

The Two Ways: Wisdom and Folly
Proverbs 9
November 22, 2015

Introduction

As we come to the conclusion of Solomon's introduction, which are **chapters 1-9**, we must ask ourselves, what is the purpose of this long introduction? First, Solomon is telling us that there are two paths: wisdom and folly; righteousness and wickedness; and life and death. There is no middle ground, no third option. It is all black and white. He stresses that what we choose today will have consequences in the future. Second, Solomon tells us that wisdom is teaching us, and we must heed her instructions. What are her instructions? It is all found in **chapter 10-29** in forms of proverbs, which compose of two lines and sometimes more. Before Solomon tells us what we need to know, he tells us first the why we need to know. This is summed up magnificently in **chapter 9**.

Solomon summarizes and closes the whole argument of why we need to know wisdom in **chapter 9**. He completes the picture of **chapters 1-8** in **chapter 9**. He tells us that there are only two groups of people and their destinies.

I. Construction of Chapter 9

See appendix A

II. Lady Wisdom (1-6)

- Her house (1-2)
 - Her house (1)
 - Well-built house
 - Wisdom built her house
 - She hewn (cut) her seven pillars
 - 7 pillars = stable, complete, and lasting
 - 7 very significant number in Bible
 - ***Proverbs 8:30** Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him,*
 - 7 days of creation: 6 + 1
 - See Appendix A—bolded words
 - **Note:** Lady Wisdom does 7 things for us. Then she commands 7 things from us. Then she identifies herself and her work 7 times. Lady Folly or the mocker do not follow the same pattern
 - Point
 - Wisdom was involved in creation of the universe
 - She made her house
 - She is telling us that we need to live by her instructions
 - Her table (2)
 - She prepares her meat
 - She kills, preps and cooks her meat
 - Mixes wine
 - Honey and spices to make it more flavorful
 - Sets her table
 - It is masterful, artful, and orderly
- Her call (3-6)
 - Sent out maids (or young women)
 - Who are the maids?
 - Those who learn from her
 - Parents, priests, Solomon, pastors, teachers, all the believers
 - Calls out
 - Who?

- Everyone
- From the highest point of city
- Who does she invite?
 - Simple ones
 - Those who lack judgment (short on brains)

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before Him.*

- Her purpose is that they will become wise
- Her commands
 - Leave your ways
 - Come
 - Eat my food and drink my wine
 - You do not need to do anything except trust me and obey
 - Grace shown to them and the response to this grace is faith!
- Life
 - Leave your life behind and live
 - This will become your way of life

III. The Mocker and the Wise (7-12)

- The mocker (**7-8a**)
 - Warning for those who are inviting the gullibles
 - He is wicked, refuses to listen
 - He does not learn
 - He thinks he is right and does not want to change or thinks he needs to change
 - He thinks he is the center of the universe
 - To attempt to correct such person will not work
 - It might harm you

Matthew 7:6 *Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.*

- It might cause hatred

1 Kings 22:8 *The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."*

- This does not mean that we remain silent
- We are to always share the gospel
- When we approach someone about the gospel and someone flat out reject it with hostility, then we leave them alone
- There is no use continuing the discussion
- The wise (**8b-9**)
 - He will accept correction
 - He desires correction because he lives for God
 - This is a person who knows that he is completely dependent on God
- The focus (**10**)
 - Mockers hate wisdom—no fear of God
 - Wise love wisdom—they fear God
 - Fear of the Lord is the beginning—not the end
 - It continues all of the person's life—this age and to the next age
- The consequences (**11-12**)

- For the wise
 - Blessings and benefits
 - Hope, joy, peace, etc
 - God is with the wise
- For the mocker
 - Be alone
 - God is against him and will not be with the mocker

Transition: If Wisdom is so attractive, then who can resist her? Lady Folly is equally attractive in appearance, but she offers nothing. The gullible and the simple are susceptible to Folly's charm and wile. Wisdom desires to save, but Folly desires to destroy.

IV. Lady Folly (13-18)

- Her character (13-14)
 - She is loud
 - Undisciplined
 - No knowledge
 - Purely fleshly allurements—all flash, no substance
- She seats herself
 - At the door and highest places
 - Seductive type of seating
 - Alluring to those who hear and pass her by
 - All she offers is the fleshly appetite
- Her seduction (15-17)
 - She is doing the same thing as Lady Wisdom—calling attention to herself
 - She even says the same words as Lady Wisdom
 - She offers stolen waters and secret bread
 - Folly does not prepare her own meals
 - She steals them
 - She offers secret, exciting fleshly desires
- Death (18)
- Lady Folly in person

Genesis 3:1-6 *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"* **2** *The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'* " **4** *"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." **6** When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

- He creates confusion about what God says, trying to create doubt in Eve's mind
- Satan steals God's word and twists it and presents the forbidden fruit as alluring

Coram Deo

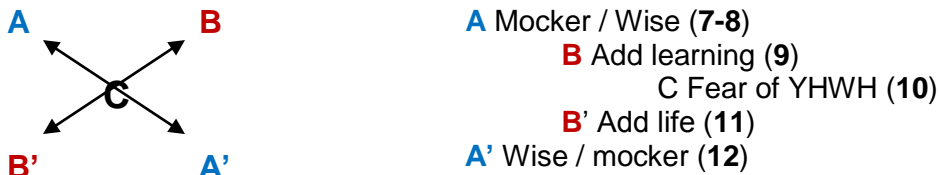
Using the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we call people to come out of darkness. There are those who hear His calling and believe. These are the wise ones. There are others who do not hear His calling or reject it. These are the foolish ones. Our destiny is clear—either heaven or hell. By believing in Jesus and obeying His words, we have fellowship with God. By rejecting His words, we will be punished—alone. Solomon's plea is the same as ours—come to Jesus and live.

Appendix A

Proverbs 9:1-6	Proverbs 9:7-12	Proverbs 9:13-18
<p>1 Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars.</p> <p>2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.</p> <p>3 She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city.</p> <p>4 "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment.</p> <p>5 "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.</p> <p>6 Leave your simple ways and you will live¹; walk in the way of understanding.</p>	<p>7 "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.</p> <p>8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.</p> <p>9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.</p> <p>10 "The fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.</p> <p>11 For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.</p> <p>12 If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."</p>	<p>13 The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge.</p> <p>14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,</p> <p>15 calling out to those who pass by who go straight on their way.</p> <p>16 "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment.</p> <p>17 "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!"</p> <p>18 But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.</p>

Structure of verses 7-12

Hebrew poetic structure called "Chiasm", from Greek letter chi, χ



¹ "you will live": literally "live" as a command.