

SIRACH

Introduction

The prologue written by the Greek translator gives information about the author and epoch.

The 'Wisdom of Ben Sirach' was a book that was read so often in the early Church that it got the name and designation of "Ecclesiasticus".

The Jews in general, and a portion of the early Church, did not consider this book as canonical, even though it was read in the church.

Some Jewish authors make reference to it in the Middle Ages.

As the book itself tells us, the author spent his time in studying, teaching and explaining what traditionally was understood as wisdom or good sense or prudence or knowledge. It fosters observation, experience and reflection as a source of knowledge; still the author underlines the value of tradition, the need of prayer.

43 ¹The pride of the heights above is the clear firmament.

How glorious is the spectacle of the heavens!

²When the sun rises and appears, it proclaims:

—I am your marvelous work, Most High!

³At noon, it dries up the land;

who can bear its burning heat?

⁴You may stoke a furnace to produce heat,

but three times greater

is the heat of the sun burning the mountains,

and sending out fiery vapors,

blinding the eyes with its rays.

⁵How great is the Lord who made it

and whose word directs its rapid course!

⁶He also made the moon,

exact in marking the months

and the passage of time.

⁷With its full light gradually decreasing,

the moon determines and rules over the feast days.

⁸The month also takes its name from the moon.

How marvelously does it increase in its phases,

providing a signal for the heavenly hosts,

brightly shining in the expanse of the sky!

⁹The bright radiance of the stars

accounts for the beauty of the sky.

What a brilliant ornament they are

for the heights of the Lord!

¹⁰At the command of the All Holy

they stand as appointed

and never fail to keep watch.

¹¹Look at the rainbow and praise

the One who made it.

How magnificent it is in splendor!

¹²It forms a circle of glory in the sky,

a bow that is bent by the hands of its Maker.
13 At his order the snow falls
and lightning strikes according to his decrees.
14 The storerooms of heaven are opened
and clouds fly away like birds.
15 It is his power that thickens the clouds,
making them freeze and break into hailstones.
16a He has only to look and the mountains are shaken;
17a the voice of his thunder terrifies the earth.
16b At his will the south wind blows,

17b as do cyclones and hurricanes from the north.
18 The snow flutters down like birds
and alights on the ground like locusts.
The eye marvels at the beauty of its whiteness
and the mind is amazed to see it fall.
19 He sprinkles frost on the earth like salt;
it freezes and becomes like thorny spikes.
20 The cold north wind blows
and turns the water into ice.
Ice forms on all stagnant water
giving it a freezing coat of armor.
21 He wears down the mountains
and scorches the desert,
withering the green grass as if by fire.
22 A mist is a timely remedy,
and dew after the heat restores it all to life.
23 According to his plan he stilled
the great deep and planted islands in it.
24 Those who cross the seas tell of its dangers,
and we listen in astonishment to what they relate:
25 It is all about strange and marvelous adventures
with marine animals and monsters of all kinds.
26 Thanks be to God, all turns out well
and everything is held together by his word.
27 We shall not give further examples;
one last word: He is everything.
28 Where shall we find the strength to glorify him?
For he is the Mighty One, greater than all his works.