

The Proverbs

Lesson 9

Proverbs 9

With the beginning of chapter 9, Solomon begins to speak to Rehoboam about the importance of finding and loving wisdom. At this point in the story, Solomon explains to Rehoboam the work of wisdom in this world.

Wisdom's House Prepared

Proverbs 9:1 Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; ² She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; She has also set her table; ³ She has sent out her maidens, she calls from the tops of the heights of the city:

Here, Solomon describes the preparations that wisdom has made for all who will seek to find her in love. Her family is large and she makes abundant provisions.

Her House

Wisdom is connected to the LORD and His creation as recorded in Proverb chapter 8; therefore, the house she has prepared is the house of God. She has prepared this house for everyone who will accept the Messiah, the LORD, Jehovah, Yahweh. Her house is the only eternal place of salvation within the universe.

Her Seven Pillars

The seven pillars are constructed to hold the house firmly in place for all eternity. A house that had seven pillars in Solomon's day meant that the structure was enormous, grand and sturdy. Such were the events during the first seven days of creation; for six days the LORD created the work of the heavens and the earth and on the seventh He rested. The world we live in was built on those seven days and the wisdom that created such a magnificent structure is beyond our imagination and intellect. Yet, she is willing to share her secrets with those who are willing to seek and love her.

Her Food

When the text says, "she has prepared her food," the better translation is "she has killed her beasts." The meat is ready for consumption and there is ample supply for all of those created in the image of God to partake.

Her Wine

Wisdom's wine has been prepared and is ready for drinking. Not all will dare to drink her wine but for those who do, great understanding and knowledge will flow with each sip.

Her Table

The table is set, the banquet is prepared and there are enough places for all of humanity who will accept wisdom's invitation.

Her Maidens

With the completion of the banquet preparations, wisdom sends out her maidens to invite all of the sons of Adam to partake as honored guests. It is an Asian custom still in style today throughout that part of the world. Females with the invitation will be preceded by eunuchs as their escorts. They travel from door to door, delivering wisdom's offer to come and dine.

Her Call

The maidens do their work for wisdom but she also calls from "the tops of the heights of the city." In Solomon's culture, as well as the Asia nations of that part of the world, the places of worship are always located on the highest ground in the area. As people accept the invitation from the maidens, wisdom meets them as they arrive to partake in her banquet. Her call is specifically directed to the naive. However, we should not miss the important point in Solomon's plea that the adulterous woman is also calling the naive from the top of the heights!

Wisdom's Invitation to the Naive

Proverbs 9:4a "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!"

Wisdom's emphasis in this passage is to the naive, that is, the young and innocent. The adulterous woman seeks the same client to engulf him with her wicked evil but wisdom offers the goodness of God to the simple young person. Youth is the time to meet wisdom so she can guard a person for life.

Come Eat and Drink

Proverbs 9:4b To him who lacks understanding she says, ⁵ "Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed.

Those who lack understanding are the ones who need the attention of wisdom the most. Here, wisdom does not make an offer to join her on the couch as the adulteress does; her offer is to sit at the banqueting table of the LORD.

Forsake Folly on the Way to Understanding

Proverbs 9:6 " Forsake *your* folly and live, and proceed in the way of understanding."

The road at the height of the city divides; one road leads to folly, the other leads to understanding which gives life. Wisdom pleads for the innocent to choose her path instead of the godless road that leads to a sinful setting. The confidante of a fool is a fool. The confidante of the wise is a wise person.

Avoid the Scoffer

Proverbs 9:7 He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, and he who reproves a wicked man *gets* insults for himself. ^{8a} Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you,

When wisdom uses the word scoffer, she is speaking of the person who scorns sacred things and is therefore an infidel. Scorners are interesting. They spend considerable time and energy rebuking the truths of the LORD as they seek to prove them to be ridiculous. Putting scorners or scoffers of sacred things in their place will redirect their hatred for the LORD's will toward you personally.

Interact With the Wise

Proverbs 9:8b ... reprove a wise man, and he will love you. ⁹ Give *instruction* to a wise man, and he will be still wiser, teach a righteous man, and he will increase *his* learning.

Not all who hate the sacred things of the LORD are without hope. They may be misdirected but those who are wise will listen to truth and make adjustments. Moreover, the wise man will grow closer to you when you show him truth. The wise person will collect truths from every possible source.

Wisdom's Gift to Those Who Worship the LORD

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. ¹¹ For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you.

How do you begin to obtain wisdom? True wisdom begins with the worship of the LORD and that will lead to knowledge from His holy counsel. In the Septuagint and Latin copies of the Scripture, the text continues with the following addendum.

He who trusts in the false will feed on the wind; and is like the one who chases the fowls of heaven. He forsakes the way of his own vineyard, and strays from the paths of his own inheritance. He enters the lonely and desert places, and into a land abandoned to thirst; and his hands collect that which yields no fruit.

Absence of worship of the LORD leads to dry deserted places and eternal death. Those who seek wisdom with the LORD will be rewarded with pleasant places and eternal life as the promise says "years of life ... added to you."

The Wise has Help – The Scoffer has No Help

Proverbs 9:12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, and if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

We are the beneficiaries when we seek wisdom. We are the chief beneficiaries of our seeking wisdom. It may have an unspoken effect on our neighbor but that is not the purpose of seeking wisdom. Conversely, when a person refuses to adhere to the sacred things of the LORD, he alone suffers the anger of God and must spend eternity without spiritual life in the LORD's presence.

Wisdom Warning About Woman of Folly

Proverbs 9:13 The woman of folly is boisterous, *she is* naive, and knows nothing. ¹⁴ And she sits at the doorway of her house, on a seat by the high places of the city, ¹⁵ calling to those who pass by, who are making their paths straight: ^{16a} "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here,"

Folly follows wisdom, seeking to lure the young into sin. We all begin in the same place in this world at birth, not knowing a word and unable to focus. Through the years, we begin to gather words and use them. Similarly, we begin to dabble in folly and are exposed to the wisdom found in the sacred things of the LORD. Folly is unruly, wildly barking sensuality; wisdom is stately, offering a banquet of godliness. Folly demands for the young to enter her doors; wisdom invites the young into hers.

Wisdom Warning to the Naive

^{16b} And to him who lacks understanding she says, ¹⁷ "Stolen water is sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." ¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead are there, *that* her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

"Stolen water is sweet." Is that true? Remember that in Proverbs 5:15-16, Solomon instructed Rehoboam to "Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets?" In this conclusion to Solomon's instruction to Rehoboam, wisdom is speaking of the stolen waters of the sexual experience with the wife of another man. Is it really sweet? No! It leads to the depths of hell. If "bread eaten in secret is pleasant," is it really? The Scriptures associate bread with flesh; therefore, is the bread of someone else's wife pleasant? No! The dead are there waiting to trap the young in a tainted life of sin.

The Septuagint adds the addendum as follows.

But draw back, that you may not die in this place; neither fix your eyes upon her; so you shall pass by those strange waters. But abstain from strange waters, and drink not of another's fountain, that you may live a long time, and that years may be added to your life.

The Hebrew, Chaldee and Latin add the following. "Whosoever shall be joined to her shall fall down into hell, while he that goes away from her shall be saved." Wisdom's words are true; folly leads to everlasting death, wisdom leads to everlasting life.

In Genesis 6:1-6 we read,

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

“The sons of God” represent those who are born on earth but also born from above, those who have chosen wisdom’s path. The “daughters of men” represent those simply born on earth without a relationship with the LORD. The first has taken the path to wisdom, the last has taken the path to folly. In this story, folly seems to win out by luring the young sons of the godly men to the couches of the beautiful daughters of godless men. The Nephilim, meaning men of renown, had watered down the culture of godliness to the point that the naïve were tempted and taken in by the flattering words and winking eyes of the daughters of godless men. The result was apostasy in such volume that the LORD needed to bring an end to all human life except that of Noah, his wife, his three sons and three daughters-in-law. Why is this story in the Bible? Why did the LORD allow such debauchery to engulf the pre-flood world? Why did God destroy the world with a flood? Had folly won in such a way that wisdom could never secure a place in the hearts of men again? Folly did not win. Folly lost! In God’s plan, folly took hold and was allowed to manifest itself until one family remained true to wisdom. Then, at the proper time, wisdom defeated folly by destroying all who had followed her path. Folly can never defeat wisdom; folly is without the LORD, wisdom belongs to the LORD.

With this last line, Solomon ends his personal plea for Rehoboam to seek wisdom and flee from folly. With the next chapter, Solomon will begin to teach Rehoboam all of his many proverbs.