

## WISDOM LITERATURE AND THE WORD

The Book of Sirach (Hebrew = *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*) was written in Greek about 190 B.C. in Jerusalem by Yeshua ben Sira (Jesus son of Sira). It is part of the Apocryphal literature in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles. The following translation is from the RSV.

| Sirach 24:1-34  | John 1:1-18 (and elsewhere) |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>24:1 Wisdom will praise herself, and will <b>glory in the midst of her people.</b></p> <p>24:2 In the assembly of the Most High she will open her mouth, and in the presence of his host she will glory:</p> <p>24:3 <b>"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,</b> and covered the earth like a mist.</p> <p>24:4 <b>I dwelt [κατασκηνοῦν] in high places, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.</b></p> <p>24:5 Alone I have made the circuit of the vault of heaven and have walked in the depths of the abyss.</p> <p>24:6 In the waves of the sea, in the whole earth, and in every people and nation I have gotten a possession.</p> <p>24:7 Among all these I sought a resting place; I sought in whose territory I might lodge.</p> <p>24:8 "Then <b>the Creator of all things</b> [ὁ κτίστης ἀπάντων] gave me a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, <b>Make your dwelling [κατασκηνοῦν] in Jacob,</b> and in Israel receive your inheritance.'</p> <p>24:9 From eternity, <b>in the beginning [ἀρχή], he created me,</b> and for eternity I shall not cease to exist.</p> <p>24:10 <b>In the holy tabernacle [σκηνή] I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion.</b></p> <p>24:11 In the beloved city likewise <b>he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my dominion [ἐξουσία].</b></p> <p>24:12 So I took root in an honored people, in the portion of the Lord, who is their inheritance.</p> <p>24:13 "I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon, and like a cypress on the heights of Hermon.</p> <p>24:14 I grew tall like a palm tree in En-ge'di, and like rose plants in Jericho; like a beautiful olive tree in the field, and like a plane tree I grew tall.</p> <p>24:15 Like cassia and camel's thorn I gave forth the aroma of spices, and like choice myrrh I spread a</p> |                             |

| <b>Sirach 24:1-34</b>  | <b>John 1:1-18 (and elsewhere)</b> |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <p>pleasant odor, like galbanum, onycha, and stacte, and like the fragrance of frankincense in the tabernacle.</p> <p>24:16 Like a terebinth I spread out my branches, and my branches are glorious [δόξα] and graceful [χάρις].</p> <p>24:17 Like a vine I caused loveliness to bud, and my blossoms became glorious and abundant fruit.</p> <p>24:19 "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my produce. 24:20 For the remembrance of me is sweeter than honey, and my inheritance sweeter than the honeycomb. 24:21 Those who eat [ἐσθίειν] me will hunger [πεινᾶζειν] for more, and those who drink [πίνειν] me will thirst [διψᾶν] for more.</p> <p>24:22 Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame, and those who work with my help will not sin."</p> <p>24:23 All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law [νόμος] which Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob.</p> <p>24:25 It fills men with wisdom, like the Pishon, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits. 24:26 It makes them full of understanding, like the Euphrates, and like the Jordan at harvest time.</p> <p>24:27 It makes instruction shine forth [ἐκφαίνειν] like light [φῶς], like the Gihon at the time of vintage.</p> <p>24:28 Just as the first man did not know her perfectly, the last one has not fathomed her;</p> <p>24:29 for her thought is more abundant than the sea, and her counsel deeper than the great abyss.</p> <p>24:30 I went forth like a canal from a river and like a water channel into a garden.</p> <p>24:31 I said, "I will water my orchard and drench my garden plot"; and lo, my canal became a river, and my river became a sea.</p> <p>24:32 I will again make instruction shine forth [φωτίζειν] like the dawn, and I will make it shine [φωτίζειν] afar;</p> <p>24:33 I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations.</p> <p>24:34 Observe that I have not labored for myself alone, but for all who seek instruction.</p> |                                    |