

Wisdom or knowledge has a striking role in the narratives about the Garden of Eden in Gen 2–3 and Ezek 28:11–19 – both in the synopsis of the two texts and in the context of the Hebrew Bible. Whereas in Gen 2–3 the primal humans first acquire knowledge by grasping the fruit from the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ and are thereupon banished from the garden, in Ezek 28 the king of Tyre is endowed from the beginning with wisdom and beauty, both of which he loses because of his hubris. In both narratives, wisdom or knowledge is more than just a life-serving ability that can be acquired and learned by humans. Rather, by linking it to the mythical space of the Garden of Eden, it appears as a divine quality. Wisdom thus has superhuman dimensions and is located at the interface between God and humans. In Gen 2–3, humans become “like God” by attaining knowledge; in Ezek 28, the king endowed with wisdom is the exclusive human inhabitant of a mythical sphere. In both texts, wisdom or knowledge is an ambivalent quality insofar as it is related to the fall of the respective protagonists and their banishment from the garden.

The conference takes Gen 2–3 and Ezek 28:11–19 as a starting point for conceptions of wisdom and knowledge that crucially concern the divine-human relationship. However, it does not limit itself to these two texts, but places them in larger horizons of the Hebrew Bible, the ancient Near East and early Jewish literature. The aim is, on the one hand, to better understand the subject of wisdom or knowledge in Gen 2–3 and Ezek 28 and, on the other hand, to shed light on the superhuman and divine dimensions of wisdom and knowledge in the different textual areas and cultures.

The guiding questions of the conference can be summarized as follows:

- What makes wisdom and knowledge a divine or superhuman quality according to the view of the sources?
- How can humans attain and participate in divine wisdom?
- What effects and consequences do wisdom and knowledge have for humans?
- How and to what extent do wisdom and knowledge affect the relationship between God and humans?

Conference venue

University of Hamburg
Department of Protestant Theology
Gorch-Fock-Wall 7
20354 Hamburg
Room C1053

Participation and Registration

The participation is possible both in person and via Zoom.

For participation in person we charge a conference fee of 50 euros in order to cover the costs of catering.

For registration, please write an informal e-mail to Marcel Krusche (marcel.krusche@uni-hamburg.de) in which you declare whether you will participate in person or via Zoom.

For participation in person, please register until **January 31st, 2023**.

Planning Team

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Wisdom at the Interface between God and Humans



Luca Giordano, *Dream of Solomon* (ca. 1693-95)

An International Conference
on Divine-Human Dimensions of Wisdom
in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient
World



Program

March 20, 2023 (Monday)

	Introduction
3.00pm	Words of Welcome
3.15–4.15pm	Konrad Schmid (Zürich) – The Way to Wisdom: From Human Intuition to Divine Knowledge
4.15–4.30pm	<i>Coffee Break</i>
	Section 1: Marking the Boundaries between Divine and Human Wisdom
4.30–5.15pm	Suzanna Millar (Edinburgh) – Wisdom at the Interfaces of Divinity, Humanity, and Animality in Genesis 2–3
5.15–6.00pm	Josephine Fechner (Göttingen) – At the Threshold between the Divine und Human World: The Ambivalent Character of the Primeval Mythical Sages of Ancient Mesopotamia
6.30–8.00pm	<i>Reception/Dinner</i>

March 21, 2023 (Tuesday)

9.00–9.45am	Alexandra von Lieven (Münster) – Accessible and Inaccessible Wisdom and Knowledge in Ancient Egypt and Its Dangers
9.45–10.30am	Seth Bledsoe (Nijmegen) – Ahiqar, Eden and the Limits of Human Knowledge in the Divine Garden
10.30–11.00am	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.00–11.45am	Fiodar Litvinau (München) – The Distinction between Good and Evil in Its Application to the Wisdom Concept in the Dead Sea Scrolls

11.45–12.30am	Hindy Najman (Oxford) – Understanding, Wisdom and Creation in 4QInstruction and Philo of Alexandria
12.30am–2.00pm	<i>Lunch Break</i>
2.00–3.00pm	Final Discussion Section 1
3.00–3.30pm	<i>Coffee Break</i>
3.30–5.30pm	<i>Social program</i>
	Public Keynote
6.00–7.00pm	Bernd Schipper (Berlin) – From Empirical Knowledge to Critical Wisdom: Concepts of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs
7.15–9.00pm	<i>Conference Dinner</i>

March 22, 2023 (Wednesday)

	Section 2: Overcoming Boundaries: Human Acquisition of Divine Wisdom
9.00–9.45am	Alan Lenzi (Stockton) – Hearing and Seeing Secrets in Ancient Mesopotamia
9.45–10.30am	Kianoosh Rezaia (Bochum) – Gaining Divine Knowledge in Its Ancient Iranian Way
10.30–11.00am	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.00–11.45am	Thomas Wagner (Wuppertal) – Gaining Knowledge – Attaining Emotions: On the Relation of Knowledge and Shame in Gen 2–3
11.45–12.30am	Mirjam Bokhorst (Halle) – Abominable Mysteries and Saving Knowledge – Perspectives of Wisdom in 1 Enoch

12.30am–2.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00–2.45pm	Jaco Gericke (Vanderbijlpark) – Folk-meta-physical Assumptions in the Religious Language of Divine Knowledge/Wisdom in Gen 2–3 and Ezekiel 28 – An Analytic-Philosophical Perspective
2.45–3.45pm	Final Discussion Section 2
4.00–6.00pm	<i>Social program</i>
6.00–7.30pm	<i>Dinner</i>

March 23, 2023 (Thursday)

	Section 3: Transgressing Boundaries: Wisdom and Hubris
9.00–9.45am	Will Kynes (Samford) – Pride Comes before the “Fall”: Wisdom, Human Hubris, Defiance of Divine Limits, and Death in Genesis 2–3, Ezekiel 28, and the Epic of Gilgamesh
9.45–10.30am	Marcel Krusche (Hamburg) – Super-Human Wisdom and Mythical Traditions in Ezek 28
10.30–11.00am	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.00–11.45am	Isaac Kalimi (Mainz) – The Violence, Hubris, and Punishment of the Assyrian King (Isaiah 10 and 14)
11.45–12.30am	Mark Sneed (Lubbock) – The Confluence of Torah, Wisdom, and Prophecy: Gen 2–3, Ezekiel 28, and Prov 30 as Hubristic Wisdom
12.30am–1.30pm	Final Discussion Section 3 and Farewell