

Proverbs 9:1-6^{iv} and Psalm 34:9-14^v

Wisdom has built her house,
she has hewn her seven pillars.
She has slaughtered her animals,
she has mixed her wine,
she has also set her table.
She has sent out her servant-girls,
she calls from the highest places in the town,
“You that are simple, turn in here!”
To those without sense she says,
“Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
Lay aside immaturity, and live,
and walk in the way of insight.”

^{iv} About the Proverbs 9:1-6

The book of Proverbs is an anthology of materials drawn from the wisdom tradition that traced its lineage back to the court of Solomon. Wisdom literature is a cosmopolitan style of writing common to the nations of the Middle East. Proverbs has parallels in both Egyptian and Assyrian works. It is based primarily upon daily experience and observation, rather than upon Israel’s salvation history or worship. Happiness and prosperity are promised to those who follow the instruction of the wise.

Today’s reading is part of a poetic allegory contrasting the ways of wisdom and folly (9:1-6, 13-18). From the statement in 3:19, the image of wisdom as a personified divine agent in the creation of the world was developed in 8:22-36. Wisdom is with God, “like a master worker” (8:30), assisting in the creation and ordering of the world.

In today’s reading, wisdom is pictured as the giver of a banquet. Wisdom’s invitation is issued, not to the proud or the mighty, but to the simple and the righteous. Wisdom’s banquet is in contrast to that of folly (9:13-18) who lures the simple to destruction. The bread and wine of wisdom bring life and insight. This concept of sustenance parallels, in the eschatological tradition, the banquet to the final times (Isaiah 25:6, 55:1-5).

^v Psalm 34:9-14^v

Fear the LORD, you that are his saints, *
for those who fear him lack nothing.
The young lions lack and suffer hunger, *
but those who seek the LORD lack nothing that is good.
Come, children, and listen to me; *
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
Who among you loves life *
and desires long life to enjoy prosperity?
Keep your tongue from evil-speaking *
and your lips from lying words.
Turn from evil and do good; *
seek peace and pursue it.