
Σοφία Σιραχ (*Ecclesiasticus*) ▫ THE WISDOM OF SIRACH (*ECCLESIASTICUS*)

INTRODUCTION

The *Wisdom of Sirach* is also known as *Ecclesiasticus* and *The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira*; the former suggests its use as a ‘church book’ in the early Christian community, which accepted it into its canon. The Jewish community, followed by the Reformers, excluded it from the canon. This explains the extraordinary history of its text. The original Hebrew text was lost to the western world from about 400 CE to 1900; the book survived in Greek, Latin, Syriac and other translations. Since about 1900, extensive sections of the Hebrew text have been discovered in various MSS: those of the *Cairo Genizah*, the *Qumran Scrolls*, and the *Masada Corpus*, so that now two thirds of that exists. The translation here is largely based on the Septuagint, with notable omissions and differences from other texts addressed in the footnotes.

Although the book lacks any clear structure, it resembles the Book of Proverbs in many ways. It stresses characteristic wisdom teachings: proper speech, riches and poverty, honesty, diligence, choice of friends, sin and death, retribution and wisdom itself. Unlike Proverbs 10ff, individual maxims are not set apart but are incorporated into smooth-flowing poems of some length (often in accordance with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet). The doctrine is surprisingly traditional, almost as if Job and Ecclesiastes have never been written. Ben Sira is aware of the problem of suffering (2:1–6, 11:4, 40:1–10) but he is a firm believer in the justice of divine retribution. God will reward everyone according to one’s deserts (15:11–16:23). There is not intimation of a future life with God in the Hebrew text; rather, all go to Sheol (14:12–19, 38:16–23). This is the usual Hebrew teaching, which understood immortality only in terms of one’s progeny and good name (44:13–15). Traditionally, Wisdom literature never appealed to Israel’s sacred history or Covenant. Ben Sira is an outstanding exception, in view of his ‘Hymn to the Patriarchs’ (Chs 44–50) and his identification of personified wisdom with the Torah or Law (24:23). At the same time, his book belongs definitely to the genre of wisdom literature, with its stress on the lessons of experience and on the ‘fear of the Lord’ (1:11–30, 25:10–11, 40:25–27).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

Ben Sira signs his name (50:27), describes his profession (39:1–11) and invites students to his school (51:23). Sometime before 180 BCE and the ensuing Maccabean revolt, he committed his wisdom to writing, probably in Jerusalem (see his description in 50:1–24 of Simeon II, who was High Priest from 219–196). Sometime after 132 BCE (see the Prologue), his grandson translated the original Hebrew into Greek. The grandson rightly stresses the profound knowledge that Ben Sira had of Hebrew traditions (‘the Law and the Prophets and the other books’ – already the threefold division of the Hebrew Bible was in the process of formation).

The ‘TheoDoor’ file for this book has yet to be completed; we have now completed the encoding of the Hebrew text and are now working through this parallel text, adding appropriate footnotes. We present here, the Prologue thru Chapter 6 as a ‘preview’.

Σοφία Σιραχ - Προλογος

¹ Πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων ἡμῖν διὰ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ² καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κατ' αὐτοὺς ἠκολουθηκότων δεδομένων, ³ ὑπὲρ ὧν θεὸν ἐστὶν ἐπαινεῖν τὸν Ἰσραὴλ παιδείας καὶ σοφίας, ⁴ καὶ ὥς οὐ μόνον αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας θεὸν ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμονας γίνεσθαι, ⁵ ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐκτὸς δύνασθαι τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας χρη σίμους εἶναι ⁶ καὶ λέγοντας καὶ γράφοντας, ⁷ ὁ πάππος μου Ἰησοῦς ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἑαυτὸν δοῦς ⁸ εἰς τε τὴν τοῦ νόμου ⁹ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ¹⁰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πατρίων βιβλίων ἀνάγνωσιν ¹¹ καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἱκανὴν ἔξιν περιποιησάμενος ¹² προήχθη καὶ αὐτὸς συγγράψαι τι τῶν εἰς παιδείαν καὶ σοφίαν ἀνηκόντων, ¹³ ὅπως οἱ

WISDOM OF SIRACH – PROLOGUE

¹ Many and great lessons have been passed on to us by the Law, the Prophets, ² and the other writers succeeding them, ³ in consequence of which Israel must be commended for learning and wisdom. ⁴ Furthermore, it is a duty, not only to acquire learning by reading, ⁵ but also, once having acquired it, to make oneself of use to those who are outside ⁶ by what one can say or write. ⁷ My grandfather Jesus, having long devoted himself to the reading ⁸ of the Law, ⁹ and the Prophets ¹⁰ and other books of the Fathers ¹¹ and, having become very learned in them, ¹² himself decided to write something on learning and wisdom, ¹³ so that people who

WISDOM OF SIRACH PROLOGUE

- ¹ This foreword by the Greek translator is not strictly a part of the book and is not usually considered canonical. On the 3 divisions of the Hebrew Bible, see #1M 12:9.
- ² At the end of this verse, the NJB includes the words, “have passed on to us great lessons,” from the beginning of v. 1.
- ³ The WEBBE has ‘given praise’ in place of ‘commended’.
- ⁴ In place of ‘acquire learning’, the WEBBE has ‘become skilful’.
- ⁵ The NJB has ‘people’ in place of ‘those who are’.
- ⁶ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, “both by speaking and writing.”
- ⁷ ‘Jesus’ here refers to Jesus ben Sira, the author of the book.
- ⁸ An exact English translation for this short verse is difficult.
- ⁹ The NJB lacks the opening ‘and’.
- ¹⁰ The WEBBE has ‘our fathers’ in place of ‘the Fathers’.
- ¹¹ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, “and having gained great familiarity with them.”
- ¹² Before ‘learning’, the NJB adds ‘the subjects of’.
- ¹³ The NJB has ‘wanted to learn’ in place of ‘love learning’, here following the WEBBE.

φιλομαθεῖς καὶ τούτων ἔνοχοι γενόμενοι ¹⁴ πολλῶ ἄλλον ἐπιπροσθῶσιν διὰ τῆς ἐννόμου βιώσεως.

¹⁵ Παρακέκλησθε οὖν ¹⁶ μετ' εὐνοίας καὶ προσοχῆς ¹⁷ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν ποιῆσθαι ¹⁸ καὶ συγγνώμην ἔχειν ¹⁹ ἐφ' οἷς ἂν δοκῶμεν ²⁰ τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐρμηνείαν πεφιλοπονημένων τισὶν τῶν λέξεων ἀδυναμεῖν· ²¹ οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ ²² αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς Εβραϊστὶ λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῇ εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν· ²³ οὐ μόνον δὲ ταῦτα, ²⁴ ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος καὶ αἱ προφητεῖαι ²⁵ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων ²⁶ οὐ μικρὰν ἔχει τὴν διαφορὰν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λεγόμενα.

²⁷ Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὀγδόῳ καὶ τριακοστῷ ἔτει ἐπὶ τοῦ Εὐεργέτου βασιλέως ²⁸ παραγεννηθεὶς εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ συγχρονίσας

love learning might, by accepting these disciplines, ¹⁴ learn how better to live according to the Law.

¹⁵ Pray then, ¹⁶ with favour and care, ¹⁷ read this book ¹⁸ and pardon us ¹⁹ in those places where, despite our efforts to translate, we may seem ²⁰ to fail to give a good rendering of some phrases; ²¹ for, there is no equivalent ²² for things originally written in Hebrew when translating them into another language; ²³ not only this, ²⁴ but the Law itself and the Prophets ²⁵ and the rest of books ²⁶ differ considerably in translation from what appears in the original text.

²⁷ It was in the thirty-eighth year of the late King Euergetes ²⁸ that, coming to Egypt and remaining here for some time,

¹⁴ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "might make progress much more by living according to the law."

¹⁵ For this verse, here (literally) following the LXX, the NJB has, "You are therefore asked."

¹⁶ The NJB swaps the translations for vv. 16 & 17.

¹⁷ A more literal translation of 'this book' is 'what is written'.

¹⁸ The NJB has 'show indulgence' in place of 'pardon us'.

¹⁹ In place of 'despite', the NJB has 'notwithstanding'.

²⁰ The NJB splits this verse, ending, "of this ²¹ or that expression."

²¹ The NJB includes this verse as part of v. 22 (but cf. #20).

²² Before 'translating', the NJB adds 'it is a question of'.

²³ The literal translation of 'this' is 'these'.

²⁴ The NJB lacks the opening 'but', here following the Greek text (ἀλλὰ).

²⁵ In place of 'rest of', the NJB has 'other'.

²⁶ For 'differ considerably', the WEBBE has 'have no small difference'.

²⁷ This king was probably Ptolemy VII Euergetes Physcon (170–117 BCE); the date would therefore be 123 BCE.

²⁸ The WEBBE has 'coming to Egypt' at the start of v. 27.

²⁹ εὐρὼν οὐ μικρᾷς παιδείας ἀφόμοιον ³⁰ ἀναγκαιότατον
ἐθέμην καὶ αὐτός τινα προσενέγκασθαι σπουδὴν καὶ
φιλοπονίαν τοῦ μεθερμηνεῦσαι τήνδε τὴν βίβλον ³¹ πολλήν
ἀγρυπνίαν καὶ ἐπιστήμην προσενεγκάμενος ³² ἐν τῷ
διαστήματι τοῦ χρόνου ³³ πρὸς τὸ ἐπὶ πέρας ἀγαγόντα τὸ
βιβλίον ἐκδόσθαι ³⁴ καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ βουλομένοις
φιλομαθεῖν ³⁵ προκατασκευαζομένους τὰ ἥδη ³⁶ ἐννόμως
βιοτεύειν.

²⁹ and finding a copy for no little instruction, ³⁰ I became
convinced of an immediate duty to apply myself in my turn
with labour and diligence to translate this book; ³¹ and I
spent much time and learning on it ³² in the course of this
period, ³³ to complete the work and to publish the book ³⁴ for
the benefit of those too who, domiciled abroad, desire to
study, ³⁵ to reform their behaviour in advance, ³⁶ to live as the
Law requires.

²⁹ According to the translation used here (others have ‘*opportunity*’ in place of ‘*copy*’), Ben Sira, in offering his grandfather’s book to the Greek public, intends to please a community already cultivated and worthy of enrichment.

³⁰ The NJB has ‘*the book that follows*’ in place of ‘*this book*’.

³¹ In place of ‘*time and learning*’, the WEBBE has ‘*watchfulness and skill*’.

³² For ‘*in the course of this period*’, the WEBBE has ‘*in that space of time*’.

³³ The WEBBE has ‘*bring the book to an end*’ in place of ‘*complete the book*’.

³⁴ In place of ‘*domiciled abroad*’, the WEBBE has ‘*in the land of their travels*’.

³⁵ The NJB lacks ‘*in advance*’, here following the WEBBE.

³⁶ The NJB includes this verse as part of v. 35.

Σοφία Σιραχ Ι

- ¹ Πᾶσα σοφία παρὰ κυρίου καὶ
μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.
- ² ἄμμον θαλασσῶν καὶ σταγόνας ὕετοῦ
καὶ ἡμέρας αἰῶνος τίς ἐξαριθμήσει;
- ³ ὕψος οὐρανοῦ καὶ πλάτος γῆς
καὶ ἄβυσσον καὶ σοφίαν τίς ἐξιχνιάσει;
- ⁴ προτέρα πάντων ἔκτισται σοφία
καὶ σύνεσις φρονήσεως ἐξ αἰῶνος.
- ⁵ *Fons sapientiae verbum Dei in excelsis,
et ingressus illius mandata aeterna.*
- ⁶ ῥίζα σοφίας τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη;
καὶ τὰ πανουργεύματα αὐτῆς τίς ἔγνω;
- ⁷ *disciplina sapientiae cui revelata est et manifestata?
et multiplicationem ingressus illius quis intellexit?*
- ⁸ εἷς ἐστὶν σοφός, φοβερός σφόδρα,
καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 1

- ¹ All wisdom comes from the Lord and
she is with him forever.
- ² The sands of the sea, the drops of rain
and the days of eternity – who can count them?
- ³ The height of the sky, the breadth of the earth
and the abyss and wisdom – who can explore them?
- ⁴ Wisdom was created before everything
prudent understanding from remotest ages.
- ⁵ *The source of wisdom is the word of God on high;
and her paths are the eternal commandments.*
- ⁶ To whom has the root of wisdom been revealed?
Her resourceful ways, who knows them?
- ⁷ *To whom was the knowledge of wisdom manifested?
And who has understood the abundance of her ways?*
- ⁸ One only is wise, terrible indeed,
seated on his throne, the Lord.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 1

- ¹ This first chapter is a series of variations on the themes enunciated at the beginning of Proverbs. The term 'Lord' (Kyrios) is commonly used in the LXX to render the name *Yahweh*. Ben Sira's translator uses it very frequently, even to render the other divine names.
- ² Vv. 2-3 illustrate the impossibility of fathoming the depths of divine wisdom (18:4-7, Rm 11:33).
- ³ In place of 'the abyss and wisdom' (here following the LXX and NRSV), the NJB, following the Vg (*profundum abyssi*), has 'the depth of the abyss'.
- ⁴ Compare Pr 8:22-31.
- ⁵ This verse, in the WEBBE & NJB only as a footnote, is not in the LXX; it is, however, in the Vg and the MSS known as *Greek 248*.
- ⁶ Only with God is wisdom to be found, yet God has bestowed her upon all the living – especially upon those who love him (Israel, v. 10)
- ⁷ This verse follows the Syro-Hexaplar text, *Greek 248*, and the Vg (see #5); it is present in the WEBBE and NJB only as a footnote.
- ⁸ The author emphasises the uniqueness and transcendence of God.

⁹ κύριος αὐτὸς ἔκτισεν αὐτὴν
καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐξηρίθμησεν αὐτὴν
καὶ ἐξέχεεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,
¹⁰ μετὰ πάσης σαρκὸς κατὰ τὴν δόσιν αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ἐχορήγησεν αὐτὴν τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.
¹¹ Φόβος κυρίου δόξα καὶ καύχημα
καὶ εὐφροσύνη καὶ στέφανος ἀγαλλιάματος.
¹² φόβος κυρίου τέρψει καρδίαν
καὶ δώσει εὐφροσύνην καὶ χαρὰν καὶ μακροημέρευσιν.
¹³ τῷ φοβουμένῳ τὸν κύριον εὖ ἔσται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων,
καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τελευτῆς αὐτοῦ εὐλογηθήσεται.
¹⁴ Ἀρχὴ σοφίας φοβεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον,
καὶ μετὰ πιστῶν ἐν μήτρᾳ συνεκτίσθη αὐτοῖς.
¹⁵ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων θεμέλιον αἰῶνος ἐνόσσευσεν
καὶ μετὰ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῶν ἐμπιστευθήσεται.
¹⁶ πλησμονὴ σοφίας φοβεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον
καὶ μεθύσκει αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῆς·

⁹ It was he who created,
inspected and weighed her up,
and then poured her out on all his works –
¹⁰ as much to each living creature as he chose –
bestowing her on those who love him.
¹¹ The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation,
happiness and a crown of joyfulness.
¹² The fear of Lord gladdens the heart,
giving happiness, joy and long life.
¹³ For those who fear the Lord, all will end well:
on their dying day, they will be blessed.
¹⁴ The basis of wisdom is to fear the Lord;
she was created with the faithful in the womb.
¹⁵ She has made a nest in men, an age-old foundation,
and to their descendants will she faithfully cling.
¹⁶ The fullness of wisdom is to fear the Lord;
she intoxicates them with her fruits.

⁹ After 'created', the Vg adds 'in the Holy Spirit' (*in Spiritu Sancto*), which is a Christian interpolation.

¹⁰ At the end of this verse, some MSS add, "Love of the Lord is glorious wisdom; to those to whom he appears he apportions her, that they may see him."

¹¹ The 'fear of the Lord', for a Jew, merely means religion or piety.

¹² After this verse, some MSS add: "The fear of the Lord is a gift from the Lord; also, for love he makes firm paths."

¹³ Here, the Vg adds 2 verses: ¹⁴ *Dilectio Dei honorabilis sapientia:*

¹⁵ *quibus autem apparuerit in visu diligunt eam in visione,*
et in agnitione magnalium suorum.

¹⁴ *The love of God is a wisdom worthy of honour,*

¹⁵ *but those to whom he has appeared love him*
and contemplate him by proclaiming his great works.

¹⁴ Compare Pr 1:7, 9:10, Job 28:28, Ps 111:10.

¹⁵ The WEBBE has 'eternal' in place of 'age-old'.

¹⁶ In place of 'intoxicates them', the WEBBE has 'inebriates men'.

¹⁷ πάντα τὸν οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐμπλήσει ἐπιθυμημάτων
καὶ τὰ ἀποδοχεῖα ἀπὸ τῶν γεννημάτων αὐτῆς.
¹⁸ στέφανος σοφίας φόβος κυρίου
ἀναθάλλων εἰρήνην καὶ ὑγίειαν ἰάσεως.
¹⁹ καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐξηρίθμησεν αὐτήν,
ἐπιστήμην καὶ γνῶσιν συνέσεως ἐξώμβρησεν
καὶ δόξαν κρατούντων αὐτῆς ἀνύψωσεν.
²⁰ ῥίζα σοφίας φοβεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον,
καὶ οἱ κλάδοι αὐτῆς μακροημέρευσις.
²¹ *Timor Domini expellit peccatum:*
²² Οὐ δυνήσεται θυμὸς ἄδικος δικαιωθῆναι·
ἡ γὰρ ῥοπή τοῦ θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ πτώσις αὐτῷ.
²³ ἕως καιροῦ ἀνδέξεται μακρόθυμος,
καὶ ὕστερον αὐτῷ ἀναδώσει εὐφροσύνη·
²⁴ ἕως καιροῦ κρύψει τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ,
καὶ χεῖλη πολλῶν ἐκδιηγῆσεται σύνεσιν αὐτοῦ.

¹⁷ She fills their entire house with treasures
and their storerooms with her produce.
¹⁸ The crown of wisdom is to fear the Lord:
she makes peace and health flourish.
¹⁹ The Lord has seen and assessed her,
he has showered down knowledge and intelligence
and exalted the renown of those who possess her.
²⁰ The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord
and her branches are longevity.
²¹ *The fear of the Lord drives away sin.*
²² Unjust anger cannot be justified;
for, his rage tips the scales to his downfall.
²³ A patient man puts up with things for a season
but his joy will break out in the end.
²⁴ He will hide his words until the right moment,
and many a lip will affirm how wise he is.

¹⁷ Some MSS have 'her' in place of both occurrences of 'their'.

¹⁸ After this verse, some MSS add: "Both are gifts of God for peace; glory opens out for those who love him. He saw her and took her measure."

¹⁹ The WEBBE has 'honour' in place of 'renown'.

²⁰ In place of 'longevity', the NJB has 'long life' and the WEBBE has 'length of days'.

²¹ This verse follows the Syro-Hexaplar, Vg, and Greek 248 (see #5); it is given in the WEBBE & NJB only as a footnote.

The Vg adds another verse: ²⁶ *In thesauris sapientiae intellectus*

et scientiae religiositas:

execratio autem peccatoribus sapientia.

²⁶ *In the treasures of wisdom is understanding*

and piety of knowledge.

but wisdom is abhorred by sinners.

²² The NJB lacks the 1st instance of 'his' and, in place of the 2nd, has 'one's'.

²³ In place of 'for a season', the NJB has 'until the time is right'.

²⁴ The NJB has 'keeps his thoughts to himself' in place of 'will hide his words'.

²⁵ Ἐν θησαυροῖς σοφίας παραβολαὶ ἐπιστήμης,
 βδέλυγμα δὲ ἁμαρτωλῷ θεοσέβεια.
²⁶ ἐπιθυμήσας σοφίαν διατήρησον ἐντολάς,
 καὶ κύριος χορηγήσει σοὶ αὐτήν.
²⁷ σοφία γὰρ καὶ παιδεία φόβος κυρίου,
 καὶ ἡ εὐδοκία αὐτοῦ πίστις καὶ πραότης.
²⁸ μὴ ἀπειθήσης φόβῳ κυρίου
 καὶ μὴ προσέλθῃς αὐτῷ ἐν καρδίᾳ δισσῇ.
²⁹ μὴ ὑποκριθῇς ἐν στόμασιν ἀνθρώπων
 καὶ ἐν τοῖς χεῖλεσίν σου πρόσεχε.
³⁰ μὴ ἐξύψου σεαυτόν, ἵνα μὴ πέσης
 καὶ ἐπαγάγῃς τῇ ψυχῇ σου ἄτιμίαν,
 καὶ ἀποκαλύψει κύριος τὰ κρυπτὰ σου
 καὶ ἐν μέσῳ συναγωγῆς καταβαλεῖ σε,
 ὅτι οὐ προσῆλθες φόβῳ κυρίου
 καὶ ἡ καρδία σου πλήρης δόλου.

²⁵ In Wisdom's treasures are maxims of knowledge;
 but the sinner holds piety in abhorrence.
²⁶ If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments,
 and the Lord will bestow it on you.
²⁷ For, the fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction
 and what pleases him is faith and humility.
²⁸ Do not stand out against fear of the Lord;
 do not come to him with a double heart.
²⁹ Do not be a hypocrite before others;
 keep watch over your lips.
³⁰ Do not exalt yourself, for fear you fall
 and cover yourself in disgrace.
 For, the Lord would then reveal you secrets
 and overthrow you before the whole community,
 for not having practised fear of the Lord
 and for having a heart full of deceit.

²⁵ The WEBBE has 'wise sayings' in place of 'maxims of knowledge'.

²⁶ For Ben Sira, wisdom and observance of the Law go together (19:20, cf. Qo 12:13). Here, wisdom is the reward of observance.

²⁷ For 'faith and humility', the NJB has 'faithfulness and gentleness'.

²⁸ The NJB has 'practice it' in place of 'come to him'.

²⁹ The literal translation of 'others' is 'human beings' (following the *Textus Receptus*); the LXX has 'in the mouth (of the world)'.

³⁰ In place of 'exalt yourself', the NJB has 'grow too high and mighty'.

Σοφία Σιραχ 2

- 1 Τέκνον, εἰ προσέρχῃ δουλεύειν κυρίῳ,
ἐτοίμασον τὴν ψυχὴν σου εἰς πειρασμόν·
- 2 εὐθυνοὺν τὴν καρδίαν σου καὶ καρτέρησον
καὶ μὴ σπεύσῃς ἐν καιρῷ ἐπαγωγῆς·
- 3 κολλήθητι αὐτῷ καὶ μὴ ἀποστῆς,
ἵνα αὐξηθῇς ἐπ' ἐσχάτων σου.
- 4 πᾶν, ὃ ἐὰν ἐπαχθῇ σοι, δέξαι
καὶ ἐν ἀλλάγμασιν ταπεινώσεώς σου μακροθύμησον·
- 5 ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ δοκιμάζεται χρυσὸς
καὶ ἄνθρωποι δεκτοὶ ἐν καμίνῳ ταπεινώσεως.
- 6 πίστευσον αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀντιλήμψεταιί σου·
εὐθυνοὺν τὰς ὁδοὺς σου καὶ ἔλπισον ἐπ' αὐτόν.
- 7 Οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον, ἀναμείνατε τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ
καὶ μὴ ἐκκλίνετε, ἵνα μὴ πέσητε.
- 8 οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον, πιστεύσατε αὐτῷ,
καὶ οὐ μὴ πταίση ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 2

- 1 My child, if you aspire to serve the Lord,
prepare yourself for an ordeal.
- 2 Be sincere of heart, be steadfast,
and don't make haste in time of calamity.
- 3 Cling to him and do not leave him,
so that you may be honoured at the end of your days.
- 4 Accept whatever happens to you
and be patient when you suffer humiliation.
- 5 For, gold is tested in the fire,
and the chosen in the furnace of humiliation.
- 6 Trust him and he will uphold you,
follow a straight path and hope in him.
- 7 You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy;
do not turn aside, lest you fall.
- 8 You who fear the Lord, trust him,
and you will not be robbed of your reward.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 2

- 1 The NRSV has 'testing' in place of 'an ordeal'. The fear of God in times of ordeal is a recurrent OT theme, particularly in the Psalms.
- 2 For the 2nd line, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "and do not be alarmed when disaster comes."
- 3 The WEBBE has 'increased' in place of 'honoured'.
- 4 For the 2nd line, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "and in the uncertainties of your humble state, be patient."
- 5 Some MSS add: "in sickness and poverty, put your trust in him."
- 6 The WEBBE has 'acceptable men' place of 'the chosen'.
- 7 In place of 'lest', the NRSV has 'for fear'.
- 8 Note that the Greek text lacks the word τὸν before κύριον in the 1st line, here; cf. v. 7.

⁹ οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον, ἐλπίσατε εἰς ἀγαθὰ
καὶ εἰς εὐφροσύνην αἰῶνος καὶ ἔλεος.
¹⁰ ἐμβλέψατε εἰς ἀρχαίας γενεάς καὶ ἴδετε·
τίς ἐνεπίστευσεν κυρίῳ καὶ κατησχύνθη;
ἢ τίς ἐνέμεινεν τῷ φόβῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγκατελείφθη;
ἢ τίς ἐπεκαλέσατο αὐτόν, καὶ ὑπερεῖδεν αὐτόν;
¹¹ διότι οἰκτίρων καὶ ἐλεήμων ὁ κύριος
καὶ ἀφίησιν ἁμαρτίας καὶ σώζει ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως.
¹² Οὐαὶ καρδίαις δειλαῖς καὶ χερσὶν παρειμέναις
καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶ ἐπιβαίνουντι ἐπὶ δύο τρίβους.
¹³ οὐαὶ καρδίᾳ παρειμένῃ, ὅτι οὐ πιστεύει·
διὰ τοῦτο οὐ σκεπασθήσεται.
¹⁴ οὐαὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἀπολωλεκόσιν τὴν ὑπομονήν·
καὶ τί ποιήσετε ὅταν ἐπισκέπτηται ὁ κύριος;
¹⁵ οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον οὐκ ἀπειθήσουσιν ῥημάτων αὐτοῦ,
καὶ οἱ ἀγαπῶντες αὐτόν
συντηρήσουσιν τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ.

⁹ You who fear the Lord, hope for his good gifts,
everlasting joy and mercy.
¹⁰ Look at the generations of old and see:
who ever trusted in the Lord and was put to shame?
Or who ever, steadfastly fearing him, was forsaken?
Or who ever was called to him and was ignored?
¹¹ For, the Lord is compassionate and merciful,
he forgives sins and saves in the time of affliction.
¹² Woe to fearful hearts and listless hands,
and to the sinner who treads two paths.
¹³ Woe to the faint heart! For, it doesn't believe;
therefore, it won't be defended.
¹⁴ Woe to you who have lost the strength to endure;
what will you do at the Lord's visitation?
¹⁵ Those who fear the Lord do not disdain his words,
and those who love him
will keep his ways.

⁹ 'Joy' here means in this life, not in the next. Some MSS add: "For his reward is an everlasting gift with joy."

¹⁰ Israel's history shows the efficacy of trust in God, who is 'compassionate and merciful' (v. 11, see Ex 34:6-7, Ps 103:8-9, Jon 4:2). In the 3rd line, the NRSV has 'the Lord' in place of 'him', here following the LXX (and the NJB).

¹¹ The NRSV has 'distress' in place of 'affliction'.

¹² The author is seemingly commending resistance under persecution; he is condemning apostasy, even if only outward (second line, v. 15; cf. 2M 6:21-28).

¹³ For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV reads, "Woe to the listless heart that has no faith; for such will have no protection."

¹⁴ The WEBBE has 'your patience' in place of 'the strength to endure'.

¹⁵ A more literal translation for 'words' is 'speech'.

¹⁶ οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον ζητήσουσιν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ,
καὶ οἱ ἀγαπῶντες αὐτὸν ἐμπλησθήσονται τοῦ νόμου.
¹⁷ οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον ἐτοιμάσουσιν καρδίας αὐτῶν
καὶ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ταπεινώσουσιν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν.
¹⁸ ἐμπεσούμεθα εἰς χεῖρας κυρίου
καὶ οὐκ εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων·
ὥς γὰρ ἡ μεγαλωσύνη αὐτοῦ,
οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ.

¹⁶ Those who fear the Lord do their best to please him,
and those who love him will be satisfied in the Law.
¹⁷ Those who fear the Lord keep their hearts prepared
and humble themselves in his presence.
¹⁸ Let us fall into the hands of the Lord,
but not into the hands of mortals;
For, as great as his majesty is,
so also is his mercy,
and equal to his name are his works.

¹⁶ Ben Sira does not oppose love to obedience; he identifies them. Love is disinterested; hope of reward is merely a secondary consideration. This attitude is characteristic of Ben Sira but is found elsewhere in Jewish thought. See, for example, *Pirke Abot*, 1:3: “Do not be like slaves who serve their master for the sake of the reward. Be like slaves who serve their master without looking for reward.”

¹⁷ See 1S 24:14 and 1Ch 21:13.

¹⁸ The last line in the English text follows the *Peshitta* and *NRSV*; it is not present in the *LXX*, *Vg*, the *WEBBE*, or *NJB*.

Σοφία Σιραχ 3

- 1 Ἐμοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀκούσατε, τέκνα,
καὶ οὕτως ποιήσατε, ἵνα σωθῇτε.
2 ὁ γὰρ κύριος ἐδόξασεν πατέρα ἐπὶ τέκνοις
καὶ κρίσιν μητρὸς ἐστερέωσεν ἐφ' υἱοῖς.
3 ὁ τιμῶν πατέρα ἐξιλάσκειται ἁμαρτίας,
4 καὶ ὡς ὁ ἀποθησαυρίζων ὁ δοξάζων
μητέρα αὐτοῦ.
5 ὁ τιμῶν πατέρα εὐφρανθήσεται ὑπὸ τέκνων
καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ προσευχῆς αὐτοῦ εἰσακουσθήσεται.
6 ὁ δοξάζων πατέρα μακροημερεύσει,
καὶ ὁ εἰσακούων κυρίου ἀναπαύσει μητέρα αὐτοῦ.
7 καὶ ὡς δεσπόταις δουλεύσει ἐν τοῖς γεννήσασιν αὐτόν.
8 ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου,
ἵνα ἐπέλθῃ σοι εὐλογία παρ' αὐτοῦ.
9 εὐλογία γὰρ πατρὸς στηρίζει οἶκους τέκνων,
κατάρρα δὲ μητρὸς ἐκρίζοι θεμέλια.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 3

- 1 Children, listen to me; for, I am your father;
do what I tell you and so be safe.
2 For, the Lord honours a father above his children
and confirms the rights of a mother over her sons.
3 Whoever respects his father atones for sins,
4 and whoever respects his mother is as one
amassing treasure.
5 He who respects his father will have joy with children;
and the day he prays for help, he will be heard.
6 Long life comes to anyone who honours his father;
and those who honour their mother obey the Lord.
7 Such a one serves parents as also his masters.
8 Respect your father in deed as well as word,
so a blessing may come on you from him.
9 For, a father's blessing makes his children's house firm,
while a mother's curse uproots its foundations.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 3

- 1 Ben Sira teaches that the keeping of the commandment to honour one's parents (Ex 20:12) atones for sins (vv. 3, 14-15).
2 In place of 'confirms the rights', the WEBBE has 'has confirmed the judgement'.
3 For this verse, the WEBBE has a separate sentence, "He who honours his father will make atonement for sins."
4 For 'respects', the WEBBE has 'gives glory to'.
5 For the 2nd line, the WEBBE has "He will be heard in the day of his prayer." The NJB lacks the opening conjunction.
6 Some MSS have 'comfort' in place of 'honour' in the 2nd line.
7 Some MSS precede this verse with: "He who fears the Lord honours his father." The NJB has the conjectural 'the Lord' in place of 'his masters'.
8 The WEBBE opens with 'Honour' in place of 'Respect'.
9 For 'uproots', here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'tears down'.

¹⁰ μὴ δοξάζου ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ πατρός σου,
οὐ γάρ ἐστὶν σοι δόξα πατρὸς ἀτιμίας.
¹¹ ἢ γὰρ δόξα ἀνθρώπου ἐκ τιμῆς πατρὸς αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ὄνειδος τέκνοις μήτηρ ἐν ἀδοξίᾳ.
¹² τέκνον, ἀντιλαβοῦ ἐν γήρᾳ πατρός σου
καὶ μὴ λυπήσῃς αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ.
¹³ καὶ ἀπολείπῃ σύνεσιν, συγγνώμην ἔχε
καὶ μὴ ἀτιμάσῃς αὐτὸν ἐν πάσῃ ἰσχύϊ σου.
¹⁴ ἔλεημοσύνη γὰρ πατρὸς οὐκ ἐπιλησθήσεται
καὶ ἀντὶ ἁμαρτιῶν προσανοικοδομηθήσεται σοι.
¹⁵ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεώς σου ἀναμνησθήσεταιί σου·
ὥς εὐδία ἐπὶ παγετῷ,
οὕτως ἀναλυθήσονται σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι.
¹⁶ ὥς βλάσφημος ὁ ἐγκαταλιπὼν πατέρα,
καὶ κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ κυρίου ὁ παροργίζων
μητέρα αὐτοῦ.
¹⁷ Τέκνον, ἐν πραύτητι τὰ ἔργα σου διέξαγε,
καὶ ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπου δεκτοῦ ἀγαπηθήσῃ.

¹⁰ Do not glorify yourself in your father's dishonour;
for, your father's dishonour is no glory to you.
¹¹ For, the glory of a man is from the honour of his father
and a mother in dishonour is a disgrace to her children.
¹² My child, support your father in his old age;
do not grieve him during his life.
¹³ Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy;
do not despise him in your health and strength.
¹⁴ For, kindness to a father will not be forgotten
but will serve as reparation for your sins.
¹⁵ On your own day of ordeal, God will remember you;
like frost in sunshine,
so your sins will also melt away.
¹⁶ Whoever deserts a father is just like a blasphemer,
and whoever angers a mother is
accursed of the Lord.
¹⁷ My child, be gentle in carrying out your business,
and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.

¹⁰ In place of 'in your father's dishonour', the NJB has 'by dishonouring your father'.

¹¹ For the 1st line, the NJB reads, "One's own honour derives from the respect shown to his father."

¹² The WEBBE has 'son' in place of 'child', here following the Greek (τέκνον) and the NJB.

¹³ For the 2nd line, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' reads 'do not dishonour him all the days of his life' (ואל תכלים אותו כל ימי חייו).

¹⁴ 'Kindness' literally translates as 'righteousness', which came to be centred in almsgiving as the characteristic sign (3:10–4:6, 7:10, 29:8–13, Tb 14:10–11).

¹⁵ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' ends, 'as heat upon frost, to put an end to your iniquity' (כחס על כפור להשבית עונך).

¹⁶ The NJB has 'distresses' in place of 'angers'. For 'accursed of the Lord', Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'angers his Creator'.

¹⁷ For 'gentle', Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'humble' (); 'lavish giver' (literally, 'giver of presents') follows the Cairo Genizah; the LXX has 'agreeable'.

¹⁸ ὅσω μέγας εἶ, τοσούτω ταπεινὸν σεαυτόν,
καὶ ἔναντι κυρίου εὐρήσεις χάριν.
...
²⁰ ὅτι μεγάλη ἡ δυναστεία τοῦ κυρίου
καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ταπεινῶν δοξάζεται.
²¹ χαλεπώτερά σου μὴ ζητεῖ
καὶ ἰσχυρότερά σου μὴ ἐξέταξε.
²² ἂ προσετάγη σοι, ταῦτα διανοοῦ,
οὐ γάρ ἐστὶν σοι χρεία τῶν κρυπτῶν.
²³ ἐν τοῖς περισσοῖς τῶν ἔργων σου μὴ περιεργάζου.
πλείονα γὰρ συνέσεως ἀνθρώπων ὑπεδείχθη σοι.
²⁴ πολλοὺς γὰρ ἐπλάνησεν ἡ ὑπόληψις αὐτῶν,
καὶ ὑπόνοια πονηρὰ ὠλίσθησεν διανοίας αὐτῶν.

**כה באין אישון יחסר אור
ובאין דעת תחסר חכמה:**

¹⁸ The greater you are, humble yourself more,
and then you will find favour with the Lord.
¹⁹ *Many are the arrogant and renowned;
but, to the humble, he reveals his secrets.*
²⁰ For, great though the power of the Lord is,
he accepts the homage of the humble.
²¹ Don't seek things that are too hard for you,
or try to discover what is beyond your strength.
²² Concentrate on what has been assigned you;
you have no need to worry over mysteries.
²³ Do not meddle with matters that are beyond you,
for more than you can understand has been shown you.
²⁴ For, their own notions have misled many,
wicked presumption having warped their judgement.
²⁵ *When the eye has no pupil, there is no light;
and, without wisdom, there is no knowledge.*

¹⁸ The NJB ends the 1st line, "the more humbly you should behave."

¹⁹ This verse, present in the NRSV, WEBBE & NJB only as a footnote, is not part of the 'canonical' Greek text and neither is it present in *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'*; it is, however, present in the *Peshitta* and in the *Greek 248 MS*.

²⁰ The emphasis here (where the text follows the LXX) is on God's condescension in putting himself within the reach of the humblest. However, the *Genizah MS 'A'* reads, "For great is the mercy of God; he reveals his secrets to the humble," expresses an idea much more frequent in the Old Testament: God showers his favours on those who behave with humility (Ps 25:14, Pr 3:34, cf. Mt 11:25, Lk 1:52).

²¹ Vv. 21-24 preach against curiosity: the Law is a sufficient study for the wise. Perhaps, Ben Sira is preaching against Greek learning.

²² For the 1st line, *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'* reads, 'Think on what you are permitted' (במה שהורשית התבונן).

²³ 'Matters that are beyond you' *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'*; the LXX has 'your unnecessary works'.

²⁴ The 1st line here follows the LXX; *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'* has 'for, many are the conceits of the sons of men' (כי רבים עשתוני בני אדם).

²⁵ This verse, loosely following the NRSV/WEBBE (and *Greek 248 MS*), is in the NJB only as a footnote; in *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'*, it follows v. 27.

²⁶ καρδιά σκληρὰ κακωθήσεται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων,
καὶ ὁ ἀγαπῶν κίνδυνον ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπολεῖται.
²⁷ καρδιά σκληρὰ βαρυνθήσεται πόνοις,
καὶ ὁ ἁμαρτωλὸς προσθήσει ἁμαρτίαν ἐφ' ἁμαρτίαις.
²⁸ ἐπαγωγῇ ὑπερηφάνου οὐκ ἔστιν ἴασις·
φυτὸν γὰρ πονηρίας ἐρρίζωκεν ἐν αὐτῷ.
²⁹ καρδιά συνετοῦ διανοηθήσεται παραβολήν,
καὶ οὗς ἀκροατοῦ ἐπιθυμία σοφοῦ.
³⁰ πῦρ φλογιζόμενον ἀποσβέσει ὕδωρ,
καὶ ἐλεημοσύνη ἐξιλάσεται ἁμαρτίας.
³¹ ὁ ἀνταποδιδούς χάριτας μέμνηται εἰς τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα
καὶ ἐν καιρῷ πτώσεως αὐτοῦ εὕρησει στήριγμα.

²⁶ A stubborn heart will come to a bad end,
and whoever dallies with danger will perish in it.
²⁷ A stubborn heart is weighed down with troubles;
and the sinner heaps sin on sin.
²⁸ For the disease of the proud there is no cure,
since an evil weed has taken root in him.
²⁹ The heart of the sensible will reflect on proverbs;
an attentive ear is the sage's dream.
³⁰ As water puts out a blazing fire,
so almsgiving atones for sin.
³¹ He who gives favours in return is mindful of the future;
at the time of his falling, he will find support.

²⁶ The 2nd line here follows the LXX; Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has, 'and he who loves good things will be led by them' (וְאוֹהֵב טוֹבוֹת יִנְהֵג בָּהֶם).

²⁷ Abegg translates the 2nd line (Cairo Genizah MS 'A' – עוֹן עַל עוֹן) as, "and the one who heaps sin upon sin is a raving lunatic."

²⁸ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (עוֹן עַל עוֹן) reads, "Do not hasten to heal the wound of a scoffer. For, there is no healing it; for, he is a plant of evil planting."

²⁹ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (לֵב חָכָם יִבִּין מִשְׁלֵי חֲכָמִים וְאָזֶן מִקְשֶׁבֶת לְחִכְמָה תִּשְׁמַח) reads, "A wise heart will understand the proverbs of the wise; and the ear that listens to wisdom shall rejoice."

³⁰ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'justice' (צְדָקָה) in place of 'almsgiving'.

³¹ The text of the 1st line does not make it clear whether it means returning good for good or good for evil.

Σοφία Σιραχ 4

- ¹ Τέκνον, τὴν ζωὴν τοῦ πτωχοῦ μὴ ἀποστερήσης
καὶ μὴ παρελκύσης ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπίδεξις.
- ² ψυχὴν πεινῶσαν μὴ λυπήσης
καὶ μὴ παροργίσῃς ἄνδρα ἐν ἀπορίᾳ αὐτοῦ.
- ³ καρδίαν παρωργισμένην μὴ προσταράξῃς
καὶ μὴ παρελκύσης δόσιν προσδεομένου.
- ⁴ ἰκέτην θλιβόμενον μὴ ἀπαναίνου
καὶ μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπὸ πτωχοῦ.
- ⁵ ἀπὸ δεομένου μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς ὀφθαλμόν
καὶ μὴ δῶς τόπον ἀνθρώπῳ καταράσασθαι σε·
- ⁶ καταρωμένου γάρ σε ἐν πικρίᾳ ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ
τῆς δεήσεως αὐτοῦ ἐπακούσεται ὁ ποιήσας αὐτόν.
- ⁷ προσφιλεῖ συναγωγῇ σεαυτὸν ποίει
καὶ μεγιστᾶνι ταπεινὸν τὴν κεφαλὴν σου.
- ⁸ κλιῖνον πτωχῷ τὸ οὖς σου
καὶ ἀποκριθήτι αὐτῷ εἰρηνικὰ ἐν πραύτητι.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 4

- ¹ My child, do not refuse the poor a livelihood;
do not tantalise the needy.
- ² Do not add to the sufferings of the hungry;
do not bait anyone in distress.
- ³ Do not aggravate a heart already angry,
nor keep the destitute waiting for your alms.
- ⁴ Do not reject a hard-pressed beggar,
nor turn your face from the poor.
- ⁵ Do not avert your eyes from the needy;
give no one occasion to curse you.
- ⁶ For if, in distress, someone curses you,
his Maker will give ear to his prayer.
- ⁷ Gain the love of the community;
in the presence of the great, bow your head.
- ⁸ To the poor, lend an ear,
and answer him with peaceful words in humility.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 4

- ¹ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' opens with '(My) Son' (בני) in place of 'My child', here following the LXX (Τέκνον).
- ² For this verse, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (נפש חסירה אל תפוח ואל תתעלם ממדכדך נפש) reads, "Do not speak harshly to he who is hungry and do not hide from one he who is oppressed." (Note the pointing on the word, מִמְּדַכְּךָ, which doesn't occur elsewhere in this section of the MS.)
- ³ In Cairo Genizah MS 'A', there is a large stain where the word for 'aggravate' (תַּחְמִיר) is written, making it effectively illegible.
- ⁴ For the 2nd line, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' reads 'nor despise the requests of the needy' (ולא תבזה שאולות דל).
- ⁵ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' appears to omit the 1st line of this verse, reading just 'lest you give him cause to curse you' (ולא תתן לו מקום לקללך).
- ⁶ In place of 'his Maker', Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'his Rock' (צור).
- ⁷ Another reading for 'community' is 'congregation'.
- ⁸ For the 2nd line, the NJB (possibly following Cairo Genizah MS 'A' - והשיבהו שלום בענוה) has 'and courteously return the greeting'.

⁹ ἐξελοῦ ἀδικούμενον ἐκ χειρὸς ἀδικοῦντος
καὶ μὴ ὀλιγοψυχήσης ἐν τῷ κρίνειν σε.
¹⁰ γίνου ὀρφανοῖς ὡς πατὴρ
καὶ ἀντὶ ἀνδρὸς τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῶν·
καὶ ἔσῃ ὡς υἱὸς ὑψίστου,
καὶ ἀγαπήσει σε μᾶλλον ἢ μήτηρ σου.
¹¹ Ἡ σοφία υἱοὺς αὐτῆς ἀνύψωσεν
καὶ ἐπιλαμβάνεται τῶν ζητοῦντων αὐτήν.
¹² ὁ ἀγαπῶν αὐτήν ἀγαπᾷ ζωὴν,
καὶ οἱ ὀρϋρίζοντες πρὸς αὐτήν
ἐμπλησθήσονται εὐφροσύνης.
¹³ ὁ κρατῶν αὐτῆς κληρονομήσει δόξαν,
καὶ οὗ εἰσπορεύεται, εὐλογεῖ κύριος.
¹⁴ οἱ λατρεύοντες αὐτῇ λειτουργήσουσιν ἀγίῳ,
καὶ τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας αὐτήν ἀγαπᾷ ὁ κύριος.
¹⁵ ὁ ὑπακούων αὐτῆς κρινεῖ ἔθνη,
καὶ ὁ προσέχων αὐτῇ κατασκηνώσει πεποιθώς.

⁹ Save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor,
and do not be short-tempered in your judgements.
¹⁰ Be like a father to the fatherless
and as good as a husband to their mothers.
You will then be like a son to the Most High,
who will love you more than your own mother does.
¹¹ Wisdom teaches her own children
and cares for those who seek her.
¹² Whoever loves her loves life;
those who seek her early
will be filled with joy.
¹³ Whoever possesses her will inherit honour,
and wherever he enters, the Lord will bless.
¹⁴ Those who serve her minister to the Holy One,
and the Lord loves those who love her.
¹⁵ Whoever obeys her rules the nations;
whoever pays attention to her dwells secure.

⁹ For 'short-tempered', the NJB has 'mean-spirited' and the WEBBE has 'hesitant'.

¹⁰ In place of 'mothers' (in the 2nd line), here following the LXX, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'widows' (לאלמנות) and has the word on a line of its own, at the left-hand end of the line. This may be more acceptable: widows and orphans being typical of those to whom charity is enjoined (see Dt 10:18, 14:29, 24:19, et cetera, Ps 68:5, 146:9, Ezk 22:7).

¹¹ The NJB has 'brings up' in place of 'teaches', here following Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (למדה) and the Peshitta (and the NRSV); the LXX has 'exalts'. In vv. 11–19, Wisdom is personified (cf. Pr 1:23–25, 8:12–21, 9:1–6); her children are those who pursue wisdom and put it into practice (Lk 7:35).

¹² For the 2nd line, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' reads 'And those who seek her shall obtain favour from Yahweh' (ומבקשיה יפיקו רצון מיה); the 3 yod characters in a triangular arrangement represent the Divine Name in this manuscript (and in some others from the Cairo Genizah).

¹³ Another reading for 'he enters' is 'she enters' (referring to Wisdom).

¹⁴ Service of wisdom is service of God, and God will love those who love her (Pr 8:17).

¹⁵ In Cairo Genizah MS 'A', vv. 15–19, in the first-person singular, are presented as a 'discourse of Wisdom', in imitation of Pr 1:22ff, 8:1ff.

¹⁶ ἔὰν ἐμπιστεύσῃ, κατακληρονομήσει αὐτήν,
καὶ ἐν κατασχέσει ἔσονται αἱ γενεαὶ αὐτοῦ.
¹⁷ ὅτι διεστραμμένως πορεύσεται μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐν πρώτοις,
φόβον καὶ δειλίαν ἐπάξει ἐπ' αὐτὸν
καὶ βασανίσει αὐτὸν ἐν παιδείᾳ αὐτῆς,
ἕως οὗ ἐμπιστεύσῃ τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ,
καὶ πειράσει αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς δικαιώμασιν αὐτῆς.
¹⁸ καὶ πάλιν ἐπανήξει κατ' εὐθεΐαν πρὸς αὐτὸν
καὶ εὐφρανεῖ αὐτὸν
καὶ ἀποκαλύψει αὐτῷ τὰ κρυπτὰ αὐτῆς.
¹⁹ ἔὰν ἀποπλανηθῇ, ἐγκαταλείψει αὐτὸν
καὶ παραδώσει αὐτὸν εἰς χεῖρας πτώσεως αὐτοῦ.
²⁰ Συντήρησον καιρὸν καὶ φύλαξαι ἀπὸ πονηροῦ
καὶ περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς σου μὴ αἰσχυνθῆς.
²¹ ἔστιν γὰρ αἰσχὺνὴ ἐπάγουσα ἁμαρτίαν,
καὶ ἔστιν αἰσχὺνὴ δόξα καὶ χάρις.
²² μὴ λάβῃς πρόσωπον κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σου
καὶ μὴ ἐντραπῆς εἰς πτώσιν σου.

¹⁶ If he trusts himself to her, he will inherit her,
and his descendants will remain in possession of her.
¹⁷ For, at first, she will take him through winding ways;
bringing fear and faintness on him,
testing him with her discipline,
until she can trust him,
and she will test him with her ordeals.
¹⁸ Then she will come back to him on the straight road,
and making him happy
and revealing her secrets to him.
¹⁹ If he goes astray, however, she will abandon him
and leave him to his own destruction.
²⁰ Take circumstances into account and beware of evil,
and have no cause to be ashamed of yourself.
²¹ For, there is a shame that leads to sin
and a shame that is honourable and gracious.
²² Do not show partiality, discrediting your soul;
and do not revere any man to your falling.

¹⁶ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' lacks this verse and this section is not extant in any other Hebrew witness.

¹⁷ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' opens 'For, I will go with him, making myself strange' (כי בהתנכר אלך עמו) (and cf. #15).

¹⁸ For the 2nd line, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'until his heart is filled with me'.

¹⁹ For the 2nd line, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'and hand him over to robbers' (ואסגירנו לשדדים).

²⁰ Vv. 20-31 probably allude to the temptation to which Jews were exposed under the impact of Hellenism, to dissimulate their faith and observances (see 1M 1:12-15, 2M 4:11-16).

²¹ In place of 'honourable and gracious', the NRSV has 'glory and favour'.

²² For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NJB has, "Do not be too severe on yourself; do not let shame lead you to ruin." Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' and 'C' read 'Do not respect your own person and do not stumble at your own shortcomings' (אל תשא פניך על נפשך ואל תכשל למכשולִיך); note that

²³ μὴ κωλύσης λόγον ἐν καιρῷ χρείας·
·תקנתך לא תכחש·

²⁴ ἐν γὰρ λόγῳ γνωσθήσεται σοφία
καὶ παιδεία ἐν ῥήματι γλώσσης.

²⁵ μὴ ἀντίλεγε τῇ ἀληθείᾳ
καὶ περὶ τῆς ἀπαιδευσίας σου ἐντρέπηθι.

²⁶ μὴ αἰσχυνῇς ὁμολογῆσαι ἐφ' ἁμαρτίαις σου
καὶ μὴ βιάζου ῥοῦν ποταμοῦ.

²⁷ καὶ μὴ ὑποστρώσης ἀνθρώπῳ μωρῷ σεαυτὸν
καὶ μὴ λάβῃς πρόσωπον δυνάστου.

²⁸ ἕως θανάτου ἀγώνισαι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας,
καὶ κύριος ὁ θεὸς πολεμήσει ὑπὲρ σου.

²⁹ μὴ γίνου θρασὺς ἐν γλώσσῃ σου
καὶ νωθρὸς καὶ παρειμένος ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις σου.

³⁰ μὴ ἴσθι ὡς λέων ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου
καὶ φαντασιοκοπῶν ἐν τοῖς οἰκέταις σου.

²³ Do not refrain from speaking at the proper moment,
and do not hide your wisdom.

²⁴ For, your wisdom is made known by what you say,
your erudition by the word of the tongue.

²⁵ Do not contradict the truth;
rather be shamed for your own ignorance.

²⁶ Do not be ashamed to confess your sins;
do not try to stop the current of the river.

²⁷ Do not grovel to the foolish;
do not show partiality to the mighty.

²⁸ Fight to the death for truth,
and the Lord God will fight on your side.

²⁹ Do not be hasty with your tongue
and slack and negligent in your deeds.

³⁰ Do not be like a lion at home
and cowardly towards your servants.

MS 'C' has למכשולך in place of לשוולך and, immediately before this verse, inserts the text of 20:22-23.

²³ 'At the proper moment' follows Cairo Genizah MS 'C' (בעיתו); the LXX has 'at a time of salvation' and the NJB has 'when it will do good'. The LXX lacks the 2nd line (here following Cairo Genizah MS 'C' and Greek 248).

²⁴ In place of 'the word of the tongue', the NJB has 'the word you utter'.

²⁵ The NJB has 'blush' in place of 'be shamed', here following the WEBBE.

²⁶ It is as futile to hide one's sins from God as to try to stop a river from flowing. The confession of sins was not unknown in Judaism (Lv 5:5, Nb 5:7, 2S 12:13, 1K 21:37, Ps 38:1,4-5, 51:5).

²⁷ For the 2nd line, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'and do not refute rulers to their face' (וואל תמאן לפני מושלים).

²⁸ Before this verse, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' inserts the text of 8:14.

²⁹ For this verse, here loosely following the WEBBE, the NJB reads, "Do not be bold of tongue, yet idle and slack in deed."

³⁰ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'dog' (ככלב) in place of 'lion' (λέων), which makes the two lines synonymous rather than antithetical.

³¹ μὴ ἔστω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐκτεταμένη εἰς τὸ λαβεῖν
καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀποδιδόναι συνεσταλμένη.

³¹ Do not let your hands be outstretched to receive,
yet clenched when the time comes to give back.

³¹ The NJB has 'tight-fisted' in place of 'clenched'.

Σοφία Σιραχ 5

- ¹ Μὴ ἔπεχε ἐπὶ τοῖς χρήμασίν σου
καὶ μὴ εἴπῃς Αὐτάρκη μοί ἐστιν.
² μὴ ἐξακολούθῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ τῇ ἰσχύϊ σου
πορεύεσθαι ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις καρδίας σου·
³ καὶ μὴ εἴπῃς Τίς με δυναστεύσει;
ὁ γὰρ κύριος ἐκδικῶν ἐκδικήσῃ.
⁴ μὴ εἴπῃς Ἥμαρτον, καὶ τί μοι ἐγένετο;
ὁ γὰρ κύριός ἐστιν μακρόθυμος.
⁵ περὶ ἐξιλασμοῦ μὴ ἄφοβος γίνου
προσδεῖναι ἁμαρτίαν ἐφ' ἁμαρτίαις·
⁶ καὶ μὴ εἴπῃς Ὁ οἰκτιρμὸς αὐτοῦ πολὺς,
τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν μου ἐξιλάσεται·
ἔλεος γὰρ καὶ ὀργὴ παρ' αὐτῷ,
καὶ ἐπὶ ἁμαρτωλοὺς καταπαύσει ὁ θυμὸς αὐτοῦ.
⁷ μὴ ἀνάμενε ἐπιστρέψαι πρὸς κύριον
καὶ μὴ ὑπερβάλλου ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας·

WISDOM OF SIRACH 5

- ¹ Do not put your confidence in your money
or say, "With this, I am self-sufficient."
² Do not be led by your appetites and energy
to follow the passions of your heart.
³ Do not say, "Who has authority over me?"
For, the Lord will certainly give you your deserts.
⁴ Do not say, "I sinned, and what happened to me?"
For, the Lord is slow to anger.
⁵ Do not be so sure of forgiveness
that you add sin to sin.
⁶ Do not say, "His compassion is great,
he will forgive me my many sins."
For, both mercy and anger are with him,
and his indignation will rest on sinners.
⁷ Do not delay your return to the Lord;
do not put it off day after day;

WISDOM OF SIRACH 5

- ¹ Vv. 1-7 form a poem against presumption.
² For this verse, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (אל תלך אחרי לבך ועיניך ללכת בחמודות רעה) reads, "Do not follow your heart and your eyes, to walk in evil desires."
³ This verse speaks of the 'fool' who, even if he does not deny the existence of God, at least denies his providence (Ps 53:1).
⁴ The sceptic defies divine justice when it is apparently inactive.
⁵ 'Forgiveness' follows Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' & 'C' (סליחה); the LXX has 'atonement' (ἐξιλασμοῦ). The added sin of the 2nd line is presumption.
⁶ The NJB has 'retribution' in place of 'anger' and 'anger' in place of 'indignation'.
⁷ Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' & 'C' have 'to him' in place of 'to the Lord'.

ἐξάπινα γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ὀργὴ κυρίου,
καὶ ἐν καιρῷ ἐκδικήσεως ἐξολῇ.
8 Μὴ ἔπεχε ἐπὶ χρήμασιν ἀδίκους·
οὐδὲν γὰρ ὠφελήσῃ σε ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπαγωγῆς.
9 μὴ λίκμα ἐν παντὶ ἀνέμῳ
καὶ μὴ πορεύου ἐν πάσῃ ἀτραπῷ·
οὕτως ὁ ἁμαρτωλὸς ὁ δίγλωσσος.
10 ἴσθι ἐστηριγμένος ἐν συνέσει σου,
καὶ εἷς ἔστω σου ὁ λόγος.
11 Γίνου ταχὺς ἐν ἀκροάσει σου
καὶ ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ φθέγγου ἀποκρισιν.
12 εἰ ἔστιν σοι σύνεσις, ἀποκρίθητι τῷ πλησίον·
εἰ δὲ μή, ἡ χεὶρ σου ἔστω ἐπὶ τῷ στόματί σου.
13 δόξα καὶ ἀτιμία ἐν λαλιᾷ,
καὶ γλῶσσα ἀνθρώπου πτώσις αὐτῷ.
14 Μὴ κληθῇς ψίδυρος
καὶ τῇ γλώσσῃ σου μὴ ἐνέδρευε
ἐπὶ γὰρ τῷ κλέπτῃ ἐστὶν αἰσχύνῃ
καὶ κατὰγνωσις πονηρὰ ἐπὶ διγλώσσου.

For, suddenly the Lord's wrath will blaze out
and, on the day of punishment, you will perish.
8 Do not set your heart on dishonest wealth;
for, it will not benefit you on the day of disaster.
9 Do not winnow in every wind,
or walk along by every by-way,
as the double-talking sinner does.
10 Be steady in your convictions,
and be a person of your word.
11 Be quick to listen
and patient when giving an answer.
12 If you understand a matter, answer your neighbour;
if not, keep your hand over your mouth.
13 Both honour and disgrace come from talking;
the tongue is its owner's downfall.
14 Do not be called a double-dealer;
do not set traps with your tongue.
For, as shame lies in store for the thief,
so harsh condemnation awaits the deceitful.

8 Cairo Genizah MS 'C' omits this verse, though it is included in MS 'A' (אל תבטח על נכסי שקר כי לא יועילו ביום עברה).

9 The NJB parenthesises the 3rd line, here following the LXX, and the NRSV includes it only as a footnote; it is not present the Cairo Genizah MSS.

10 For this verse, Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' & 'C' read, 'Be sure of your knowledge and then speak' (היה סמוך על דברך ואחר יהיה דברך).

11 For 'patient', Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' & 'C' have 'slow of spirit'.

12 Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (אם יש אתך ענה רעך ואם אין ידך על פיך) and MS 'C' (אם יש אתך ענה ריעיד ואם אין שים ידך על פיך) have slightly different texts for this verse.

13 Ben Sira takes up the topic of the tongue (use and abuse) frequently: 19:6–17, 20:16–20, 22:7–23:15, 28:12–26.

14 'Double-dealer' follows Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (בשל שתיים); the LXX has 'slanderer' (ψίδυρος).

15 ἐν μεγάλῳ καὶ ἐν μικρῷ μὴ ἀγνόει
καὶ ἀντὶ φίλου μὴ γίνου ἐχθρὸς·

15 Do not act corruptly in great or small matters,
and do not exchange friendship for enmity.

15 'Do not act corruptly' follows Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (אל תשחת) and the Peshitta; the LXX has 'do not be ignorant'. The NRSV includes the 2nd line in 6:1.

Σοφία Σιραχ 6

- ¹ ὄνομα γὰρ πονηρὸν αἰσχύνῃ καὶ ὄνειδος κληρονομῇ·
οὕτως ὁ ἁμαρτωλὸς ὁ δίγλωσσος.
- ² Μὴ ἐπάρῃς σεαυτὸν ἐν βουλῇ ψυχῆς σου,
ἵνα μὴ διαρπαγῇ ὡς ταῦρος ἡ ψυχὴ σου·
- ³ τὰ φύλλα σου καταφάγῃ
καὶ τοὺς καρπούς σου ἀπολέσεις
καὶ ἀφήσεις σεαυτὸν ὡς ξύλον ξηρόν.
- ⁴ ψυχὴ πονηρὰ ἀπολεῖ τὸν κτησάμενον αὐτήν
καὶ ἐπίχαρμα ἐχθρῶν ποιήσῃ αὐτόν.
- ⁵ Λάρυγξ γλυκὺς πληθυνεῖ φίλους αὐτοῦ,
καὶ γλῶσσα εὐλαλὸς πληθυνεῖ εὐπροσῆγορα.
- ⁶ οἱ εἰρηνεύοντές σοι ἔστωσαν πολλοί,
οἱ δὲ σύμβουλοί σου εἷς ἀπὸ χιλίων.
- ⁷ εἰ κτᾶσαι φίλον, ἐν πειρασμῷ κτῆσαι αὐτόν
καὶ μὴ ταχὺ ἐμπιστεύσῃς αὐτῷ.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 6

- ¹ For, a bad name will earn you shame and reproach,
as happens to the double-talking sinner.
- ² Do not exalt yourself in the counsel of your soul,
for fear your strength tears itself apart like a bull.
- ³ You will devour your leaves
and your destroy fruit,
and you will be left like a withered tree.
- ⁴ An evil temper destroys the person who has it
and makes him the laughing stock of his enemies.
- ⁵ A kindly turn of speech attracts new friends;
a courteous tongue invites many a friendly response.
- ⁶ Let your acquaintances be many
but, for advisers, choose one out of a thousand.
- ⁷ If you want to make a friend, take him on trial,
and do not be in a hurry to trust him.

WISDOM OF SIRACH 6

- ¹ In the *Rahlfs-Hanhart* text, this verse is included as part of 5:15; and, in that text, this chapter begins at v. 2.
- ² For the 1st line, the *NJB* has ‘Do not get carried aloft on the wings of passion’, claiming to follow the ‘Hebrew text’; however, *Cairo Genizah MS ‘A’* (which is the only extant Hebrew text for this verse) reads much the same as the translation presented here (אל תפול ביד נפשך), which follows that of the *WEBBE*. The *NRSV* has ‘Do not fall into the grip of passion’.
- ³ For ‘destroy’, here following the *LXX* (ἀπολέσεις), *Cairo Genizah MS ‘A’* reads ‘uproot’ (תשרש).
- ⁴ In place of ‘evil temper’, here following the *NJB*, the *WEBBE* has ‘wicked soul’.
- ⁵ Vv. 5–17 discuss true and false friendship – a frequent topic (see 11:29–12:18, 22:19–26, 37:1–6).
- ⁶ The literal translation of ‘acquaintances’ is ‘those who are at peace with you’, or possibly, ‘those who wish peace to you’.
- ⁷ Friends are to be tested, lest they turn out to be ‘fair-weather friends’ (vv. 5 –12); true friends are a treasure, a gift from God (vv. 13–17).

8 ἔστιν γὰρ φίλος ἐν καιρῷ αὐτοῦ
καὶ οὐ μὴ παραμείνῃ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεώς σου.
9 καὶ ἔστιν φίλος μετατιθέμενος εἰς ἔχθραν
καὶ μάχην ὀνειδισμοῦ σου ἀποκαλύψει.
10 καὶ ἔστιν φίλος κοινωνὸς τραπεζῶν
καὶ οὐ μὴ παραμείνῃ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεώς σου.
11 καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς σου ἔσται ὡς σὺ
καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας σου παρρησιάζεται.
12 ἐὰν ταπεινωθῇς, ἔσται κατὰ σοῦ
καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου σου κρυβήσεται.
13 ἀπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου διαχωρίσθητι
καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν φίλων σου πρόσσεχε.
14 φίλος πιστὸς σκέπη κραταιά,
ὁ δὲ εὐρὼν αὐτὸν εὗρεν θησαυρόν.
15 φίλου πιστοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντάλλαγμα,
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν σταθμὸς τῆς καλλονῆς αὐτοῦ.
16 φίλος πιστὸς φάρμακον ζωῆς,
καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον εὐρήσουσιν αὐτόν.

8 For, one kind of friend is so only on occasions
but will not stand by you in your day of trouble.
9 Another kind of friend will fall out with you
and, will expose the quarrel, to your shame.
10 A third kind of friend will sit at your table
but will not remain in your day of trouble.
11 When you are doing well, he will be your second self,
and he will order your servants about;
12 but, if disaster befalls you, he will recoil from you
and will hide himself from your face.
13 Keep well clear of your enemies
and be wary of your friends.
14 A faithful friend is a powerful defence:
whoever finds one has found a treasure.
15 A faithful friend is something beyond price
and there is no measuring his value.
16 A faithful friend is the elixir of life,
and those who fear the Lord will find one.

8 In place of 'on occasions', the NJB has 'when it suits him'. Cairo Genizah MS 'C' omits this verse.

9 In place of 'exposes', here following the LXX (ἀποκαλύψει) and Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (יחשוך), Cairo Genizah MS 'C' has 'withholds' (יחשוך).

10 For 'but (and) will not remain', here following the LXX (καὶ οὐ μὴ παραμείνῃ), Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' & 'C' have 'but not be found' (ולא ימצא).

11 For the 2nd line, here following the LXX, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'and in your adversity he will turn away' (וברעתך יתנדה ממך).

12 For the 2nd line, the NJB has, "and keep out of your way."

13 Cairo Genizah MSS 'A' & 'C' have near identical text for this verse (which is generally concordant with that of the LXX); the one difference is that MS 'A' (מאהביך) lacks the conjunction at the start of the 2nd line but MS 'C' (ומאהביך) includes it.

14 The NJB has 'loyal' in place of 'faithful', here following the WEBBE (as also in vv. 15 & 16).

15 The WEBBE has 'excellency' in place of 'value'.

16 Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'God' in place of 'the Lord' and MS 'C' omits this verse (and v. 7).

¹⁷ ὁ φοβούμενος κύριον εὐθυνεῖ φιλίαν αὐτοῦ,
 ὅτι κατ' αὐτὸν οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλησίον αὐτοῦ.
¹⁸ Τέκνον, ἐκ νεότητός σου ἐπίλεξαι παιδείαν,
 καὶ ἕως πολιῶν εὐρήσεις σοφίαν.
¹⁹ ὥς ὁ ἀροτριῶν καὶ ὁ σπείρων πρόσελθε αὐτῇ
 καὶ ἀνάμενε τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς·
 ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἐργασίᾳ αὐτῆς ὀλίγον κοπιάσεις
 καὶ ταχὺ φάγεσαι τῶν γεννημάτων αὐτῆς.
²⁰ ὥς τραχεῖά ἐστιν σφόδρα τοῖς ἀπαιδεύτοις,
 καὶ οὐκ ἐμμενεῖ ἐν αὐτῇ ἀκάρδιος·
²¹ ὥς λίθος δοκιμασίας ἰσχυρὸς ἔσται ἐπ' αὐτῷ,
 καὶ οὐ χρονιεῖ ἀπορριῖψαι αὐτήν.
²² σοφία γὰρ κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς ἐστιν
 καὶ οὐ πολλοῖς ἐστιν φανερά.
²³ Ἄκουσον, τέκνον, καὶ ἐκδεξαι γνώμην μου
 καὶ μὴ ἀπαναίνου τὴν συμβουλίαν μου·
²⁴ καὶ εἰσένεγκον τοὺς πόδας σου εἰς τὰς πέδας αὐτῆς
 καὶ εἰς τὸν κλοιὸν αὐτῆς τὸν τράχηλόν σου·

¹⁷ Whoever fears the Lord makes true friends,
 for, as a person is, so is his friend too.
¹⁸ My child, from your earliest youth, choose instruction,
 and, until your hair is white, you will find wisdom.
¹⁹ Like one who ploughs and sows, approach her
 and wait for her fine harvest;
 for, in tilling her, you will toil a little while,
 but, very soon, you will be eating her crops.
²⁰ How very harsh she is to the fool!
 The senseless does not stay with her for long.
²¹ She will rest on the senseless like a heavy stone
 and such a person will lose no time in throwing her off.
²² For, Wisdom is true to her name
 and she is not accessible to many.
²³ Listen, my child, and take my advice,
 do not reject my counsel.
²⁴ Put your feet into her fetters
 and your neck into her collar.

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- ¹⁷ The 2nd line is usually read, 'for his friend is as dear to him as himself' but equally probable is 'for his friend will be inevitably like himself', god-fearing. True piety is the guarantee of friendship.
¹⁸ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' lacks this verse but it is included in MS 'C'.
¹⁹ The NJB has 'cultivate' in place of 'approach' but this is not supported by either the LXX or Cairo Genizah MSS.
²⁰ In place of 'fool', the NJB has 'undisciplined' and the WEBBE has 'unlearned'.
²¹ For the 1st line, the NJB reads, "She will weigh as heavily on the senseless as a touchstone."
²² The Cairo Genizah MS 'A' text for this verse (כִּי הַמוֹסֵר כַּמְשָׁה כֵּן הוּא וְלֹא לְרַבִּים הִיא נְכוּחָה) is not easy to translated precisely; Abegg has, "For, she and discipline are one and the same, and not many are willing to accept her as the right way of life."
²³ For this verse, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has the text of 27:5.
²⁴ For this verse, Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has the text of 27:6.

²⁵ ὑπόθες τὸν ὤμόν σου καὶ βάσταξον αὐτήν
καὶ μὴ προσοχθίσῃς τοῖς δεσμοῖς αὐτῆς.
²⁶ ἐν πάσῃ ψυχῇ σου πρόσσελθε αὐτῇ
καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ δυνάμει σου συντήρησον τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῆς.
²⁷ ἐξίχνευσον καὶ ζήτησον, καὶ γνωσθήσεται σοι,
καὶ ἐγκρατὴς γενόμενος μὴ ἀφῇς αὐτήν.
²⁸ ἐπ' ἐσχάτων γὰρ εὐρήσεις τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν αὐτῆς,
καὶ στραφήσεται σοι εἰς εὐφροσύνην.
²⁹ καὶ ἔσονται σοι αἱ πέδαι εἰς σκέπην ἰσχύος
καὶ οἱ κλοιοὶ αὐτῆς εἰς στολὴν δόξης.
³⁰ κόσμος γὰρ χρύσεός ἐστιν ἐπ' αὐτῆς,
καὶ οἱ δεσμοὶ αὐτῆς κλῶσμα ὑακίνθινον.
³¹ στολὴν δόξης ἐνδύσῃ αὐτήν
καὶ στέφανον ἀγαλλιάματος περιθήσεις σεαυτῷ.
³² Ἐὰν θέλῃς, τέκνον, παιδευθήσῃ,
καὶ ἐὰν ἐπιθῶς τὴν ψυχὴν σου, πανοῦργος ἔσῃ.
³³ ἐὰν ἀγαπήσῃς ἀκούειν, ἐκδέξῃ,
καὶ ἐὰν κλίνῃς τὸ οὖς σου, σοφὸς ἔσῃ.

²⁵ Offer your shoulder to her burden;
do not be impatient of her bonds.
²⁶ Court her with all your soul
and, with all your might, keep in her ways.
²⁷ Search for her, track her down; she will reveal herself;
and, holding her fast, do not let her go.
²⁸ For, in the end, you will find rest in her
and she will be turned for you into joy.
²⁹ Her fetters you will find a mighty defence,
her locks a robe of glory.
³⁰ Her yoke will be a golden ornament,
and her bonds will be purple ribbons.
³¹ You will wear her like a robe of honour;
you will put her on like a crown of joy.
³² If you wish it, my child, you can be taught;
and, if you apply yourself, you will be prudent.
³³ If you love listening, you will learn;
and, if you pay attention, you will become wise.

²⁵ The meaning of 'her bonds' here is uncertain; Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has **וואל תקץ בתחבולתיה**, which may refer to 'her cords' or 'her counsel'.

²⁶ Cairo Genizah MS 'A' lacks this verse.

²⁷ The NJB opens the 2nd line, "once you hold her."

²⁸ For the 2nd line, here (loosely) following the WEBBE, the NJB has, "and she will take the form of joy for you."

²⁹ In place of 'robe of glory', Cairo Genizah MS 'A' has 'golden garment' (**בגדי כהם**).

³⁰ 'Her yoke' follows Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (**עלי**); the LXX has 'on her' – probably a misreading by the original translator; on the 'purple ribbons'.

³¹ The NRSV, following Cairo Genizah MS 'A' (**ועטרת תפארת תעטרנה**), has 'splendid crown' in place of 'crown of joy', here following the LXX (and NJB). The last part of this verse is the only substantial text of the book found in Qumran Scroll 2Q18 (2QSir), reading, **ת תפארת תעטרנה**[...].

³² The NJB has 'become intelligent' in place of 'be prudent'.

³³ The literal translation of 'pay attention' is 'incline your ear'.

³⁴ ἐν πλήθει πρεσβυτέρων στῆθι·
καὶ τίς σοφός; αὐτῷ προσκολληθήσῃτι.
³⁵ πᾶσαν διήγησιν θείαν θέλε ἀκροᾶσθαι,
καὶ παροιμίαι συνέσεως μὴ ἐκφευγέτωσάν σε.
³⁶ ἐὰν ἴδῃς συνετόν, ὄρῃριζε πρὸς αὐτόν,
καὶ βαθμοὺς θυρῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκτριβέτω ὁ πούς σου.
³⁷ διανοοῦ ἐν τοῖς προστάγμασιν κυρίου
καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς αὐτοῦ μελέτα διὰ παντός·
αὐτὸς στηριεῖ τὴν καρδίαν σου,
καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σοφίας δοθήσεται σοι.

³⁴ Attend the gathering of elders;
if there is a wise man there, attach yourself to him.
³⁵ Listen willingly to any divine discourse;
and do not let wise proverbs escape you.
³⁶ If you see a man of understanding, visit him early;
let your feet wear out his doorsteps.
³⁷ Reflect on the injunctions of the Lord;
busy yourself at all times with his commandments.
He will strengthen your mind
and the wisdom you desire will be granted you.

³⁴ One way of becoming wise is to seek out the intelligent and frequent their company (vv. 34–36). *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'* lacks this verse.

³⁵ In place of 'divine discourse', the NJB has 'discourse coming from God'; *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'* lacks the adjective,

³⁶ The NJB has the singular, 'doorstep'; a more literal translation is 'the steps of his doors'.

³⁷ Attaining wisdom means fidelity to the Law (see also 15:1, 19:20, 23:27, 24:33). In place of 'the Lord' (*κυρίου*), *Cairo Genizah MS 'A'* has 'the Most High (God)' (*יְיָ*).

*The annotation and parallel formatting of Chs 7–51 is currently ‘in progress’
and will hopefully be completed during the course of 2025.*