



Handout for week of 8/13/18 John 6: 51-58 & Prov. 9: 1-6

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Proverbs 9: 1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; 2 She hath prepared her meat, she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. 3 She hath sent forth her maidens, she calleth, upon the highest places of the city: 4 'Whoso is thoughtless, let him turn in hither'; as for him that lacketh understanding, she saith to him: 5 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. 6 Forsake all thoughtlessness, and live; and walk in the way of understanding.

#### COMMENTARY:

Our reading from the Old Testament for next week is from the book of Proverbs, which is from the subdivision of the Old Testament known as Wisdom literature. The subject of Wisdom literature is often Lady Wisdom, described in various passages either has God's own wisdom, or the first entity created by God

that is all important for humans to acquire if they are to lead a life centered on and in Yahweh. Lady Wisdom is always presented in the feminine gender, though some New Testament scholars depict Jesus himself as the perfect fulfillment of Wisdom. Wisdom literature in either Testament is to help us live the "good life," one with the Lord as its focus.

In today's famous passage from the ninth chapter of Proverbs, Lady Wisdom has built her house with seven columns, the same number present in Solomon's great temple. She has prepared a wholesome and lavish meal, and sent out her maidens to invite everyone to her house and banquet. Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! The food and drink is literally bread and wine, often symbols of spiritual nourishment in the Hebrew Bible. If we partake of her invitation we will continue to forsake foolishness and "advance in the way of understanding." One of the very next passages, which we don't hear today, has Dame Folly sitting on the other side of the street, inviting all to journey down her path of death and destruction. Who do we decide to follow? Lady Wisdom, or Dame Folly?