



### THE TWO BANQUETS OF MANKIND – that of the Wise Man, and that of the Foolish

*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 wanteth understanding, she saith to him, 5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. 6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. 7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. 8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. 9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. 11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. 12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it. (Proverbs 9:1-12)*

It is a wonderful truth of God that the destiny of man is always determined by a matter of TWO's: 1) there were TWO trees in the Garden (the Tree of Life & the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil); 2) there are TWO ways (the Narrow Way that leads to life & the Broad Way that leads down to destruction); 3) the TWO families (either that of God, or that of Satan); 4) the TWO masters – God or Mammon; and 5) the TWO Banquets – that of Wisdom and Heaven, or that of the House of Ill-Repute. There are more examples of the TWO's, but those given will suffice for today's devotion.

In chapter 9 of Proverbs, we will address (in 2 parts) the Two Banquets that stand, starkly, before men and women to choose: The one Banquet (Part I, vs. 1-12) is that of the House of Wisdom and God; the second (Part II, vs. 13-18) is the House of Fools and of Satan. When our names are called from the roll from cross the fields, or down the city street, to "*Come to Supper*", to which Banquet will you hurry? That is the crucial question postulated by this chapter of Proverbs. When I was a boy, Suppertime was a time of fellowship and sharing around the common table. Those around the table usually included only family and, on occasion, close friends. Strangers did not come to

our family suppers. The wicked shall not dine at the Supper of the Righteous, nor the Righteous at the supper of the wicked. The two families of Mankind shall be separated in the Wisdom of God to their common banquet tables.

### **THE BANQUET OF THE WISE at WISDOM'S TABLE:**

Throughout Proverbs Wisdom is personified as a virtuous woman. She has built her house – not of mortar or thatch, not a tent or arbor – but a dwelling place requiring stone pillars hewn out of the Rock of our Salvation (Jesus Christ) for its support. The building is designed for permanence and not for the short term. Seven pillars of Wisdom are required as a foundation of Wisdom. The number SEVEN is significant in that it represents the perfection and satisfaction of God – seven days of Creation, seven notes in the musical scale, seven colors of the rainbow, etc. What are the seven pillars of Wisdom? Do the Holy Scriptures ever leave us bewildered? No, we need only look at the previous chapter 8 of Proverbs for those seven pillars of Wisdom: **12 I wisdom dwell with (1) prudence, and find out (2) knowledge of witty inventions. 13 The (3) fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. 14 (4) Counsel is mine, and (5) sound wisdom: I am(6) understanding; I have (7) strength.** (Prov 8:12-14) So the Seven Pillars of Wisdom are: 1) Prudence; 2) Knowledge; 3) the “fear of the Lord”; 4) Counsel; 5) Sound Wisdom (that which emanates from God); 6) Understanding; and 7) Strength which always results from adherence the other six.

In the construction of her building, Wisdom had you in mind from the cut of the first stone: **2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.** Wisdom does not dwell in solitary places, but seeks her own. She has prepared a table of strong meats (the mysteries of the Gospel) and she has prepared her mingled wine (enhance for the delectability of the Holy Spirit). Lastly, she has prepared and set her table for the Communion of souls who call her Sister. Do we invite our Sister, Wisdom, to accompany us to the reception of the Holy Communion? Does our spiritual Communion not reflect that Holy One that Wisdom has prodigiously prepared?

God is perfect in every way, we know; however, have you ever considered what an accomplished and perfect Author He is. He pens the most profound truths in the fewest and most beautiful words possible. “War and Peace” by Leo Tolstoy is an epic novel of great historical significance, but it recounts only a single segment of life in Russia in hundreds (1424 pgs. in my library copy) of pages. But the Holy Bible has encapsulated eternity between two covers and a history spanning 4,000 years (1448 pages in standard Bible with marginal notes). Amazing! **3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,** Her sweet and precious maiden are her angels of proclamation. Nothing is sweeter or more virtuous than a little girl. These never signal revolt or violence, but love and tenderness. They are the public and ever-present Voice of Wisdom. Wisdom sends her maidens of ministry into the public streets and high corners of the city much as Christ has sent His Apostles – and you and me, Friend. Please note the lack of care for social, economic, or political station – her message is broadcast in the streets and from the high places of the streets so that ALL may here and take notice. Wisdom desires to make the stranger her friend if the stranger will only embrace Wisdom. Were you and not strangers to Wisdom at some point in the past?

**4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, 5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.** Her voice is not heard by the shrewd and heartless, but she beckons to the SIMPLE –

those who have a natural innocence; those who are modest; those who are humble; and those who lack knowledge (but hunger therefor). Those who are as many pseudo-scientists of our day who are classified as know-it-alls are actually those who know NOTHING. Yet, they cannot hear the voice of Wisdom because their minds are too full of "facts that are not true". But those who hunger after knowledge of right things, she actively solicits. ***Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*** (Matt 5:6 (KJV) But those who do not hunger now because they are so full of themselves shall certainly hunger when the winter winds howl and the leaves are fallen. ***Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*** (Luke 6:25) Of what bread does Wisdom invite us to come and eat? It is that Bread of Life that came down from Heaven (our Lord Jesus Christ)! And of what wine are we invited to drink? That Wine of the Cup and Blood of Christ mingled with both joys and sorrows, but, above all, victory and life.

***6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.*** Observe a signal truth here: if we are to sup at the table of Wisdom, we must put away our bad manners of greed and deceit. We cannot carry our old rags and baggage of sin and lies to the table of Wisdom. She is a lady who disdains the hint of unrighteousness or the odor of sin.

***7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.*** What possible good can come from correcting one whose aim and purpose is always to scorn? Such a one may have his heart changed and made new by God, but not by your correction. What profit is there in a Prince or King in lowering himself to the level of a street idiot by arguing with him? The King will appear the fool and the idiot the victor. Please note the opposing responses of a rebuke from the scorner on one hand, and the righteous on the other: ***8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.*** Do not confuse an obstinate fool with the facts – even if those facts may profit him. But a wise man will feel greatly indebted to the friend of his bosom if that friend points out some grave error that the wise man has promulgated. Such rebuke will save the wise man from great error and future embarrassment. How often have we been taught great biblical principles by a little child? I certainly have and have benefitted immensely from their innocent counsel. ***9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.***

That which begins in fear, here, ends in the most rapturous love! This verse is one of the better known in Holy Scripture: ***10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*** When we recognize that we are abject sinners without any hope whatsoever, we will fear the Majesty on High and His Righteousness. Hopefully, such fear will drive us to seek Him out and to know Him. If we do seek His face, we shall find Him, and our fears are turned to joy and love. The only fear that remains is not the mortal fear one feels for a dreadful enemy, but a beneficent fear one holds for a loving Father – the kind of fear that dreads to disappoint or dishonor.

***11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.*** This is certainly an understatement! If we embrace Wisdom, yes, our days shall be lengthened, but that is only half the story. Our days shall be eternalized and unending. We cannot love Wisdom and hate the Lord. Wisdom is His Nature.

***12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*** Clearly, Wisdom is a great benefit and scorn is a burden to bear. The wise man can ONLY profit from Wisdom, and the scorner can ONLY bear a heavy burden of his scorn. Which Banquet have you been invited to attend, Reader?

