

Radiant and Unfading

Take-Home • Session 1: God Did Not Make Death

What We Found

We opened what is very likely the last book of the Old Testament to be written, composed in Greek, likely in Alexandria in Egypt, in the generations just before Christ. It speaks in the voice of Solomon as a literary tribute to Israel's wisdom tradition, and the Church teaches that it is inspired Scripture. It was written for believers living in a brilliant, skeptical, pleasure-rich city, which is to say, for people like us.

Chapter 1 gave us the thesis of the whole book. Wisdom is spoken of as a kindly spirit, someone who can be welcomed or grieved, not a mere skill. The Spirit of the Lord fills the world, just as on the Bible's first page (Genesis 1:2). Then the chapter makes a striking claim: God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living (1:13), a claim about us, made for incorruption, not about all of nature. We hunted through Ezekiel 18 and found God saying the same thing about himself: "I have no pleasure in the death of any one... so turn, and live" (Ezekiel 18:23, 32). Creation is wholesome, righteousness is immortal, and yet the ungodly court death like a friend and make a covenant with him (1:16). Chapter 2 gives the reasoning of those who have chosen death. That is where we pick up next time.

Voices of the Church

St. Athanasius • On the Incarnation, 4-5 (4th century)

God created man for incorruption, to share his own life, and death entered the world through the devil's envy when man turned away. St. Athanasius quotes the Book of Wisdom as Scripture to make this very case.

St. Augustine • The City of God, Book 13 (5th century)

Death is not natural to man as God created him, but the penalty of sin. Yet for the faithful, God turns death itself into the doorway of life. The intruder does not get the last word.

St. Clement of Rome • Letter to the Corinthians, ch. 3 (c. AD 96)

Within living memory of the Apostles, the fourth pope lamented that through envy death entered the world, drawing on this book's teaching as common Christian currency.

My Guess

MY GUESS • SEAL IT AND DO NOT CHANGE IT

Throughout this book we will keep meeting a mysterious figure called Wisdom, a kindly spirit who can be welcomed or grieved. Who or what do you think Wisdom is? Write your guess below, then fold this sheet and do not change your answer. We will open our guesses together later in the study.

Live It This Week

- **Read ahead, slowly.** Read Wisdom 1 and 2 once this week, unhurried, with a pencil. Mark every line where death or life appears.
- **Pray with one verse.** Once this week, sit with Ezekiel 18:32 for five quiet minutes: “so turn, and live.” Let God say the second half to you personally.
- **Choose life once, concretely.** Make one deliberate move onto the side of life: reconcile with someone, encourage someone, visit someone lonely, or finally drop a habit’s smallest link.
- **Check your shelf.** Find any Bibles in your home or on your phone and check the table of contents: is the Book of Wisdom there? Bring your findings next week. No conclusions yet, just evidence.

Memory Verse

“God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living.” (**Wisdom 1:13**)

Before next session: read Wisdom 2.

Catechism references: CCC 413, CCC 1008.

Scripture We Opened

- Tonight’s text: Wisdom 1:1-16 (read aloud complete: 1:1-11 and 1:12-16)
- The discovery: Genesis 1:2 (the Spirit over the waters)
- The discovery: Psalm 139:7-10 (a second cross reference)
- The discovery: Ezekiel 18:23 and 18:32 (God takes no pleasure in death)
- Genesis 1:31 (creation very good)
- Deuteronomy 30:19 (choose life)
- Proverbs 8
- 1 Peter 2:9 (a royal priesthood)
- Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:26 (death through sin; death the last enemy)
- John 10:10 (life abundantly)
- Revelation 21:4 (death shall be no more)
- 2 Timothy 2:12 (if we endure, we shall reign with him)