

The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus

Contents

THE WISDOM OF JESUS THE
SON OF SIRACH,
OR
ECCLESIASTICUS

The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, also called *Ecclesiasticus*, is recognised as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox Churches.

The Prologue of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.

WHEREAS many and great things have been delivered to us by the law and the prophets, and by the others that have followed in their steps, for which we must give Israel the praise for instruction and wisdom; and since not only the readers need to become skilful themselves, but also those who love learning must be able to profit those who are outside, both by speaking and writing; my grandfather Jesus, having much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers, and having gained great familiarity with them, was also drawn on himself to write somewhat pertaining to instruction and wisdom, in order that those who love learning, and are devoted to these things, might make progress much more by living according to the law. You are entreated therefore to read with favour and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have laboured to interpret, we may seem to fail in some of the phrases. For things originally spoken in Hebrew don't have the same force in them when they are translated into another language. Not only these, but the law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books, have no small difference, when they are spoken in their original language. For having come into Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of Energetes the king, and having continued there some time, I found a copy giving no small instruction. I thought it therefore most necessary for me to apply some diligence and travail to translate this book, applying indeed much watchfulness and skill in that space of time to bring the book to an end and publish for them also, who in the land of their travels are desiring to learn, preparing their character in advance, so as to live according to the law.

1All wisdom comes from the Lord,

and is with him forever.

2Who can count the sand of the seas,

the drops of rain,

and the days of eternity?

3Who will search out the height of the sky,

the breadth of the earth, the deep,

a nd wisdom?

4Wisdom has been created before all things,

a nd the understanding of prudence from everlasting. ⁵ ¹

6To whom has the root of wisdom been revealed?

W ho has known her shrewd counsels? ⁷ ²

8There is one wise, greatly to be feared,

s itting upon his throne: the Lord.

9He created her.

H e saw and measured her.

H e poured her out upon all his works.

10She is with all flesh according to his gift.

H e gave her freely to those who love him.

11The fear of the Lord is glory, exultation,

g ladness, and a crown of rejoicing.

12The fear of the Lord will delight the heart,

a nd will give gladness, joy, and length of days.

13Whoever fears the Lord, it will go well with him at the last.

H e will be blessed in the day of his death.

¹ + **1:5** Verse 5 is omitted by the best authorities: The source of wisdom is God's word in the highest heaven, and her ways are the eternal commandments.

² + **1:7** Verse 7 is omitted by the best authorities: To whom was the knowledge of wisdom manifested? Who has understood her abundant experience?