

Proverbs 8:22 הָיָה

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2

Several translations have "possessed me" while others have "made me". Is "possessed me" the proper translation and if so, what does it mean? Or is "made me" the correct translation and if so, was there "a time when God's wisdom was not"?

New American Standard Bible "The LORD **possessed me at the beginning of His way**, Before His works of old.

New International Version "The LORD **brought me forth as the first of his works**, before his deeds of old;

NET Bible The LORD **created me as the beginning of his works**, before his deeds of long ago.

Brenton LXX 22The Lord **made me the beginning of his ways** for his works.

22 Κύριος **ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ** εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ,

Swete, H. B. (1909). The Old Testament in Greek: According to the Septuagint (Pr 8:22).

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Or did God gradually, or suddenly "acquire" wisdom from experience or somewhere?:

<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/7069.htm>

Here are several more English translations:

<http://biblehub.com/proverbs/8-22.htm>

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[edited Oct 1 '17 at 14:54](#)

[asked Oct 1 '17 at 14:32](#)



[Ruminator](#)

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• 1

This question reminds me of the story about the three men who discussed who's occupation was the oldest. One was an electrician, one was a gardener, and one was a carpenter. The carpenter said that his occupation had to be the oldest because it was represented in the building of Noah's ark. The gardener

shook his head and said that his occupation had to be the oldest because it was represented in the garden of Eden. The electrician then said "No, no", "my occupation just has to be the oldest because it had to have been represented in God's very first command "Let there be light!" :) – [Constantthin](#) Nov 1 '18 at 0:01

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6

From "The Songs of the Witnesses" :

From everlasting was I poured, from when all did begin,  
or ever earth was. When there were no depths to be within -  
Then was I brought forth, when no founts with water did abound;  
before the mountains were set down, before the hills were found.  
I was brought forth before he made the earth or did it dress.  
Before he'd formed the fields, or made the head of this world's dust.

[Proverbs 8:22-26, accurately versed from Young's Literal and the KJV]

Wisdom is personified. It is a quality within a Person, and the quality, itself, is personified. That Person is not yet revealed. But he will be, in incarnation.

"From everlasting was I poured" is an everlasting begetting. It is not a creation, it is a begetting, everlastingly. 'Time' has no meaning in this context.

For the Son is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

(Prov 8:23 - *nasak* to pour out or to be anointed [Young] *nacak* to pour out [Strong 5258](#))

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[edited](#) May 18 '18 at 11:27

[answered](#) Oct 2 '17 at 9:16



[Nigel J](#)

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- The begetting of which this passage speaks is the Divine begetting - that of the Father and the Son. It is not a matter of time or of creation. 'Before the mountains were set down' is the context and *olam* within such a context cannot mean anything other than 'everlasting'. – [Nigel J](#) Jun 4 '18 at 4:33
- I do not understand your term 'preexistence'. I have no idea what abyss you are referring to. – [Nigel J](#) Jun 4 '18 at 15:29

- @Ruminator In the beginning God created. In the beginning was The Word. Anything after that beginning is, by definition, created by God, with The Word. Sea, void, waters, earth - all follow the beginning, by definition. – [Nigel J Jun 26 '18 at 10:23](#)
- Genesis 1:1-3 and John 1:1-3. – [Nigel J Jun 26 '18 at 11:47](#)
- @Ruminator So we're back to 'pre-existence' which is a contradiction in terms. Nothing can 'exist' before it 'existed'. What part of 'The Beginning' is a problem. ?The Beginning is The Beginning. It's only a problem for those who do not - actually - believe in him who said 'I am that I am'. And who - alone - is eternal. – [Nigel J Jun 26 '18 at 12:29](#)  
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4

The Pauline dictum about the "killing letter" and "vivifying Spirit" is appropriate to first think about the principles of exegesis, for a theologian should not be enslaved by the letter of any text, but adhere to the spirit, logos, to philosophy: even the revelation cannot bypass philosophy and there is a difficult, heartrendingly so, "marital" relationship between the two. In fact, the basic and very healthy conviction is that the natural light and wisdom of philosophers have the same divine origin being the divine gift for humans as the truth revealed directly to simple good-hearted prophets and the fishermen, and moreover, both the second should be interpreted through the first and the first should be instructed by the second.

Now, the ἔκτισεν means "he created", "he made", but its semantic field also includes "he brought forth" (Liddle&Scott give few references when the word means "to bring about", as in Aeschylus' "Suppliants" 171, where according to the context it can be translated even as "beget", as chosen by H.W. Smith). In Septuagint, for example in Sirach 44:2 it is impossible for the ἔκτισεν to be used in a strict technical meaning of "creation out of nothing" as it later acquired through the relevant theological debates, especially the Arian controversy, for it is said that "God wrought much glory through hero-ancestors, that is to say, His great power/majesty from the beginning" (πολλὴν δόξαν ἔκτισεν ὁ Κύριος, τὴν μεγαλωσύνην αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αἰῶνος), now God's glory and majesty is always with Him inseparably, and therefore ἔκτισεν in this passage can but mean that He revealed or worked His (αὐτοῦ) ever-existing glory through the heroes of the past, and not created this glory and majesty out of nothing (the Hebrew is even more clear with this, for it has "He apportioned His glory to them"); that men can partake of uncreated divine glory is clear from the Scriptures (cf. John 5:44). The English translations of this passage give a range of options for the ἔκτισεν from "created" (CEB) to "wrought" (DRA), "honored" (GNT), "manifested" (WEB), "made" (WYC), others (NABRE, NRSV, NRSVA, NRSVACE, NRSVCE, RSV, RSVCE) opt for the Hebrew version, which makes things even clearer, saying that "God *apportioned* His great glory" to the heroic ancestors, thus it is excluded the Septuagint translator could mean in the ἔκτισεν any strong sense of creation, to say nothing about the *ex nihilo* sense, given that "His great Glory" is everexistent just as He Himself is. Also, κτίζω can mean with a double accusative "to make somebody something", e.g., "to make/set somebody free" (cf. Aeschylus "Choephoroi" 1060), that is to say, cause somebody's getting free. In this last meaning the adequate literal translation of the Septuagint will be: "Lord caused/made me (brought me forth) to be the beginning of His ways towards His deeds", for there is not an "ἐν ἄρχῃ" in the text, but a double accusative ("[ἔκτισεν] **με ἀρχήν**"), like in the abovementioned quote from Aeschylus ("**ἐλεύθερόν σε** [κτίσει]"). Therefore, the translation "He created me in the beginning of his ways" is totally misleading, while "He caused/made me to be the beginning/principle" is grammatically more plausible with the double accusative construction. Thus, the Septuagint suggests that God was necessitated to bring forth, bring about, or cause something to be the principle ἀρχή for doing His deeds (ἔργα); therefore, by

logic of this, this something is not included in those ἔργα but is outside of them as the God-derived principle for their coming into being.

The question is whether this something, this God-derived principle was always with God, or God can be imagined without it? And it would mean that God could create the ἔργα without the mediation of this ἄρχη, which is counter-intuitive, for then why on earth He makes things difficult for Himself as to create a middle principle between Himself and the rest of the creation and only later to create through this created middle principle the rest of the creation? Why not to create all creation without this intermediate creation, just directly? But if we take the ἔκτισεν in a looser sense of "made to be", or "caused to be", which grammatically is more precise, then it is very reasonable to think that God creates creatures making His intrinsic Wisdom as the necessary and unavoidable principle of manifesting Himself in those creatures, for those creatures possess the perceptible and created signs of Him-Uncreated, or more precisely of His uncreated wisdom. Just for an analogy: rays of the sun say: "The sun made us the principle for making visible the mountains and fields", now, as it is impossible for the sun to make visible anything without its rays, in the similar manner, it is impossible for God to make anything without His Wisdom.

The Hebrew version has יָרַד "possessed me", so there is no indication of its' being in any situation (I do not say "time", which could not exist without something to be measured by it, i.e. the world) not possessed by God. But why the Septuagint translators put there the ἔκτισεν (of course, if it is not a simple mistake on the part of the translator who put ἔκτισεν instead of ἐκτήσατο - from κτάομαι/"to possess" - which is the more adequate to the Hebrew word, as suggested by Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion and Jerome /possedit/)? I guess, for the reason to invest the text with a notion of dynamism: that God, so to say, reaches out of Himself through the Wisdom that He always possesses, thus creating the world, or expressing, manifesting Himself through the world created by Him through His eternally possessed wisdom, for it is impossible for such a vast orderliness to be based on chaos and haphazardness, unless we think that a) God himself is such a chaos and haphazardness, and then b) suddenly creates the structuring principle - wisdom, and then c) creates the universe invested with the features of this created principle. All that is absurd, for the creatures must reveal or bear witness to the Creator and not to the creature, while in this wrongheaded model creatures will be radically unable to bear witness to the utterly haphazard God, but only to a created structuring principle - wisdom; to say nothing about inadequacy of putting haphazardness above rational intentionality/providentiality, which is quite Protagorean or Nietzschean, but hardly Biblical.

In fact, what is manifested in the orderliness of the creation? God? His Wisdom? Or Both, that is to say, God in His Wisdom, or together with His Wisdom, with His intrinsic power and ability to introduce structure in reality intelligible for our created intellects, this intelligible created structure being grounded on His intrinsic structuring/creating power? And does not Paul say that pagans have no excuse for not believing in God, for His invisible/imperceptible and by clear implication, uncreated qualities, His invisible eternal (ἀίδιος) power and divinity, are manifested through the creation (Romans 1:20)?! And through what aspects of the creation? Of course, through the orderliness-aspect, the intelligibility-aspect of the creation that bears witness to its ἀίδιος/eternal, uncreated cause, that is the God's eternal power to introduce and make manifest world's structure and order! And this eternal power is nothing else but His wisdom, and therefore, to the extent the power is ἀίδιος/eternal, *to the very same extent* is also the wisdom, for both are interchangeable notions having the identical function and in theological expressions are used in a *hendiadyoin* ("one notion in two terms") construction (cf.

Jeremiah 51:15; or Paul 1 Cor. 1:24). Thus, again, God's power is the same as wisdom, for God's wisdom is never an impotent wisdom but imbued with power, and vice versa, God's power is never a haphazard or chaotic power, but imbued with wisdom, and thus the creation reveals simultaneously God's power and wisdom and *ἄϊδιος* ("eternal") applies likewise to both power and wisdom. Therefore, had it been otherwise, Paul's logic would have been totally wrong, for why should one reprimand an unbeliever for not believing in the Creator, if that which is revealed and implied by the creation - i.e. wisdom - were itself a creature? But this is absurd, and Paul is emphatic that what is revealed and implied by the creation - the power and wisdom - is just as *ἄϊδιος* as God himself.

Later in theology, through the Arian controversy, there happened a clear technical division between "creation" (*κτίζω*) and "begetting" (*γεννάω*). However, Septuagint translators did not yet have this terminologically tense agenda and thus put the verb in a looser sense of "making somebody something" or "bringing forth", not at all investing this term with a necessity of a contingency and createdness, i.e. non-eternity, of a being that God has brought about (*ἔκτισεν*). This happens in theology: for instance "*ὑπόστασις*" and "*οὐσία*" where used interchangeably, both denoting the same idea of "being" in I Nicaea (325) but they became totally different and excluding terms in I Constantinople (381-2), when the first became "essence" and the second "person", never to be henceforth intermingled. Also in the Proverbs 8 it is clear that the *ἔκτισεν* is used interchangeably with the *γεννάω*, for immediately in the sequel we read (Proverbs 8:24-25): "*πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τὰς ἀβύσσους ποιῆσαι, πρὸ τοῦ προελθεῖν τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων, πρὸ τοῦ ὄρη ἐδρασεθῆναι, πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾶ με*". Therefore, had the Septuagint translator of the Proverbs 8 put in those two terms in 8:22 and 8:25 the mutually exclusive meanings, that they got in strictly theological debates later in history, especially with the Arian controversy, he could not perform this unless he got affected by schizophrenia before undertaking the task of translating this passage: in fact, semantics is the same in 8:24-25 as in 8:22, because "towards all His deeds" (*ἔργα*) is just explained in the sequel: *τὰ ἔργα* = 1. *ἀβύσσοι* (depths); 2. *πηγαὶ ὑδάτων* (streams of waters); 3. *ὄρη* (mountains); 4. *βούνοι* (hills) which simply indicate to everything, the heaven and earth of the Genesis 1:1.

Thus, the principle through which all those things are brought into being is not to be enlisted among them. As it is unreasonable to suppose that in Genesis 1:2 the "Spirit of God" is something created and as such a part of the creation through which other creatures are made, but natural, neutral and unforced interpretation will be that "Spirit of God" is intrinsic to God and is prior to creation just as God is, so also with the "Wisdom of God", the latter being likewise intrinsic to God and prior to creation just as God is. In fact in Exodus 31:3 God's Spirit and Wisdom are used in the same semantic power, synonymously.

And if one just reads the Psalm 104:24 ("O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all/*πάντα*") with an unprejudiced eye: will anybody with a clear mind raise any suspicion that here in the "wisdom" is implied anything created? In fact "all" (Greek: *πάντα*) means "all" and it includes in its class the whole entirety of the created order, while necessarily excluding anything uncreated, ergo, also God's wisdom.

Thus, Proverbs 8:22 does not say that God's Wisdom is created in the strict theological sense of the word as indicating something that did not exist to come into existence by the agency of God (for God's agency is always a wise agency and as such cannot be without His Wisdom that is "always-ed" or eternal to Him, for if His action/agency is always wise, necessarily the wisdom

is possessed in His essence also always, for action is expression of essence, the latter logically preceding the former), but can be interpreted as a term indicating God's creative motion, an outreach so to say, in order to manifest Himself through His eternal wisdom in the things - τὰ ἔργα - created by Him.

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[edited Oct 22 '17 at 6:14](#)

[answered Oct 4 '17 at 8:52](#)



[Levan Gigineishvili](#)

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- And furthermore, the grammar and text is important, but my argument is based to not a lesser extent on plain logic and dialectic, which is necessary for any theology, for no revealed truth does abolish philosophy, but unless both go hand-in-hand, wrongheaded and soul-damaging ideas will ensue, as in my previous Augustinian example about "God's regretting creating man", which, unaided by philosophy, will lead to a blunder of supposing that God did not know what He was creating. – [Levan Gigineishvili](#) Oct 7 '17 at 18:26

[add a comment](#)

3

### **Ecclesiasticus 1:1-5 (LXX/Brenton)**

All wisdom cometh from the Lord, and **is with him for ever, [Vulg.+ "and is before all time."]** 2 Who can number the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity? 3 Who can find out the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the deep, and wisdom? 4 Wisdom hath been **created** *before all things*, and the understanding of prudence *from everlasting*. 5 The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom; and her ways are everlasting commandments.

**Notice particularly the parallelism:** Wisdom hath been *created before all things*, and the understanding of prudence *from everlasting/eternity*. (cf. *Proverbs 8:1; 1:2-3*).

We have some insight here into this kind of 'creation before all time' and how it was understood within the Jewish community (Sirach/Ecclesiasticus being written in Hebrew around from 200-170 B.C.—even being considered by a fringe in the Talmud to be among, and quoted as, a hagiographical Book).

*(This concept of wisdom sounds a lot like a primitive form of the concept of eternal generation, rather than creation strictly speaking. That is, eternal 'scenes' or realities are being described in temporal terms. Just as we say the eternal Son of God was 'begotten' (an action), even though He is eternal; it being a fact of eternity described in temporal terms (necessarily)).*

One is reminded of a few referenced *Colossians 1:17*, or *Revelation 3:14*. Where Jesus, "the wisdom and power of God" (*1 Corinthians 1:24*) is called "the beginning of the creation of God":

**Revelation 3:14** And to the angel of the church of Laodicea, write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is **the beginning of the creation of God**.

Or "before all things,"

**Colossians 1:17** And he is **before all things**, and by him all things consist.



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Wisdom in Proverbs (and the other wisdom literature) is a classic personification (*Proverbs 8:12-21; Wisdom 9:4*). Namely, of **wisdom** (*Wisdom 7:7*) **as portrayed as proper to God alone** strictly speaking, and only 'meted out' and or 'granted' to people as He wishes (*Wisdom 9:1 et seq.*) It is a manifestation of His eternal character (*Proverbs 2:6; cf. Ecclesiasticus 24:3*), not a 'thing' attached to Him or created or recieved by Him, even though it is described in such terms metaphorically, just as it is personified. This is hinted at by the mutually exclusive metaphors (which is OK for metaphors, but not literal descriptions). Wisdom is often times deified, or given the attributes of God to convey this point (*Wisdom 1:6-7; 7:21; 8:4,8; cf. Ecclesiasticus 42:19; Wisdom 9:11,19; Proverbs 3:19; cf. Hebrews 1:2* etc.) Wisdom and prudence/understanding are by way of parallelism, and for the didactic purposes of the wisdom literature, often equated as well (*Proverbs 2:2-3; 4:5; Ecclesiasticus 1:4; 19:19; Baruch 3:23; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:19; Ephesians 1:8* etc.) and even knowledge, too (*Proverbs 2:6*), showing that it is a general characteristic of God as possessing what is good (*Wisdom 8:7; Job 12:12; 26:3*), rather than one simple virtue, period.

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[edited Oct 2 '17 at 12:28](#)

answered Oct 1 '17 at 21:43



[Sola Gratia](#)

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- Perhaps it's from the Hebrew tradition. It wasn't written originally in Greek. – [Sola Gratia](#) Oct 1 '17 at 22:16

• 1

Whoa! Slow down. **I added the source:** the Septuagint (LXX)! I **noted** where the Vulgate deviates therefrom! "remove the trash or at least show from who's dogma-soaked brain it came".."knowingly publish rubbish to support your dogma" is very vicious and spiteful, uncalled for and unprofessional; and itself against site rules. I actually put quite some effort into gathering a profile of wisdom and how it's portrayed from the wisdom literature, and you repay it by insulting it/me and accuse me of posting 'fake news' and 'dogma.' I'll know never to waste time answering your questions! – [Sola Gratia](#) Oct 2 '17 at 12:26

• 1

The Vulgate is not 'fake Scripture'. – [Sola Gratia](#) Oct 2 '17 at 12:37

• 1

Point to the corruption—point to the 'Trinity'. I get it, you are hellbent against my analysis of the wisdom literature. Be a bit more professional about it. And don't report someone for a textual variant, either. – [Sola Gratia](#) Oct 2 '17 at 13:16

[add a comment](#)

2

*Is "possessed me" the proper translation... Or is "made me" the correct translation... ?*

Believe it or not, there is little difference between (ancient) Greek (the language of the [Septuagint](#)) and (modern) English (or even Romanian, for that matter). In all these three (Indo-European) languages,

- people **have** children, and **make** babies (see [James 1:18](#), where *offspring* are called *creatures*), as well as **create** tools, or **construct** buildings (all four representing various possible meanings of the same [verb](#)). Needless to say, the [Orthodox](#) opted for the former two, and the [Arians](#) for the latter two.

- **having** (see above) also means **possessing** (obviously), albeit, at this point, the connection to the aforementioned concept of **(pro)creation** becomes severely obscured.
- someone can **become** something (in this case, Wisdom is **made** the Beginning of all things, as [Eusebius](#) explains, following [Psalm 50:12 LXX](#) — where the heart is *made clean* — and [1 Peter 2:13](#), where people *become* — or are **invested** as — kings and rulers).

I hope the above observations help to shed some light on the reason(s) behind the rich variation which you have noticed in the various translations and interpretations.

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*Or did God gradually, or suddenly "acquire" wisdom from experience or somewhere ?*

I assume you are referring here to the fact that by [changing the \*iota\* into an \*eta\*](#), the verb becomes *to obtain, acquire, or get*. Certainly, this also represents a distinct possibility, worthy of some serious amount of thought and consideration.

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answered Oct 1 '17 at 18:39

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1

All the anthropomorphism and poetic license of Proverbs 8 aside, Wisdom is an abstract concept, with no actual boundaries or limitations except what we create for it in our minds. The more we attempt to define it with words, to settle on a 'proper' or 'correct' translation of this text, the more we limit our understanding of it and its potential in our life. A bit like the collapsed potentiality of observed matter...

To say that wisdom was 'possessed' by God helps to form an understanding of what wisdom is, but to then say that the words 'created' or 'made' are therefore the *wrong* translation unnecessarily limits our potential to fully understand the origin or nature of wisdom. Likewise, to attribute a value or measurement such as 'first' to the creation of wisdom in relation to the rest of creation is a pointless attempt to reduce the beginning of the universe to an ordered sequence of events. What if someone could prove somehow that wisdom *was* created first? Does this increase our understanding or knowledge of wisdom, or does it simply enable us to make judgements against everything else in comparison?

Wisdom is a fundamental part of what God is. All translation attempts of this single quote collectively paint a more accurate picture of wisdom's origin, and in turn a more accurate understanding of God. Is it necessary then, to judge which specific words would best sum up our understanding, or to engage in a futile discussion about 'which of them would be the greatest' (Luke 9:46)? Does understanding even *require* words, or is our use of words simply to prove our wisdom to others?

Wisdom can be understood as the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in life, gained first hand through life experiences, and secondhand through learning and education. It encompasses all the knowledge and understanding we both have as well as seek about the past, present and future.



“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; 23 I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. 24 When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; 25 before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, 26 before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth. 27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, 28 when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, 29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. 30 Then I was constantly[e] at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, 31 rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. (NIV Proverbs 8:22-31)

When the universe was in its infancy (regardless of how it may have been formed), the author suggests here that wisdom was 'witness' to the experiences of the universe coming into being. The point being made here is that wisdom began or emerged with subjective experience itself - including not just the experience of humanity, or even of 'life' as we currently understand it, but the experience of all matter from the beginning. And it is this full knowledge and understanding of the universe which we are invited to seek:

I raise my voice to all mankind. 5 You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, instruct your minds. (NIV Proverbs 8:4-5)

The call of wisdom in Proverbs 8 is to continue to seek and share knowledge and understanding of the past, present and future through our collective experiences and our connection to each other. Even now we are 'simple', we are 'foolish' - the wisest among us cannot individually acquire all available wisdom in one lifetime. But so many of us can't even manage to see what is right in front of us, because we judge one word better than another, and then we close our minds (and the minds of those we teach) to other possibilities.

Humanity can only attain access to true wisdom collectively - not as individuals, as a chosen people or even as a religious group, but as 'all mankind' - interacting with all life and all matter: past, present and future.

This starts with an open mind and an open heart - recognising that in attempting to relate our experiences to others we unwittingly define, measure and limit both our understanding and theirs; and recognising that just because one description is judged by someone to fit best, it doesn't render all other possibilities false.

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answered Oct 3 '17 at 6:24



[Possibility](#)

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- Hi Ruminator, I'm not sure what you're asking. Unfortunately, my ability to read Greek is non-existent, so my approach to the text comes from looking at various English translations and striving to understand the

meaning this way. I wonder if sometimes we have to accept that maybe there is no precise wording in English that conveys the full clarity of meaning. – [Possibility](#) Oct 5 '17 at 7:58

- Fair enough - my point is that you're splitting hairs on this question. Wisdom is a fundamental part of what God is - it is not 'created' separate from universal experience, so no, there would not be a 'time when God's wisdom was not'. The movement of time creates experience which simultaneously creates the getting of wisdom in all matter. To define its limits by deciding if wisdom was 'first' is counterproductive to a genuine understanding of wisdom, and therefore a genuine understanding of God. But hey, have at it... – [Possibility](#) Oct 5 '17 at 8:29
  - I appreciate your respect, and I understand what the text seems to be suggesting. Wisdom is commonly anthropomorphised in literature as the feminine Sophia. At the time and culture in which Proverbs was written, in fact, it was rarely described any other way. The purpose of the text, therefore, is not to describe Wisdom as a created being - that is simply how readers already understand Wisdom. It is to say that Wisdom pre-dates and therefore encompasses human experience, the experience of all living creatures, and the experience of the formation of the universe itself. – [Possibility](#) Oct 5 '17 at 8:57
- add a comment

1

**v. 30:** I was a nursling beside Him, and I was [His] delight every day, playing before Him at all times...

Surely, Wisdom is a being apart from the One who brought forth, created, acquired or got Wisdom. The Son of God was [His] delight every day (day by day):

### Luke 3:22

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'\*\* (ESV)

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[edited](#) Jan 9 at 6:09



[Constantin Jinga](#)

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answered Jan 5 at 17:00



[thomas](#)

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- 1  
Hi thomas, welcome to the BH site. Thank's a lot for your comment. Whenever you have a minute, do read [this](#) and repost your answer accordingly. Thank you. – [Constantin Jinga](#) Jan 8 at 13:05
- add a comment

0

As you know, קָנָה means "acquire", as in *obtaining something you didn't previously have*. That is what happens when a consumer *buys* an object. They *acquire* a new thing. [Brown-Driver-Briggs](#) says:

I. 84 קָנָה verb **get, acquire** (Late Hebrew = Biblical Hebrew; Phoenician (Punic) מִקְנָא, property [in cattle]; Assyrian ʔanû, **gain, acquire**, Meissn Suppl. 85; Arabic (,) **acquire**, procure; Sabean קָנָה **acquire**, possess, CIS iv,no.89,5.6, קָנָה noun property Id ib,no.3,8,29,3; Ethiopic **acquire**, subjugate; Aramaic קָנָה, (**acquire**); —

God *acquired* wisdom at *the beginning of His work*. This means, prior to His work, God did not have wisdom. He had knowledge, which He either learned after so long, or it was entirely present with Him when He came to be. Wisdom and knowledge are not the same thing, as knowledge is to *know facts*, whereas wisdom is to take the experience of that knowledge, and *apply it*.

Suppose God is a Boltzmann brain. He could have formed as a self-aware entity that had all *knowledge* of physics. However, to apply this knowledge, He needed a reason. He needed to think about what He could use this knowledge for. So He used His wisdom and made an image of Himself that He could love- mankind.

That is the only way I can explain how God can "acquire" anything. If He is "eternal", then He is "unchanging". In other words, He can't move. If He cannot move or change, it is impossible for Him to *acquire*.

Acquire is not the same as possess. When you acquire something, you do possess it. However, you may possess things you do not acquire. For example, you don't *acquire* cells. They are a fundamental part of your being. Nobody exists one day without cells, and then *obtains* cells. I think if the author intended "possessed", he would have used a form of the word יָרַשׁ.

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[edited Oct 6 '17 at 4:53](#)

[answered Oct 5 '17 at 22:13](#)



[Cannabijoy](#)

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- [@Ruminator](#) If you'd like to discuss this more, you can join me in the [Freewill chat](#) - [Cannabijoy](#) Oct 7 '17 at 1:09

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0

Reading - wisdom personified.

Proverbs 8:22-25 NWT Jehovah PRODUCED me as the beginning of his way, The earliest of his achievements of long ago. 23 From ancient times I was installed, From the start, from times earlier than the earth. 24 When there were no deep waters, I was brought forth, When there were no springs overflowing with water. 25 Before the mountains were set in place, Before the hills, I was brought forth,

Proverbs 8:31 NWT And I was especially fond of the sons of men.

1st God has wisdom its part of God's very nature so to "produce" it does not work here, must have something else in mind made external to himself!

2nd It was an action of God to produce it, see vs 22!

3rd God's EARLIST achivement!

4th It was fond of mankind vs. 31!

Two key ideas 1st God's earliest action vs. 22, what was that? This takes us to John 1:1 where "The Word" was there in the beginning, the start of God's creation as noted at:-

Revelation 3:14 NWT These are the things that the Amen\* [Jesus] says, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation by God,

\*2 Corinthians 1:19, 20 NWT **For the Son of God, Jesus Christ**, who was preached among you through us, that is, through me and Sil-va'nus and Timothy, did not become "yes" and yet "no," but "yes" has become "yes" in his case. 20 For no matter how many the promises of God are, they have become "yes" by means of him. Therefore, also through him is the "**AMEN**" said to God, which brings him glory through us.

2nd Key idea was Wisdom was "fond" of humans, this would fit Jesus as he died for humanity:-

1 Corinthians 5:7 NWT or, indeed, Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. . .

So in short it talking of the creation of Jesus as the son of God personified as the wisdom of God which fits well:-

1 Corinthians 1:30 NWT But it is due to him that you are in union with Christ Jesus, who has become to us **WISDOM** from God, . . .

**As "The Word."**

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answered Oct 29 '18 at 20:03

user26950

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-1

**Does Proverbs 8:22 say that God's wisdom was the first person/thing that God created?**  
Proverbs 8:22-25 (NRSV)

Wisdom's Part in Creation

22 "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth."

God has always existed and therefore always possessed wisdom, his wisdom in other words was neither created or produced. Wisdom is said to be created, produced, at the beginning of his works, the first of his acts of long ago, brought forth before the foundation of the earth. (Verse 29) Wisdom is personified, is speaking and making an appeal: "**Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?**" Proverbs 8:1 (NET Bible)

Proverbs at 8:30-31 describes wisdom as being beside God, like a master worker and taking delight in the creation of the human race.

30 "Then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, 31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race."

**This is in harmony with the rest of the scriptures.**

Colossians 1:15-17 (KJV)

15 "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Revelation 3:14 (KJV)

14 "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

### **Conclusion:**

God always existed and always possessed wisdom, his wisdom was neither produced or created. The passage obviously applies to Jesus pre-human existence who worked closely with God his Father, as a master worker, long before he came to earth, long before all things were created. When he came to earth he was God's Word - his Spokesman. Jesus is also called the power and wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:24,30 (NRSV)

24 "But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

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[edited Oct 6 at 8:45](#)

[answered Oct 4 at 21:18](#)



[Ozzie Nicolas](#)

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- In the LXX verse 22 says KTIZW which usually means "created" or "establish". But in the Hebrew the word usually means "bought". What do you make of that? - [Ruminator](#) Oct 5 at 0:12
  - @ Ruminator: The following verse state about wisdom "I was set up", "I was brought forth", "When he establish the heavens I was there", "For who ever finds me". Such expression to me rule out the word "bought", wisdom here is tangible- speaks-acts-has joy, etc. ,hence the word "bought" is an erroneous translation and also not in harmony with the scriptures. - [Ozzie Nicolas](#) Oct 6 at 8:42
  - Note your comments for the down vote or the scriptures that you disagree and so help improve the answer - [Ozzie Nicolas](#) Oct 7 at 20:49
- add a comment
- 2

Wisdom was not the first person or thing created.

The verse is taken from a passage in which wisdom is personified; she speaks of herself. Once she is finished the reader is told:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning (תְּחִלָּתָא) of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10) [KJV throughout]

Obviously, regardless of how one understands the meaning of "the fear of the LORD" it requires something other than the LORD to be in existence. Thus, Wisdom cannot be the first person or thing created.

Second, Wisdom's claim of "in the beginning" parallels Genesis 1:1:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning (רֵאשִׁית) of his way, before his works of old. (Proverbs 8:22)

In the beginning (בְּרֵאשִׁית) God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1)

Nowhere in the creation account of Genesis is Wisdom found; therefore either she was created after the events in Genesis 1 or she was in existence before Genesis 1. If after, she was not the first person created. If before, then the "beginning" of Wisdom is clearly stated in Proverbs 9:10.

Third, the word the NETS translates as "create" is used 84 times, almost always meaning "to possess." As Gesenius states in the Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon:

There does not appear to be any sufficient ground for ascribing the sense of *to create* to this verb; in all the passages cited for that sense, *to possess* appears to be the true meaning. [[H7069-קנה](#)]

The NETS translation notes recent discoveries do attribute a second root to the word which can mean "to create."

There are two roots קָנָה (qanah) in Hebrew, one meaning "to possess," and the other meaning "to create." The earlier English versions did not know of the second root, but suspected in certain places that a meaning like that was necessary (e.g., Gen 4:1; 14:19; Deut 32:6). Ugaritic confirmed that it was indeed another root. The older versions have the translation "possess" because otherwise it sounds like God lacked wisdom and therefore created it at the beginning. They wanted to avoid saying that wisdom was not eternal. Arius liked the idea of Christ as the wisdom of God and so chose the translation "create." Athanasius translated it, "constituted me as the head of creation." The verb occurs twelve times in Proverbs with the meaning of "to acquire"; but the Greek and the Syriac versions have the meaning "create." Although the idea is that wisdom existed before creation, the parallel ideas in these verses ("appointed," "given birth") argue for the translation of "create" or "establish" (R. N. Whybray, "Proverbs 8:22-31 and Its Supposed Prototypes," VT 15 [1965]: 504-14; and W. A. Irwin, "Where Will Wisdom Be Found?" JBL 80 [1961]: 133-42). [[Proverbs 8 - NET](#)]

While the meaning of "to create" may be possible, as each of the potential examples show, that sense is always in the context of creating within the created world:

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. (Genesis 4:1)

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: (Genesis 14:19)



Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? (Deuteronomy 32:6)

Cain's "creation" required a man and a woman to be in existence; the "creation" of a people (Deuteronomy) obviously takes place within the created world.

"Creation" as in nothing already in existence might be understood from Melchizedek's words: "most high God creator of heaven and earth." However, "God" in Genesis 14 is אֱלֹהִים (El) not אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) of Genesis 1. This is not to say they are not one in the same; it simply recognizes a meaning of "create" in Genesis 14 must acknowledge different words for "God" and "create" from those used in Genesis 1.

So in addition to Proverbs 9:10 which states Wisdom cannot be the first thing or person created, there is little, if any, support in Scripture for taking the sense of חָכְמָה to mean Wisdom was the first thing or person created.

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[edited Oct 6 '17 at 20:16](#)

answered Oct 6 '17 at 15:56



[Revelation Lad](#)

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- @Ruminator The Scripture states (clearly IMHO) wisdom results from something and therefore cannot be the first person or thing created. Whether angels or men is speculation; it could be both. But to answer your question, it was not the first. – [Revelation Lad](#) Oct 6 '17 at 17:08
- @Ruminator Since wisdom is personified I don't see why this has to be applied to God as in God acquiring wisdom. I believe wisdom is speaking about herself not about Him. – [Revelation Lad](#) Oct 6 '17 at 17:20
- @Ruminator As you requested. – [Revelation Lad](#) Oct 6 '17 at 20:19