

# Ecclesiasticus on Wisdom

All wisdom comes from the Lord,  
she is with him for ever.

The sands of the sea, the drops of rain,  
the days of eternity—who can count them?

The height of the sky, the breadth of the earth,  
the depth of the abyss—who can explore them?

Wisdom was created before everything, prudent un-  
derstanding subsists from remotest ages.

For whom has the root of wisdom  
ever been uncovered?

Her resourceful ways, who knows them?

One only is wise, terrible indeed,  
seated on his throne, the Lord.

It was he who created, inspected and weighed her  
up, and then poured her out on all his works—  
as much to each living creature as he chose  
—bestowing her on those who love him.

for though she takes him at first through winding  
ways, bringing fear and faintness on him,  
trying him out with her discipline till she can trust  
him, and testing him with her ordeals,  
she then comes back to him on the straight road,  
makes him happy and reveals her secrets to him.  
If he goes astray, however, she abandons him and  
leaves him to his own destruction.

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Wisdom speaks her own praises,  
in the midst of her people she glories in herself.  
She opens her mouth in the assembly  
of the Most High, she glories in herself  
in the presence of the Mighty One:

“I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
and I covered the earth like mist.  
I had my tent in the heights,  
and my throne was a pillar of cloud.  
Alone, I have made the circuit of the heavens  
and walked through the depths of the abyss.  
Over the waves of the sea and over the whole  
earth, and over every people and nation  
I have held sway.  
Among all these I searched for rest, and looked to  
see in whose territory I might pitch camp.  
Then the Creator of all things instructed me and  
he who created me fixed a place for my tent.

He said, ‘Pitch your tent in Jacob,  
make Israel your inheritance.’  
From eternity, in the beginning, he created me,  
and for eternity I shall remain.  
In the holy tent I ministered before him  
and thus became established in Zion.  
In the beloved city he has given me rest,  
and in Jerusalem I wield my authority.  
I have taken root in a privileged people,  
in the Lord's property, in his inheritance.  
I have grown tall as a cedar on Lebanon,  
as a cypress on Mount Hermon;  
I have grown tall as a palm in En-Gedi,  
as the rose bushes of Jericho;  
as a fine olive in the plain, as a plane tree,  
I have grown tall.  
Like cinnamon and acanthus,  
I have yielded a perfume,  
like choice myrrh, have breathed out a scent,  
like galbanum, onycha, labdanum,  
like the smoke of incense in the tent.  
I have spread my branches like a terebinth,  
and my branches are glorious and graceful.  
I am like a vine putting out graceful shoots,  
my blossoms bear the fruit of glory and wealth.  
Approach me, you who desire me,  
and take your fill of my fruits,  
for memories of me are sweeter than honey,  
inheriting me is sweeter than the honeycomb.

They who eat me will hunger for more,  
they who drink me will thirst for more.  
No one who obeys me will ever have to blush,  
no one who acts as I dictate will ever sin.”

All this is no other than the Book of the  
Covenant of the Most High God, the Law that  
Moses enjoined on us, an inheritance for the  
communities of Jacob.

This is what makes wisdom brim over like the  
Pishon, like the Tigris in the season of fruit,  
what makes intelligence overflow like the Eu-  
phrates, like the Jordan at harvest time;  
and makes discipline flow like the Nile, like the  
Gihon when the grapes are harvested.

The first man did not finish discovering about her,  
nor has the most recent tracked her down;  
for her thoughts are wider than the sea, and her  
designs more profound than the abyss.

*Ecclesiasticus/Sirach 1:1-10, 4:17-19, 24:1-29*  
*Translation from the New Jerusalem Bible*