

The Banquet Foretold

Proverbs 9:1-6; Isaiah 25:6-9; Isaiah 55:1-3; Malachi 1:11

What We Found

The Old Testament leaned forward tonight and told us what it is waiting for. Wisdom has built her house, slaughtered her beasts, mixed her wine, and set her table, and her invitation goes to the simple: come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed, and live.

Isaiah showed us the summit: on Mount Zion, a feast of fat things and wine on the lees well refined, for all peoples, at which God swallows up death for ever and wipes tears from every face. Death, which entered the world through a meal, dies at a meal. And Isaiah 55 posted the price: without money and without price, for everyone honest enough to admit they cannot pay, with an everlasting covenant for dessert.

Then Malachi left us the riddle we carried home: a pure offering, presented to Israel's God, in every place, among all nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting. No temple-bound sacrifice could ever do that. The Old Testament closes waiting for a meal and a mystery. Next week we cross into the Gospels.

Voices of the Church

St. Cyprian of Carthage

Letter 63, to Caecilius, 3rd century

St. Cyprian returns to this study for a second time, because his famous letter reads tonight's text too: he heard in Proverbs 9, the house built, the beasts slaughtered, the wine mixed, the table furnished, the simple summoned, a portrait of what the Lord would one day set before the nations. Wisdom's feast, for Cyprian, was a promise with a date he already knew.

St. Cyril of Alexandria

Commentary on Isaiah, 5th century

St. Cyril read the feast of rich food and aged wine on the mountain as God's promise of the messianic age: every nation summoned to one table, the shroud of ignorance torn away, and death itself, humanity's oldest guest, destroyed in the presence of the diners. The prophet, he taught, was describing a joy that only God could cater.

St. Justin Martyr

Dialogue with Trypho, 2nd century

St. Justin, writing his Dialogue with Trypho in the mid-second century, pointed to Malachi's prophecy of a pure offering presented to God among the nations in every place, and testified that he could already watch it coming true: wherever believers gathered, from sunrise to sunset around the

world, the offering Malachi foresaw was being made. What form it took, this study will let Scripture show in its own time.

Live It This Week

- 1.** Fast from one "bread that does not satisfy" this week, one purchase, scroll, or habit you use to fill the Isaiah 55:2 hunger, and each time you feel its absence, pray one line: Lord, prepare me for your feast.
- 2.** Extend one impossible-economics invitation this week: feed or treat someone who cannot pay you back, and refuse repayment if offered.
- 3.** Read Isaiah 25:6-9 once each morning. By week's end, know verse 8 by heart without trying.

Scripture Memory Verse

"He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces."

Isaiah 25:8

Before Next Session

Read Mark 6:30-44. We cross into the New Testament next week, and we cross it hungry. As you read, notice every detail that sounds like somewhere this study has already been.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 64; 1027