

# *Wisdom* on Wisdom

Yes, wretched are they  
    who scorn wisdom and discipline:  
their hope is void,  
    their toil unavailing,  
    their achievements unprofitable;  
their [spouses] are reckless,  
    their children depraved,  
    their descendants accursed.

\* \* \*

Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades.  
    By those who love her, she is readily seen,  
    by those who seek her, she is readily found.  
She anticipates those who desire her by making  
    herself known first.  
Whoever gets up early to seek her  
    will have no trouble  
    but will find her sitting at the door.  
Meditating on her is understanding  
    in its perfect form,  
and anyone keeping awake for her  
    will soon be free from care.

For she herself searches everywhere  
for those who are worthy of her,  
benevolently appearing to them on their ways,  
anticipating their every thought.  
For Wisdom begins  
with the sincere desire for instruction,  
care for instruction means loving her,  
loving her means keeping her laws,  
attention to her laws guarantees incorruptibility,  
and incorruptibility brings us near to God;  
the desire for Wisdom thus leads to sovereignty.  
If then thrones and scepters delight you,  
monarchs of the nations,  
honor Wisdom, so that you may reign for ever.

What Wisdom is and how she was born,  
I shall now explain;  
I shall hide no mysteries from you,  
but shall follow her steps  
from the outset of her origin,  
setting out what we know of her in full light,  
without departing from the truth.  
Blighting envy is no companion for me,  
for envy has nothing in common with Wisdom.  
In the greatest number of the wise  
lies the world's salvation,  
in a sagacious king  
the stability of a people.  
Learn, therefore, from my words;  
the gain will be yours.

\* \* \*

For within her is a spirit intelligent, holy,  
unique, manifold, subtle,  
mobile, incisive, unsullied,  
lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, shrewd,  
irresistible, beneficent, friendly to human beings,  
steadfast, dependable, unperturbed,  
almighty, all-surveying,  
penetrating all intelligent, pure  
and most subtle spirits.

For Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion;  
she is so pure,  
she pervades and permeates all things.  
She is a breath of the power of God,  
pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;  
so nothing impure can find its way into her.

For she is a reflection of the eternal light,  
untarnished mirror of God's active power,  
and image of his goodness.

Although she is alone, she can do everything;  
herself unchanging, she renews the world,  
and, generation after generation,  
passing into holy souls,  
she makes them into God's friends and prophets;  
for God loves only those who dwell with Wisdom.  
She is indeed more splendid than the sun,  
she outshines all the constellations;  
compared with light, she takes first place,

for light must yield to night,  
but against Wisdom evil cannot prevail.  
Strongly she reaches from one end of the world  
to the other  
and she governs the whole world for its good.

\* \* \*

It was Wisdom who protected  
the first man to be fashioned,  
the father of the world,  
who had been created all alone,  
she it was who rescued him from his fall  
and gave him the strength  
to subjugate all things.  
But when in his wrath a wicked man deserted her,  
he perished in his fratricidal fury.

When because of him the earth was drowned,  
it was Wisdom again who saved it,  
piloting the upright man on valueless timber.  
Again, when, concurring in wickedness, ?  
the nations had been thrown into confusion,  
she singled out the upright man,  
preserved him blameless before God  
and fortified him against pity for his child...

*The Book of Wisdom 3:11-12, 6:12-25, 7:22-8:1, 10:1-5*  
*Translation from the New Jerusalem Bible*