

TEXT — 9:1-9

1. Wisdom hath builded her house;
She hath hewn out her seven pillars:
2. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine;
She hath also furnished her table:
3. She hath sent forth her maidens;
She crieth upon the highest places of the city:
4. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:
As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him
5. Come, eat ye of my bread,
And drink of the wine which I have mingled.
6. Leave off, ye simple ones, and live;
And walk in the way of understanding.
7. He that correcteth a scoffer getteth to himself reviling;
and he that reproveth a wicked man getteth himself a blot.
8. Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate thee:
Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee.
9. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:
Teach a righetous man, and he will increase in learning.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 9:1-9

1. What are the seven pillars of wisdom's house (v. 1)?
2. Does wisdom believe in mixed wine (v. 2)?
3. Who are wisdom's maidens (v. 3)?
4. Is wisdom beckoning the simple to sin like the harlot woman (v. 4)?
5. What is her bread and her wine (v. 5)?
6. "Leave off" what (v. 6)?
7. Who gives such a righteous man a blot (v. 7)?
8. What are the opposite results of reprovng a scoffer and a wise man (v. 8)?
9. Who profits from instruction (v. 9)?

PARAPHRASE OF 9:1-9

- 1-6. Wisdom hath built a palace supported on seven pillars, and has prepared a great banquet, and mixed the wines, and sent out her maidens inviting all to come. She calls from the busiest intersections in the city, "Come, you simple ones without good judgment; come to wisdom's

banquet and drink the wines that I have mixed. Leave behind your foolishness and begin to live; learn how to be wise.

- 7-9. If you rebuke a mocker, you will only get a smart retort; yes, he will snarl at you. So don't bother with him; he will only hate you for trying to help him. But a wise man, when rebuked, will love you all the more. Teach a wise man, and he will be the wiser; teach a good man, and he will learn more.

COMMENTS ON 9:1-9

V. 1. "The same wisdom speaks here who spoke in the preceding chapter. There she represented herself as manifest in all the works of God in the natural world--all being constructed according to counsels proceeding from an infinite understanding. Here she represents herself as the great potentate who was to rule all that she had constructed; and having an immense family to provide for had made an abundant provision and calls all to partake of it. This is the continuation of the parable begun in the preceding chapter, where wisdom is represented as a venerable lady whose real beauties and solid promises are opposed to the false allurements of pleasure, who was represented in the seventh chapter under the idea of a debauched and impudent woman. This one, to draw young men into her snares, describes the perfumes, the bed, and the festival which she had prepared. Wisdom acts in the same way but instead of the debauchery, the false pleasures, and the criminal connections which pleasure had promised offers her guests a strong, well-built, magnificent palace, chaste and solid pleasures, salutary instructions, and a life crowned with blessedness" ("Clarke"). Consider the contrast between the lady "wisdom" in vs. 1-12 and the "foolish woman" of vs. 13-18. Wisdom "builds" (v. 1), but immorality tears down. Both are inviting guests to come in (vs. 3-5 and vs. 14-17). Within their invitations both used the exact words at one point: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him..." (v. 4 and v. 16). the wicked woman offers "stolen waters" and "bread eaten in secret" (v. 17), showing the illegitimacy of what she is offering while wisdom operates in legitimate wares and ways (in the open). The pleasure of sin is said to be "sweet" and "pleasant" (v. 17) while wisdom may impart some of its knowledge through reproof (v.

8). The guests of the immoral woman end in death (v. 18) while wisdom leads to life (v. 6). The "seven" pillars of wisdom may be the seven things mentioned in Jas. 3:17 concerning heavenly wisdom: (1) pure; (2) peaceable; (3) gentle; (4) easy to be entreated; (5) full of mercy and good fruits; (6) without variance; and (7) without hypocrisy, or "seven" may be used here as it so often is in the book of Revelation as an ideal number.

V. 2. In the preparation of her feast of good things, she had prepared her food and her beverage and had set the table. By "mingled her wine" is probably meant the mixing of the straight grape juice with the proper amount of water to make it a better tasting beverage (which the ancients among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans did). Since we are dealing with wisdom, the preceding seems more likely than that she added drugs to give it more potency.

V. 3. With everything ready she sends forth the maidens to call the guests to the feast. There have been times when maidens were employed to beckon the guests that the hour of banqueting had come.

V. 4. The wicked woman of v. 16 uses the same words in her invitation. Wisdom is pleased to call those who lack it, calling them to begin a life of wisdom. In a sense we all start "simple".

V. 5. We are told in Prov. 4:5 to "get wisdom", and this verse compares the gaining of wisdom as desirable and not miserable by using the figure of dining, something that people enjoy doing. For "mingled wine" see comments on v. 2.

V. 6. Put an end to living without wisdom; cease ignorance and folly. Adopt a new way: the way of understanding. All who make this change are glad they did.

V. 7. A triple parallel: "correcteth" and "reproved"; "scoffer" and "Wicked man"; and "getteth to himself reviling" and "getteth himself a blot". A scoffer will neither appreciate your sincere intention to help him nor allow himself to see the correctness of what you are saying to him. Instead of straightening up as a result of your proper rebuke, he will say all manner of evil about you, and you (the innocent) end up with a "blot".

V. 8. Reprove the wise but not the scoffer. The one will love you for it; the other will hate you. In harmony with this verse the Lord reproved Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:4) and chastens His children (Heb. 12:6), but He teaches us not to cast our pearls

before swine--scoffers (Matt. 7:6).

V. 9. The same good qualities of the wise man who accepted rebuke in v. 8 show up in this verse and justify the time and effort that it takes to instruct him. As a result of your efforts he will be "yet wiser" and "will increase in learning". This is satisfying to any instructor. Jesus' parabolic teaching resulted in "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance" (Matt. 13:12).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 9:1-9

1. Cite some of the contrasts between the woman Wisdom and the wicked woman in this chapter?
2. What three preparations are mentioned in v. 2?
3. What was probably involved in wisdom's "mixed wine" (v. 2)?
4. What phase of things is mentioned in v. 3?
5. In a sense do we all begin life "simple" (v. 4)?
6. What is gaining wisdom likened to doing in v. 5?
7. What important change is called for in v. 6?
8. Cite the triple parallel in v. 7.
9. How does the New Testament follow the instructions found in v. 8?
10. What is a teacher's joy (v. 9)?

TEXT — 9:10-18

10. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom;
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
11. For by me thy days shall be multiplied,
And the years of thy life shall be increased.
12. If thou are wise, thou art wise for thyself;
And if thou scoffest, thou alone shall bear it.
13. The foolish woman is clamorous;
She is simple, and knoweth nothing.
14. And she sitteth at the door of her house,
On a seat in the high places of the city,
15. To call to them that pass by,
Who go right on their ways:
16. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither;
And as for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,
17. Stolen waters are sweet,

- And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.
 18. But he knoweth not that the dead are there;
 That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 9:10-18

1. Where is the opening statement of v. 10 first mentioned in Proverbs?
2. Where else in Proverbs is the truth in v. 11 found?
3. The "foolish woman" of v. 13 is to be contrasted with what other woman?
4. Is this low-down woman ashamed of herself and her business (v. 14)?
5. Are wicked people "evangelistic" for sin (v. 15)?
6. Who will get caught by such a wicked woman (v. 16)?
7. Do sinners believe what v. 17 says?
8. Why does v. 18 begin with "but"?

PARAPHRASE OF 9:10-18

- 10-12. For the reverence and fear of God are basic to all wisdom. Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding. Wisdom will make the hours of your day more profitable and the years of your life more fruitful. Wisdom is its own reward, and if you scorn her, you may only hurt yourself.
- 13-18. A prostitute is loud and brash, and never has enough of lust and shame. She sits at the door of her house or stands at the street corners of the city, whispering to men going by, and to those minding their own business. "Come home with me," she urges simpletons, "stolen melons are the sweetest; stolen apples taste the best!" But they don't realize that her former guests are now citizens of hell.

COMMENTS ON 9:10-18

V. 10. Other passages agreeing with the first statement: "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom" (Job 28:28); "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa. 111:10); "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). No one can be a person of real understanding who does not know the holy One in whom alone originally resided wisdom, knowledge, and

understanding. The Greeks were famous for their knowledge, but the Greeks through their philosophies "knew not God" (I Cor. 1:21). Paul (the writer of I Cor. 1:21) knew, for he had been to Athens and had beheld the famous city "full of idols" (Acts 17:16). Is it any wonder, then, that when he preached there the resurrection of the dead "some mocked" (Acts 17:32)? Nor do present-day philosophies that disregard the revelation of God in the Bible have an understanding of our holy God.

V. 11. "The parenthetical explanation being concluded in which wisdom has intimated why it is useless to appeal to the scorner and the wilful sinner, she now resumes the direct address interrupted at v. 7, presenting a forcible reason for the advice given in v. 6, though there is still some connection with v. 10 as it is from the wisdom that comes from the fear of the Lord that the blessings now mentioned spring" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Other passages on what imparts long life: "My son...let thy heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and years of life, And peace, will they add to thee" (Prov. 3:1,2); "The fear of Jehovah prolongeth days; But the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (Prov. 10:27).

V. 12. "Though thy example may be very useful to thy neighbors and friends, yet the chief benefit is to thyself. But if thou scorn--refuse to receive--the doctrines of wisdom, and die in thy sins, thou alone shalt suffer the vengeance of an offended God" ("Clarke"). There is a sense in which others let you be wise if it is your choice to be wise, and others let you scoff if that be your choice. Whatever your choice, the non-committee multitude will not join you. In other words, the scholar who is right tries to tell the others and is not always believed (at least, is not always "joined"), and the scoffer who is wrong tries to gain adherents to his way of thinking, and he runs into a similar reception.

V. 13. The "foolish woman" of this and following verses is in contrast to the woman "wisdom" of vs. 1-6. As this wicked woman has been fully identified in previous sections (2:16-19; 5:3-23; 6:24-35; 7:5-27), this section is speaking of the immoral woman. Our verse says she is "foolish", "clamorous", "simple", and "knoweth nothing". The Bible has no compliments for the adulteress (or the adulterer). She is "foolish" instead of wise, for it is much wiser to be happily married to a good man than to sell yourself for a few minutes to any man who comes along. She is "clamorous" (boisterous, loud, forward), which was pointed out in Prov. 7:11-13 wherein she was said not to remain in her

house but to get out on the street and aggressively proposition men. She is "simple", for her trade does not necessitate her to develop her mind, and little is a harlot concerned or involved in the concerns and the involvements of the community. She "knoweth nothing", for she either doesn't know or doesn't care what she is doing, how she is looked upon, what harm she is bringing to the homes and bodies and souls of others, and of what she is robbing herself of and ultimately bringing upon herself.

V. 14. She is forward, not bashful, in pushing her trade. She is bold and not ashamed.

V. 15. She gets out in the passing crowd and tries to get customers. But thank God, most people have enough sense to keep going "right on their ways" instead of stopping and getting involved with her. Those who do not fall for her are men who have been taught from youth to fear adultery, or who are happily married to good wives and have righteous children at home to whom they are examples, or who have committed themselves to a godly life that even if once guilty of such behavior will have no part in it.

V. 16. Anyone who will listen to her and go with her really isn't any wiser than she was described as being in v. 13. She employs the same words as wisdom uses (see v. 4); she is going to "educate" the "simple" who are "void of understanding". They will "learn" all right, but it will be the wrong thing, and the time will come when they will see that they listened to the wrong person: "Thou mourn at thy latter end, When thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof; Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" (Prov. 5:11-13).

V. 17. Hers is an invitation to commit adultery with her. She is referred to as "stolen waters", for she does not really belong to those who accept her invitation, for is she is married (as in Prov. 6:29 and as in Prov. 7:19,20), she belongs to her husband, and if she is unmarried she should belong to and save herself for the man whom she will later marry. God never intended that any woman would be to society like the old town-well of years ago or like the block of stock-salt in the cow pasture. A woman who does not save herself (or a man who does not save himself) for the mate that she (or he) will later marry really does not deserve a pure mate in marriage! It is only a

saying that "stolen melons are sweeter". Why should any man choose the arms and the bosom and the intimacies of an impure, ungodly woman to the sweet and attractive and good wife whom he has personally chosen and shared life with over the years? No, "stolen waters" are not better! Therefore, "drink waters out of thine own cistern, And running waters out of thine own well...Rejoice in the wife of thy youth. As a loving hind and a pleasant doe, Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; And be thou ravished always with her love" (Prov. 5:15-19).

V. 18. The "sweetness" and the "pleasantness" that she promised in v. 17 end in "death"--just like all sin. Other passages connecting immorality with death: Prov. 2:18; Prov. 7:27. Other passages connecting sin with death: Rom 6:23; Jas. 1:15.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 9:10-18

1. What success do philosophies of men have in common to a knowledge of God (v. 10)?
2. What great promise is contained in v. 11?
3. Comment on v. 12.
4. In what way is an immoral woman "foolish" (v. 13)?
5. In what way "simple" (v. 13)?
6. In what way "clamorous" (v. 13)?
7. In what way "knoweth nothing" (v. 13)?
8. What shows her forwardness (v. 14)?
9. Do most men of the crowd stop with her or pass right on (v. 15)?
10. Why will they do this (v. 15)?
11. What kind of "education" does the immoral woman give to the "simple" (v. 16)?
12. Why is she "stolen waters" if married (v. 17)?
13. Why also "stolen waters" if yet unmarried (v. 17)?
14. How does her praise of "sweetness and pleasantness" turn out (v. 18)?