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SIRACH AND THE JUDAIC DOCTRINE OF CREATION

Thesis submitted by

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Finally, anything of worth in this thesis comes from the Lord, "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding ..." (Pr 2.6). To Him alone belongs all honour, glory and praise.

SUMMARY

The objective of this thesis was to consider the measure of formative influence from the Judaic doctrine of creation upon Sir. Textual sources and methodology have been crucial in our research. Sir Hebrew fragments, various Greek MSS, rendering Sir in full, and the Latin Vulgate edition provided the sources for a comparative study with creation tradition in the HB and LXX. The method of investigation has been text criticism from a contextual basis.

Our comparative study traced all major creation material in the OT according to the BH order: Gn 1-11, DI, Pss, Wisdom Literature and Early Apocalyptic. This was followed by a chapter containing an exegesis of all the major creation passages within Sir. In an eighth chapter, the purpose of creation tradition in Sir was considered under, "Schema In Sir".

Findings from this study raised three important conclusions. First, the long standing claims, from OT scholarship, that Sirach depended largely on Wisdom Literature and the Psalms to formulate his document must be questioned. The major formative influences in theology, form and creation language would appear to be Gn 1-11 and DI. Secondly, there is a substantial measure of creation faith in Sir. Thirdly, by using the doctrine of creation, Sirach developed a schema throughout his book, which gave it both form and authority.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Anchor Bible
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament
APOT	Apocrypha And Pseudepigrapha of The Old Testament
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
AV	The Authorized King James Version
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BDB	Brown, F.; Driver, S. R.; Briggs, C. A.; <u>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</u>
BH	Biblia Hebraica
Bib	Biblica
BJRUL	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library
BT	Bible Translator
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ChQR	Church Quarterly Review
DBS	The Daily Bible Study
DI	Deutero Isaiah
DOTT	Documents From Old Testament Times
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
EvQR	The Evangelical Quarterly Review
Ex	Explor
Exp.	Expositor
Expt	The Expository Times
GNB	Good News Bible

HLA	Dictionary of the Hebrew Language Academy, <u>The Book of Ben Sira. Text, Concordance and an Analysis of the Vocabulary</u>
H&R	Hatch, E.; Redpath, H. A.; et al, <u>A Concordance to the Septuagint and other Greek versions of the Old Testament including the Apocryphal books</u>
HThR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
IJA	International Journal of Apocrypha
INT	Interpretation
J	The Jahwist document
JAOS	Journal of The American Oriental Society
JB	The Jerusalem Bible
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JTCh	Journal for Theology and the Church
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KBH	Koehler, L.; Baumgartner, W; Holladay, W. H., <u>A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</u>
LXX	The Septuagint
L&S	Liddell, H. G.; Scott, R.; <u>Greek-English lexicon</u>
MS	Manuscript
MSS	Manuscripts
NCB	The New Century Bible
NEB	The New English Bible
No	Number
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NRTh	Nouvelle Revue Théologique

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the formative influences on Sirach's doctrine of creation and the significance of that doctrine in Sirach's thought.¹⁾ It is a well established fact that Sirach drew primarily from the foundational works of his Judaic heritage: evidence of such borrowings can be seen from right across the OT and into early apocalyptic literature. The major shaping forces within this vast literary field and how they left their mark on Sirach's doctrine of creation is relatively unresearched. Much of what is claimed needs serious reconsideration. Consequently, to gain an understanding of Sirach's doctrine of creation, our method of investigation begins with a close study of the Judaic doctrine of creation, from J to Jubilees, with an eye to the formative influence. It culminates in an exegetical study of his main creation texts. Throughout the study direct influences are the major concern, but this is not to infer that the evidence is always conspicuous. Sirach's style is sometimes subtle. By the placement of a word, a synonym, a thought pattern, or a restatement, Sirach frequently points to the basis of his dependency. Sirach's own creation theology is at times developed in this same syntactical style.²⁾

1) Unless the context dictates otherwise, within this study 'Sirach' will indicate the author's name and 'Sir' his book. The one exception will be in chapter headings where the title of the book will be written in full. For further discussion on the title, author's name, historicity of the text and an explanation for citing texts within this thesis, please see Appendix A.

2) This syntactical style is evident in Sir 16.24-17.14, for discussion see Chapter 7 pp.114-123. For a full consideration of schema see Chapter 8, "Schema In Sir", on pp.190-218.

In this research we have not restricted ourselves to a set definition of creation, believing that any constricting or widening to one definition seriously hampers how we view the material under consideration. At times, what may first appear as mere reference to nature can be a strong addition to the author's concept of creation, whereas in another setting the appearance of creation language may not denote any concept of creation. The use of 'snake' or the word 'sin' alone need not have any reference to Gn 3 but when the two words are paired, as in Sir 21.2a, they allude to the doctrine of creation in J. On a more conspicuous level, the occurrence of, "... כִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים מֵעֶשֶׂי מְרָאשׁ when God created his works from the beginning..." is a key creation clause which helps lay the context for an elaborate creation statement in Sir 16.24-17.14. The virtue of keeping our definition flexible is that we do not make the material fit our concept and thereby give rise to the accusation made against L. Fisher that he so broadened his definition that he abandoned all standards for creation or even cosmogonic ideas.³⁾ On the other extreme, E. G. Singgih having cautioned against turning too hastily to nature references - heavens, sky, wind and mountains⁴⁾, then proceeded to include the theophanies as a significant part of his concept of creation.⁵⁾ What then is to be our guide? We believe the context must be the first determining factor, followed by the language, form and theology of the writer. Moreover, the material under consideration must not be studied in isolation. It was this approach that convinced us to go back through the OT and Apocalyptic literature in order to determine the tradition upon which Sirach built.

³⁾ L. Fisher, "Creation At Ugarit And In The Old Testament", VT, Vol. 15, 1965, pp.313-324. For critique see, D. J. McCarthy, "Creation Motifs In Ancient Hebrew Poetry", CBQ, 29, 1967, note 1, p. 393; A. S. Kapelrud, "Creation in the Ras Shamra Text", ST, 34, 1980 pp.1-11; G. Landes, "Creation and Liberation" USQR XXXIII, No 2, 1978, Note 17, p.89.

⁴⁾ E. G. Singgih, "The Concept of Creation In Prophetic Tradition From Amos To Deutero Isaiah", (Ph.D. dissertation, The University, Glasgow, 1981).

⁵⁾ *ibid.*, pp.19-42.

Throughout the research we have found much assistance from the three basic questions posed by Ph.B. Harner in his attempt to measure the influence of creation faith in DI. 1/ Does creation faith have more than an ancillary function? 2/ Does it actually constitute an integral part of the total structure of thought, with at least a relative independence of its own? 3/ Is it in any sense a part of the author's message instead of just a presupposition?⁶⁾ The findings of our research indicated that the major areas for a comparative study with Sir were: Genesis, DI, Psalms, Wisdom Literature and Early Apocalyptic. We were then left with the question of order. Should we follow chronology? It was soon apparent from Sirach's use of the tradition (he had all of the above and more) that antiquity was not a consideration. He chose from his wide selection that which would give the fullest possible impact to his own personal statement on the doctrine of creation. Sometimes this meant drawing upon the works of his contemporary writers, or at other times choosing to draw upon those which were long established as part of his religious heritage. Thus we concluded, our order of presentation would not be chronological; instead we would simply follow the order of works as presented in Biblia Hebraica. With this choice we follow the plan indicated by the grandson's description in his prologue, which points to the grandfather's sources of reference as being from: the law, the prophets and other books of the fathers.

The lack of any serious previous study of creation faith in Sir has been a motivating factor for this research. One of the most perceptive discussions, though brief, is that offered by J. L. Crenshaw, "The Quest for Survival: Sirach".⁷⁾ Crenshaw breaks stride with most OT scholars when he states, "By far the most allusions derive from Pentateuchal

⁶⁾ Ph.B. Harner, "Creation Faith In Deutero Isaiah" VT, 17, 1967, p.299.

⁷⁾ J. L. Crenshaw, "The Quest for Survival: Sirach", in Old Testament Wisdom, SCM Press Ltd. London 1982, pp.149-173.

traditions concerning the Primeval History (Genesis 1-11) and the Patriarchal Narratives."⁸⁾ We concur with the first part of his statement but doubt the influence attributed to the Patriarchal Narratives. Beyond a sampling of cross references Crenshaw does not follow through his theory. As with most other OT scholars, he seems unaware of the significant influence of DI upon Sir. This statement is confirmed not only by a lack of reference to DI, but by Crenshaw's joining his voice with other scholars in claiming that Sirach has a jaundiced view of prophets.⁹⁾ Nor are we happy with his conclusion that Joseph and the four primeval characters are placed on the honour roll merely, "As an afterthought ..."¹⁰⁾ These comments will be considered later in our study. For the present, credit is due to Crenshaw for pointing in a fresh direction for source dependency when most scholars still hold that the major influences on Sir are derived from the Psalms and Wisdom Literature. W. O. Oesterley is representative when he describes Sir as thoroughly orthodox and holding much affinity with Job, Psalms and Proverbs.¹¹⁾ R. E. Murphy in his recent publication, Wisdom Literature and Psalms, sees such a close dependency of Sir 24 on Proverbs 8 that having quoted Sir 24.1-23 he offers this directive to the reader, "See the comments on Proverbs 8 above for the personification of wisdom and the broader context. Sirach 24 is a reinterpretation of Proverbs 8."¹²⁾

⁸⁾ *ibid.*, p.150 (our underlining of the word "allusions" is to indicate italics by the author).

⁹⁾ *ibid.*, p.152.

¹⁰⁾ *ibid.*, p.152.

¹¹⁾ W. O. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, The University Press, Cambridge, 1912, p.xxiii.

¹²⁾ R. E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature and Psalms, Abingdon, Nashville, 1983, p.104.

Other scholars seem unaware of the existence of a doctrine of creation within Sir. This is particularly surprising among Roman Catholic scholars for whom Sir is a canonical document. G. Lambert in his paper on creation entitled, "La Création Dans La Bible", makes no mention of Sir even though Maccabees and other apocryphal books are included in his study.¹³⁾ Confirmation of this lack of awareness of creation faith in Sir is further evidenced by his list, "Le verbe *bārā* ... dans l'Ancien Testament."¹⁴⁾ It does not include any of the Sir texts. Citings of *אֱלֹהִים* in the Hebrew fragment can be seen in Sir 15.14; 16.24; 40.10.¹⁵⁾ The first text is particularly conspicuous in its unique creation context,

אֱלֹהִים מִבְּרָא שֵׁית	God from the beginning
... אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים	created man ...

A similar lack of awareness of a doctrine of creation in Sir is evident in P. Humbert's article, "Emploi et portée du verbe *bārā* (créer) dans L' Ancien Testament."¹⁶⁾

Beyond the questions of source dependency and the extent of creation faith in Sir, other claims about the book need challenging: that Sirach's concept of Torah is equivalent to Pentateuch; that Sir is written as a defense contra Hellenization; that it lacks any schematic investigation. Concerning the first claim, J. Blenkinsopp's Wisdom And Law In The Old Testament represents the most popular view, in a surprisingly wide spectrum of OT thinking, when he calls for *תורה* in Sir as being equated with

¹³⁾ G. Lambert, "La Création Dans La Bible", Nouvelle Revue Théologique, Vol 75, 1953, pp.252-281.

¹⁴⁾ *ibid.*, p.267, note 44.

¹⁵⁾ See Appendix B, "Verbs and Verbal Roots of Creation in Sirach" for complete listing.

¹⁶⁾ P. Humbert, "Emploi et portée du verbe *bārā* (créer) dans l'Ancien Testament", dans, Opuscles D'un Hébraïsant, Neuchatel, 1958, pp.147-165.

Pentateuch.¹⁷⁾ This is a questionable assumption. Instead, Sirach seems to be continuing the understanding of earlier wisdom writers who consider $\overline{\text{רד}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ as Divine will, a guide to all life. This discussion will receive close consideration in our exegesis of Sir creation texts. The view that Sir is primarily a polemic on Hellenization finds little support within the text.¹⁸⁾ This faithful Wisdom Teacher was simply eager to pour out his insights of $\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ and $\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}\overline{\text{ל}}$. This is readily apparent from his autobiographical statements in Sir 24.33-34.

ἔτι διδασκαλίαν ὡς προφητείαν ἔκχεῶ
καὶ καταλείψω αὐτὴν εἰς γενεὰς αἰώνων.
ἴδετε ὅτι οὐκ ἔμοι μόνῳ ἔκοπίασα,
ἀλλ' ἅπασιν τοῖς ἐκκλητοῦσιν αὐτὴν.

The last comment in Sirach's testimony is restated in Sir 33.18.

Those who would still claim a narrow definition of wisdom by Sirach, seeing his work as largely a restating of old proverbial sayings, must be challenged. G. vonRad begins to clarify the issue when he writes, "Sirach extends the concept 'wisdom' in broad, programmatic terms."¹⁹⁾ However, this same giant in the field of OT, who once described the doctrine of

¹⁷⁾ J. Blenkinsopp, Wisdom And Law In The Old Testament, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, pp.1; 140-145. See also G. T. Sheppard, Wisdom As a Hermeneutical Construct, W. De Gruyter, Berlin, 1980, Note 59 p.14; p.82. R.A.F. MacKenzie, Sirach, OTM, 19, Michael Glazier, Inc., Delaware, 1983, pp.16; 103. R. E. Murphy, op. cit., p.105.

¹⁸⁾ A. Di Lella says Sir was published to bolster the faith of fellow Jews. He then adds, "His purpose was not so much to engage in a systematic polemic against Hellenism, but rather to convince Jews -and even well-disposed Gentiles that true wisdom is to be found in Jerusalem...", "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom" in, Studies In Ancient Israelite Wisdom, edited by H. M. Orlinsky, KTAV Publishing House Inc., New York, 1976, p.403. This same discussion of Sirach's reaction to Hellenization by Di Lella is also found in the, CBQ, 28, 1966, pp.139-154. For further discussion of Hellenization see Chapter 6, p.80 of our study.

¹⁹⁾ G. VonRad, "The Wisdom of Jesus Sirach", in, Wisdom In Israel, Translated by J. D. Martin, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1972, p.241.

creation as a "magnificent foil",²⁰⁾ is convinced that Sirach's text defies any scheme.²¹⁾ On the contrary, we shall argue that within Sir the doctrine of creation has become the central theological force offering both form and authority.

Although it did not serve as our directive, J.L. Crenshaw's plea for a paper on the centrality of creation theology in wisdom is an encouraging confirmation. He writes, "Astonishingly to this day no one has devoted a full scale essay to this problem despite the constant refrain in scholarly works that wisdom thought and creation theology are inseparably bound together."²²⁾ He rightly adds that such a study would have to be against the background of creation in the total thought of Israel.

²⁰⁾ G. VonRad, "The Problem of The Hexateuch And Other Essays", Translated by E. W. Dicken, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1966, p.134.

²¹⁾ G. VonRad, op. cit., note 2, p.240.

²²⁾ J. L. Crenshaw, "Prolegomenon", in, SAIW, op. cit., p.26.

CHAPTER TWO

SIRACH AND GENESIS 1-11

The formative influence of the primeval history in Genesis 1-11 upon Sirach's doctrine of creation can not be outweighed by any other OT document. The choice of Gn 1-11 for comparison, as opposed to Gn 1-2, is important for several reasons. The broader context underlines that man can assert his independence as the one who sits at the pinnacle of the created order, but he must realize his bounds. The Noah saga dramatically displays man's limits and at the same time it carries the important guarantee that the ^לב of creation is no longer under the threat of total destruction. C. Westermann rightly concludes, "The God-created man and the God-created world are presented by the biblical authors not in chs 1-3 but in chs 1-11."¹⁾ The larger context also ensures that the blessing of God upon all flesh, Gn 1.22, is carried through in the P concept of pairs. The blessing of male and female in Gn 1.28 moves to Noah, the progenitor, and eventually rests with the promised blessing upon Abram in Gn 12.2. In Genesis creation faith leads to election faith. As will be seen in later chapters this broad form which moves from a universalistic to a particularistic message is one of which Sirach is well aware and skillfully adapts from P. R. Davidson sums the issue well when he writes, "The book of Genesis begins with the broad canvas of creation and narrows down to the particular

¹⁾ C. Westermann, Creation, Translated by J. J. Scullion, SPCK, London, 1974, p.28.

history of one nation in its pilgrim forefather Abraham."²⁾ It is this broad canvas of creation which we shall hold up against Sir. To appreciate fully the impact of Gn 1-11 on Sir we have found it helpful to separate these chapters into the two main categories of Priestly and Yahwist strands of tradition. Our findings will be organized under these two headings. Although such a break up in material was unknown to Sirach, it offers an insightful approach for modern scholarship. We will begin with P.

I Priestly Influence

Almost every major theological concept of P found in the primeval history has been taken up by Sirach. It begins with P's opening statement on creation in Gn 1.1,

בראשית ברא אל־הים
את השמים ואת הארץ:

In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth.

These introductory words offer a summary of the P creation account, and at the same time make it quite clear that God created all. The כָּל of creation forms a strategic part of Sirach's doctrine of creation. It is summed up well in Sirach's central chapter with his divine title for God, ὁ κτίστης πάντων, the Creator of all things (Sir 24.8a). At the beginning of Sirach's book, Sir 1.4a, προτέρα πάντων 'before all things' is a phrase which makes way for two important realities: God created all³⁾ and wisdom pre-existed. Although personified חכמה was before all things she too is part of the created כָּל. This is made evident in Sir 1.1,9 where Sirach opens his whole text with these thoughts,

²⁾ R. Davidson, Genesis 1-11, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973, p.9.

³⁾ We would not want to make too much of the word πᾶς, but not only is it the opening word to the Greek text it occurs also in Sir 1.4a, 9c, 10a. M. H. Segal's Hebrew reconstruction employs the word כָּל for all four citings in his text, ספרוֹן סִרְא דְּשִׁלְחַן, Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 1958, p.2.

πάντα σοφία παρὰ κυρίου...
κύριος αὐτὸς ἐκτίσεν αὐτήν...

All wisdom is from the Lord ...
The Lord himself created her ...

The reflexive use of the pronoun αὐτὸς 'himself' makes it very clear that God alone performed this creation act. αὐτήν can only refer back to wisdom, as the RSV rendering 'wisdom' for αὐτήν indicates. This same concept of the ל of creation is also in the opening words of Sirach's poem to the Creator (Sir 18.1),

ὁ ζῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
ἐκτίσεν τὰ πάντα κοινῇ.

He who lives for ever
created all things in common.

This last statement is the closest parallel in thought with the concept implied in Gn 1.1. In Gn, this opening remark, penned during the Babylonian captivity sweeps away any possibility of glory for the creation acts being given to anyone other than God. Although the Sitz im Leben has changed, Sirach remains faithful to the strong, monotheistic creator concept established in P. Two factors helped Sirach avoid any clash with his Hebraic creator theology: 1/ God created wisdom and apportioned her (Sir 1.9-10); 2/ unlike Proverbs 8 personified wisdom is never portrayed as participating in the acts of creation. On the contrary, in Sir 1.8a it states, "εἷς ἐστὶν σοφός, φοβερός σφόδρα... One is wise, to be feared greatly ..." It is this One who is rightly called, ὁ κτίστης πάντων.

Sirach shows his dependence on the language, form and thought of Gn 1.1 when he writes in Sir 15.14a, "...אלהים מן התחלה ברא אדם God from in the beginning created man..." This same thought which is found nowhere else in the OT, is restated in Sir 16.24a,

כברא אל מעשיו בראש...

When God from the beginning created
his works ...

Creation by word is the next theological concept which forges a very strong bond between P and Sir. Wisdom herself is spoken into existence in Sir 24.3a,

‘Εγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου
ἐξῆλθον...

I from the mouth of the most High
came forth ...

The opening verses of Sirach's poem on the *לְחִישֵׁי*, Sir 42.15-43.33, further establishes the concept of creation by divine fiat while at the same time making a play on the words of P's creation account. For comparison they are as follows Gn 1.3; Sir 42.15c,

...וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
...וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים

And God said ...
By the word of God ...

The Masada Scroll makes the word play on *אמר* in Gn 1.3 yet more obvious with the expression, "...*וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים*, By the word of the Lord..." (Sir 42.15c). Within this same lengthy poem on creation, which is filled with P imagery, Sirach repeats on three separate occasions the thought or theological concept, that God creates by his word. The extant Hebrew shows two of these (Sir 43.5b, 10a). The first citing has, "*וַיֹּאמֶר*", and (at) his words", while the second reads, "*וַיֹּאמֶר*, by the word of God". It is Sirach's brief, concluding statement to this same hymn which captures most vividly this P creation concept (Sir 43.26b),

...וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
... and by his words he does his will.

The last three citings noted above are referring to the sustaining creative power of God's word rather than the proto-creative acts. Whether it is the sun moving on its course (Sir 43.5), or the stars coming out on parade (Sir 43.10), their work is carried out at God's word. The work of the luminaries is described by P when he states in Gn 1.17-18,

וַיִּתֵּן אֱלֹהִים
בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ
וּלְמַשֵּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה
וּלְהַבְרִיץ בֵּין הָאֹר
וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ...

And God set them
in the firmament of the heavens
to give light upon the earth
and to rule over the day and over the
night
and to separate the light
from darkness ...

It is this on-going work, enabled by the sustaining power of God, that the Greek translator depicts in his paraphrase of Sir 43.26b, "*καὶ ἐν λόγῳ αὐτοῦ σύγκειται τὰ πάντα*, and by his word all things hold together." The P

stamp of approval on the Lord's works rendered in the expression, "וְיָרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב" (Gn 1.3, 10, 18, 25) is given full use by Sirach when he states, "טוֹב כָּל בְּרִיאָתוֹ", God's works are all good." (Sir 39.16a). Though the fragment is partially mutilated here, that it is God's works which are under approval; is confirmed by the same claim being restated in Sir 39.33a, "טוֹב כָּל בְּרִיאָתוֹ." In translating the first of these two texts the grandson wrote in Sir 39.16a,

τὰ ἔργα κυρίου πάντα ὅτι καλὰ σφόδρα,	All the works of the Lord are very good,
--	---

This is a very close summary of God's approval upon all his works in Gn 1.31,

καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησεν καὶ ἰδοὺ καλὰ λίαν.	And God saw everything that he created and behold it was very good.
---	---

A brief summary of the good works is given in Sir 16.26-27a; 28-30. The statement corresponds closely in theological concepts, language, and actual order of creation with the creation account in Gn 1. Unfortunately only the opening clause is available in the Hebrew fragment. Nonetheless it clearly points to the source dependency in Sir 16.24(H),

...מֵעֵצָה בְּרִיאָתוֹ מֵעֵצָה	When God created his works from the beginning ...
--------------------------------	--

The correspondence between the above clause and Gn 1.1 is very close, particularly if the P statement is read as a time clause. The full Greek text carries through this P correspondence in Sir 16.26-27a, 28-30(GK)⁴⁾

⁴⁾ As noted in Appendix A, note 4, all quotations in Greek follow A. Rahlfs' version. The English translation is not dependent on any version. Although it appears stilted at times, we have chosen a more literal as opposed to idiomatic style for the purpose of paralleling the texts and affording the closest possible wording for both the Greek and Hebrew. It should also be noted that the verse and chapter numbers of the Greek do not always correspond with the Hebrew. For example, Sir 16.24a(H) is actually Sir 16.26a in Greek. The variations in chapter numbering is particularly apparent between Sir 30.24-36.16. H. B. Swete explains, "The error seems to have arisen from a transposition in the common archetype of the pairs of leaves on which these two nearly equal sections were severally written ...", An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, Cambridge University Press, 1902, p.271. In all references where variation occurs we will indicate by adding (H) or (GK) to the citing.

Ἐν κρίσει κυρίου
 τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς,
 καὶ ἀπὸ ποιήσεως αὐτῶν
 διέστειλεν μερίδας αὐτῶν.
 ἔκδομησεν εἰς αἰῶνα
 τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ
 καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν
 εἰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν...
 ἕκαστος τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ
 οὐκ ἐξέθλιψεν,
 καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος
 οὐκ ἀπειθήσουσιν
 τοῦ ῥήματος αὐτοῦ.
 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα κύριος
 εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐπέβλεψεν
 καὶ ἐνέπλησεν αὐτὴν
 τῶν ἀγαθῶν αὐτοῦ.
 ψυχῇ παντὸς ζώου
 ἔκάλυψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς,
 καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν ἡ ἀποστροφὴ αὐτῶν.

By judgement of the Lord
 his works are from the beginning
 and from creating them
 he determined their divisions.
 He arranged for an eternity
 his works
 and their dominion
 for their generations ...
 Everyone does not squeeze aside
 his neighbour
 and till eternity
 they shall never disobey
 his word.
 And with this the Lord
 looked upon the earth
 and filled it
 with his good things.
 With all living beings
 he covered its surface,
 and into it they return.

The Greek translator has replaced the opening Hebrew phrase **כְּרִיתָהּ**,
 by **ἐν κρίσει**, 'by judgement'. J. Snaith suggests that the grandson
 mistakenly placed the word **κρίσει** 'judgement' for **κτίσει** 'creation'.⁵⁾
 Scholarship is silenced on any other possible changes; however, by
 paralleling the text with Gn 1 it is apparent that the translator remained
 consistent with the direction into which the Hebrew fragment points. The
 only variation is in Sir 16.27c, "**οὔτε ἐπείναςαν οὔτε ἐκοτίσσαν**", they
 neither hunger nor grow weary." A similar thought is used to describe the
 stars in Sir 43.10. Both are clearly dependent on DI creation faith. This
 dependence is considered in Chapter Three page 39. Excluding the DI
 reference the whole Sir text quoted above flows in a clipped order
 highlighting many of the major creation acts described in Gn 1.1-25.⁶⁾

5) J. G. Snaith, Ecclesiasticus, Cambridge University Press,
 Cambridge, 1974, p.85. For our consideration of the changes see Appendix
 A, p.229, Note 10.

6) An exegetical study is contained in Chapter Seven: our present
 intentions are with continuing to draw out the correspondences between Sir
 and P's doctrine of creation. See pp.115-117.

Following the introductory time clause, attention is drawn immediately to the physical ordering of creation into *μερίδας*, (Sir 16.26b). This includes all the P works of separation: waters from the waters, waters from the dry land and day from night. The following verse reiterates their ordering and underlines at the same time their eternal quality with the phrase, "*ἐκόσμησεν εἰς αἰῶνα*, He arranged (his Works) for an eternity." (Sir 16.27a). *ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν* 'their dominion' can only be with reference to the work of the created order as it passes from times and seasons, generation to generation. *ἀρχὰς* is the same word used by the LXX for 'dominion' in Gn 1.16. As stated earlier they carry out their functions by the sustaining power of God's *וַיַּחַד*. How well the created works respond to God's command is concisely stated by Sir 16.28, "*καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος οὐκ ἀπειθήσουσιν τοῦ ῥήματος αὐτοῦ* and till eternity they shall never disobey his word." The P refrain which depicts God reviewing his creation (Gn 1.4, 10,18,25) is announced in Sir when the world is ordered but waiting for life to be put upon it, "*καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα κύριος εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐπέβλεψεν* ... and with this the Lord looked upon the earth" (Sir 16.29a). The timing of his statement is more in keeping with the second occurrence of the P refrain in Gn 1.10 which is followed by the coming forth of plant life. *τῶν ἀγαθῶν* 'good things' referred to in Sir 16.29b may include both plant life and sea life unless *πρόσωπον* 'surface' in the following verse entails the whole earth (air, sea and land) as opposed to just the dry land. The use of *ψυχῇ παντὸς ζῶον* 'all living beings' would support the wider interpretation of *πρόσωπον*. In the P account the fish, birds and animals are all categorized as *ψυχὴν ζῶσαν* (Gn 1.20,24). Like P Sirach reserves the account of man's creation for a separate statement, Sir 17.1. This statement which opens the next pericope is based largely on the J document, thus will be considered later in this chapter. It is not the end of Sir dependency on

the Gn 1 account. Sirach continues by picking up on three more major P theological concepts: man's dominion, his creation in God's image and man's ability to praise the Creator.

Like the P writer Sirach states twice that man was given authority or dominion over the earth (Sir 17.2b, 4). The first reference is more in keeping with Gn 1.26b,

... καὶ ἀρχέτωσαν
τῶν ἰχθύων τῆς θαλάσσης
καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
καὶ τῶν κτηνῶν
καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς
καὶ πάντων τῶν ἑρπετῶν
τῶν ἐρπόντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

... let them have dominion
over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the heavens
and over the cattle
and all the earth
and over every creeping thing
that creeps upon the earth.

This lengthy P list which details what is meant by, *ψυχῇ παντὸς ἔωου* is summed by Sir 17.2b, "καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς and he gave them dominion over things upon it." The αὐτῆς can only refer back to γῆς. The RSV and NEB translators confirm this by inserting 'earth' instead of 'it' (αὐτῆς). Placing so much weight on αὐτῆς is in keeping with the clipped style used by Sirach throughout this creation text. The second reference to man's dominion is more detailed, Sir 17.4. Its specific naming of *θηρίων* 'beasts' and *πετεινῶν* 'birds' gives this text a close affinity with Gn 1.26 and the blessing of man in Gn 1.28. The latter is more favoured because of the verb employed in Sir 17.4,

ἔθηκεν τὸν φόβον αὐτοῦ
ἐπὶ πάσης σαρκὸς
καὶ κατακυριεύειν
θηρίων καὶ πετεινῶν.

He placed the fear of them
upon all flesh
and gave them dominion
(over) beasts and birds.

The first half of the stanza is based on Gn 9.1-3 where the blessing of God, given to all men in Gn 1, is now placed on Noah and his sons. With the blessing of God granted there comes the promise of *ὁ φόβος*. In Gn 9.1-3 *φόβος* is a sign of man's dominion. The Sir Greek text moves beyond the claim of *φόβος* employing the phrase *κατακυριεύειν*, as in Gn 9.1. However, the Gn 9.1 commission to Noah and his sons, is identical to the portion of the statement from Gn 1.28 where the same verb is used of man's commission to subdue the earth. Moreover, Sirach follows the Gn 1 writer

in addressing man in general, unlike the Noah saga where it is very specific. The importance of seeing a universalistic message at this juncture in Sir will become more apparent later in our research.

As in the P creation account, Sirach placed his statement on the creation of man in God's image between the two recordings of man being granted dominion. The claim that man was created in the image of God appears only three times in the OT: all three occur within Gn 1-11. In Gn 9.6 the P writer is simply restating his claims made in Gn 1.26,27. In its third context it is recalled as a reason for man not shedding the blood of his fellow man. Considering the creation context in Sir, the close ordering of his statement according to the P form of Gn 1 and the use of the phrase *κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ* 'like his own image', in Sir 17.3b, it is apparent that Sirach is drawing directly from Gn 1.27. "*καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς*, and like his own image he created them", is almost a direct quote of Gn 1.27b. The choice of *εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ* 'his image' rather than *εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν* 'our image' could be considered a personal commentary on the very perplexing Gn 1.26 text which infers that God is not alone in his creating. This becomes the more obvious when we realize how throughout his whole book Sirach stresses that God alone is creator. It may also explain Sirach's statement in the midst of his poem on the works of creation where he writes (Sir 42.21c,d),

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{ג[וס] ח[ל]} \\ \text{ל[ח] ח[ל] ח[ל]} \\ \text{ל[ח] ח[ל] ח[ל]} \\ \text{ל[ח] ח[ל] ח[ל]} \end{array}$$
 : מבי'ן לכל צריך עזר

Nothing can be added
 and nothing can be taken away
 he needs no counsellor.

The thought pattern of this statement reflects that of DI 40.13b-14 which raises the question of whom God consults for His counsel. Neither DI nor Sir, would appear to lend support to the theory of a plural interpretation of the 'Let us' phrase in Gn 1.26a. The grandson's translation makes this yet more clear when he writes in Sir 42.21d, "*καὶ οὐ προσεδεήθη οὐδενὸς συμβούλου*. And he needs no one to give Him advice." However, there still

remains the question of what Sirach intended by his use of the imago Deo. His close aligning of the context so that it parallels the context of the P account (that is placing the 'image of God' statement between the two claims of man's right to dominion) indicates that he believes it means man's ability to share sovereignty with God. Sirach moves from his synthesis of P and J when he explains that man is endowed with a strength like God's: having a tongue to speak, ears to hear and a mind to exercise free will (Sir 17.6). Sirach then adds that man has been filled with knowledge and has been shown good and evil. All of this enables man in his personal relationship of shared sovereignty with God to act responsibly. Beyond shared responsibility, 'being in God's image' for Sirach also means man is endowed with the ability to worship God (Sir 17.10),

καὶ ὄνομα ἁγιασμοῦ αἰγέσουσιν,	And they shall praise his holy name,
ἵνα δειγῶνται	that they may declare
τὰ μεγαλεῖα τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.	the majesty of his works.

This represents the apex of Sirach's own faith and how he views man in his doctrine of creation.⁷⁾ It is this enthusiasm for the praise of God that enables him to say unto all people (Sir 43.30),

[י י י י]	וְגָדְתָּ	You that magnify the Lord
הַרְמוֹ קוֹלְךָ	בְּכָל חֲזָקָתְךָ	lift up your voice
כִּי שְׂעוֹד:	מְרוֹמֵי חַיִּים לִפְנֵי כָח	with all your strength
וְאַל תִּלְּאֵהוּ כִּי לֹא תִּשְׁקָר:		for there is yet more.
		You that exhort him renew your
		strength
		And weary not for you will not fully
		search him out.

The language with its strong DI influence is examined in Chapter Three, page 43. Considering Sirach's high priority on man's praise of the Creator and the centrality of creation theology to his whole book, it is understandable that he should deliberately choose to draw so heavily on the

⁷⁾ This creation concept, of man praising the Creator, is vividly pictured in Sir 50 which portrays Simon leading the congregation in worship. For discussion see pp. 205-208.

Gn 1 account, which places man at the centre of creation and in a personal relationship with God. Few would deny that within this same P account, which concludes with the seventh day being made 'blessed' and 'holy', the praise of God orchestrates the whole.⁸⁾

The above résumé of P works of creation is not the end of Sirach's dependency on this profound writing. The P ordering of created things, times and seasons as determined by the luminaries and the Noah saga with its many theological implications are all embedded within Sirach's text. The order of the created world is fixed in the opening remarks of the Gn 1 account, "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν... τῆς ἀβύσσου ...". This exact order is found in the opening words of Sir with the statement, "ὕψος οὐρανοῦ καὶ πλάτος γῆς καὶ ἄβυσσον ..." (Sir 1.3). It is doubtful whether this exact P order is repeated elsewhere in the OT. Sirach uses it again in his poem on the created works in Sir 43.1-33. Here the whole hymn is structured under the form of heavens (43.1-12), earth (43.13-22) and abyss (43.23-26). Moreover, in the portion of his poem on the luminaries (43.1-12), the order of sun, moon and stars is identical with the created order of the lights as listed in Gn 1.16.

Sirach draws on the P concept of signs and seasons, days and years for two purposes. In Sir 33.7-9(GK) where the translator shows how Sirach is endeavouring to explain the inequality within creation we read,

Διὰ τί ἡμέρα
ἡμέρας ὑπερέχει
καὶ πᾶν φῶς ἡμέρας
ἐνιαυτοῦ ἀπ' ἡλίου;
ἐν γνῶσει κυρίου
διεχωρίσθησαν,
καὶ ἡλλοίωσεν καιροὺς
καὶ ἑορτάς;
ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀνύψωσεν
καὶ ἡγίασεν
καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔθηκεν
εἰς ἀριθμὸν ἡμερῶν.

Why does one day
surpass other days
when all the light of day
in the year is from the sun?
By the Lord's knowledge
they were distinguished,
and he varied the seasons
and the feasts.
Some of them he exalted
and hallowed
and some of them he made
into ordinary days.

⁸⁾ C. Westermann rightly insists that Gn 1 & 2 can only be read in the context of the praise of God, The Genesis Accounts of Creation, trans. N. E. Wagner, Fawcett Books, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1964, p.4.

There is a continued link with the P account of the luminaries. The above text seems especially to reflect P's description of God appointing tasks to the luminaries, "...καὶ ἔστωσαν εἰς σημεῖα καὶ εἰς καιροὺς καὶ εἰς ἡμέρας καὶ εἰς ἔνιαυτούς...", and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years ..." (Gn 1.14b). The answer to the initial question of inequality is quickly given by the comment "ἐν γνώσει κυρίου. By the Lord's knowledge." The Lord distinguished, appointed, exalted, hallowed and assigned the days. Besides the Lord's knowledge (wisdom) Sirach says the created order was decided by his pleasure, "וּבְדַבְּרֵי יָפְעַל רָצוֹן;" and by his words he does his pleasure." (Sir 43.26b). This second statement is charged with God's ultimate authority to do as he pleases. It is this same pleasure or will of God that the P writer portrayed effortlessly with his refrain, "...אמר אלהים", and God said ..." (Gn 1.3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26).

The second occasion for Sirach's correspondence with the P concept of signs and seasons comes in his poem on the στερέωμα καθαριότητος, 'clear firmament'. Although it includes vivid accounts of the sun, moon and stars, the moon is singled out for a very scientific description which tells how it controls the signs and seasons in Sir 43.6-7a, 8.

וְהָם יָרַח יְיָ רַח עֲתוֹת שְׁבוֹת
בְּמִשְׁלַת קֶץ וְגֹת עוֹלָם:

ב(ו) מוֹעֵד וְזִמְנֵי חֹדֶק...

הַדֶּשׁ בְּחֻדְשׁוֹ הוּא מִתְחַדֵּשׁ
מִה נֹרָא בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲנוּתוֹ:
כְּלִי צִבָּא נֹבֵל מְרוֹם
מְרַצֵּף רִקִּיעַ מִזֵּה רִתּוֹ:

The moon also shines from time to time
for rule of time and an everlasting
sign.

From it are the festivals and the
times of decree ...

The month renews itself from the moon
how terrible is she in her changing.
An instrument of the hosts on high
she paves the firmament with her
shining.

With the Hebrew calendar being lunar⁹⁾ it is understandable that Sirach chose the moon for the explanation of signs, seasons and festivals. The 'month' gets its name from the moon, a fact Sirach is well aware of in his

⁹⁾ An excellent discussion of the lunar calendar is contained in R. de Vaux's, "Divisions of Time", in Ancient Israel, Trans. by J. McHugh Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1974, pp.178-194.

word play with שֶׁטֶף . The word play becomes reflected in the Greek translators' rendering of μήν for 'month' and μήνη for 'moon'. The Sir Greek translator being aware of the Gn 1 parallels endeavours to draw the passage yet closer by inclusion of the phrase ἐν στερεώματι οὐρανοῦ 'in the firmament of heavens'. The same phrase occurs twice in the P description of the luminaries (Gn 1.14, 15). The Sir Hebrew fragment has only רָקִיעַ 'firmament' but it too has strong P affinity (Gn 1.6, 7a,b,c, 8, 14, 15, 17,20). רָקִיעַ, being the hammered out vault of the sky as depicted in Gn 1, became a key word in Hebrew cosmogony. It is from the height of the רָקִיעַ that the moon is set for מַשְׁלָט 'rule of' time and seasons. The Greek translation of כֶּלִי as σκεῦος 'instrument' is an effective one, leaving the overall impression of the moon being one large timepiece. Sirach appropriately concludes this poem on the lights of creation with the most beautiful of all lights, the rainbow. It makes a fitting conclusion, not just because of its beauty, or that it enables Sirach to maintain his P order of the lights, Gn 1-11, but rather because the קשת draws strong lines between P's primeval creation account and his own text. Outside of the P account there are only two other occurrences of קשת 'rainbow' in the OT. The first citing, II Samuel 1.18, is corrupt. The second reference to קשת is in Ezekiel 1.28 where its beauty is used for comparative purposes. The description in Sir 43.11-12, is not only to its beauty but of its creation. The emphasis on its creation is made very obvious when Sirach writes, "... וְרָאָה קֶשֶׁת וּבֵרַךְ עֲשִׂיהָ... וַיֵּצֵא יְהוָה אֶת הַקֶּשֶׁת מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם", see the bow and bless the one who made it ... the hand of God stretched it out ..." (Sir 43.11a,12b). It is this קשת which stands as a promise that God will preserve his created order for ever.

Besides the inclusion of the rainbow other aspects of the Noah saga are carefully placed within Sir. The reason for the flood, which is given in Gn 6.11-12, is succinctly restated by the Greek text in Sir 40.10.

ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνόμους
ἐκτίσθη ταῦτα πάντα,
καὶ δι' αὐτοὺς ἐγένετο
ὁ κατακλυσμός .

For the wicked
all these were created,
and on their account
the flood came.

The Hebrew fragment, though partly mutilated, supports this translation.

על רשע ובראיה רעה
ונוצור תמוש כלה :

Evil was created for the wicked
and on their account ' ' ' complete
destruction.

Since שמוש is dubious and the word for 'flood' מבוּל is lacking much weight for interpretation rests with the word כלה . That כלה is in fact referring to the Noah saga is apparent from the context of the word in a second text (Sir 44.17b).

ומצא תמים
לעת כלה
היה תחליף :

Noah the righteous was found perfect,
at the time of the complete
destruction
he was the progenitor.

Thus, in both texts כלה is employed as a synonym for מבוּל . In the same passage cited above תחליף is translated by the Greek as meaning one taken in exchange. This is one understanding but there is yet another. Sirach used תחליף on a second occasion, Sir 48.8b. In the context of this citing it is regarding Elijah's choosing the prophet Elisha to succeed him. Here תחליף means the one who carries forward the role of prophetic life. Noah, in both the P and Sir accounts, was to carry forward the essence of all created life. Noah was chosen by God as the progenitor for new beginnings. Because of Noah, the צדיק 'righteous' and תמים 'perfect' one, all of creation can now live without the threat of total destruction. Sirach returns to the קשת , which stands as an אות עולם 'eternal sign' to this important aspect of the doctrine of creation, by restating the promise made in Gn 9.11. He writes in Sir 44.18,

באות עולם וכרת צמו
לביתי השחית כל בשר :

An eternal sign was cut with him
(Noah)
not to destroy (again) all flesh.

Beyond creation theology and language an important P form has an overall shaping influence on Sir. That literary form is the placing of history and creation together.¹⁰⁾ This same combining of history and creation is found nowhere else in the wisdom literature. In DI and the Psalms it is always a paralleling of creation and Heilsgeschichte. Apart from reference to key figures in the honour roll like Abraham and Moses, Sirach seldom mentions any aspect of salvation history. One rare citing of the exodus event is given by reference to the waters being heaped in Sir 39.17b. On the other hand both Sir and P utilize the combination of creation and history by listing. In both texts the listing is by historical succession or chronological order. In Sir the chronological order begins with Enoch, is broken by a second mention of Enoch, then is followed by a retrospect containing the names of: Joseph, Shem, Seth and Adam (Sir 44.16-49.16). The latter names are in reverse chronological order. For P's listing it is important to note not only that he follows the tol^edot formulae, which infers chronological order, but that he begins his historical roll with a creation statement, Gn 5.1-2. The preface creation statement contains a reminder that man was created in God's likeness and that God blessed them male and female. This is a summary statement of the P doctrine of man's creation. Sirach likewise prefaces his historic roll with an account of creation, only his is a much more elaborate statement (Sir 42.15-43.33). As P entitles his work in Gn 5.1 so Sirach gives a title to his list of the faithful, "שִׁבְחַת אֲבוֹתַי עוֹלָם", Praise of the Fathers of Old." The Sir Hebrew fragment sets the title apart from the remainder of the text. Sirach then opens his book of the faithful with these words in Sir 44.1,

¹⁰⁾ Sirach implants this form in two ways: 1/ history by listing; 2/ the movement of creation faith into election faith. The second is considered in Chapters Seven and Nine, pp.107, Note '9'; 137-138; 221-222.

אֶהְלִיךָ נָא אֲנֹשֵׁי חֶסֶד
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּדִוְרוֹתָם :

Let me praise faithful men
our fathers in their generations.

סִרַּח serves notice of the form that Sirach will follow in his historical listing. The word **לָךְ** is used four times in this opening chapter (Sir 44.1,7,14,16). However, it is not the frequency but the inference in the first citing that Sirach will present Israel's faithful in chronological order that helps strengthen the correspondence with P. Moreover, this listing with positive character descriptions is characteristic throughout Sirach's list. It is also true of P's record. The first to receive favourable recognition by P is Enoch (Gn 5.24),

וַיֵּהָלֶךְ חֵנוֹךְ אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים
וְאֵינוֹ כִּי־לָקַח אֱתֹו אֱלֹהִים :

Enoch walked with God
and he was not for God took him.

Sirach, who placed Enoch first on his list, wrote similarly of him (Sir 44.16a), "... וַיֵּהָלֶךְ עִם יְיָ וְלָקַח ...", Enoch walked with the Lord ... and (was taken) ...". HLA has **וְנִלְקַח** . 'Was taken', is consistent with the verb form used in the second Enoch statement, Sir 49.14b. Likewise P's description of Noah as **צַדִּיק** 'righteous' and **תָּמִים** 'perfect' is taken up in Sir 44.17. Not only does Sirach draw on Gn for the character description, both of these **אֲנֹשֵׁי חֶסֶד** are placed at the head of the historic roll. Three other primeval figures help determine the order of Sirach's historical list: Shem, Seth and Adam. A fourth character who also appears in P's prediluvian list, Enosh, could conceivably be included; however, **אֲנָשׁ** is sometimes translated as if the text read **בְּאֲנָשׁ** 'among men'. This same spelling for men occurs in Psalm 8 with the question "... הֲאֲנֹשׁ .". **אֲנָשׁ** is also used in Sir 15.20a. The present reading in Sir 49.16a could be accounted for by scribal error placing a third "**נ**" instead of "**ך**", thereby giving **אֲנָשׁוֹנִי** **אֲנָשׁוֹנִי** . That honour is among men is clearly seen from Sirach's understanding of the 'name' being everlasting: living on in the minds and hearts of the people. He writes, "Their bodies were buried in peace, and their name lives to all generations. Peoples will declare their wisdom and

the congregation proclaims their praise." (Sir 44.14-15) This same concept of the congregation remembering the faithful in their praises is also stated in Sir 31.11; 39.10. שׁוֹיַאֲב is favoured by the Greek translator who renders it as ἐν ἀνθρώποις . The Latin follows with, apud homines.

The inclusion of Seth on the list of praiseworthy is probably based on the fact that Seth is said to have been created in the image of Adam who in turn was created in the image of God (Gn 5.3). Shem's importance would seem to lie in being the link between the generations before and after the deluge. The final applause is left on the honours list for Adam of whom Sirach writes, " $\text{וְעַל כֹּל כִּי תִפְאֶרֶת אָדָם}$, and above all things is the glory of Adam." The Greek translator wrote, " $\text{καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ζωῶν ἐν τῇ κτίσει Ἀδάμ}$. And above all life in the creation is Adam." When we recall the importance of the בְּ of creation, as seen earlier in both P and Sir, the grandson's conclusion is a most appropriate one. Far from being an afterthought, as suggested by J. L. Crenshaw¹¹⁾, the retrospect is a very calculated statement which suitably draws to a close a text which has been largely shaped by the doctrine of creation. However, with the mention of Adam we have already taken a step into the second part of this chapter.

II Yahwist Influence

The J origin and destiny of man, from רָצַח to רָצַח , is one Sirach follows closely in his doctrine of creation. Because the Hebrew fragment is not extant for the texts to be considered it is important to note that the LXX does use $\gamma\eta$ as a translation of רָצַח . In Gn 3.17-19 the J writer, having told of God's cursing the ground, then depicts God reminding Adam of his humble origin and destiny with these words, " $\text{γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσῃ}$, you are dust and to the dust you shall return." The J account also states in Gn 2.7a,

¹¹⁾ J. L. Crenshaw, op. cit., p.152.

καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον
χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς...

And God formed man
from dust of the ground ...

Sir echoes this J creation thought in Sir 17.1a,¹²⁾

κύριος ἔκτισεν
ἐκ γῆς ἄνθρωπον...

The Lord created
out of the dust man ...

Closer exegetical consideration of this text follows in Chapter Seven, page 118. For the present, however, it is significant to realize that once Sirach has established the fact that man was created from the dust he parallels the thought with this clipped statement of his destiny, "καὶ πάλιν ἀπέστρεψεν αὐτὸν εἰς αὐτήν, and turned him back to it again." (Sir 17.1b). Even though the Greek gives the sense of man in general, ἄνθρωπον, in the first part of this same statement, the use of the verb ἀπέστρεψεν in the past tense and the inserting of the singular pronoun αὐτὸν, would indicate Sirach was thinking in particular of Adam's condemnation as cited above.¹³⁾ A similar summary of all man's beginning and end is stated in (Sir 17.32b),

καὶ (οἱ) ἄνθρωποι πάντες
γῆ καὶ σποδός.

and all men are
dust and ashes.

The language of the above statement γῆ καὶ σποδός, although out of Abraham's confession (Gn 18.27), is considered by most commentators to belong to the J documentary source. It clearly reflects J language and creation theology. This same phrase is used a second time by Sirach (Sir 10.9a). Its context is the poem of man's pride and the extant Hebrew reads, $\gamma\gamma\chi\ \gamma\gamma\chi\ \pi\chi\chi'\ \pi\chi$. The use of such terminology and indeed elements in no way demeans the love and personal care of God for man so vividly expressed in J. This same love of God for man is mirrored in Sir 17.7-8,

¹²⁾ A similar theological viewpoint on man's creation is expressed in Sir 33.10(GK).

¹³⁾ It may be that Sirach has a double edge to his comment allowing for the naming of Adam and the including of mankind in general. This may explain why the Greek translates it as 'man' while the Syriac used Adam: Gn 2-3 presents the same problem to the LXX and English translations.

ἐπιστήμην συνέσεως
 ἐνέπλησεν αὐτοῦς
 καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὰ
 ὑπέδειξεν αὐτοῖς.
 ἔθηκεν τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν αὐτοῦ
 ἐπὶ τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν
 δεῖξαι αὐτοῖς
 τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.

The knowledge of understanding
 he filled them with
 and good and evil
 he showed them.
 He set his eye
 upon their hearts
 to show them
 the majesty of his works.

However, all God's grace and love in creating man in his own image, giving him shared sovereignty and showing him $\text{וְיָדָע}(\text{ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὰ})$ is struck a blow by man's choice of וְיָדָע . The fact of man's being aware of these two great realities (both J and Sir indicate God showed them to him) and yet is left to his own free will is a crucial aspect of the doctrine of creation which both J and Sir underline. Under the influence of J theology Sirach writes (Sir 15.14),

אלהים מבראשית
 א ברא אדם
 וישיתו
 ביד חוטא
 ויתנהו ביד
 יצרנו

God from in the beginning
 created man
 and delivered him into
 the hand of the one who spoils him
 and left him in the hand
 of his own inclination.

For discussion, particularly of Sir 15.14b, see pp.108-9 of Chapter 7. As noted earlier the language of the first clause is P; however the full statement rings loudly of J creation theology with its awareness of וְיָדָע and its explicit message that man is left to his own free will or yetzer. Besides showing man good and evil and providing free will, the consequences so openly stated in J with the phrase, $\text{וְיָדָע} \text{ 'you shall die'}$ are similarly stressed by Sirach (Sir 15.16-17a),

מוצק לפניך
 אש ומים
 באשר תקחפך
 שלח ידך
 לפני אדם
 חיים ומוות...

Set before you are
 fire and water
 for which (ever) you will
 stretch forth your hand.
 Before man are
life and death ...

Immediately prior to these consequences being stated Sirach acknowledges again man's right to choose: but with an added word of wisdom (Sir 15.15).

אם תקחפך
 תשמר מצוה
 ותלוייה לעשות רצונו

If you wish
 you can keep the commandment
 it is understanding to do his will.

It is literally left in the hands of man to decide between good and evil: the will of God or his own inclination. It is this $\gamma\zeta'$, man's counsel or inclination, which ultimately becomes the place of choice.

The instigator, the one who baits man's yetzer for sin, is openly stated in J and Sir. Sirach refers to him as the 'spoiler' יִשְׁתָּלֵּל . The Greek translator uses the name $\sigmaατανᾶν$ in Sir 21.27. For the J writer the tempter is $\psi\tau\iota\tau$ 'the snake'. The fact that Sirach is well aware of the J account of the snake and its lure to sin is made plain in his warning which parallels the snake with sin in Sir 21.2,

ὥς ἀπὸ προσώπου ὄφeos
φεῦγε ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας.
ἐὰν γὰρ προσέλθῃς,
δήξειταί σε .
ὀδόντες λέοντος οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῆς
ἀναιρουῦντες ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων.

As from the snake
flee from sin.
For if you come to it
it will bite you.
The teeth of a lion are its teeth,
destroying the souls of men.

Finally the stark reality of what happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, thereby succumbing to the snake's invitation, is restated in Sir 25.24,

ἀπὸ γυναικὸς
ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας
καὶ δι' αὐτὴν
ἀποθνήσκουσιν πάντες.

From a woman
sin had its beginning
and because of her
we all die.

Without entering into the whole moral issue of what Sirach might mean here it is fair to say that he has a very low profile of women. Amongst many texts which give such an understanding is Sir 42.13-14. It also has a not so veiled reference to the accusation against Eve.

... ἀπὸ γὰρ ἱματίων
ἐκπορεύεται σῆς
καὶ ἀπὸ γυναικὸς
πονηρία γυναικὸς.
κρείσσων πονηρία ἀνδρὸς
ἢ ἀγαθοποιὸς γυνή,
καὶ γυνὴ κατασχύνουσα
εἰς ὀνειδισμόν .

... for from garments
comes the moth
and from woman
a woman's wickedness.
Better the wickedness of a man
than a woman who does good,
and it is a woman who brings shame
with disgrace.

Such statements when placed alongside the fact that Eve is omitted from the male dominated honour roll, while Adam rates glory that is above all others in creation, can only further betray his bias against women: a bias

evident both in his interpreting the J account and shaping his own doctrine of creation.¹⁴⁾ There is one consequence of the disobedience, directed towards Adam, which Sirach builds into his own creation faith. That consequence is the cursing of the ground by אֲרֶץ (Gn 3.17c),

... אֲרֶץ בְּעוֹרָךְ	... cursed is
... אֲרֶץ בְּעוֹרָךְ	the ground on account of you ...

This is pursued by Sirach on two levels. First he echoes the burdensome consequence (Sir 40.1),

אֵל רָבָה לָנוּ קָשָׁה	God has apportioned a great burden
	(affair)
כִּבְדֵּי יוֹגֵי	a heavy yoke
עַל בְּנֵי אָדָם	upon the sons of Adam.

Because קָשָׁה is neo Hebrew for 'affair', 'business', 'occupation' the Greek serves as a helpful commentary on this text (Sir 40.1a,b),

Ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἐκτίσται	much labour was created
παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ	for every man
καὶ ζυγὸς βαρὺς	and a heavy yoke
ἐπὶ υἱοὺς Ἀδάμ...	is upon the sons of Adam ...

The choice of ἀσχολία μεγάλη 'much labour' coupled with ζυγὸς βαρὺς 'heavy yoke' develops much the same picture of arduous, unending labour described by J. "כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל מִן הָאָדָם, in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (Gn 3.17d). Where J uses כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ Sirach expresses the unending character of toil with Sir 40.1d,

עַד יוֹם שׁוֹבוֹ אֶל מִן הָאָדָם	until the day
יָשׁוּבוּ אֶל מִן הָאָדָם	they return to the mother of all
	living things.

יָשׁוּבוּ אֶל מִן הָאָדָם is directly quoted from Gn 3.20.

Though labour is burdensome Sirach commands respect for it. He particularly marks out farm labour for this respect because it was commanded by the Lord. While Sirach's own appreciation is indicated in Sir

¹⁴⁾ A thorough discussion of Sirach's bias of women is presented by W. C. Trenchard, Ben Sira's View of Women, Brown Judaic Studies 38, Scholars Press, Chico, California, 1982.

38.31-34, where he sees the labourer's work as keeping stable the fabric of the world, his actual call for respect is in Sir 7.15,¹⁵⁾

אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
עֲבֹדָהּ הִיא כְּאֵל נִחְלָקָהּ

Hate not toilsome labour
or farm labour for God apportioned it.

There remains one other major influence from the J account which is crucial to Sirach's doctrine of creation. The mist coming upon the earth and the garden of Eden concept described by J in Gn 2.4b-14 provides Sirach with the form and much of the content for his central chapter on creation and personified Wisdom (Sir 24). For the present it will be presented only in outline with the detailed study being reserved for Chapter Seven.¹⁶⁾ To begin with Sirach describes personified Wisdom coming forth and covering the earth like a mist. Nowhere else in the OT is this picture of the mist covering the earth rendered except in Gn 2.6. The result in J's description of the mist covering the parched, barren earth upon which, "no herb had sprung", was the Garden of Eden. The only 'named' plants of this garden are the trees (Gn 2.9). Likewise in Sir 24 once personified Wisdom has "taken root" in her resting place she depicts herself as a garden of trees (Sir 24.13-18). The trees in the J account of Gn 2.9 are both "pleasant to the sight" and "good for food". This is also the case with Sirach's garden of trees. Wisdom was exalted like the: cedar, cypress, palms and olive. This is not only supported by the trees named but Wisdom herself says, "I spread out my branches of glory and grace caused thankfulness to bud and my blossoms were the fruit of glory and riches." That there was fruit good for food is apparent from Wisdom's invitation to eat her 'produce' (Sir 24.19). Unlike the fruit of the forbidden tree in

¹⁵⁾ The text is cited as in MS A, but it needs emendation to sustain the message.

¹⁶⁾ This brief outline is simply to indicate that there are yet other areas of J influence in Sir. The detailed study is located on pp.132-156.

the J garden, Wisdom promises that those who partake of her fruit will experience neither shame nor sin (Sir 24.19-22). In Gn 2.4-10, the four rivers formed from the Garden of Eden as listed in LXX and three of the four named in BH are listed in Sir 24.25-27.¹⁷⁾ This list is found nowhere else in the OT.

¹⁷⁾ For further discussion on the rivers of creation see p.153 of Chapter 7.

CHAPTER THREE

SIRACH AND DEUTERO ISAIAH

The fact that Sirach read the works of the prophets is readily acknowledged by the grandson's comment in his prologue to Sir where he writes,

ὁ πάππος μου Ἰησοῦς
ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἑαυτὸν δοῦς
εἰς τετὴν τοῦ νόμου
καὶ τῶν προφητῶν...

My grandfather Jesus
after devoting himself fully
to the reading of the law
and the prophets ...

That Sirach knew and respected the work of the prophet Isaiah in particular is clearly demonstrated within his own text. In describing the victory over Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah Sirach writes (Sir 48.20c-d, 22d),

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ בְּקוֹלָם
וַיַּצֵּלָם
וַיַּשִּׁיעֵם
בְּיַד יִשְׁעִיהוּ
... הַגָּדוֹל
וְהַנֶּאֱמָן בְּחִזְיוֹנוֹ

And the Lord heard the voice
of their prayer
and delivered them
by the hand of Isaiah.
... who was great
and faithful in his vision.

Sirach's concluding remarks in this same pericope lead specifically to the prophet of comfort, Deutero Isaiah (Sir 48.24-25),

בְּרוּחַ גְּבוּרָה
חָזָה אֲחֵרִית
וַיְנַחֵם אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן
עַד עוֹלָם
הִגִּיד נְהִיּוֹת
וְסֻתְרוֹת
לִפְנֵי בּוֹאָן

By a spirit of might
he saw things to come
and comforted them that mourn in Zion.
Unto eternity
he declared things to come
and hidden things
before they happened.

The very expression, "וַיְנַחֵם אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן" ... and comforted them that mourn in Zion,¹⁾ is a restatement of the opening words of DI, where God

¹The call in Is 61.2-3 would appear to be an even closer parallel, but 61.2b is to, "לְנַחֵם כָּל-אֲבֵלִים", to comfort all those who mourn." The particularizing of this in v3a is considered a gloss. See JB op. cit., p.1241, Note 'b'.

comissioned the prophet to comfort "עמי, my people". Besides paralleling DI 40.1 it also summarizes DI's ministry: the prophet of comfort who pointed to the glory of God in creation when all else seemed hopeless. The expression נסתרות 'hidden things' carries the same thought pattern and has a similar sound to נצרות 'hidden things' used in DI 48.6. The first reference is to God's being hidden. In DI 48.6 it concerns new things, things yet to come,

השמעתיך חדשות
מצותה
ונצרות ולא ידעתם;

I make you to hear new things
from this time forth
hidden things which you have not
known.

Here Sirach employs נצרות which is identical to the expression used in DI 48.6b. Sirach makes a second reference to the unique DI concept with the expression, "ומגלה חקר נסתרות";...and he reveals the place of hidden things." (Sir 42.19b). The final phrase in our first Sir citing, Sir 48.25b, לפני בואן 'before they happen' echoes the work of DI in announcing, צאתה נורא 'things that are created now' in DI 48.7a. The employment of נה'ות 'things to come' in Sir 48.24-25 helps link the Sir text with DI's concept of new things to come. To stress this same sense of 'things to come' DI had used the rare expression אחיות in DI 41.23; 44.7; 45.11. It is the only time the feminine plural participle of a verb 'to come' is employed in the OT. In DI, it reflects a break with tradition to give a new sense of 'the future'. It is also a more likely explanation for the seeming apocalyptic overtones which some scholars attribute to Sir 48.24-25.²⁾ The early beginnings of apocalyptic writings can be traced to the pen of the prophet, whom contemporary scholars refer to as DI. P.

²⁾ W. O. E. Oesterley, op. cit., p.331. He points to the apocalyptic works of The Martyrdom of Isaiah, and The Ascension of Isaiah as an influence for נסתרות.

Hanson refers to DI as, "proto-apocalyptic".³⁾ New vocabulary such as $\sqrt{\Pi} \cdot \Pi \chi$ 'things to come', though not necessarily outrightly eschatological carries shades of apocalyptic colouring. In sum, with this one statement Sirach has identified the prophet, his language and theology. Having established Sirach's awareness of the prophet, now known as DI, for the remainder of this chapter we shall identify DI correspondences in language, form and theology. These fifteen chapters of OT prophecy have had a surprisingly strong formative influence, literally from the opening to the concluding words of Sir.

Sirach opens his text with a dependence on DI's rhetorical form (Sir 1.2.3, 6).⁴⁾

ἄμμον θαλασσῶν	Sand of the seas
καὶ σταγόνας ὕετοῦ	and drops of rain
καὶ ἡμέρας αἰῶνος	and days of eternity
<u>τίς ἐξαριθμήσει;</u>	who can count them?
ὕψος οὐρανοῦ	Height of heaven
καὶ πλάτος γῆς	and breadth of earth
καὶ ἄβυσσον καὶ σοφίαν	and abyss and wisdom
<u>τίς ἐξιχνιάσει;</u>	who can search (them) out?
... ῥίζα σοφίας	... the root of wisdom
<u>τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη;</u>	to whom has (it) been revealed?
καὶ τὰ πανουργεύματα αὐτῆς	and her clever devices
<u>τίς ἐγνώ;</u>	who can know?

All of the questions raised speak of the countless, immeasurable, unsearchable: that which can not be known. In this context Sirach has changed the subject so that these rhetorical questions are now describing

³⁾ P. Hanson explains, "Since Second Isaiah's use of mythic motifs points in the direction which apocalyptic eschatology would pursue while yet being fully related to the historical realm, we designate his prophecy, 'proto-apocalyptic'," op. cit., p.27.

⁴⁾ By the term 'rhetorical question' we mean that form of speech where the answer is not so important as the effect which the question causes. Indeed, in most cases the answer is assumed already. DI makes very effective use of this form in the opening chapter of his book. See DI 40.12-14, 18, 21, 25-26a, 28. The answer most often implied is 'God' or 'the Creator alone'. DI carries this rhetorical form throughout his book; see also DI 44.7; 46.5; 49.21; 50.1-2b; 51.19; 53.1. In DI'S rhetorical questions the answer may be given by any man or God. It is most likely that under the influence of this DI form Sirach wrote the above text. Although the rhetorical question appears in both Job and Proverbs it is always addressed to a specific person and never left for 'anyone' to answer. For further discussion see pp.68; 72-73; 76-77.

boundless Wisdom. On the surface this appears as a very bold move since in its original setting this literary form was used to mark the incomparability of God. Is Sirach saying personified Wisdom is comparable with God? No. Wisdom has a close affinity as His first created but is always subordinate to God, the creator of all things. (This was stressed in our P study pp.9-10 and is considered again in our exegetical chapter on the creation texts p.106). All that Wisdom is, her unknowability and unsearchability, can only reflect the greatness of her creator. In trying to picture the vastness of Wisdom in Sir 1.3 the order and language are from P; the analogy of using the whole of the created order for the immeasurable corresponds with DI 40.12. Here DI speaks of waters, heavens and earth while Sirach includes heaven, earth and abyss in his analogy.

DI rhetorical style is applied in Sir 18.4b-5,

... καὶ τίς ἐξιχνεύσει
τὰ μεγαλεῖα αὐτοῦ;
κράτος μεγαλυνῆς αὐτοῦ
τίς ἐξαριθμήσεται;
καὶ τίς προσθήσει ἐκδιηγήσεται
τὰ ἑλέη αὐτοῦ;

... and who can search out
his mighty works?
and his majestic strength
who can measure?
and who can fully recount
his mercies?

In this poem God is the subject, making it quite apparent that Sirach, like DI, believes God is incomparable. In the whole of this creation text (Sir 18.1-10) Wisdom is not even mentioned. The verb ἐξιχνεύω 'to search out' is used twice (Sir 18.4,6) further underlining the impossibility of fully knowing the ways of God. These same questions are turned into facts of reality at the conclusion of Sirach's hymn on, "ἐργα, works of God". (Sir 43.28a,b,30d),

כי לא נוכל לחפש
:הוא גדול מכל מעשיו
[וְלֹא תִשְׁלֹט] וְלֹא תִשְׁלֹט
כי לא תוכל לחפש

For we can not search (him) out
he is greater than all his works.
For you will not fully search him out.

This last statement is a direct appeal to DI 40.28f which states openly, " :הוא גדול מכל מעשיו ... his understanding is unsearchable". Within this same DI text it is also claimed (DI 40.28cd),

אלהי עולם יהוה
בורא קצות הארץ

Yahweh is an everlasting God
Creator of the ends of the earth ...

The title אלהי עולם is only used on one other citing in the OT. That citing is Gn 21.33 which renders it as אלהי עולם.⁵⁾ That Sirach is drawing from the DI text when he writes (Sir 36.17cd),

וידעו כל אפסי ארץ
כי אתה אלהי עולם:
That all the ends of the earth may
know
that you are the everlasting God.

is supported not only by his full spelling אלהי but paralleling it with a second DI expression, "כל אפסי ארץ", all the ends of the earth". The second expression is from DI 45.22b. Both the DI title and thought on God's creatorship seemed to be echoed in Sirach's poem to the Creator of all (Sir 18.1),

ὁ ζῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
ἔκτισεν τὰ πάντα κοινῇ.
The One who lives for ever
created all things in common

Although the concept that God created הכל is implicit in P, for both DI and Sir this becomes an outright claim. DI, in stating that God stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth wrote (DI 44.24),

אנכי יהוה צפה הכל...
I am the Lord who has created all
things ...

Sirach made a similar claim (Sir 43.33a),

[צפה] את הכל
The Lord created all things.

Although the fragment is partially mutilated it is sufficient to endorse the Greek translation, "πάντα γὰρ ἐποίησεν ὁ κύριος, for the Lord made all things." But, what of the יהוה, referred to by some scholars as pre-existent chaos? Is it included within הכל? First, that both authors are aware of the concept of יהוה is evident from its employment within their texts. DI wrote (DI 40.17),

⁵⁾ DI is the only OT occurrence of this title if the argument on Gn 21.33 by A. Alt, that it refers to the god El, is accepted. See A. Alt, "The God of the Fathers", in Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, Trans. by R. A. Wilson, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1966, pp.27; 50-51.

כל־הַגּוֹיִם
כְּאִין נִגְדוּ
מֵאַפֶּס וְהָיוּ
נִחְשְׁבוּ-לֹא:

All of the nations
are as nothing before Him
as empty and nothing
they count before him.

Under the influence of this DI text Sirach wrote of the godless (Sir 41.10).

כל־מֵאַפֶּס אֵל
אֶפֶס יִשׁוּב
כֵּן חִנּוּף
מִהָיְוֹת אֱלֹהִים:

All that is nought
shall return to nought
hence the godless
from nothingness to nothingness.

This same pairing of אֶפֶס וְהָיוּ is found nowhere else in the OT. With this common understanding of אֶפֶס וְהָיוּ both Sir and DI step beyond any other OT book to make very inclusive claims for God's acts of creation. DI wrote (DI 45.7),

יוֹצֵר אֹר
וּבֹרֵא הַחֹשֶׁךְ
עֹשֶׂה שְׁלֹמֶם
וּבֹרֵא רָע
אֲנִי יְהוָה
עֹשֶׂה כָל-אַלֵּה:

Forming light
and creating darkness
making wholeness
and creating evil
I am the Lord
who creates all these things.

DI's employment of all three verbs of creation: יוֹצֵר, בֹּרֵא, and עֹשֶׂה further emphasises God's creative activity in הַכֹּל. No other OT text either contains all three creation verbs in the one statement, nor such strong creation claims for הַחֹשֶׁךְ 'darkness' and רָע 'evil'. The P writer simply said the חֹשֶׁךְ was upon the face of הַמֵּיִם, leading some scholars to view חֹשֶׁךְ as part of a pre-existent chaos. Sirach makes similarly strong claims in a style which also parallels concepts of טוֹב וְרָע (Sir 11.14).

טוֹב וְרָע
חַיִּים וְמוֹת
רִישׁ וְעוֹשֶׁר
כִּיִּי הוּא:
חֲכָמָה וְשֹׂכֵל
וְהַבִּינָה דְבַר מִיִּי הוּא:

Good and evil,
life and death
poverty and wealth
are from Him.
Wisdom and understanding
and discernment of the word are from Him

הַשָּׂא וְדַרְכֵי יֹשְׁרִים
מִיִּי הוּא:
שִׁכְלוֹת וְחֹשֶׁךְ [שִׁד]
לְפִשְׁעִים נֹוצְרָה
וּמִרְעִים רָעָה עִמָּם:

Sin and upright ways
come from Him
folly and darkness
were formed for sinners
and as for the wicked, evil is with them.

The full statement is retained within the Hebrew fragment but only partially extant within the Greek. The Latin also contains the full text with the exception of two changes: אֵלֶּה is translated as Dilectio and לֵבִי as legis.⁶⁾ What brought DI and Sirach to offer such an explanation for this very difficult aspect of the doctrine of creation? For those caught in the grips of the Babylonian Exile DI's claim on God being the Creator of all, including עַר, afforded hope. God is somehow still in control even if that means blaming Him for their evil plight. The acceptance of this reality could be no more shattering than the realization that Jerusalem had fallen; indeed it could have been an explanation for that very event. Jeremiah in warning of the evil which was to befall Jerusalem said, "Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you, ...דְּרֹכְךָ וּמַעַלְלֶיךָ עָשׂוּ אֵלֶּה לָּךְ" (Jeremiah 4.18a). What was the cause for Sirach's equally bold presentation? Besides the example of DI's creation theology he had the wisdom tradition with its sharp awareness of the two opposing realities: טוֹב וָרָע, דְּכִמָּה וּשְׂכָלוֹת. This dichotomy is further explained by Sirach when he writes (Sir 39.25; 40.10a),

<p>טוֹב לְטוֹב חָלַק מֵרֵאשִׁית כֵּן לְרָעִים טוֹב וָרָע;⁷⁾ עַל רָשָׁע נִבְרָא רָע ה'...</p>	<p>Good for the good he created from the beginning so for the wicked good and evil. Evil was created for the wicked ...</p>
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These last two statements leave the very clear impression that Sirach believed God created evil. נִבְרָא רָע ה' seems to come almost as a direct reverberation of DI's statement וַיִּבְרָא רָע. It is significant that both chose the one verb of creation in which God alone can be subject. It would seem for both authors רָע was part of the כָּל from the beginning (מֵרֵאשִׁית). The above statement by Sirach conflicts with his earlier view seen in our parallel study of J and Sir, that God created man מִבְּרָא שֵׁית with a yetzer. It can only be concluded that on this controversial aspect

⁶⁾ This change from לֵבִי to legis will become more understandable in our discussion דְּכִמָּה וּשְׂכָלוֹת, in Chapter Seven, pp.144-152.

⁷⁾ MS marginal note corrected to רָע.

of the doctrine of creation Sirach did not leave a neatly packaged statement. Like DI he went as far as his mind allowed but he too was lost in the fathomless ways of God. Sirach's translator records of such searchings in Sir 18.7,

ὅταν συντελέσῃ ἄνθρωπος,
τότε ἄρχεται.
καὶ ὅταν παύσῃται,
τότε ἀπορηθήσεται.

When a man has finished,
at that time he is beginning.
And when he stops,
at that time he will be at a loss.

As in DI 40.13, Sirach could only conclude, "לֹא צָרִיךְ לָנוּ מִבֵּינָם... he needs none to give him counsel." (Sir 42.21d). It was this faith in God's fathomless wisdom which moved Sirach beyond the shoal of evil in creation into the sea of God's glory as revealed in the created order. In short, the ways of God can not be fully apprehended but God can be glorified.

When Sirach wanted to portray the כְּבוֹד of God evidenced by the works of creation he turned to DI for both language and thought. The language of DI 40.28c-30 is reflected in the steadfastness of the created order (Sir 16.27b GK),

οὔτε ἐπείνασαν
οὔτε ἐκοπίασαν
καὶ οὐκ ἐξέλιπον
ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

They neither hunger
nor grow weary
and they do not cease
from their works.

The stars are selected by both DI and Sirach as a specific example of how the created works continue to respond to God's command. DI writes (DI 40.26; 48.13b),

שְׂאוּ מַרְוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם
וּרְאוּ מִי בָרָא אֵלֶיךָ
הַמּוֹצִיא בְּמִסְפָּר צִבְיָא
לְכָל שְׁמֵי קָרָא
מִרְבֵּי אֲנִיָּים וְאֵמִיךָ כָּךְ
אִישׁ לֹא נֶעְדָּר
... קָרָא אֲנִי אֵלֶיךָ
יַעֲמְדוּ יחדוּ:

Lift up your eyes on high
and see, who created these?
He who brings out their host by number
calling them all by name
for him who is great in might and
strong in power
not one is missing.
... when I call to them
they stand forth together.

Sirach captures this same authority and glory of God when he describes the stars in his hymn לְחַשְׁבֵּי הַכּוֹכָבִים (Sir 43.9-10),

וְהָאֵלֹהִים שְׂמִיָּה
 וְהָדָר כְּכֹכָב
 וְהָאֵלֹהִים מִזִּמְרֵי
 בְּמִרְוַת אֵל
 בְּדִבְרֵי אֵלֶיךָ
 : בְּאֵשׁ מִרְוֵתָם

The beauty of heaven
 is the glory of the stars
 a gleaming array
 in the heights of God.
 By the word of God the order stands as
 commanded
 they are not sleepy at their watches.

The choice of דָּמָע links Sir with DI's impression of the heavenly host standing forth like an army on parade. The grandson's translation, "καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκλυθῶσιν ἐν φυλακαῖς αὐτῶν", and they never relax in their watches", further strengthens this picture of the stars standing at God's command.

That Sirach shares DI's belief that Israel is specially chosen, called by His name, is apparent from Sir 36.12(H).⁸⁾ Here Sirach intercedes for the people of Israel reminding God,

וְהָאֵלֹהִים מִזִּמְרֵי
 וְהָאֵלֹהִים מִזִּמְרֵי
 : בְּאֵשׁ מִרְוֵתָם

Have mercy upon the people
 called by your name
 Israel surnamed first born.

DI likewise claimed that God having "created Jacob, found Israel" said, "בְּאֵשׁ מִרְוֵתָם... I have called you by Name, you are mine." (DI 43.1). A closer parallel still is in DI 45.4b,

וְהָאֵלֹהִים מִזִּמְרֵי
 : בְּאֵשׁ מִרְוֵתָם

I called you by name
 I surnamed you, who did not know me.

Despite Sirach's earlier claim that man has free will, yetzer, he carefully plots a whole creation text which makes it abundantly obvious that God has the ultimate decision on man's status (Sir 33.10-19).⁹⁾ The whole pericope is constructed around the potter imagery. Jr 18.1-11; DI 45.9-13; Sir 33.10-18 all share a common creation theology built around the potter imagery. Jeremiah's description of his visit to the potter's house

⁸⁾ This particularizing of Israel is first openly apparent by Sir 24.8-12. For discussion see pp.137-138 of Chapter Seven.

⁹⁾ Our intentions at this point are simply to continue the study of DI influence on Sir. For a detailed examination of Sir 33.10-19, please see pp. 158-163.

(Jr 18.2-4) is followed by the conclusion that Israel is to God's hands as the clay is to the potter's (Jr 18.5-7). Thus beyond this common theme and creator theology the links between the three texts end. Only DI and Sir are placed in a creation context. While Jeremiah offers his prophecy as a threat of destruction to Israel, DI and Sir use the imagery to demonstrate God's right to raise up leadership for the community. The direct dependency on DI becomes evident when the DI and Sir texts are paralleled. DI opens his text with a woe to those who would strive with their maker: such resistance is as ridiculous as the clay directing the potter or the begotten questioning his parents. With this context the Greek translator then writes in DI 45.11,

ὅτι οὕτως λέγει
 κύριος ὁ θεός...
 ἔρωτήσατέ με
 περὶ τῶν υἱῶν μου
 καὶ περὶ τῶν θυγατέρων μου
 καὶ περὶ τῶν ἔργων
 τῶν χειρῶν μου
 ἐντεῖλασθέ μοι.

For thus says
 the Lord God ...
 Question me
 concerning my sons
 and concerning my daughters
 and concerning the work
 of my hands
 command me.

The Hebrew text has only יְיָ-בְנֵי which ordinarily means 'concerning my sons' but can be interpreted as children thereby explaining the LXX use of two separate clauses. However, LXX omitts DI's rhetorical form marked by the words, "... יְיָ-בְנֵי וְיָחִידָא וְיָחִידָא..." DI's purpose for raising the question becomes more pointed when the χιη(αὐτόν) of DI 45.13 is seen as referring back to Cyrus. Cyrus is named in the opening verse of this same chapter. In sum, DI is saying God will raise for leadership whom He chooses. DI places the whole passage in a creation context with the brief comment "ἐγὼ ἐποίησα γῆν καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' αὐτῆς..., I created the earth and man upon it ..." (DI 45.12a).

Having established the reason for inequality within creation as being "by the Lord's decision",¹⁰⁾ Sirach, like DI, continues with a

¹⁰⁾ The question of inequality within the created order was considered in our P study, pp.18-19. Also, see our exegetical presentation on pp.157-161.

creation statement. In this statement Sirach explains how man was formed from the dust and appointed to his lot (Sir 33.10-12cGK),

καὶ ἄνθρωποι πάντες
ἀπὸ ἑδάφους,
καὶ ἐκ γῆς ἐκτίσθη Ἀδάμ.
ἐν πλήθει ἐπιστήμης
κύριος διεχώρισεν αὐτοὺς
καὶ ἡλλοίωσεν τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῶν.
ἐξ αὐτῶν εὐλόγησεν
καὶ ἠνύψωσεν
... ἀπ' αὐτῶν κατηράσατο
καὶ ἔταπείνωσεν...

And all men are
from the ground,
and out of the dust Adam was created.
In the fullness of knowledge
the Lord distinguished them
and appointed their different ways.
Some of them he blessed
and exalted ...
but some of them he cursed
and brought low...

Having established the reality that man stands according to God's ordaining Sirach then makes his direct appeal to DI's potter imagery (Sir 33.13GK),

ὥς πηλὸς κεραμέως
ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ
- πάσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ
κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ,
οὕτως ἄνθρωποι ἐν χειρὶ
τοῦ ποιήσαντος αὐτοὺς
ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς
κατὰ τὴν κρίσιν αὐτοῦ.

Like the potter's clay
in his hand
- all his ways
are according to his pleasure -,
thus men are in the hand
of Him who made them
to give them
according to his judgement.

As clay is to the potter so are men in the hands of God to shape at his pleasure. Sirach takes a step beyond DI when he offers a testimony to his own status in Sir 33.17(GK),

ἐν εὐλογίᾳ κυρίου ἔφθασα
καὶ ὥς τρυγῶν
ἐπλήρωσα ληνόν.

By the blessing of the Lord I excelled
and like a grape gatherer
I filled my wine press.

Following this autobiographical statement on how God chose to raise him up to a place of blessing, according to the grandson's translation, Sirach returns to the DI form for his concluding remark (Sir 33.19GK),

ἀκούσατέ μου,
μεγιστᾶνες λαοῦ,
καὶ οἱ ἡγούμενοι ἐκκλησίας,
ἐνωτίσασθε.

Hear me,
you who are great among the people,
and you leaders of the congregation,
hearken.

The DI form of ἀκούσατέ μου (DI 51.1, 4,7) enables Sirach to press more firmly an already strong message, forcing the leaders within the congregation to remember that their greatness is the Lord's decision. By His wisdom God creates; appoints and sustains all things. The sharpness of this warning of God's ultimate control is heightened when held against the

familiar DI background which speaks of the historical reality that God chose Cyrus. To the listening sons of Israel, who were aware of the historical reality recorded in DI 45.1-13, Sirach's creation speech offered a not so veiled reminder that **הכל** is at God's command. At such a realization man can only praise the Creator who has promised never again to destroy his creation by flood waters.¹¹⁾ With their strong similarities in creation faith it is understandable that Sirach should depend on the words of DI when he offered the call to praise in his final creation text (Sir 43.30).

מגדל [י] יי
הרימו קול
בכל תוכם
כיש עוד:
ברומים
תחליפו כח
ואל תלאו
כי לא תי [חקרו]:

You that magnify the Lord
lift up your voice
with all your strength
for there is yet more.
You that exalt him
renew your strength
and weary not
for you will not fully search him out.

The opening words follow DI's call to "הרימי בכח קולו", lift up your voice with strength", in DI 40.9c. The opening words of Sir 43.30 also contain echoes of DI 40.31; 41.1. The final claim in Sir 43.30b arises under the influences of DI expressions like, "אין חקר להבונתו": his understanding is unsearchable", in DI 40.28f, and the whole creation concept of the unfathomable nature of God developed in DI 40.12-31. This same theme is found on three other counts in Sir. Those citings are Sir 18.4,6; 24.28; 43.28. The final citing offers a brief response as to why God's ways are unsearchable,

...כי לא נחקר
(והוא גדול מכל מעשיו):

for we can not fully search (him) out
and he is greater than all his works.

This DI concept of the unfathomable ways of God served as a key to the whole of Sirach's doctrine of creation.

¹¹⁾ In our study of P we saw how the flood tradition was included in Sirach's doctrine of creation. DI is also aware of its importance when he writes, "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth." (DI 54.9a). This is one of the few references to Noah apart from P's account.

A profound respect for the work of DI is evident from the opening words of Sirach's text to the concluding remarks, Sir 51.23-25, where he extends an invitation to any who would attend his בית מדרש 'house of learning'.¹²⁾ In keeping with the invitation of DI 55.1-3 Sirach also invites 'thirsty souls', וְפִשְׁכֵּי צִמְאָה , to come and receive 'without silver', בְּלֹא כֶסֶף (Sir 51.23-25). It is such linguistic links combined with citings of DI form and theology throughout Sir that seriously question J. L. Crenshaw's claim, that Sirach had a "jaundiced view of prophets."¹³⁾ G. von Rad says Sirach's idea of prophets is "astonishingly inadequate".¹⁴⁾ Such claims by modern scholarship come out of a clear lack of awareness of the important formative influence DI had on Sir. Nowhere in modern scholarship have we seen a call for such influences.

¹²⁾ For further discussion on the invitation: DI 55.1-3; Pr 9.4-5a; Sir 24.19, see Chapter Five, p. 76.

¹³⁾ J. L. Crenshaw, op. cit., p.152 .

¹⁴⁾ G. von Rad, op. cit., p.258, note 25.

CHAPTER FOUR

SIRACH AND THE PSALMS

The influence of the Psalms and Wisdom Literature on Sir has been boldly underlined by OT scholarship. For the present comparative study the Psalms is our focal point: Wisdom Literature will be considered in the ensuing chapter. This drawing of firm lines between Sir and Psalmody seems to have been initiated largely by S. Schechter, who was the first to identify the newly discovered Hebrew fragments of Sir. Following the discovery, Schechter immediately joined with fellow Cambridge colleague C. Taylor in a thorough study of the fragments which opened the door anew on Sir research. Their findings published as The Wisdom of Ben Sira, in 1899, have had a far reaching influence on OT scholarship's view of Sir.¹⁾ Reference to their work is found in every major study which post-dates 1899. It is also important to note that all major English commentaries for the seventy five year period following the Schechter and Taylor publication came out of Cambridge.²⁾ The importance of this historical sketch is twofold: 1/ Schechter, in a vocabulary analysis of Sir, placed the Psalms as the book most frequently quoted, 2/ later scholarship seems to have left this unquestioned and instead has added to the already lengthy list of Psalm dependencies. First let us return to the Schechter listing which he introduces with this statement:

1) S. Schechter; C. Taylor, The Wisdom of Ben Sira University Press, Cambridge, 1899.

2) J. H. A. Hart, Ecclesiasticus in Greek, University Press, Cambridge, 1909. W. O. E. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, University Press, Cambridge, 1912. G. H. Box; W. O. E. Oesterley, "Sirach" in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha Of The Old Testament, Volume 1, edited by R. H. Charles, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913, pp.268-517. J. G. Snaith, Ecclesiasticus, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974. Although APOT was published in Oxford the Cambridge influence is evident from the coauthorship of W. O. E. Oesterley.

The following list, containing the phrases, idioms, typical expressions, and even whole verses about which there can be no reasonable doubt that they were either suggested to him by or directly copied from the Scriptures, will best show how well he was acquainted with the Bible and how much he made use of it:-³⁾

The results of Schechter's research are most revealing.⁴⁾ The Psalms with sixty eight direct citings surpasses even the book of Proverbs for which Schechter indicates forty five direct dependencies. According to his listing, Gn 1-11 and DI have only ten and nine respectively. Having concluded that the list speaks for itself in showing the wide use of the OT canon he then adds, "... what is of special importance, it covers all the books or groups of the Psalms."⁵⁾ He then points the reader's attention to thirty eight individual Psalms which were drawn upon by Sirach. Box and Oesterley continue this line of Psalm dependency in their commentary "Sirach" where, within the first chapter alone, they indicate eight counts of Psalmody. (Schechter and Taylor had considered only the Hebrew fragments which represent two thirds of the text beginning with Sir 3.6b). Oesterley in his own commentary, published in the previous year, had already described Sir as thoroughly Orthodox and having "so much affinity" with Psalms, Job and Proverbs.⁶⁾ Outside the English School of thought the cause for Psalmody in Sir is carried further by S. Mowinckel. In his The Psalms In Israel's Worship, he notes a lengthy list of "hymns and hymnic motives" (one reference alone included the whole of the honour

³⁾ S. Schechter; C. Taylor, op. cit., p.13.

⁴⁾ *ibid.*, pp.13-26.

⁵⁾ *ibid.*, pp.25-26.

⁶⁾ W. O. E. Oesterley, op. cit., p.XX111 (our underlining is to indicate italics by the author).

roll) then describes Sir as a didactic poem written in a "more or less pure hymnic style."⁷⁾ Finally two Belgian scholars H. Duesberg and I. Fransen in their fairly recent publication, Les Scribes Inspirés, compiled a more abbreviated listing of OT influences within Sir but like Schechter they too record a high proportion of Psalm dependency. Having introduced their list with the statement, "Voici une liste de passages tirés du Ben - Sirach et qui s'inspirent de l'AT au point qu'ils paraissent parfois n'être que des centons de remploi",⁸⁾ there follow forty three Sir texts bearing a reference to twenty four Psalms in all. Eleven of the citings are considered exclusive to the Psalms. What is to be deduced from such strong claims on the Psalms for Sir? We do not so much question the affinity, but see a need to measure the degree of formative influence. How does Sirach use the Psalms? In making such a measurement there are three questions which should be asked of the correspondences between the Psalms and Sir: 1/ is the material used peculiar to the Psalms? 2) what questions do the Psalms raise or answer within Sir? 3/ how wide a usage do the Psalms receive within Sir? These questions will also serve as an outline for the remainder of this chapter.

We begin with the creation Psalms as this is the most likely place to anticipate a formative influence on Sir. The שאלה question of Psalm 8 appears to receive two hearings in Sir. The first is Sir 16.15d where the fragment reads, " : ומה נפשי בקצות רוחות כל בני אדם : ... What is my soul among the multitude of spirits of all the sons of man?" Although, on first encounter, this seems to be a paraphrase of Psalm 8 its employment of נפשי and more so the phrase, בקצות רוחות כל בני אדם,

⁷⁾ S. Mowinkel, The Psalms In Israel's Worship, Volume 2, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962, p.116.

⁸⁾ H. Duesberg; I. Fransen, Les Scribes Inspirés, Editions de Maredsous Belgium, 1966, p.705.

This too offers a close correspondence with Sir 18.8-9, which follows the questioning of man's worth immediately by this statement on the brevity of his life, "...ἀριθμὸς ἡμερῶν ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ ἔτη ἑκατόν." However, caution is still due because the same question exists in a wisdom book with which Sirach was well acquainted. Job 7.17 reads,

τί γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος,
ὅτι ἐμεγάλυνας αὐτόν,
ἢ ὅτι προσέχεις τὸν νοῦν
εἰς αὐτόν

For what is man,
that you should exalt him
or that you should set your mind
upon him?

Admittedly the above quotation does not appear back to back with a statement on the shortness of man's days, but that this too is a Jobian theme is apparent from Job 8.9b which states, "...σκιὰ γάρ ἐστιν ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὁ βίος", for our days of life on the earth are a shadow."

In sum, Sirach had at his disposal at least three sources of influence for his ψιχ-πιδ(τί ἄνθρωπος): to identify it exclusively with Psalm 8 would be doing injustice to the available tradition. Amongst those who make such a single claim for Psalm 8 are W. Oesterley¹⁰⁾ and more recently R. A. F. MacKenzie who says, "Cp. a similar contrast in Psalm 8, which Ben Sira is here quoting."¹¹⁾

Another creation Psalm which requires close consideration for this study is Psalm 104. There is some scholarly debate about whether Gn 1 was the source of influence for Ps 104. B. W. Anderson is one who suggests that the flow of influence might be Psalm 104 to Gn 1. He writes: "Psalm 104 may be relatively early and prior to Gn 1 in literary formulation in which case perhaps the Priestly account is dependent upon it."¹²⁾ This

¹⁰⁾ W. O. Oesterley, op. cit., p.123.

¹¹⁾ R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p.81. (our underlining is to stress how current scholarship still too readily credits Psalm influence on Sir).

¹²⁾ B. W. Anderson, Creation Versus Chaos, Association Press, New York, 1967. p.91, note 18. The influences are not confined to Gn 1 but include the flood saga which is supported by our discussion which follows. As noted above Anderson confines his argument solely to Gn 1.6-30 as shown in his text, *ibid.*, pp.91-92.

proposal is offered as a result of a presentation in which he divided the first thirty verses of Psalm 104 into seven strophes paralleling them with Gn 1.6-30. As in much of his text, Creation Versus Chaos, the waters of chaos are very key to Anderson's thesis on Psalm 104: the pivot point rests on the verses which describe the earth being covered or existing in a submerged state and then uncovered (Psalm 104.5-9).

יִסַּד אֶרֶץ
עַל-מְכוּנֶיהָ
בִּלְתִּימוּשׁ עוֹלָם וְעַד:
וְהַיְדוּת כְּלָבוֹשׁ
כְּסִיתוֹ
עַל-הָרִים
יַעֲמְדוּ-מֵי־מִים:
מִן-הַעֲרִיתָךְ יִנּוּסוּן
מִן-קוֹל רַעֲמֶךָ
יִחַפְּזוּן:
יַעֲלֻ הָרִים
יִרְדּוּ בִקְעוֹת
אֶל-מָקוֹם זֶה
יִסְדֶּה לָהֶם:
הַבּוֹלֵ-שָׁמַיִם
בִּלְתִּי-יַעֲבְרוּן
בִּלְתִּי-יָשׁוּבוּן
לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ:

He established the earth
upon its foundations
so that it should never be shaken.
The deep like a garment
covered it
above the mountains
the waters stood.
At your rebuke they fled
at your thunderous voice
they took to flight.
The mountains rose,
the valleys sank down
to the place which
you appointed to them.
You set a boundary
which they should not pass
never again will they return
to cover the earth.

If the waters described above are considered the primeval waters of chaos one must ask, was the earth created or simply uncovered? If this is indeed a picture of creation then the promise made in verse 9 concerning those same waters, "בִּלְתִּי-יָשׁוּבוּן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ:" never again will they return to cover the earth", was broken when the flood eventually did come. The use of the verb יָשׁוּבוּן before the infinitive does two things to counteract such a reading: 1/ it stresses emphasis on the Psalmist's confidence in the promise, 2/ it gives a direct link with the Genesis flood account where the same verb is used in the infinitive absolute to describe the receding waters (Gn 8.3a) "וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הָלוֹךְ וְשׁוֹב..." And the waters receded from the earth continually." שׁוֹב is used a second time in this same account to describe the activity of the ravens (Gn 8.7). Moreover, the Psalmist's description of "יַעֲלֻ הָרִים", the mountains rose" which presumably links with his earlier statement, "עַל הָרִים יַעֲמְדוּ-מֵי־מִים:", the

waters stood above the mountains", parallels well with the picture of the ebbing flood waters of Gn 8.5. Here the Priestly writer states, " :וַעֲשִׂי בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן הָהוּא הָרְאִיתָ אֶת-רֹאשֵׁי הַהָרִים : in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains could be seen." Besides these correspondences with Gn 8 the Psalmist's use of בָּ before the verb שׁוּב leaves no room for repeated action and fits well with the promise made to Noah (Gn 9.11b), " :וְלֹא-יְהִי עוֹד מַבּוּל לְשָׁחֹת הָאָרֶץ : And never again shall flood waters destroy the earth."

In light of the above it is understandable that G. A. F. Knight in his recent two volume work on the Psalms should propose that the author of Psalm 104 had three possible sources before him: Gn 1, Job 38-41 and a story of the flood.¹³⁾ P. Humbert following his study of Gn 1 and Psalm 104 concludes, "En face de rapprochements aussi multiples, précis et significatifs, il est difficile de ne pas conclure que l'auteur du Ps. 104 s'inspirait étroitement du modèle qu'était le récit de Gn. 1."¹⁴⁾ In sum, we believe all the lines of correspondence seen in Anderson's parallel study are more likely a result of the flow of influence from the P works (not just Gn 1) to Psalm 104, which assumes a fuller account. Thus, we stand with the school of thought which sees the influence moving from Gn to Ps 104. It also moves from Gn to Sir. There is no cause to believe that there is any direct influence from Psalm 104 upon the doctrine of creation within Sir. Ultimately this decision is based not simply on the possibility that the Priestly work predates Psalm 104. Regardless of the date, we know Sirach had both sources, and from the findings of chapter two of this study we see that much of Sirach's language, form and theology points sharply back to P.

¹³⁾ G. A. F. Knight, Psalms, Volume 2, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1983, p.143.

¹⁴⁾ P. Humbert, op. cit., p.77. Although B. W. Anderson referred to this same article he made no mention of Humbert's conclusions, see B. W. Anderson, op. cit., p.91. Note 18. Our discussion is not directed so much at solving the dating issue as taking a stand between the two schools of thought.

Although the debate between Ps 104 and Gn 1 may not be finalized, the above findings present a pattern which holds true for many of the creation passages used within the Psalms; they too assume a fuller account of the creation story.¹⁵⁾ Within the list below invariably the writers, in alluding to the creation story or making a direct appeal, do so as part of their resource for forming a liturgy. To follow this topic of the Psalms and cult through would be to open an area which is well beyond the scope of this chapter; instead, by way of example, we shall consider briefly several Psalms from our list. The opening verses of Psalm 24 are a clear indication of how references to the doctrine of creation give this 'Entrance Torah' Psalm a basis for two claims within its liturgy which are fundamental to the OT believing community: 1/ the privilege of any believer in associating with such an omnipotent God, 2/ the immense responsibility laid upon the לב of any believer who dares to enter the presence of יהוה. This same claim can be seen in Psalms 121.2; 124.8 with the single statement, " עזרנו בשם יהוה עשה שמים וארץ : Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." (Psalm 124.8). Although the wording of Psalm 121.2 is slightly different, the message is clearly at one with the above quote. Even more typical of the liturgical use of creation is apparent in Psalm 136.4-9 where a brief summary of creation, abstracted largely from Gn 1, has the refrain, " כי לעולם חסדו : ", for His steadfast love endures for ever", following each creation claim. Finally in Psalm 148.3-10 the whole of creation is called to "הללוהו", Praise the Lord!" Amongst those called to praise, the Psalmist includes (Psalm 148.10)

החיה וכל בהמה
: רמש וצפור כנף

Beasts and all cattle
creeping things and flying birds.

¹⁵⁾ Pss. 24.1-2; 33.4-9; 50.6-11; 95.1-7; 96.4-6; 102.25-28; 115.14-16; 119.89-91; 121.1-2; 124.8; 136.4-9; 148.3-10.

Although Sirach uses this same P language he never calls the created order to praise: this for Sirach is the highest of gifts reserved for man alone. There is a combination of liturgy and creation within Sir, but that leads into our second question on the utilization of Psalms in Sir which in turn will help answer where Sirach employed the Psalms. As an approach to the text we shall primarily consider the major creation passages within Sir. This approach is chosen with three considerations: 1/ they cover a wide spectrum of Sir, 2/ the creation texts enable a manageable quantity of material conducive to our survey, 3/ it is in keeping with the central issue of this whole study.

In the opening words to his book (Sir 1.1-10) Sirach places no exclusive Psalm dependency. This is stated with awareness of the two counts of sole dependency on the Psalms recorded by Box and Oesterley for Sir 1.3.¹⁶⁾ This text is clearly the language and order of P announced in a DI form: a matter considered earlier in Chapters Two and Three (pages 18; 35). The expression in Sir 1.8b, "καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ, sitting upon his throne" has some correspondence with Psalm 46.9b, "ὁ θεὸς κάθηται ἐπὶ θρόνου ἁγίου αὐτοῦ, God sits upon his holy throne". The source of Sirach's throne imagery could also be Is 6.1 with its description of "κύριον καθήμενον ἐπὶ θρόνου ..., the Lord sitting upon a throne". The next block of creation material (Sir 15.14-18.10) besides containing the 'τί ἄνθρωπος' questions already considered in the above discussion, also holds in the Hebrew (Sir 16.16-17) a text which is quite obviously dependent on Psalms 18.7-9; 104.32. Haggai 2.6 with its prophecy on the shaking of the whole created order holds a parallel with Sir 16.16a; however, the Hebrew fragment adds,

ברדתו עליהם עמודים

When he comes down upon them they
stand firm,

בפקדו וכרשו;

when he visits them they tremble.

¹⁶⁾ G. Box; W. Oesterley, op. cit., p.318.

The emended text which reads **וּכְרַעְשׁוּ** as **יִרְגְּשׁוּ** follows I. Lévi (op. cit., p.26, note 'g'). It then continues with verse 17,

**אֶף קַצְבֵּי הָרִים
וַיִּסְדֵּי תִבְלָה
בְּהִיטוֹ אֲלֵיהֶם
רָעַשׁ יָרֵעַשׁ :**

Also the bottoms of the mountains
and the foundations of the world
when he looks on them
they tremble greatly.

This text corresponds very closely with the coming down of God in Psalm 18.8, 10a,

**וַתִּגְעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ
וּמוֹסְדֵי הָרִים יִרְגְּזוּ
וַיִּתְגַּעְשׁוּ כִּי-...
וַיִּשָּׁבֹשׁ שָׁמַיִם וַיִּרְדּוּ...**

The earth reeled and rocked
and the foundations of the mountains
trembled
they quaked because he was angry ...
He bowed the heavens, and came down
...

and to the phrase in Psalm 104.32a, "**הַמְבִּיט לָאָרֶץ וַתִּרְעַד...**", who looks on the earth and it trembles." Although Jonah 2.7 also refers to, "**לְקַצְבֵּי הָרִים**, bottoms of the mountains," in favour of the above Psalms is the action describing God's coming down to earth and the linguistic links of **רָעַשׁ** and the verb **מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים**.

The concept of Sheol described in Sir 17.27-28 appears to be under the influence of Psalm 6.6 in that both purport that there can be no praise of God in Sheol; however Hezekiah's prayer (Isaiah 38.18) offers a similar insight and to a limited degree so does Jonah 2.2. It could be argued that both latter references are within Psalmody, but of the possibilities the most likely remains with Ps 6.5. However, Sirach could have turned to his own wisdom tradition and found plenty of support for his statement where Qoheleth says, Ecclesiastes 9.10b,

**כִּי אֵין מַעֲשֶׂה
וְחִשְׁבֹּן וְדַעַת וְחָכְמָה
בְּשֶׁאֵל אֲשֶׁר-אֵתָהּ הַלֵּךְ שָׁמָּה :**

For there is no work
or thought or knowledge or wisdom
in Sheol to which you are going.

Job could have provided a second wisdom source for such concepts of sheol (Job 7.9; 21). Despite such a range of possibilities for influence Hart cites only Psalm 6.5¹⁷⁾, while Box and Oesterley list five possible

¹⁷⁾ J. H. A. Hart, op. cit., p.143.

references as the source: all are Psalms.¹⁸⁾ In brief, apart from the hymnic language suddenly introduced to describe God's power, a method called on in much OT poetry which deals with this same subject,¹⁹⁾ there is little indication of direct Psalm appeal in Sir 15.12-18.10.

The central chapter to Sirach's work (Sir 24) displays a number of OT influences but there are only two possible Psalm references. The first is the unique title for God, "ὁ κτίστης πάντων, The Creator of all things."²⁰⁾ There is but this single occurrence within Sir. As will be seen later, the fifteen line canticle of the Hebrew Sir 51.12a-o which also contains the title is not considered authentic to the text. Please see p.61. BDB does not record any such title within the whole of the OT; however the Jr Psalm found in both Jr 10.12-16; 51.15-19 does require consideration. This Psalm contains the expression, "אֵלֶּה הֵם אֲשֶׁר יָצַקְתָּ לְיָדְךָ...," for He is the one who formed all things."

The Greek for both Jeremiah passages reads, "ὁ πλάσας τὰ πάντα ." The use of πλαστός to translate יָצַק is an excellent one. Liddell and Scott give as a possible meaning of πλαστός, "formed, moulded in clay or wax."²¹⁾ The LXX rendering of this Psalm found within Jeremiah is nonetheless quite different from the Sir "ὁ κτίστης πάντων". The source of inspiration for this title is outside the OT: it is within the book of Jubilees where the title is used on four separate incidences. However, further discussion of this is best left till our chapter on early apocalyptic literature. Please see p.98. The second consideration for

¹⁸⁾ G. Box; W. Oesterley, op. cit., p.378 (Pss references include: 6.5; 28.1; 30.9; 88.4,5; 115.17).

¹⁹⁾ I Kings 8.27; Isaiah 66.1; Job 41.10-11; I Samuel 2.6-8.

²⁰⁾ There is no extant Hebrew for Sir 24.

²¹⁾ H. Liddell; R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, Eighth Edition, At The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1889, p.644.

Psalm influence is within this same passage, Sir 24.8-12, where ὁ κτίστης ἀπ' πάντων instructs personified Wisdom to rest her 'tent' in Zion. Although the verb κατέπαυσεν is with reference to Wisdom's tent in v8; it is apparent that Wisdom was seeking a 'resting place', ἀνάπαυσιν, in v7a. Ps 131GK speaks of a 'resting place' in vv5b, 7a, for God and a 'dwelling place' in v8a. God's choice of Zion is confirmed in Ps 131.13,

ὅτι ἐξελέξατο κύριος τὴν σιών,	For the lord has chosen Zion.
ἠρετίσαστο αὐτήν	He has desired it
εἰς κατοικίαν ἑαυτοῦ	for His habitation.

While this Psalm affords some correspondence with Sir 24.8-12 it must be kept in mind that the invitation for God to reside, for His 'resting place', in Zion is also written in the Chronicler's report of Solomon consecrating the temple in 2 Chronicles 6.41. The fact that a similar text is contained in a prayer by Solomon, the patron of wisdom, would seem to make it a more likely choice by Sirach, especially since his main subject in Sir 24 is personified wisdom. Furthermore, echoes of both Ps 131GK and 2 Chronicles 6.41 are evident in Numbers 10.35-36. Thus, the most that can be argued is that Sirach had at least three possible sources of influence. On the other hand, when one realizes there is no Psalm impression in the next creation passage (Sir 33.7-18) it might well be asked: Where is the Psalm influence found? It is found largely in the latter portion of Sir where the themes of praise and glory to God are increasingly dominant.

Early signs of these dual themes are found in Sir 39.12-40.11: here there are two very distinct passages wrapped in the language of the Psalms. The first of these is Sir 39.14b-15,

διάδοτε ὄσμην	Scatter the fragrance,
καὶ αἰνέσατε ᾠδα,	and sing a song of praise,
εὐλογήσατε κύριον	bless the Lord
ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔργοις,	for all his works,
δοτε τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ	give to His name
μεγαλωσύνην	majesty
καὶ ἑξομολογήσασθε	and give thanks
ἐν αἰνέσει αὐτοῦ	with praise to Him
ἐν ᾠδαῖς χειλέων	with a song on your lips
καὶ ἐν κινύραϊς	and with lyres
καὶ οὕτως ἐρεῖτε	and this you shall say
ἐν ἑξομολογήσει	in thanksgiving:

The Hebrew fragment which begins at Sir 39.15c reads, " וכן ואמר בהרועה , and then you shall say with a shout," rather than "in thanksgiving" which the Greek translates. In any case the full text is very representative of the hallelujah Psalms, in particular Psalms 95; 150. The same must be said of the second passage (Sir 39.35) where the Hebrew fragment states,

עתה בכל לב	Now with all (your) heart
הרנינו	give a ringing cry
ונרכו את שם	and bless the name of
הק[רוש:]	the Holy One.

The final main creation text (Sir 42.15-43.33) is inundated with Psalmody. It opens with a form similar to Psalm 77.12,

אזכיר מעללי-יה...	I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord ...
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Sirach writes (Sir 41.15a),

אזכר וג מעשי אל...	I will call to mind the works of God ...
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Sirach has carefully substituted the synonym מעשי for מעללי which is understandable since the latter is used largely for deliverance and judgement while מעשי is usually with reference to the theme of creation. The following verse (Sir 41.16b) combines מעשי with כבוד to announce the theme of the whole hymn,

...וכבוד יי על כל מעשיו;	... and the glory of the Lord is upon all his works.
--------------------------	---

There follows a picture of Yahweh being praised by the קדשים which has close affinity with Psalm 89.6-7. The Psalmist declares,

ויודו שמים	Let the heavens praise
פלאך יהוה	your wonders Lord
אף-אמונתך	also your faithfulness
בקהל קדשים	in the assembly of the Holy Ones
כימי בשחק	For who in the skies
יערך ליהוה	can be compared to the Lord
ידמה ליהוה	Who is like the Lord
בבני אלים;	among the sons of gods (heavenly beings)?

Almost as if in response to the question posed by the Psalmist Sirach writes (Sir 42.17),

לֹא הִסְפִּיקוּ קְרוּשֵׁי אֱלֹ
לְסַפֵּר נִפְלְאוֹתַי יְיָ :
אֵימָץ אֱלֹהִים צִבְאוֹ
לְהִתְחַזֵּק לִפְנֵי כְבוֹדוֹ:

The Holy Ones of God have not the
power
to recount the Lord's wonders.
God has given strength to His hosts
to endure before His glory.

This also contains DI colourings which become more conspicuous later in the poem when Sirach is making a similar claim of man's praises. However in light of the angels' inability to recount God's wonders Sirach appropriately opens his poem on the luminaries with yet another Psalm form (Sir 43.2b), " כִּה נֹרָא מַעֲשֵׂי יְיָ : ... , How terrible (awe inspiring) are the works of the Lord!" This announcement shows a close parallel with Psalm 66.3a which declares, " אָמְרוּ לְאֱלֹהִים כִּה נֹרָא מַעֲשֵׂיךָ , Say to God, 'How terrible are your deeds!' It is only the expression that serves as a link, for in this case the Psalmist recounts saving deeds whereas Sirach continues with his concept of creation. On the other hand Sirach's whole poem with its accent on God's glory and power is similar in theme and purpose to Psalm 19A. This familiar Psalm opens with the vivid statement (Psalm 19A.2),

הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד יְיָ...

The heavens are telling the glory of
God ...

Although the Psalmist says הַשָּׁמַיִם, he singles out the sun as a special witness to God's glory and power but Sirach includes all four luminaries. Both Ps 19.7b and Sir 43.2a use the rare poetic word דָּמָה when describing the sun's heat. BDB records only seven occurrences of דָּמָה in the OT. The Psalmist concludes the first part of his hymn with the expression, "אֵין וְסִתַּר מִדָּמָתוֹ; ... nothing is hid from its heat;" while Sirach opens his hymn with a description of the שֶׁשׁ pouring forth its דָּמָה 22) The

22) Sir 43.3-4. Sirach continues with a description of the sun's heat comparing it to three times that of a blast furnace: here he uses the synonym הָרִב for heat.

grandson may have been aware of the close association between these two works when he chose to translate Sir 43.2 as, "ἡλῖος ἐν ὀπτασίᾳ διαγγέλλων ἐν ἔξοδῳ, The sun, when it appears, brings tidings as it goes forth ..."

When Schechter calls for Psalm 33.6 as the sole influence on Sir 43.10 he is correct in that both refer to creation by **בְּדָבָר**, but when both texts are placed alongside DI 48.13b another picture of influence arises. The texts for comparison are as follows (Psalm 33.6a; Sir 43.10a; DI 48.13b),

בְּדָבָר יְהוָה	By the word of the Lord
שָׁמַיִם נִצְּחוּ ...	the heavens were created ...
בְּדָבָר אֱלֹהִים	By the word of God
עֲמַד קָמָה ...	the order stands as commanded ...
קָרָא אֲנִי אֲלֵיהֶם	When I call to them
יִצְמְחוּ יַחְדָּם :	they stand forth together.

Since DI and Sirach are talking about God's continuing authority over creation and both single out the stars as an illustration, the correspondence is the closer between DI and Sir. Sirach follows his account of the luminaries with a poem on the climatic elements: it shows some dependence on the Psalms use of the same theme,²³⁾ but Job's treatment of the same subject within a creation context must not be overlooked.²⁴⁾ In keeping with his Priestly order Sirach moves from the description of **הַשָּׁמַיִם** and **הַאָרֶץ** to a brief portrayal of the **וְהַיָּם**. This latter segment seems to be written under the influence of Psalm 107.23-26 which speaks of both the wonders and the dangers of the deep. Sirach captures both in his brief statement (Sir 43.23b-24),

וַיִּטֵּן בְּתֵּי הַיָּם אִיִּם :	he planted islands in the deep.
יֹרְדֵי הַיָּם	Those who go down to the sea
יִסְפְּרוּ קִצְּהוּ	tell of its expanse
לְשִׁמְעֵי אָזְנוֹן	when our ears hear it
וְשִׁמְעוּ מִם :	we are astonished.

²³⁾ Psalms 135.7; 147.16-18; 148.8.

²⁴⁾ Job 38.22-30 is considered in our comparative study of Sir and Wisdom Literature. Please see pp.70-71.

As in Ps 107.23,26 Sirach interchanges וְהִתְהַלַּל and וְהִתְהַלַּל . Although the phrase וְהִתְהַלַּל also appears in the Hebrew text of DI 42.10b the overall influence is most likely from Psalm 107. Following this discussion Sirach extends a call to praise, then concludes his hymn with: $\text{... מְעַט רָאִיתִי}$..."
 ; מְעַט שִׁירָיו , I have seen (but) few of His works." (Sir 43.32b). This comment harkens back to the Psalm form with which he opened the poem.²⁵⁾
 The measure of Psalm influence here is more intense than at any point in the previous forty chapters of Sir. However, this same text is surpassed by the last two chapters in Sir. In fact, Sir 51 contains almost a third of Schechter's total Psalm references. We shall look briefly at these texts because they hold a final key of explanation on how Sirach used the Psalms.

Sirach chose to conclude the formal part of his book by telling of Simon, the high priest, leading the congregation in fervent worship. Here the influence of the Psalms is felt in the action of Worship (Sir 50.18),
 $\text{... וַיִּתֵּן קוֹל שִׁיר הַתְּהִלָּה}$, and the sound of song was given ...". With an emendation to Sir 50.18b the text reads, "a sweet sound of praise went up." The emendation is based on that recommended in Lévi (op cit., p.71, notes 'g'; 'h'). The Greek gives a very vivid picture (Sir 50.18),

$\text{καὶ ᾄνεσαν οἱ ψαλτῶδοι
 ἐν φωναῖς αὐτῶν,
 ἐν πλείστῳ ᾠῳ ἑγλυκάνθη μέλος.}$

And the singers praised (Him)
 with their voices,
 in sweet and full toned melody.

The book could very well have ended with this chapter especially with the inscription of Sirach's name, a bold act for wisdom literature.²⁶⁾ Nonetheless, the autobiographical style of Sir 51, which is in keeping with his earlier texts, makes it quite evident that Sirach has added yet another chapter. Whether it is all authentic to Sirach is a question we shall consider shortly. The opening verses (Sir 51.1-12) are presented as the

²⁵⁾ Other Psalm influences within the same creation hymn include: Sir 42.16b (Pss 104.31; 57.11), 43.19a (Ps 147.16), 43.28 (PS 145.3).

²⁶⁾ It was on this account that the pseudonyms of David and Solomon figure so largely in the Psalms and Wisdom.

author's prayer of thanksgiving. It is crammed with phrases and a whole statement from the Psalms.²⁷⁾

If this same prayer were apart from its present context it would more likely be placed as Psalm 151. The Hebrew text follows this prayer with a fifteen line canticle containing the refrain, "כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד", for His steadfast love endures for ever." Its dependence on Psalm 136 is unmistakable; however, it is not found in either the Greek, Syriac or Latin translations. Moreover, no commentator seriously considers it a part of the original Hebrew text. I. Lévi answers well when he writes,

It has so many points in common with the "Eighteen Benedictions", a Pharisaic prayer, and by mentioning the Messiah son of David, directly contradicting the express opinion of the author, that its authenticity is dubious.²⁸⁾

There follows Sirach's personal testimony to wisdom and an invitation to his בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ. As stated earlier both of these are in keeping with the message and form found elsewhere in Sir. The Hebrew MS B concludes the whole book with the statement,

יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:

May the name of the Lord be blessed
from this time forth and for evermore!

This is a direct quote from Psalm 113.2.

All of this demands a new perspective on the relationship between Sir and the Psalms. In response to the questions set down at the outset of this study it must be concluded: 1/ not all the material accredited to the Psalms is peculiar to Psalmody, 2/ nowhere - within Sir does the Psalm tradition raise or answer profound theological issues. By the time Psalm

²⁷⁾

Sir 51.1b	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	Ps.18.47b
Sir 51.1c	אֲמַרְתָּה שִׁמְךָ	Ps.22.22a
Sir 51.2	מֵעוֹלָם	Ps.27.1
Sir 51.2ii	כִּי פָדִיתָ מִמּוֹת וְפָשִׁי;	Pss.49.16a; 56.14
Sir 51.2b	וּמִיַּד שָׂאוֹל הַצֹּלֵת רַגְלִי	Ps.24.15b
Sir 51.2d	וְשָׁטִי כִזְוִי	Ps.40.5b (Heb)
Sir 51.6b	וְפָשִׁי וְהִיֹּת לְשָׂאוֹל וְחֻתְמִי וְתִ	Pss.88.4b; 86.13
Sir 51.8	וְאֶזְכְּרָה אֶת רַחֲמֵי יְיָ וְחֶסֶדְיוֹ	Ps.25.6
	אֲשֶׁר מְעוֹלָם:	
Sir 51.12b	וְיִמְלִטֵנִי בְיוֹם צָרָה:	Ps.41.1

²⁸⁾ I. Lévi, op. cit., p.73, Note 'g'.

influence does occur there is little real formative impact on Sirach's book. His doctrine of creation is already formulated. Most of the Psalm tradition appears after Sir 39.32-35; it is this text that marks the completion of Sirach's creation theology. Sir 39.35 offers a call to praise. For more detailed discussion of Sir 39.32-35 see p.170. It is not till Sirach responds himself with full praise by writing a creation hymn that Psalm influence appears in full force, in Sir 42.15-43.33. This and other hymnic expressions in Sir 50-51 add no new theological thoughts. The most that can be said is that they develop the call to praise given in Sir 39.35. In sum, there is no formative influence but merely expressive use of the liturgical language so familiar in the Psalms. Why should this be so? Sirach, who is referred to by his grandson as, "ὁ ἱεροσολυμίτης, the Jerusalemite", had a close acquaintance with the Temple and cult in Jerusalem. This acquaintance is reflected in his respect for the priestly office,²⁹⁾ love of the temple and intimate knowledge of its rituals. Though found elsewhere in the text all three are described with much feeling in Sir 50. It opens with a display of love and respect for Simon the high priest, who was his contemporary, and moves into a lively service of worship.³⁰⁾ His frequenting the temple is the only thing that could allow such an intimate description of the service of worship. Sirach's reference to Simon, " : וּבֵצֵאתוֹ מִבֵּית הַדְּפָרָכָה ; ... coming forth from the house of the veil" could very well be an indication of this very chapter being inspired from his being in attendance on the Day of Atonement. F. O'Feaghail claims it was the 'Daily Whole Offering' (Bib 59, 1978, p.316). Regardless of the day in question Sirach's familiarity with cult and temple is undeniable.

²⁹⁾ Sir 7.29-31. Sirach calls for honour to the priests and practical support for them; Sir 36 contains his prayer for Israel, the temple and her people; Sir 45.6-22 describes Aaron with a lengthy and glowing statement.

³⁰⁾ This last clause is stated with full awareness of its double edge, for Sirach not only describes worship but enables the reader to enter into it.

Indeed such is Sirach's admiration for the temple and priestly office that one contemporary scholar suggests that Sirach may have been a priest himself.³¹⁾ This we do not find necessary to claim in order to understand his love of temple and priestly work: moreover, given the autobiographical nature of his text it is rather doubtful that this is the sort of information Sirach would have withheld.³²⁾ However, his full commitment cannot be questioned, for it was his intimate involvement with temple and cult where the Psalms would have been prevalent in worship, that led Sirach to absorb them within his own vocabulary. Then, when he endeavoured to describe the praise and glory of God as revealed in the created order and celebrated in private or public worship Sirach broke into the language of the Psalms. Herein lies the real influence of the Psalms on Sir.

³¹⁾ J. F. A. Sawyer, "Was Jeshua Ben Sira a Priest?" Offprint from proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1982.

³²⁾ For comment on the spurious phrase ἱερεὺς ὁ πολυμείτης found in the Sinaiticus (Sir 50.27) see Appendix A, p. 227.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIRACH AND WISDOM LITERATURE

The historical sketch of OT scholarship given in the preceding chapter holds true in the relationship between Sir and Wisdom Literature. OT scholarship has not only held Sir to be under the shadow of the old wisdom corpus, but has often bound this claim tightly to a few specific texts, namely Job 28 and Proverbs 8. S. Schechter wrote of Sir, "For B.S., though not entirely devoid of original ideas, was, as is well known, a conscious imitator both as to form and as to matter, his chief model being the book of Proverbs."¹⁾ R. E. Murphy having presented an exegetical study on Proverbs 8, made this statement after quoting Sir 24.1-23, "See the comments on Proverbs 8 for the personification of Wisdom, and the broader context. Sirach 24 is a reinterpretation of Proverbs 8."²⁾ R. A. F. MacKenzie introduces Sir 24 as linked with Job 28 but modelled on Proverbs 8.³⁾ Our purpose is to look again at Sir in the light of the wisdom books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes with a view to testing this hypothesis of strong influence. Before doing so it is important to underline that here too we do not deny the close affinity between these works especially since all four are of the wisdom school. Our concern, however, is to measure the degree of formative influence. The same questions posed in the previous

¹⁾ S. Schechter; C. Taylor, op. cit., p.12.

²⁾ R. E. Murphy, op. cit., p.104.

³⁾ R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p.100-101.

chapter will be held in tension throughout but they will not determine the form of this chapter. In this context it must be asked of any correspondence between Sir and the above named wisdom books: 1/ is the material drawn upon peculiar to these wisdom texts? 2/ what questions does the shared tradition raise or answer within Sir? 3/ how wide a usage does it receive within Sir? In keeping with the BH order we begin with Job.

The fact that Sirach was aware of the man Job is evident from his comment in Sir 49.9,

וְגַם הִזְכִּיר אֶת אִיּוֹב יְיָ
הַמַּכְלִיל כָּל דְּרָכָיו צַדִּיק:

And he remembered Job ...
who maintained all the (ways of)
righteousness.

The Greek varies considerably here,

καὶ γὰρ ἐμνήσθη τῶν ἐχθρῶν
ἐν ὀμπρῇ
καὶ ἀγαθῶσαι τοὺς εὐθύνοντας
ὁδοῦς.

For he remembered his enemies
with storm
and he did good to those who made
straight their ways.

Understandably the RSV, in trying to give a reasonable interpretation of the Greek, here changed the subject from 'he' to God; however, for Sir 49.8-9 in the extant Hebrew, Ezekiel, is clearly the subject. It is quite conceivable that the grandson mistakenly read **יְיָ** 'Job' as **יָאֵל** 'enemy'. (See W. O. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, op. cit., p.333). English translations tend to follow the Greek. In favour of the Hebrew fragment is the whole context of the statement: in discussing Ezekiel it would appear Sirach is referring to the two passages where Ezekiel drew attention to the three righteous men (Ezekiel 14.14,20). The first of these citings reads,

וְהָיוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשֵׁי
הָאֵלֶּה בְּתוֹכָהּ
נֹחַ דָּנִיֵּאל וְאִיּוֹב
הֵמָּה בְּצִדְקָתָם
יִצְּלוּ נַפְשָׁם נֹאם
אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה:

Even if these three men
were in it
Noah, Daniel and Job
by their righteousness alone
they would deliver but their own lives
(says) the Lord God.

Although the Sir fragment is partly mutilated Sirach's form and message is in keeping with that of Ezekiel. If the Sir 49.9 fragment had all three

names Sirach did change the Ezekiel order of the names by beginning his text with אֵלֹהִים . HLA suggests the reading אֵלֹהִים follows the name Job; however if the doubtful letters were read אֵלֹהִים the Ezekiel list becomes the more likely. Ultimately one can only surmise the mutilation, but the name Job is not in doubt. The צַדִּיק which is suggested by both Lévi and HLA as the final word in Sir 49.9b, not only keeps the Ezekiel theme of righteousness, but offers a description consistent with the man Job who is so very clearly pictured in the opening words of the book of Job (Job 1.1b), " $\text{אִישׁ כָּמֹנִים וְיָשָׁר וְיָרָא אֱלֹהִים וּסָר מֵרָע}$:" (Job was) perfect and upright and feared God and turned away from evil." If we add to this Job's consolation that regardless of pain, " $\text{לֹא כִדְרֹתַי אֶמְרִי קְדוֹשׁ}$;" I had not denied the words of the Holy One" (Job 6.10c), you have a picture of a very faithful man: one who was perfect, upright and feared God. Considering the man and his book it is understandable that Job should be placed on Sirach's honour roll.

The fact that Sirach was aware not only of the man Job but a text similar to the Job account within the present OT canon becomes apparent from Sir 40.5-6c,

אֵין קִנְיָה	There is only jealousy,
דַּאְגָּה וּפְחַד	anxiety and dread
אִמַּת מוֹת	Fear of death and
תִּהְרָה וְ[רַב]	(much strife)
וּצְחַת וְנוּחַ	at the time of rest
עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹ	upon his bed
שִׁנְתָּ לַיְלָה	the sleep of night
$\text{הַעֲיֹרָה [לְבוֹ]}^4)$	(will frustrate his heart)
מַעַט לְרִיק	A little, in vain
$\text{כְּרַגְצַ יִשְׁקוּט}$	but a moment he rests
$\text{וּמִבֵּין בְּהִלָּ[וֹת]} \dots$	and then is disturbed by dream(s) ...
$\text{מַעַט שֶׁ מִדְּזוֹן וּפְשׁוֹ} \dots$... by the vision of his soul ...

⁴⁾ We have based our translation on the proposed reading from HLA and Lévi. Both suggest that הַעֲיֹרָה should read תִּשְׁנוּה . See Lévi op. cit., p.48, Note 'h'. JB states, "The Hebr. and the contexts suggest (sic) that sleep brings thoughts no less painful.", op. cit., p.1091, Note 40d. Also in v 5b, a marginal note suggests that the final word could be וְרִיב , for the lacuna.

A marginal note proposes that the gap at the end of v 5d should read []⁵ΥΓ. For v 5b HLA notes $\pi\pi\pi\pi$ as erroneous. Lévi suggests it should read $\pi\pi\pi\pi$ (op cit., p.48, note 'g'). $\theta\gamma\omega$ of v 6c is possibly a lapsus from v 6a making the first two indecipherable. With parts of the Hebrew fragment remaining in doubt the Greek is an aid in clarifying and confirming the message (Sir 40.4b-6c),

θυμὸς καὶ ζῆλος
καὶ ταραχὴ καὶ σάλος
καὶ φόβος θανάτου
καὶ μὴνίαμα καὶ ἔρις
καὶ ἐν καιρῷ ἀναπαύσεως
ἐπὶ κοίτης
ὕπνος νυκτὸς
ἄλλοις γινώσκιν αὐτοῦ.
ὀλίγον ὥς οὐδὲν ἐν ἀναπαύσει
... τεθορυβημένος ἐν ὁράσει
καρδίας αὐτοῦ ...

(There is) anger and envy
and struggle and unrest
and fear of death
and wrath and rivalry
And at the time one rests
upon his bed
his sleep at night
confuse his mind.
He gets little or no rest ...
perturbed by the visions
of his heart ...

The message of this text corresponds to that stated by Job (Job 7.13-14),

יְשַׁע מְנוּחָתִי מְנוּחָתִי
כִּי-אֶמַּר בְּשֵׁנִי
בְּשֵׁנִי מְנוּחָתִי

וְתַתְּנֵנִי בְּחֶזֶק
וְתַתְּנֵנִי בְּחֶזֶק

When I say, "my couch will comfort me
my bed will ease (the burden of)
my complaint,"
then you shatter me with dreams
and terrify me with visions.

No other OT text gives a similar description of the torment of dreams
בְּשֵׁנִי מְנוּחָתִי.

Through the above findings we concur with OT scholarship that Sirach was familiar with the book of Job. We will now consider the closest correspondences in creation faith, form and language in order to measure the degree of influence which the book of Job had on Sir. The first such citing is Job 11.8-9, where the wisdom of God is compared with the threefold created order. Since there is no extant Hebrew for the text in Sir for comparison, we will cite LXX.

ὕψηλός ἐστι οὐρανός,
καὶ τί ποιήσεις;
βαθύτερα δὲ τῶν ἐν ᾧδου
τί οἶδας;
ἢ μακρότερα μέτρον γῆς
ἢ εὐρους θαλάσσης;

It is higher than heaven,
and what can you do?
It is deeper than those in Sheol
what can you know?
Its measure is longer than the earth
broader than the sea.

This does seem a close parallel with Sir 1.3,

ὕψος οὐρανοῦ καὶ
πλάτος γῆς
καὶ ἄβυσσον καὶ σοφίαν
τίς ἐξιχνιάσει;

The height of heaven and the breadth
of earth
and the deep and wisdom
who can search them out?

Despite the likeness of thought, form and language between the two above texts closer examination shows three important differences. 1/ Job employs ἄδου 'Sheol' while Sirach chooses ἄβυσσον 'the deep'. 2/ Sirach follows the P order of creation with - οὐρανοῦ, γῆς and ἄβυσσον while Job established his own. 3/ The rhetorical questions in this Job text are a direct challenge to Job while Sirach's question follows the general form of DI which leaves the challenge open to any man or god.

The Job text most frequently called on by scholarship for an influence on Sir is Job 28: the poem on personified Wisdom. Many scholars would argue that Job 28 was not originally a part of the book of Job. M. Pope sums scholarly opinion by stating, "Virtually all critics are agreed that the poem on wisdom, xxviii is extraneous," (Job, A B, 15, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1965, p. xviii). However, if Job 28 was an addition it was there by the time of Sirach, thus it is not an issue for our presentation.

Early in his text Sirach made the claim that wisdom pre-existed. This same issue is raised twice in Job (15.7; 38.21) but in each case it is God's questioning Job's knowledge of the created order. There is a close correspondence between Job 15.7,

הָרָא יִשׁוֹן אָדָם תּוֹלֵךְ
לִפְנֵי גִבְעוֹת דּוֹלֵלֶת;

Were you born the first among men
and brought forth before the hills?

and Proverbs 8.25 where personified Wisdom states,

בְּטֶרֶם הָרִים הֻטְּבוּ
לִפְנֵי גִבְעוֹת דּוֹלֵלֶת;

Before the mountains were shaped
before the hills I was brought forth.

but nowhere within Job's poem to personified wisdom is the concern of pre-existence explicitly claimed. Two themes dominate Job's poem. Wisdom is unsearchable and she is priceless. The lengthy statement on man's skill at finding precious metals is followed by the theme question in Job 28.12,

כִּי מַה הִיא
 וּמַה הִיא
 : וְהֵיכָן הִיא

But wisdom,
 where may she be found
 and where is the place of
 understanding?

This question is repeated in Job 28.20. It offers a stark contrast to Sir 1.1a, "πᾶσα σοφία παρὰ κυρίου...", All wisdom comes from the Lord ...". According to the grandson's translation the place of Wisdom is yet more candidly stated in Sir 1.9-10,

κύριος αὐτὸς ἔκτισεν αὐτὴν
 καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐξηρίθμησεν αὐτὴν
 καὶ ἐέχεεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ
 πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,
 μετὰ πάσης σαρκὸς
 κατὰ τὴν δόσιν αὐτοῦ,
 καὶ ἐχορήγησεν αὐτὴν
 τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

The Lord himself created her
 he saw her and apportioned her
 and poured her out upon
 all his works,
 with all flesh
 according to his gift,
 and he supplied her
 to those who love him.

There is no mystery here about either the origin or place of wisdom.⁵⁾ On first sight the series of verbs in the above statement (Sir 1.9) seem to offer some linguistic links with Job 28.27,

τότε εἶδεν αὐτὴν
 καὶ ἐξηγήσατο αὐτὴν
 ἐτοιμάσας ἐξιχνίασεν.

Then he saw her
 and declared her
 he established and searched (her) out.

However, closer inspection reveals that out of four verbs only the verb ὁραω 'to see' is common to both texts. ἐξιχνεύω occurs in Sir 1.3. Like Job Sirach refers to Wisdom in the third person but in Sir 24 Wisdom

⁵⁾ In a poetic gesture Sirach has wisdom state for herself, "Ἐγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου ἐξῆλθον, I came forth from the mouth of the Most High." (Sir 24.3a).

speaks in the first person. Finally, Job makes it quite obvious that Wisdom is the priceless one who cannot be compared to the most precious of things on earth (Job 28.19),

οὐκ ἴσω θήσεται αὐτῇ
τοπάζιον Αἰθιοπίας,
χρυσίῳ καθαρῷ οὐ
συμβασται χθήσεται.

The topaz of Ethiopia cannot
be compared with it,
neither with pure gold
shall it be valued.

For Sirach it is the heart of his poem to make Wisdom comparable. Wisdom can be compared to the most stately of trees, sweetest of spices, the most precious substance, loveliest of blossoms or most glorious fruits (Sir 24.13-18). The real significance in this difference is more than a literary one: it means for Sirach Wisdom is comparable, tangible and very present while, for Job, she remains unsearchable and incomparable.

Job has two statements on the climatic elements which require close consideration (Job 37.5-12; 38.22-30), the first of which stands as a very real parallel with Sirach's poem on the same theme (Sir 43.13-22). Both make the claim that as part of the created order the elements respond to God's φωνὴ βροντῆς 'thunderous voice'. Sirach's poem includes all of the elements named by Job and has behind the literary presentation the same purpose: to display the mighty power of God. The use of the atmospheric conditions to this end is, however, not peculiar to Job. In our previous chapter we saw the Psalmists make a similar presentation (Psalms 135.5-7; 148.7-8). Moreover, the writer of Jubilees lists the climatic elements as being created on the first day. (Jubilees 2.2). In brief, although there is here a greater affinity in style and theme between Sirach's poem and that of Job's, neither the material nor the form are exclusive to Job. In his second passage on the heavenly elements Job speaks of their being used by God for vengeance (Job 38.22-23),

ἦλθες δὲ ἐπὶ
θησαυροὺς χιόνος
ἦλθες δὲ ἐπὶ
θησαυροὺς χιόνος
θησαυροὺς δὲ
χαλάλης ἐόρακας
ἀπόκειται δὲ σοι
εἰς ὥραν ἐχθρῶν
εἰς ἡμέραν πολέμου
καὶ μάχης.

Have you entered
the storehouses of snow
have you seen
the storehouses of hail
which I have reserved for you
for the time of trouble
for the day of war
and battle?

Sirach is equally bold about seeing the elements as part of God's armaments

(Sir 39.28-29),

Ἔστιν πνεύματα, ἃ εἰς
ἐκδίκησιν ἐκτίσται...
πῦρ καὶ χάλαζα καὶ λιμὸς
καὶ θάνατος,
πάντα ταῦτα εἰς ἐκδίκησιν
ἐκτίσται.

There are winds that have been
created for vengeance ...
Fire and hail and famine
and death
all of these for vengeance
have been created ...⁶⁾

The parallels are not as strong with Job here as in the previous poem.

Moreover, from much earlier tradition there are accounts of God using the elements to His advantage. The hail is used in a mighty blitz on Egypt (Ex 9.22),⁷⁾

εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν
ἐκτεινὼν τὴν χεῖρά σου
εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν
καὶ ἔσται χάλαζα
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν γῆν
Αἰγύπτου, ἐπὶ τε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους
καὶ τὰ κτήνη καὶ ἐπὶ
πᾶσαν βότάνην τὴν
ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

The Lord said to Moses
stretch your hand
toward heaven
that there may be hail
upon all the land
of Egypt, upon man
and the beasts and upon
all the plants of the field
in the land.

The earlier statement on the threefold creation showed language links between Job and Sir which were enabled largely by drawing on common tradition. This can be seen again where Job turns to the J document (Job 10.9),

זכר-נ-ך כ-י כ-מ-ר ע-ש-י
:ל-ך ע-ש-י ב-נ-י

Remember that you made me like clay
and will return me to dust.

Although the word 'clay' is not in J, the potter language provides the imagery for 'like clay'. The same creation theme occurs in Job 33.6b when Elihu declares, "א-נ-י ג-ם נ-צ-ר מ-כ-ו-ן...,- moreover I too was formed from clay ..." In our comparative study of J and Sir it was seen how Sirach used similar terminology repeatedly, forging a strong bond with J. Thus

⁶⁾ The Hebrew fragment is too mutilated to carry the full sense of the text but in Sir 39.29 where the Greek translates εἰς ἐκδίκησιν the Hebrew reads *מִשְׁפָּט*, for judgement.

⁷⁾ See also Joshua 10.12-14; I Kings 17; Amos 4.7-9, 13.

the common creation language in Job and Sir is often an indication of these two wisdom writers drawing on the same tradition to formulate their separate statements of creation faith.

This is not to deny that Sirach depended on the Job text for some of his creation material: a point made clear in Wisdom's testimony (Sir 24.5),

γῦρον οὐρανοῦ ἐκύκλωσα μόνῃ
καὶ ἐν βάθει ἀβύσσων περιεπάτησα. Alone I made the heavenly circle
and in the depths of the abyss have walked.

The rare OT word γῦρον is found in DI 40.22 and Job 22.14b, but the action depicted is very similar to the Job citing, "...καὶ γῦρον οὐρανοῦ διακορεύσεται", and He walks the heavenly circle." The second part of Sirach's statement which shows wisdom walking the abyss is almost a direct quote from Job 38.16b where God challenges Job saying, "...ἐν δὲ ἵχυσιν ἀβύσσου περιεπάτησας, ... have you walked in the recesses of the abyss?" Another possible dependency is seen in Sirach's opening form to his poem, כַּעַשׂי בָּא (Sir 42.15b),⁸⁾

וזה הדירתי ואספרה: and what I have seen I will declare.

which is seemingly a direct quote from Job 15.17b,

וזה הדירה ואספרה: and what I have seen I will declare.

But, it is arguable that this is no more than a common expression used by both writers. The conclusion of this same poem, "כַּעַשׂ רַאִיתִי מִמַּעֲשֵׂיו... I have seen (but) few of his works" (Sir 43.32b) is a faint echo of Job 26.14a "...הֵן אֵלֶּה קְצוֹת דַּרְכּוֹ, Behold those are but the outskirts of his ways ..." Where Sir does differ sharply with Job's form is in the use of rhetorical questions. The same observation made in the rhetorical style of Job 11.8-9 is consistent throughout his text:⁹⁾ the questions are always

⁸⁾ As was seen in our previous chapter Sir 42.15a is a Psalm dependency.

⁹⁾ The only variation in Job's form is that the questions are at times posed by Job himself (Job 21) or God (Job 38), but they are always directed to the individual. Please see the note on rhetorical form, p.34 and for comment on Job 11.8-9 see p.67.

ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς
ἔργα αὐτοῦ, ...
πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι...

the Lord created me
first of his way for his work, ...
before the world was created ...

In Sir 1.4a it states,

προτέρα πάντων ἔκτισται σοφία... Before all things Wisdom was created

...

As in Proverbs 8, Sirach also resorts to the first person form for his central poem on Wisdom (Sir 24). Both of these characteristics, pre-existent Wisdom and personified Wisdom speaking in the first person, could only have come from Proverbs 8. Yet, in the Proverbs poem the concept of pre-existent Wisdom is a major issue requiring half the poem to establish it while Sirach makes it a reality with one brief comment in his introductory statement (Sir 1.4). It is never openly discussed again, including his main tribute to Wisdom (Sir 24). With these two similarities the correspondence stops. The remainder of the Proverbs poem emphasises how personified Wisdom was in a special personal relationship with the Lord, possibly as a co-creator, but certainly as his darling. She describes herself as,

...ἐγὼ ἥμην ἣ προσέχαιρεν. ...I was the one in whom He delighted.

(Proverbs 8.30b)¹³⁾ That this in fact means delight to Yahweh is confirmed by the Hebrew in Pr 8.30bc, "אֲנִי שִׂשׁוֹעַ יְיָ יוֹם יוֹם וְיָמִים וְלַיְלָה, and I was delight daily, making sport before him ...". Never in Sir is there a hint of personified Wisdom sharing in the work of creation: for Sirach God alone is the creator of כָּל־כֵּץ. Nor does Sirach ever portray Wisdom as sporting before the Lord. She is simply at His command (Sir 24.8a),

¹³⁾ The role of the אֲנִי has been much debated: See T. H. Gaster, "Proverbs", VT, 4(1954), pp.77-79; P. A. H. de Boer, "The Counsellor," VTS 3(1955), pp.42-71; R. B. Scott, "Wisdom in Creation: the 'AMON of Proverbs viii 30", VT, 10(1960) pp.213-23; J. de Savignac, "La Sagesse en Proverbes viii 23-31", VT, 12(1962), pp.211-15; R. N. Whybray, "Proverbs viii 22-31 and its supposed Prototypes," SAIW, op. cit., pp.390-400.

τότε ἐνετείλατό μοι ὁ
κτίστης πάντων,
καὶ ὁ κτίσας με
κατέπαυσεν τὴν σκηπὴν μου...

Then the Creator of all things
commanded me,
and the One who created me
assigned the place for my tent ...

Remarks in Sirach's opening poem give a sense of an impersonal relationship between Wisdom and God (Sir 1.9c, 10b) whereby Yahweh, having created Wisdom He,

καὶ ἐξέχεεν αὐτὴν
ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,
... καὶ ἐχορήγησεν αὐτὴν
τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

poured her out
upon all his works, .
... and supplied her
to those who love him.

One other concept of Wisdom in Proverbs which differs sharply from that in Sir is the presenting of Wisdom as a **ד'א-חַי**, 'tree of life'. It is a concept which appears in Genesis and is used on four separate occasions in Proverbs (3.18; 11.30; 13.12; 15.4).¹⁴⁾ The first applies directly to Wisdom while the other citings describe the fruit of Wisdom (what she offers to those who heed her). These are the only occurrences of the **ד'א-חַי** outside the Genesis account. Sirach never applies this analogy to Wisdom. For Sirach Wisdom is like any number of trees: she forms a garden of the most beautiful, bountiful and biggest of trees (Sir 24.13-18). But, Wisdom must not be identified solely with any one tree. Why did Sirach tread so circumspectly here? Could it not be that the **ד'א-חַי** was too closely identified with the **ד'א-חַי**, 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' which was desired to make one wise? That this is so becomes the more apparent when Wisdom makes her promise (Sir 24.22),

ὁ ὑπακούων μου
οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσεται
καὶ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι ἐν ἐμοὶ
οὐχ ἁμαρτήσουσιν.

Who ever obeys me
will not be put to shame
And those who work with my help
will not sin.

¹⁴⁾ The tree of life was also important in ancient Near Eastern myth. See W. McKane, Proverbs (OTL) SCM Press Ltd, 1970, p.296. McKane rightly adds that for the Proverbs citings it is the vitality of Wisdom that the 'tree of life' symbolizes. For discussion of the Gn occurrences see, E. A. Speiser, Genesis (AB), Doubleday and Company Inc., New York, 1964, pp.27-28.

The use of ὑπακούων and the pairing of αἰσχύνῃ 'shame' and ἁμάρτημα 'sin' produces a parallel with Gn 3 in thought concept which is not so subtle. Thus the use of the garden of trees concept defuses any sense of false hopes. It is almost as if Wisdom is now everything that the Garden of Eden held minus the two trees of temptation which dominated the centre. Thus Sirach wrote, "...כַּחַר בְּרָכָה כַּחַר פֶּחַח אֵלֹהִים Fear of God is like a garden of blessing ..." (Sir 40.27a).¹⁵⁾

Having met this thorny issue of how to depict Wisdom Sirach is quite prepared to return to Proverbs, following the example given there of Wisdom's invitation. But here too it is not a total dependence on Proverbs. Wisdom extends her invitation in deliberate contrast to Dame Folly, Proverbs 9.4-5a,

ὅς ἐστιν ἄφρων,
ἐκκλινάτω πρὸς με.
καὶ τοῖς ἐνδεέσι φρενῶν εἶπεν

Who ever is simple,
turn aside to me.
And to him who is without sense she
says,

ἔλθατε φάγετε τῶν ἐμῶν ἄρτων... 'Come eat of my bread' ...

Sirach has Wisdom simply announce a general invitation (Sir 24.19),

προσέλθετε πρὸς με,
οἱ ἐπιθυμοῦντές μου,
καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενημάτων μου
ἐμπλήσθητε.

Come to me,
everyone who desires me,
and from my produce,
eat your fill.

Sirach's use of οἱ ἐπιθυμοῦντές 'everyone who desires' parallels closely with DI's invitation which opens with οἱ διψῶντες 'everyone who thirsts' and concludes with προσέχετε (DI 55.1-3). This leaves only the main subject, personified Wisdom, extending an invitation, as peculiar with Proverbs 9.4-5a.

Near the end of Proverbs the rhetorical question is used (Proverbs 30.4).

¹⁵⁾ The grandson's translation reads, "φόβος κυρίου ὡς παράδεισος εὐλογίας...., Fear of the Lord is like a Paradise blessing ..." (Sir 40.27a).

τίς ἀνέβη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν
 καὶ κατέβη;
 τίς συνήγαγεν ἀνέμους ἐν κόλπῳ;
 τίς σκέστρεψεν ὕδωρ
 ἐν ἱματίῳ;
 τίς ἐκράτησεν πάντων
 τῶν ἄκρων τῆς γῆς;
 ... ἥ τί ὄνομα τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτοῦ,
 ἵνα γνῶς;

Who has ascended to heaven
 and come down?
 Who has held the wind in his bosom?
 Who has held the waters
 in a cloak?
 Who has established all
 the ends of the earth? ...
 what is his son's name?
 Surely you know!

Depending on how the very difficult text in Proverbs 30.1 is translated this could be part of a dialogue between individuals. This would place it in a form closer to Job's rhetorical style, whereby the questions are directed to a specific individual. Other parallels with Job include the analogy of containing the waters: not a cloak but the clouds are God's binding force in Job 26.8. The taunting statement "ἵνα γνῶς, surely you know", of Pr 8.30 is similar to the comment expressed by εἰ οἶδας in Job 38.5a. Here too we must conclude that the form, language and theology employed by Sirach in such texts as Sir 18.4b-5,

καὶ τίς ἐξιχνεύσει
 τὰ μεγαλεῖα αὐτοῦ;
 κράτος μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ
 τίς ἐξαριθμήσεται;
 καὶ τίς προσθήσει ἐκδιηγέσασθαι
 τὰ ἐλέη αὐτοῦ;

Who can search out
 his mighty deeds?
 His majestic power
 who can measure?
 Who can fully recount
 his mercies?

align far more readily with DI's rhetorical form. For both Sir and DI the greatness of God is immeasurable for its abundant fullness but never from a sense of בְּיָד 'emptiness', 'vanity' which is hinted at in the above Proverbs text. W. McKane suggests that there is a hiddenness, an unknowability in Proverbs 30.4 which is similar to that of Ecclesiastes, for Auger sees the teaching of wisdom as "... empty speculation and vain imagining."¹⁶⁾ This contrasts sharply with Sirach.

As for Ecclesiastes itself, apart from confusion with the Latin title, Ecclesiasticus, there is little similarity with Sir. The measure of direct influence amounts to several phrases and one brief comment. The phrase וְנִחָרְךָ 'long or patient spirit' used in the Hebrew fragment of

¹⁶⁾ W. McKane, op. cit., p.647.

Sir 5.11b is identical with that of Ecclesiastes 7.8.¹⁷⁾ It does show an awareness of the language of Qoheleth as does the use of $\eta\iota\beta\omega$ (Sir 11.14d). $\eta\iota\beta\omega$ with the initial letter 'W' instead of 'D' is only found once in OT: that one citing is in Ecl. 17b. All other OT citings use $\eta\iota\beta\delta$. The strongest appeal to Ecclesiastes by Sirach is to be found in Sir 40.1b-2, where Sirach having mentioned the "much labour" for all men continues,¹⁸⁾

...ἀφ' ἡμέρας ἐξόδου ἐκ γαστρος
μητρὸς αὐτῶν
ἕως ἡμέρας ἐπιστροφῆς
εἰς μητέρα πάντων.
τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς αὐτῶν
καὶ φόβον καρδίᾳς
ἐπίνοια προσδοκίας, ἡμέρα τελευτῆς.

... from the day they come from their
mother's womb
till the day they return
to the mother of all.
Their troubling thoughts
and fear of heart
anxious anticipation, the day of
death ...

This commentary by Sirach on man's toil matches closely Ecclesiastes 5.14-16,

καθὼς ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ
γαστρος μητρὸς αὐτοῦ γυμνός,
ἐπιστρέψει τοῦ πορευθῆναι ὡς ἦκει
καὶ οὐδέν οὐ λήμψεται
ἐν μόχθῳ αὐτοῦ...
καὶ τίς περισσεῖα αὐτῷ,
ἢ μαχθείεις ἄνεμον;
καὶ γε πᾶσαι αἱ ἡμέραι αὐτοῦ
ἐν σκοτει καὶ πένθει
καὶ θυμῷ πολλῷ
καὶ ἄρρωστίᾳ καὶ χόλῳ.

As he came from
his mother's womb naked
he shall return to go as he came
and he shall take nothing
for his toil ...
And what profit has he,
that labours for the wind?
And at any rate all his days (are)
in darkness and grief
and much worry
and sickness and bitterness.

Despite the mixed tradition of Genesis and Job the predominant thought pattern in the Sir text is that of Ecclesiastes. Both texts stress the

¹⁷⁾ However, Lévi notes Sirach's use is not with the same signification, I. Lévi, op. cit., p.5, Note 'r'.

¹⁸⁾ The Hebrew fragment omits verse 2, thereby giving rise to the speculation that the Greek text is corrupt (see W. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, op. cit., p.265-266); however, the description of man's anxious thoughts in verse 2 parallels well with the summation and effect of anxiety spoken of in verse 5. Moreover it explains that the "heavy yoke" mentioned in verse 1 is more than physical labour: it includes psychological trauma. For citing and discussion of Sir 40.5-6c see pp.66-67.

burdens of life and labour which weigh man down to the grave or earth (the mother of all). This is, however, the only major dependency on Qoheleth in the whole of Sir. It would seem that Qoheleth's sense of the **לֵב** in **לֵב** was too far from the direction which Sirach wanted to chart in revealing the **דְּבַר** of God in the created order:

In retrospect what can really be claimed for the relationship between Sir and Wisdom Literature? In an attempt not to devalue we have included some of the less conspicuous material and yet the very brevity of this chapter is in itself a witness to the lack of influence. Even in the proverbial sayings Sirach claimed a style of his own, grouping the proverbs around themes thereby removing them from their old form of proverbial listings.¹⁹⁾ More than a shift of form, he restates most of the proverbs such that R. B. Y. Scott writes, "Although the content of Sirach's instruction covers much of the same ground as that of Proverbs and there are verbal echoes of the old book, only two or three direct quotations are made from it."²⁰⁾ The theory that Proverbs is a major influence, a model for the whole of Sir, has little evidence to substantiate it. As for the book of Job, it is not creation faith, but the figure of Job that has the most marked influence on Sir. With the three major poems on personified Wisdom scholarship must now accentuate the differences so as not to blur the texts. In short, a new perspective is needed: Sir must no longer be held under the shadow of old wisdom.

¹⁹⁾ While the many wise sayings in the book of Proverbs appear to have no particular order, examples of Sirach's 'groupings' include, Sir 2.1-18, patience in trouble; Sir 3.1-16, submission to parents; Sir 11.29-34, hospitality; Sir 20.1-8, silence; Sir 32.1-17, some banquet manners.

²⁰⁾ R. B. Y. Scott, op. cit., p.209.

CHAPTER SIX

SIRACH AND EARLY JEWISH APOCALYPTIC

The close dating of Sir at 180 BC enables an entry into the fascinating theological thought world which surrounded its author. The foregoing comparative studies indicate the high degree to which Sirach was influenced by the earlier writings. In our introductory chapter, on pp.1; 6, it was stated that we do not regard Hellenization as a primary motivating factor. We hold to this. M. Hengel in speaking of Hellenization said, "We find the first slight traces of Greek in Koheleth, in Ben Sira and with the musical instruments in the Book of Daniel." He then adds that they become "extraordinarily numerous" in later Jewish rabbinic literature.¹⁾ Yet, there is more for inquiry into his contemporary circumstances. We know from Sir 50 that Sirach was much impressed by the then spiritual/political leader of his community, Simon the High Priest. If the political has a low profile the question must be asked about the theological thought world in which he lived. The apocalyptic world, in both oral and written form, was nearing its crest at the very period when Sirach was preparing his wisdom in creation document. Our purpose in this chapter is to examine this theological thought world in which Sirach wrote.

¹⁾ M. Hengel, Jews Greeks and Barbarians, Trans. by J. Bowden, SCM Press, London, 1980, p.116. As part of the "slight traces" in Sir Hengel points to Sirach's use of his own name within the book and the comment "He is all" in Sir 43.27 (pp.121-123). Greek influence on the name is a possibility but even if we consider Qoheleth a nom de plume it may also be this provided sufficient influence from within the Wisdom School. On the claims of pantheistic overtones in Sir 43.27 E. Jacob says, "It is a bit rash to draw such conclusions." Jacob sees instead that the 'He is all' statement refers to God as creator of all, thereby keeping Sirach well within the Israelite tradition. See E. Jacob, "Wisdom And Religion In Sirach" in Israelite Wisdom, edited by J. G. Gammie et al, Scholars Press, New York, 1978, p.257.

Ultimately the examination will determine any possible formative influence, particularly on Sirach's doctrine of creation. The investigation into this theological thought world will be in two parts: 1/ a brief description of this literary genre under, "terms, titles and theories", 2/ a study of the rise of apocalyptic. This will be followed by an evaluation of the measure of influence from apocalyptic on Sir.

I Terms, titles and theories

The confusion of terms, titles and apocalyptic theories throws one into a sea of possibilities. This variant of possibilities was planted within the literature itself, aided by the historical setting and interpolations by later Christian writers. At times the only thing that appears for certain is that the authorship so boldly declared is spurious.

Scholars who pursue this elusive corpus of Jewish literature portray the lack of agreement when trying to settle on a definition for apocalyptic. J. Barr in his Rylands lecture, "Jewish Apocalyptic In Recent Scholarly Study", says a book is considered an apocalypse if we move beyond the dual distinction of form and content to consider a number of levels: language use, structure, the sort of thing that is told and doctrine.²⁾ Here Barr is following the search through literary levels already advanced by K. Koch who advocates, "In view of the throng of contradictory theories, it would seem advisable to narrow down the criterion of what is apocalyptic, rather than to extend it, and to insist on starting from a strictly form-critical basis."³⁾ When this definition

²⁾ J. Barr, "Jewish Apocalyptic In Recent Scholarly Study", Reprinted from the "Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester", Vol.58, No. 1, Autumn 1975, p.16.

³⁾ K. Koch, The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1972, p.35.

is applied to Jubilees its limits are challenged, for the best Barr can conclude is, "Only in a very limited sense could the book be called an apocalypse; but it has many contacts with apocalyptic." (op. cit., p.17). He prefers to see it more as a midrash but concedes that the tendency to rewrite does not allow for an easy placement under this category either. We believe if allowance is made for the developmental stages, Jubilees would appear to be earlier than a more full blown work like Daniel. The dating of Jubilees will be considered later in this chapter, but sufficient to say that style and content place it at a time when apocalyptic thinking was firmly attached to its parent, traditional material.⁴⁾ In its more infantile state, it naturally does not fit the description so much more conducive to later works like, The Book of The Secrets of Enoch, which is also known as 2 Enoch, The Slavonic Book of Enoch or as J. Charlesworth's recent work indicates, 2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch.⁵⁾

F. C. Burkitt writing early in this century makes this very concise statement on apocalyptic in his Schweich Lectures entitled, Jewish and Christian Apocalypses, "The doctrine of the apocalypse is the doctrine of the Last Judgement."⁶⁾ He later quotes, 4 Ezra 7.50, 'The Most High has

4) The choice of "traditional material" here as parent rather than simply prophecy or wisdom is an intentional one for although many scholars, P. D. Hanson being the most recent, consider apocalyptic the child of prophecy while a few others such as G. von Rad turn to wisdom as its source we believe either can be too restricting. It is apparent that Genesis gave birth to Jubilees. 'Creation Faith' whether from Genesis, the Prophets or Wisdom Literature might also be considered an important component of the Apocalyptic world.

5) J. Charlesworth, The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments, Vol. I, Darton Longman and Todd, London, 1983.

6) F. C. Burkitt, Jewish and Christian Apocalypses, Oxford University Press, London, 1914, p.2.

not made one world but two' then declares that this is the essential thing, the very central doctrine which animates all apocalypses.⁷⁾ Barr appropriately cautions that, 4 Ezra 7.50, is the standard example cited by those scholars who hold firmly to the 'doctrine of the two ages' but he further cautions that the terminology of 'this age' and 'the age to come' depends very largely on a semantic shift in the Hebrew term עולם.⁸⁾ Moreover, this dualistic element is found throughout the New Testament but it does not warrant the term apocalypse for the whole of the NT. L. Morris speaks to this very issue when he claims that the adjective apocalyptic is derived from the Greek apokalypsis in Revelation 1.1: this context gives the understanding of 'uncovering' or 'revelation'.⁹⁾ Koch refutes this saying the adjective is not derived from apokalypsis as in Rv 1.1, but a second, narrower use of the word describing secret, divine disclosures which pertain to the end of this present world and a new heavenly state.¹⁰⁾ What apocalyptic describes is not clear but the etymology is distinctly that of Revelation 1.1, adding to the already confused state the predicament wherein a New Testament phrase gives a title to what is really a Jewish OT concept. In attempting to clarify the apocalyptic blur D. Russell follows a list known as the "marks of apocalyptic" put forward by the Swedish scholar, J. Lindblom. These marks include: transcendentalism, mythology, cosmological survey, pessimistic historical surveys, dualism, division of time into periods, teaching of two ways, numerology, pseudo-ecstasy, artificial claims to inspiration, pseudonymity and

7) *ibid.*, p.32.

8) J. Barr, *op. cit.*, p.35. Barr explains that this understanding of 'olam is not only post-biblical, but it is not evidenced in the main Qumran writings. It is in rabbinic Hebrew that it becomes well established.

9) L. Morris, Apocalyptic, Inter-Varsity Press, London, 1973, p.20.

10) K. Koch, *op. cit.*, p.19. The second source Koch describes as the title of early literary works which resemble the book of Revelation.

esoterism.¹¹⁾ This characteristics list was closely followed by most scholars from the late 1930's to the mid-sixties, but of the Lindblom list H. H. Rowley rightly states that some of these must be viewed more as the accidents than the essence of apocalyptic.¹²⁾ Not everything in it applies to all apocalyptic and on the other hand much of it is appropriate to other literary forms within the OT. P. D. Hanson shows the inadequacy of long lists of apocalyptic characteristics by giving four adverse results,

(1) the sources of apocalyptic are misunderstood, (2) the period of origin is centuries off the mark, meaning that the resulting typology of apocalyptic literature is grossly inaccurate, (3) the historical and sociological matrix of apocalyptic is left unexplained (4) the essential nature of apocalyptic is inadequately clarified.¹³⁾

Hanson concludes, much later in his text, that lists of either literary features or concepts are far too abstract for defining such an alive entity as apocalyptic.¹⁴⁾ J. Charlesworth's recent publication shows that confusion persists, "Unfortunately there is presently no consensus regarding the precise definition of this adjective (apocalyptic) ..." ¹⁵⁾

To a lesser degree, yet indicative of the same lack of consensus, is the term pseudepigrapha. Here J. Bloch reminds us that there was little distinction between fiction and history so long as the appearance of antiquity was given.¹⁶⁾ Despite this lack of concern for fact, including

¹¹⁾ D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (200BC-AD100), SCM Press, London, second impression, 1971, p.105.

¹²⁾ H. H. Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic (a study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to Revelation), Lutterworth Press, London, New and Revised edition, 1963, p.13.

¹³⁾ P. D. Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic (The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, Revised Edition, 1979, p.7.

¹⁴⁾ *ibid.*, p.429.

¹⁵⁾ J. H. Charlesworth, *op. cit.*, p.3.

¹⁶⁾ J. Bloch, On Apocalyptic In Judaism (an authorized facsimile of the original by Maurice Jacob Inc.) The Dropsie College For Hebrew, Philadelphia, 1976, p.49.

authorship, D. S. Russell goes far afield to explain the significance of a pseudonym by giving an understanding of Hebrew psychology with its sense of corporate personality and time sequence whereby the past is telescoped into the now.¹⁷⁾ H. H. Rowley, meanwhile, does not believe pseudonymity is integral to apocalyptic, noting that the first half of Daniel is anonymous: the second half is attributed to Daniel not to deceive, but simply to identify with the writer of the first part of the book.¹⁸⁾ This same consideration holds true for DI. Charlesworth clarifies that although the term pseudepigrapha is a transliteration of a Greek plural noun, indicating works with 'false inscription', it is employed by contemporary scholarship not because it denotes something spurious about the documents, but because the term has been inherited and is now used internationally.¹⁹⁾ This brings us to the question of titles. They too reflect the lack of any agreed understanding on this literary corpus called 'apocalyptic' (a matter earlier illustrated by the four possible titles for 2 Enoch). Despite Charlesworth's explanation that pseudepigrapha is an 'inherited title' this does not fully justify the complete title given to his own publication, The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments. Firstly it could give a sense of the words pseudepigrapha and apocalyptic being interchangeable, but of greater concern is the fact that out of twenty-eight documents studied twenty-two were written in the Christian Era extending as late as the ninth century. This places some of the works under consideration well beyond the latest acceptable date for the OT canon and into a time when the apocalyptic works were shut out of the Hebrew

¹⁷⁾ D. S. Russell, op. cit., p.136.

¹⁸⁾ H. H. Rowley, op. cit, p.37.

¹⁹⁾ J. H. Charlesworth, op cit., p.xxv.

world. Furthermore, there is only one complete apocalypse within the Jewish/Protestant canon, similarly with the NT. The Roman Catholic canonical list has only added one more, 2 Ezra, which is also confusingly entitled 1 Esdras. Why must Charlesworth use the words, The Old Testament ... in his title? A more appropriate description would be 'Judaic Writings', for although etymologically pseudepigrapha denotes writings attributed to figures featured in the OT, this hardly justifies the inclusion of 'Old Testament' in his title. Moreover, to argue that pseudepigrapha is an inherited title is only to perpetuate an unquestioned misnomer. Such action in modern scholarship, in a field where titles are already a source of confusion, is of little help. Charlesworth himself readily acknowledges how misleading titles are by exemplifying the Life of Adam and Eve which is essentially the same as the Apocalypse of Moses (an inapt title for an account of Adam and Eve).²⁰⁾ In other works the title may have been most appropriate at one time but with interpolations or even rewriting of much of the text, the title is no longer apt.

It stands that in any body of literature where divergence is so wide on terms and titles so it will be with apocalyptic theories. It might well be asked, what group or groups of people produced the apocalyptic literature between 200 BC-100 AD? How representative of the total Jewish community were they? Could they have been a relatively small group with a massive output like the Qumran Community? Were they estranged from more main line writers like Sirach? The number of theories on this question of party representation alone is sufficient to indicate how diversified scholarship is here too. One of the more sweeping statements is by Bloch who contends that the apocalyptists comprised no party but cut right across all party lines representing teachers, preachers, thinkers and writers of

²⁰⁾ J. H. Charlesworth, op. cit., p.4.

the day: all of whom adhered to the basic religious teachings of Israel.²¹⁾ P. D. Hanson responds happily to this theory saying, "We applaud Joshua Bloch's rejection of the 'party' model as a means of explaining the history of Jewish apocalyptic."²²⁾ This strong affirmation seems only an opportunity to present his own view which ultimately is very different from Bloch's, for he concludes that Bloch's view is inadequate in explaining involvement of specific groups at certain periods.²³⁾ As will be seen more fully in this chapter, according to Hanson's theory the sociological circumstances surrounding these 'groups' gave rise to apocalyptic. Koch believes it was not only a party but a distinctly Palestinian one, perhaps an obscure group within society opposed to the more learned sages. He takes this a step further by suggesting they were a people with, "... a particular linguistic training, perhaps even a particular mentality."²⁴⁾ Charlesworth, with every good reason cuts right through the above theories, including Hanson's which has as a keystone the notion of a strong, all-powerful ruling party, when he writes,

The simplistic picture of Early Judaism should be recast; it certainly was not a religion which had fallen into arduous legalism due to the crippling demands of the law, nor was it characterized by four dominant sects ... Three examples suffice to demonstrate this insight: First, none of the present translators strives to identify a document with a particular Jewish sect. We cannot identify with certainty any author of a pseudepigraphon as being a Pharisee or an Essene or a member of another sect. Second, Palestinian Jews were influenced by Egyptian, Persian, and Greek ideas. Hence, the

21) J. Bloch, op. cit., p.136.

22) P. D. Hanson, op. cit., p.228, Note 43.

23) *ibid.*, p.229.

24) K. Koch, op. cit., p.27.

old distinction between "Palestinian Judaism" and "Hellenistic Judaism" must be either redefined or discarded. Third, because of the variegated, even contradictory, nature of the ideas popular in many sectors of post-exilic Judaism, it is obvious that Judaism was not monolithically structured or shaped by a central and all-powerful "orthodoxy".²⁵⁾

In sum, it should neither be surprising nor disturbing that agreement within the apocalyptic world is hitherto unobtainable. This is as it should be. Apocalyptic literature was never intended to be easily aligned: simple 'yes' and 'no' answers or any amount of detective work which assumes full understanding will be left looking a bit shamefaced. For apocalyptic, this surely has to be described as a healthy state. Both scholar and reader must keep a very open-ended view.

II The rise and development of Apocalyptic literature

The next portion of this chapter will be confined to tracing the rise and development of early Jewish Apocalyptic literature. Material considered will include sections of the prophets, Daniel, earliest Enoch writings and Jubilees. The reasons for staying to the edge of such a large field of extant literature are twofold: 1/ it will allow further understanding of the literary world in which Sirach wrote; 2/ it will help indicate possible influences on Sir from a sphere of writing and theological thought which stands apart from this more traditional, humanistic, wisdom text. The second concern, as indicated earlier, will comprise the final portion of this chapter.

Most scholars are in agreement that the roots of apocalyptic lie in prophecy. The only two who seriously oppose this view are G. von Rad and E. W. Heaton. In his commentary on Daniel, the only full apocalyptic OT

²⁵⁾ J. Charlesworth, op. cit., p.xxix.

book, Heaton in disclaiming the influence of prophecy says, "It is, however, a significant fact (and one too often overlooked) that this prophetic material is almost entirely absent from the Book of Daniel."²⁶⁾ He adds, in a section following a discussion of the "Psalms and Wisdom" in relationship to Daniel, that the Hebrew word mashal describes the book of Daniel best.²⁷⁾ G. von Rad notes that the interpretation of the future and the science of omens belonged to the wise men. He then adds, "Apocalyptic, wisdom's immediate successor certainly did not produce such and similar material out of the blue."²⁸⁾ Barr, who describes von Rad's position as, "rather a strange view of apocalyptic", faults his interpretation of salvation history, "... which is seriously distorting in its application to all late-biblical and post-biblical materials."²⁹⁾ Barr's own theory is based on the prophet Ezekiel, whom he describes as the fountain out of which the apocalyptic river flowed.³⁰⁾ Early in his presentation Bloch also shows that the apocalyptic writings are, "... in no small degree a direct offshoot of prophecy."³¹⁾ Rowley sums best with his comment on apocalyptic origins, "That apocalyptic is the child of prophecy yet diverse, can hardly be disputed."³²⁾ Beyond this established point of

²⁶⁾ E. W. Heaton, The Book of Daniel, SCM Press, London, 1956. p.34.

²⁷⁾ *ibid.*, p.44.

²⁸⁾ G. von Rad, Wisdom In Israel, Translated by J. Martin, SCM Press, London, First English Edition, 1972, p.288.

²⁹⁾ J. Barr, *op. cit.*, pp.24-25.

³⁰⁾ *ibid.*, p.19.

³¹⁾ J. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p.5.

³²⁾ H. H. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.15.

origin, however, the process of development, the impact of particular prophecies and the actual point of birth of apocalyptic continue as debatable issues. One of the more recent and most convincing proposals has been put forward by P. D. Hanson's, The Dawn of Apocalyptic. A brief consideration of his thesis seems appropriate here. By choosing from the apocalyptic strand one theme, that of "apocalyptic eschatology", Hanson shows that the rise and development of early apocalyptic was, "Neither sudden nor anomalous" but followed a pattern of unbroken development from pre-exilic and exilic prophecy.³³⁾ Beyond Second Isaiah all that was required for the dawn of apocalyptic, according to Hanson, was the final demonstration to a group of alienated disciples that their vision could not be realized within mundane structures or through human agency. He believes the course of history allowed such a crisis with the return of the exiles and restoration of the temple. It is in this setting that Hanson develops a highly sociological study. In his thesis the political/religious struggle within the community, during the early period of the Second Temple, divided Jew against Jew creating two polarized groups: the "visionaries" and the "hierocratic realists". The first group consisted of redundant prophets and levite priests while membership in the so called "hierocratic realists" was made up of ruling Zadokite priests. This heavily sociological account is based on the assumption that the powerless or "disenfranchised" who lose all hope of personal achievement in the present historical setting move aggressively into the eschatological, visionary world. He endeavours to look at the apocalyptic picture through the world of both groups, but as R. P. Carroll so rightly accuses in his critique,

³³⁾ P. D. Hanson, op. cit., p.8.

"Twilight of Prophecy or Dawn of Apocalyptic", Hanson overplays the polarizing and puts too much weight on sociological theories which in themselves are suspect.³⁴⁾ Carroll, who sees the real value in Hanson's work being the fresh Sitz im Leben it creates for apocalyptic, concludes, "It is to the credit of P. Hanson that the debate about the origins of apocalyptic will now have to take seriously the possibility that those origins may be derived in part from a period much earlier than has been conventionally thought of as the matrix of apocalyptic".³⁵⁾ This return to the sixth century BC was being advocated by F. M. Cross ten years previous to Hanson's publication, albeit with an acknowledgement of Hanson's thinking, but Cross's own interpretation is uniquely different. In his article, "New Directions in the Study of Apocalyptic", Cross does not see the old tradition silenced so much by the exilic events as by the voice of Job.³⁶⁾ Though the traditional faith did revive briefly in the Chronicler Cross says, "Job brings the ancient religion of Israel to an end."³⁷⁾

In keeping with P. D. Hanson's social findings, yet on a more theological level, it would seem that the "visionaries'" inability to meet doubt as Job did gave rise to the apocalyptic world. Seeing no hope in the present historical circumstances the apocalypticist takes flight into the future kingdom which God alone can and will bring. One wonders that if the "visionaries" had faced their "powerlessness", their doubt in God's ability to change the present circumstances, as did Job and the writer of Psalm 73, would this period of Hebrew literature have taken a very different shape? This too, however, is a flight from the historical reality. The

³⁴⁾ R. P. Carroll, "Twilight of Prophecy or Dawn on Apocalyptic", JSOT, Vol. 14, 1979, p.19.

³⁵⁾ *ibid.*, p.31.

³⁶⁾ F. M. Cross, "New Directions in the Study of Apocalyptic", JTCh; Vol.6, 1969, pp.157-165.

³⁷⁾ *ibid.*, p.162.

apocalyptists not only survived but thrived from the pre-Hellenistic period to 100 AD. Of the silent period from the fourth to the middle of the third century BC, where there is no known apocalyptic literature, Hanson claims that under the reform measures of Nehemiah and Ezra there was a reintegration into what he calls, "one dominant socio-religious system based on 'the law of your God, which is in your hand' (Ezra 7.14)."³⁸⁾ Out of the silence comes a writing like Jubilees which is a rewrite of Genesis and part of Exodus. It is ascribed to Moses 'the Father of the Law'. This brings us to the place where we must discuss what Hanson calls "middle apocalyptic":³⁹⁾ specifically early Enoch material, Jubilees and Daniel.

Hanson dates 1 Enoch 6-11, which is the Noah fragment, as late third century BC while E. Isaac places it as late pre-Maccabean but puts the Apocalypse of weeks (91.12-17; 93.1-10) and fragments of Enoch's vision (12-16) as early pre-Maccabean.⁴⁰⁾ Unlike 1 Enoch, Jubilees is not of composite authorship and seems more appropriately dated as early pre-Hellenistic. The dating is a contentious one with the strongest debate between S. Zeitlin and H. Rowley in which Zeitlin calls for an early pre-Hellenistic date while Rowley argues for a mid-second century dating.⁴¹⁾ After a study of the two books, we feel serious consideration must be given to Jubilees predating Daniel. Jubilees has a more primitive form of angelology in which angels are not assigned personal names nor is there talk of the levels of angels. The references to Prince Mastema give

³⁸⁾ P. D. Hanson, op. cit., p.440.

³⁹⁾ ibid., p.365.

⁴⁰⁾ J. L. Charlesworth, op. cit., p.7.

⁴¹⁾ This debate which arose after Rowley first published, The Relevance of Apocalyptic is well recorded in JQR, Vol. xxx, 1939-40, pp.1-31, vol. xxxvi, 1945-46, pp.183-189.

a form of satanology more in keeping with the Chronicler or the story of Micaiah with its lying spirits, I Kings 22.22, which keeps God from being personally involved in or even responsible for evil. This attributing of death and destruction to Pince Mastema is even read into the Exodus saga when the author of Jubilees writes, "Ye were eating the passover in Egypt, when all the powers of Mastema had been let loose to slay all the first born in the land of Egypt ..." (Jubilees 49.2). The expectation in Jubilees of a new era is less with a sense of complete destruction of the present in favour of a whole new creation, as seen in later apocalyptic, but much more in keeping with the earlier thinking of Trito Isaiah. This new era of peace and joy is well described in Jubilees 23.27-31a,

And in those days the children will begin to study the laws, and to seek the commandments, and to turn to the path of righteousness ... And all their days they will complete and live in joy, and there will be no Satan nor any evil destroyer; for all their days will be days of blessing and healing. And they will rise up and see great peace and drive out their adversaries ... and their bones will rest in the earth ...

This statement also shows the author's lack of any belief in a resurrection life so clearly stated in Daniel 12.2, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ..." All of this, coupled with our earlier note of the author's stress on the law, with Moses being the recipient of esoteric knowledge, would seem to place Jubilees more in the swell of the apocalyptic wave while Daniel is very much on the crest. This calls for a dating on Jubilees that is early second century; just prior to the book of Sir.

The book itself has its name from the fact that its history is numbered and dated according to Jubilees (49-year periods mentioned in Leviticus 25.8-24). With the Jubilees calendar, which was solar based, Zeitlin takes strong issue. He believes the calendar had long been changed before the writing of the Jubilees and was by that time a dead issue. Thus,

he concludes, "To say that the book of Jubilees could have been written in the first or even the second century B.C.E. betrays a lack of comprehension of the history of that period."⁴²⁾ However, from the Dead Sea Scrolls we know the calendar was very much an alive issue in the second century BC.⁴³⁾

1 Enoch with its Book of Watchers (1 En 1-5), containing what is known to be its oldest material, shows a development beyond Jubilees. It has a highly schematic presentation explaining the source of evil. It ascribes personal names to angels. Moreover, 1 Enoch's introduction of Pseudo Enoch (1 Enoch 1.1-3) reflects the description of the all knowing, righteous one given in Jubilees 4.17-25. In fact, nowhere in the whole of the Apocalyptic is there a more highly acclaimed account of Enoch than in Jubilees. Ordinarily one would anticipate a simpler statement being the oldest but if one allows for the existence of legends creating so prominent an Enoch figure it stands that when it is finally put to paper an appropriate summary would be anticipated. Jubilees supplies that. Moreover later writers do not build upon the character description of Enoch offered by Jubilees. This holds true with 1 Enoch 1.1-2, 80.1 & 2 Enoch 28.1ff. The later work of the Qumran Community (Genesis Apocryphon 2.22) describes Methuselah running to Enoch, "(he ran) to Enoch, his father, to learn the truth about everything."⁴⁴⁾ The 2(Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch, which F.

⁴²⁾ S. Zeitlin, "The Book of Jubilees, its Character and Significance", JQR, Vol xxx 1939-40, p.15.

⁴³⁾ G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Penguin Books Ltd., Middlesex, Reprint, 1972, pp.42-44. Therefore, a third century BC dating for Jubilees is too early, particularly if it is based on the 'calendar debate'.

⁴⁴⁾ J. A. Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, Biblical Institute Press, Rome, 1971, p.53.

I. Andersen dates as late first century AD, offers the latest summary on Enoch's life.⁴⁵⁾ Although the whole of the sixty eighth chapter is used as a final statement on Enoch, there are no new insights except for the exact number of books he wrote and the specific date for his ascension with reference to a clan celebration following it. Enoch's removal in the Jubilees statement is more in keeping with the Genesis 5.24 text and the writer's own lack of any belief in a resurrection life. Jubilees simply states, "And he was taken from amongst the children of men and we conducted him into the Garden of Eden ..." (Jubilees 4.23). In the Garden of Eden Enoch supposedly wrote an account of the wickedness of the children of men which ultimately lead to God's bringing the flood.

III Measure of Early Apocalyptic influence on Sir

The description of Enoch in Jubilees 4.17-25 is one of the most conspicuous of the apocalyptic influences on Sir. Sirach's lengthy honour roll of the Jewish faithful is headed by Enoch, son of Jared. This is supported by both the Greek and Hebrew texts (Sir 44.16),

ΕΝΩΧ ΕΥΗΡΕΣΤΗΣΕΝ ΚΥΡΙΩ
καὶ μετετέθη
ὑπόδειγμα μετανοίας
ταῖς γενεαῖς.

Enoch pleased the Lord
and was changed
(having being) an example of
repentance
to all generations.

חֲנוֹךְ [וְ]אֵלֶּיךָ
(וְ)הָיָה לְךָ
אֶתֶּן דָּרֹךְ לְדֹר וּדְרוֹר:

Enoch was found perfect
and walked with the Lord and was taken
(As) a sign of knowledge from
generation to generation.

To say that Sirach was influenced in this description by old tradition found in Genesis 5.18-24 is not satisfactory. Within this single OT account there is little that would distinguish Enoch for such a worthy position. The book of the generations places Enoch as the seventh

⁴⁵⁾ J. L. Charlesworth, op. cit., p.91.

progenitor. That Enoch "walked with God" clearly places him amongst the "righteous" but the phrase "he was not, for God took him", within this same Gn 5.24 text, does not in itself outrightly indicate a supernatural ascension. Even if one argued for such an experience, as was obviously believed by later Apocalyptists, surely it is a paler one in comparison with that of Elijah (II Kings 2.11-12). Neither in Hebrew nor Greek does the language of Sir 44.16a necessarily imply a supernatural ascension. If it was on the basis of ascension Elijah would be a prime candidate for first honours. In sum, to place Enoch at the head Sirach needed more convincing material. Jubilees supplied it. This becomes especially apparent when one realizes that unlike the Greek text which describes Enoch as 'an example of repentance', *ὑπόδειγμα μετανοίας*, the original Hebrew fragment refers to him as a 'sign of knowledge', *תַּלְמִיד*. The Hebrew is well backed by the Jubilees description, "And he (Enoch) was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom ..." (Jubilees 4.17a)⁴⁶). Such a description would no doubt please an esteemed wisdom teacher. Oesterley tries to explain the shift from 'knowledge' to 'repentance' in the Greek by saying *μετανοίας* 'repentance' is a corruption for *διανοίας* 'intelligence', but this word is never used in the LXX to translate *תַּלְמִיד*. We can only conjecture why the grandson made this change: that Enoch is placed in the Garden of Eden as a sign to write down the condemnation and judgement of the world, Jubilees 4.23-24, could indicate that Enoch was considered both as a 'sign of knowledge' and a 'sign of repentance'. Noah being second on the list could also have served the grandson in choosing the phrase 'sign of repentance'.

⁴⁶) This same Jubilees text which continues by describing Enoch being taken into the Garden of Eden may also help explain why the Latin translator chose to add to Sir 44.16, "Enoch placuit Deo; et translatus est in paradisum ...", Enoch pleased God: and was translated into paradise ..."

A second occurrence of Enoch, the only name repeated on the list, is found in Sir 49.14,

כמעט נוצר
על הארץ כהניך
וגם הוא נלקח פניו:

Few have been formed
upon the earth like Enoch
and moreover he was taken from (its)
face.

Some scholars, such as R. Beckwith, have overworked this text as indicative of Sirach's belief in resurrection life.⁴⁷⁾ This is taking a single text out of its fuller context. Sirach, like the writer of Jubilees, held no such doctrine. It is the old sheol concept which dominates his book (Sir 14.12-16; 17.27; 41.4; 48.5). The final reference in this list with its mention of raising "a corpse from death", thereby saving it from "Hades", is with respect to Elijah's miraculous work. (I Kings 17.17-24).

In our comparative study with DI on p.33, apocalyptic colourings were noted in the language used in describing the prophet DI in Sir 48.24-25. This seems the more likely, not just because of the two later apocalyptic works on the prophet Isaiah, but early traces of apocalyptic thinking which lie in prophecy; especially DI whose book has been referred to as 'proto-apocalyptic'.⁴⁸⁾ On the other hand, the account of Wisdom's journey in Sir 24.3-7 from heaven to earth should not be held as a correspondence with some of the heavenly journies in search of secret knowledge as in 2 Enoch, also known as The Book Of The Secrets of Enoch. Out of his journies it was said he learned all the works of heaven, earth and sea, whereas Wisdom's walk through the heavenly circuit, sea, abyss and earth is more to emphasize the inclusion of הכל. This in turn stresses the extent of her search for the right 'resting place'.

⁴⁷⁾ R. Beckwith, "The Earliest Enoch Literature and Its Calendar: Marks of Their Origin Date and Motivation", RDQ, Vol. x, 1979-81, p.367. At most this text (Sir 49.14) must be seen as a soft relinquishing to the growing reports on Enoch; yet there is nothing in Sir 49.14 which could not be attributed directly to Gn 5.24.

⁴⁸⁾ The two later apocalyptic works on Isaiah are, The Martyrdom of Isaiah, and The Ascension of Isaiah. For the reference on Isaiah as 'proto-apocalyptic' see P. Hanson, op. cit., p.27.

Sirach used thirty separate divine titles with 'Most High' employed most frequently (33x in Sir). All except one of these are found in earlier OT tradition. As noted in our Psalms study 'Creator of all things', δ $\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ is not used within the whole of the OT: for this one unique, central title in Sir 24.8a, Sirach is probably indebted to apocalyptic literature.⁴⁹⁾ The writer of Jubilees used the title 'Creator of all things' on three separate occasions (Jubilees 11.17; 22.27; 45.5). A fourth reference, though not using the title explicitly, serves as an explanation of the same (Jubilees 36.7): where Isaac is said to make his sons swear an oath, "... by the name glorious and honoured and great and splendid and wonderful and mighty, which created the heavens and the earth and all things together - that ye will fear and worship him." This also sums up well the reason for, δ $\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$, being at the heart of Sirach's doctrine of creation: it points all back to the Creator and calls all to fear and worship Him. Finally, on God's relationship with Israel Sirach states that, "He appointed a ruler to every nation, but Israel is The Lord's own portion". (Sir 17.17). Although God's authority over other nations is not a new concept, the specific assignment of "a ruler to every nation" is a step beyond earlier tradition. Here again, although Sirach removes the apocalyptic language, the step is made under the influence of Jubilees 15.31b-32a where it is written,

... for there are many nations and many peoples, and all are His, and over all has he placed spirits in authority to lead them astray from Him. But over Israel He did not appoint any angel or spirit, for He alone is their ruler.

With reference to the Sir 17.17 text, J. Snaith redresses Sirach's stripped down apocalyptic statement saying, "However the ruler of this verse may not

⁴⁹⁾ Except for $\epsilon\psi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\omega$ $\pi\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ (Most High, King of All) which might be considered a variation on 'Creator of all' there is but this single occurrence in Sir. לְכֹהֵן in Sir 51.12d is spurious. Also the Hebrew fragment lacks Sir 50.15, which contains, "Most High, King of All".

refer to a human ruler but to angels, semidivine beings whom it was believed God had appointed to control other nations ..."⁵⁰⁾ Snaith's comment is backed with reference to Michael and the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia (Daniel 10.13). This text with its more developed concept of angelology, post-dates Sir while the Jubilees passage is previous to Sir and all inclusive with the phrase, "over all (nations) he has placed spirits".

In sum, what can be said of the Sir relationship with Apocalyptic? Working amidst a sea of literary activity contrary to his own, Sirach managed to stand apart. In considering the whole text with the influences drawn by Sir from a much earlier tradition, the Apocalyptic impact becomes very measurable. The placing of Enoch at the head of his honour roll was a bold one, in light of the dearth of early tradition, whereas Noah, who was second, has ample support within primeval history. The key title, Creator of all things, although a well developed concept in earlier tradition needed that final bridge to justify its full employment. Jubilees spanned the gap. On other occasions apocalyptic thinking seems to have slipped in almost despite himself. On the whole Sirach was aware of the Apocalyptic tradition, particularly the Enoch tradition, but chose to keep it at a safe distance. P. D. Hanson's thesis on the two distinct groups, visionaries and hierocratic,⁵¹⁾ could be one possible explanation for Sirach's standing apart. Sirach's theological position suits well the hierocratic group. He turned to apocalyptic thought sparingly and only when it could offer the fullest possible impact. It was Sirach's doctrine of creation which was served best by Apocalyptic literature. In comparison to all else it was a meagre amount but it made a significant difference.

⁵⁰⁾ J. Snaith, op. cit., p.89 (underlining is to indicate italics by author).

⁵¹⁾ P. D. Hanson, op. cit., pp.70-75; 218-220.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SIRACH CREATION TEXTS

There are eight major creation texts spread throughout Sir. These texts are: Sir 1.1-10; 15.14-20; 16.24-17.14; 18.1-14; 24; 33.7-19; 39.16-35; 42.15-43.33. Before asking what role they play in the book, we shall examine them in detail, according to order of occurrence.

Personified Wisdom in Creation (Sir 1.1-10)

Πᾶσα σοφία παρὰ κυρίου
καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν
εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα .
ἄμμον θαλασσῶν
καὶ σταγόνας ὑετοῦ
καὶ ἡμέρας αἰῶνος
τίς ἐξαριθμήσει;
ὕψος οὐρανοῦ
καὶ πλάτος γῆς
καὶ ἄβυσσος καὶ σοφίαν
τίς ἐξιχνιάσει;
προτέρᾳ πάντων
ἐκτίσται σοφία
καὶ σύνεσις φρονήσεως
ἐξ αἰῶνος.
ῥίζα σοφίας
τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη;

1. All wisdom is from the Lord
and is with him
for ever.
2. Sand of the seas
and drops of rain
and days of eternity
who can count?
3. Height of heaven
and breadth of earth
and abyss and wisdom
who can search (them) out?
4. Before all things
wisdom was created
and wise understanding
from eternity.¹⁾
6. The root of wisdom
to whom has (it) been revealed?

¹⁾ Codex 248 adds,
πηγὴ σοφίας
λόγος θεοῦ ἐν ὑψίστοις
καὶ αἱ πορεῖαι αὐτῆς
ἐντελαι αἰῶνιοι .

The spring of wisdom is
God's word in heaven
and her ways are
the eternal commandments.

The Latin offers an identical translation. It is also included in the Syro-Hexaplar.

καὶ τὰ πανουργεύματα αὐτῆς
 τίς ἐγνώσκει;
 εἰς ἐστὶν δεινός,
 φοβερός σφόδρα,
 καθήμενος ἐπὶ
 τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ.
 κύριος αὐτὸς ἐκτίσεν αὐτὴν
 καὶ εἶδεν καὶ
 ἐξηρίθμεσεν αὐτὴν
 καὶ ἐξέχεεν αὐτὴν
 ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,
 μετὰ πάσης σαρκὸς
 κατὰ τὴν δόσιν αὐτοῦ,
 καὶ ἐχορήγησεν αὐτὴν
 τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

- and her clever devices
 who can know? ²⁾
 8. One is wise,
 to be feared greatly,
 seated upon
 his throne.
 9. The Lord Himself created her
 and saw and
 numbered her
 and poured her out
 upon all his works,
 10. with all flesh
 according to his gift,
 and he supplied her
 to those who love him.

Sirach's opening words *σοφία* and *κυρίου*, the predominant subjects for the whole book, are immediately coupled with the sense of totality and eternity. That the very first word is *πᾶσα* (כָּל) is not only appropriate for the sense of totality but serves as the first indication of the Judaic doctrine of creation: a doctrine in which, as we saw earlier, the concept of כָּל is very central. The repetition of 'all' at three other points within this same introductory statement further underlines its centrality (Sir 1.4a, 9d, 10a). כָּל־וְ which usually stands behind αἰῶνα provides a sense of stretching indefinitely into the future. Thus the two main subjects are encompassed between כָּל and כָּל־וְ. It is important to distinguish between *σοφία* and *κυρίου* within this opening verse, for the two must not be considered equal. *Πᾶσα σοφία παρὰ κυρίου* makes it immediately apparent that the Lord is the provider of all wisdom. She comes forth as one of his attributes. Because of the context, which clearly indicates that God created Wisdom (Sir 1.9a), it is more likely that, כָּל stood behind *παρὰ* in v 1a rather than כָּל־וְ as in Pr 8.30c.

²⁾ Cursives 70, 106 and 253 add,

ἐπιστήμη σοφίας
 τίγιν ἐφανερώθη;
 καὶ τὴν πολυπειρίαν αὐτῆς
 τίς συνήκεν;

Knowledge of wisdom
 to whom was it revealed?
 and her great experience
 who can understand?

It is also retained by the Latin but is quite clearly a doublet of v 6.

of Wisdom without openly mentioning Solomon by name. Perhaps Sirach's break in the more traditional stance by not ascribing his work to Solomon helps explain not only the veiled reference here but the fact that there is no direct reference to Solomon till Sir 47.14b.⁵⁾ The phrase *σταγόνες ὕετου* 'drops of rain' is also in the LXX of Job 36.27; its main contribution in Sir 1.2a is simply to make more vivid the sense of the innumerable. The third expression *ἡμέρας αἰῶνος* 'days of eternity' in Sir 1.2b increases yet further the sense of the innumerable but with the added purpose of echoing the understanding of 'eternity' used in the opening verse.

In v 4a the pre-existence of Wisdom is openly stated, "*προτέρα πάντων ἔκτισται σοφία*, before all things Wisdom was created." Sir 1.1a stated that wisdom was *παρὰ κυρίου* but by v 9a it is explicitly stated, "*κύριος αὐτός ἔκτισεν αὐτήν* , The Lord Himself created her ...". Wisdom was created first. She was created by the Lord. Sir 1.4b does more than reiterate the pre-existence of wisdom; by the employment of *ἐξ αἰῶνος* 'from eternity' it links back to the opening words of the poem which describes the relationship of wisdom and the Lord as being *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* 'for ever'. These same phrases when combined give a sense of the totality of time: one stretching into the future 'for ever' and the other reaching retrospectively 'for ever'. The pair of rhetorical questions which follow in v 6 enlarge the picture of fathomless wisdom. The first questions the *ρίζα* 'root' of wisdom which follows on the reality that it was planted long, long ages ago, deep into the past, before all things. It is this reality that makes the question rhetorical. Who could uncover a

⁵⁾ In this context the comparison for Solomon's wisdom is *ὡς ποταμός* , 'like a river'. Sirach used this same analogy in Sir 24.25-27. There wisdom is compared to rivers in their season of fullness. Sirach infers that his own wisdom became a river in Sir 24.31c.

root that goes that deep? It is not unlike the rhetorical question which Eliphaz placed before Job, "... were you brought forth before the hills?" (Job 15.7b). The second question moves from the origin to the essence of wisdom which the Greek translator describes well with *πανουργεύματα* 'clever devices'. The Latin translation is consistent with this picture of wisdom, "et astutias illius quis agnovit?, and who has known her astute counsels?" The answer is immediately given with the statement, "*εἷς ἐστὶν σοφός, φοβερός σφόδρα*..." One is wise, greatly to be feared ..." It is this One alone who knows the root and essence of wisdom. The Latin translator not being satisfied with *εἷς* went a step further to identify this One by the inclusion of the words, "Creator omnipotens, Almighty Creator." For Sirach's first readers, any of the community of the faithful, such an addition was hardly necessary. What is surprising is the single use of the word *σοφός*. It is found only in the Greek MSS. Neither the Latin nor Syriac contain it. There is no extant Hebrew. Sir 1.8a is the only time that it occurs in reference to God; all other citings in Sir are with reference to man. In its context, immediately following the pair of rhetorical questions, it could simply be a response meaning God alone knows the root of wisdom and God alone knows her clever devices. He created her. *σοφός* could also mean God alone has the fullness of wisdom. This understanding of God being 'all knowing' is expressed by Sirach with the statement (Sir 42.19-20a),

<p>מְדוּה חֲלִיפוֹת נִדְיוֹת וּמִגְלֵה דְקָר נִסְתָּרוֹת: לְ[אֵן] עֶרְ מִמֶּנּוּ כֹל שָׁכָל...</p>	<p>He declares things that are past and things yet to come and reveals the traces of hidden things. No knowledge is lacking from Him ...</p>
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Following *σοφός* the phrase *φοβερός σφόδρα* 'to be feared greatly' in Sir 1.8a serves as an identity for *εἷς*. These words announce a theme which will remain throughout Sir. In this same introductory chapter Sirach is

not merely making a word play when he writes, "ρίζα σοφίας φοβεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον, to fear the Lord is the root of wisdom." (Sir 1.20a). In Sir 1.18a fear of the Lord is seen as, "στέφανος σοφίας, the crown of wisdom." Such is its importance to Sirach's text that he immediately follows this opening poem on wisdom in creation by one of equal length on "φόβος κυρίου" (Sir 1.11-20).

Sir 1.8a, with its image of the wise One who is greatly to be feared, is paralleled by a picture of the same wise One seated upon the θρόνος (Sir 1.8b). This could be taken as an early signal of the theocracy within Sir: a theocracy in which Sirach describes God as appointing rulers for every nation, but Israel remains the Lord's own portion (Sir 17.17). That the description of God seated on the throne is not a passive one, but possibly points to His kingship as depicted in Is 6.1, 5 or the Enthronement Ps 47.8b, is assumed by the Latin translation, "Rex potens ... et dominans Deus, powerful King ... and God of dominion." However, this is how the Latin understood it. The only other possible direct reference to the Kingship of God in Sir is the title "ὕψιστῳ παμβασίλει, Most High, King of all" (Sir 50.15d). However, this verse is wanting in the Hebrew. Thus, the most that can be said about any possible correspondence here with Isaiah or the Enthronement Pss is that the Latin translator collated tradition giving a more vivid picture of God seated upon His throne.

The next verse that follows in this opening poem on creation (Sir 1.9a) demonstrates well the independence and the power of God in relationship to wisdom, "κύριος αὐτὸς ἔκτισεν αὐτήν, The Lord Himself created her." The emphatic use of αὐτὸς makes it unquestionably clear that God alone is creator. This important aspect of the doctrine of creation is restated in the central poem where personified Wisdom speaks of God as

"ὁ κτίστης ἅπαντων, καὶ ὁ κτίσας με ... the Creator of all things, and the one who created me ..." (Sir 24.8a). In the opening text, where it is first declared that God created wisdom, the Latin translator uses a theological concept which does not exist in Sir when he states, "Ipse creavit illam in Spiritu sancto ... , He created her in the Holy Spirit ... (Sir 1.9). Never does Sirach attempt to equate $\pi\alpha\omega\pi$ with the $\pi\eta\gamma$ which hovered over the waters at creation nor does he identify it with the $\psi\gamma\rho\ \pi\eta\gamma$ as seen in Ps 51.13. Besides creating wisdom, God ἐξηρίθμεσεν αὐτήν 'numbered her'. The choice of this verb hearkens back to the first rhetorical question, "τίς ἐξαριθμήσει; Who can count?" The Latin translator picks up the word play and responds to the first two opening questions with the phrase, "et dinumeravit, et menus est, and numbered and measured her" (Sir 1.9b). The response in both the Greek and Latin texts gives the desired effect of designating yet again that the ultimate power of creation is in God's hands. He is the only wise one. In sum, from the perspective of man, Wisdom is innumerable and immeasurable, but from the perspective of the Creator she too knows her bounds. The third verb in the series ἐξέχεεν 'poured out' leads to the placing of wisdom. Although it seems terribly impersonal, more like a disposing of Wisdom, she receives her rightful commissioning in Sir 24.8a.⁶⁾ The placing of Wisdom "ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, upon all his works" indicates how intimate Wisdom is to the whole created order. Wisdom and creation are literally united with this brief statement. This in itself helps explain why the created order is so fundamental to Sir; a matter which will become much more apparent in

⁶⁾ It is true that ἐξέχεεν is the same verb used of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.33 but this hardly justifies the Latin translation discussed above.

the Sirach creation tradition which follows this opening poem. Sirach closes out this poem on Wisdom in creation by adding that she is also amongst *πάσης σαρκὸς* 'all flesh'. Here Wisdom is placed as a 'gift' (*δόσιν*). It is not unlike Paul's later description of grace in Ro 3.24, or indeed that of Sirach's description of mercy (Sir 18.11-14).⁷⁾ Sirach's choice of *δόσιν* underscores that God is the initiator and *σαρκὸς* the receiver.⁸⁾ That *σαρκὸς* means mankind is clarified by "*τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν*, those who love him." This comment is not to particularize Sirach's message⁹⁾, instead it becomes a leading statement for the next major block of creation material which is on man's free will.

Man's Free Will (Sir 15.14-20)

אֱלֹהִים מִבְּרָאשִׁית
אֵל בֹּרָא אָדָם
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶהוּ
בִּיד כּוֹחַ פָּנָיו

וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ
בִּיד יִצְרוֹ:

אִם תִּחְפֹּץ
תִּשְׁמַר מִצְוָה
וְתִבְוֹנֶה
לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנוֹ:
אִם תִּאֱמִין בּוֹ
גַם אֱמִתָּה תִּחְדִּיחַ

14. God from in the beginning
created man
and delivered him
into the hand of the one who
spoils him
and placed him
in the hand of his own
inclination
15. If you desire
you can keep the commandment
and have (keep) understanding
to do His will.
If you trust Him
also of a truth you shall live.

⁷⁾For commentary on Sir 18.11-14 see pp.130-132.

⁸⁾In Sir 15.14-20 it will be seen that man is not merely a passive receiver; he must decide.

⁹⁾To particularize "those who love him" is to curtail Sirach's more universalistic message far too quickly. W. Oesterley is amongst those who sees only a particularistic attitude in the whole of Sir op. cit., p.9. For the opposing view see A. Schökel, "The vision of Man in Sirach 16:24-17:14", in Israelite Wisdom, Scholars Press, N.Y. 1978, pp.242-243.

מוצק לפניך
 אש ומים
 באשר תחפץ
 שלח יריך:
 לפני אדם
 חיים ומוות
 אשר יחפץ
 ינתן לו:
 ספקה חכמה יי

אמיץ בבורות
 ודודה כל:
 עיני אל
 יראו מעשיו
 ודו יכיר ע"ל
 כל מפעל איש:
 לא צוה
 אנוש לחטא
 ולא החלים
 אנשי כזב:
 לא מרחם
 על עושה שוא
 ועל מבלה סוד:

16. Poured out before you
 (are) fire and water
 to which you desire
 stretch forth your hand.
17. Before man
 (are) life and death
 which he desires
 shall be given to him.
18. Sufficient is the wisdom of the
 Lord
 (He is) mighty in power
 and sees all things.
19. The eyes of God
 see His works
 and He knows
 every deed of man.
20. He does not command
 man to sin
 and does not strengthen
 men of lies.
 No mercy
 on them that commits vanity
 nor on him that betrays a secret.

The creation of man, his relationship to God and man's free will appear in stark, brief comments; indeed, if the whole passage were considered in its isolated context, it would make little sense. Sir 15.14a comes closer than any other OT text in paralleling Gn 1.1a אלהים מבראשית א, when God from the beginning created "...". But, unlike the P writer who goes on to list created works, leaving any reference to אדא till all things are created, Sirach leaves his dependence on P's opening formula and immediately states " א' ברא אדם , (God) created man". Man alone remains the subject for Sir 15.14-20, as surely as Wisdom was for Sir 1.1-10. The 'created works' are postponed till the third block of creation material. Sir 15.14b has been met with varied opinions. I Lévi considers the two remaining clauses as doublets.¹⁰⁾ W. Oesterley is amongst scholars who view the clause referring to God's leaving man to the hand of the spoiler as a gloss.¹¹⁾ Neither the Greek nor Latin versions contain this clause.

¹⁰⁾ I. Lévi, op. cit., p.24, Note 'e'.

¹¹⁾ W. O. E. Oesterley, The Wisdom of Ben-Sira, SPCK, London, 1916, p.47, Note 1.

However MS A reads, "... וְיִשְׁתָּהוּ בְיַד קוֹנֵהוּ, and delivered him into the hand of the one who spoils him ..." MS B is fragmented on this clause, but what is extant corresponds with MS A, "... וְיִשְׁתָּהוּ בְיַד קוֹנֵהוּ, and delivered him into the hand of the one who spoils him ...". This is not to be mistaken for the second clause "and placed him in the hand of his free will," for this too exists in both MSS A and B. One could argue that the silence of the Greek and Latin versions could point to the Hebrew being a late addition; however silence in the face of both Hebrew MSS is hardly a sufficient case. It is more likely that the grandson took liberty here to excise a seemingly inconsistent part of his grandfather's theology. As for the Latin, it was translated from the Greek. Considering Sirach's dependence on J creation theology,¹²⁾ it is possible that we have here a veiled reference to the fall. Surely it is as at home in Sir as the message in Sir 25.24,

ἀπὸ γυναικὸς
ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας,
καὶ δι' αὐτὴν
ἀποθνήσκει πάντες.

From a woman
sin had its beginning,
and because of her
we all die.

וְיִשְׁתָּהוּ is personified sin. Anybody or anything enticing man away from God's will is sin. The final clause in Sir 15.14 shows man has a choice, " וְיִשְׁתָּהוּ בְיַד קוֹנֵהוּ, and placed him in the hand of his free will." This clause, which exists in all MSS, is central to Sirach's doctrine of creation. Man was not created as God's puppet. He has been given choice.

The first choice which Sirach sees before man is the וְיִשְׁתָּהוּ. This word had a variety of possible renderings as seen in MS B, Sir 45.5b.¹³⁾

¹²⁾ Sirach dependencies on what we call the J document were discussed on pp. 25-31.

¹³⁾ For the translation and discussion of Sir 45.5b see p.149.

The Greek cursives use the plural when translating $\eta\zeta\omega$. But for the present discussion it little matters whether we use a narrow definition, such as only the ten commandments, or a wider interpretation meaning any word that points the way. God's word or will is the way of life. Sirach adds, " $\text{וְחַיְתָּ לְעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנוֹ}$ ", and (it is) wisdom to do His will." (Sir 15.15b). Sirach immediately adds that it is not only wisdom to do His will but if you trust God, " $\text{וְחַיְתָּ} \dots$ you shall live." (Sir 15.15c).¹⁴⁾ There is no cause here for believing that 'life' described in this claim, means resurrection life, for without any further discussion, Sirach reverts to the reality of man's choice. This he exemplifies by the analogies 'fire and water'; 'life and death'. In Sir 15.16a וְאֵשׁ וְמַיִם could both be seen as fundamental elements for life, but they may also be symbols of danger and death as in Is 43.2. The added clause, " $\text{וְלֹאֲשֶׁר תַּחֲפֹץ שְׁלַח יָדְךָ}$ ", that which you desire stretch forth your hand" in v 16b clarifies this picture. The thought of the hand stretched forth in water is refreshing and cleansing, but placing the hand to fire is quite the contrary. If one were to allow for a less penalizing message in this verse, it would only be a temporary stay, for v 17 makes the consequences of man's choice very stark. He must choose life or death. The antithesis is retained for as water is to fire so is death to life. Again in Sirach's own words, if you choose God's will, " וְחַיְתָּ ", you shall live." (Sir 15.15c). Sirach has already developed at this point a major doctrinal statement on created man. In sum, man has the right to choose but the way of God (that is, the

¹⁴⁾ The claim "you shall live" is wanting in the Greek. It reads instead, " $\text{καὶ πιστὶν ποιῆσαι εὐδοκίας}$ ", and to act faithfully is within your power." The same argument as given above with v 15b holds true here; for again, both MSS A and B contain the statement; therefore we see it as an intentional change by the Greek translator. That Sirach actually meant 'life' becomes more apparent in v 17.

μυριοπλασίως ἡλίου
 φωτεινότεροι
 ἐπιβλέποντες πάσας
 ὁδοὺς ἀνθρώπων
 καὶ κατανοοῦντες εἰς
 ἀπόκρυφα μέρη.
 πρὶν ἢ κτισθῆναι τὰ πάντα 20.
 ἔγνωσται αὐτῷ
 οὕτως καὶ μετὰ
 τὸ συντελεσθῆναι.

are ten thousand times brighter
 than the sun
 they look upon all
 the ways of men
 and perceive even
 hidden ways.
 Before all was created
 it was known to Him
 and thus also after
 they were completed.

Nothing is hidden from before God's eyes for He saw things before they actually were formed, which we take to mean He saw in his own mind's eye what shape they would take before creation. Besides the pre-existent Wisdom, this is the only other reference to the pre-existent work of God. Here it offers an absolute sense of God's all seeing power. The analogy of God's eyes seeing ten thousand times brighter than the sun takes on even more emphasis when one considers the immense power of the sun described by Sirach in Sir 43.2-5.¹⁵⁾ These same watchful eyes continue to scan.

Man has the right to choose, thus the sins that man commits can not be blamed on God for as Sirach wrote, " **אֵל לֹא צִוָּה אִישׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת חַטָּאת**, He (God) does not command man to sin." (Sir 15.20a). MS A is fully extant but on this claim MS B has only the words **אֵל לֹא צִוָּה**. MS B varies slightly with MS A in Sir 15.20b. MS A reads,

וְלֹא יַחֲזִק אִישׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת חַטָּאת and does not strengthen men of lies.

while MS B reads,

וְלֹא יִלְמַד אִישׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת חַטָּאת and does not teach deceit
וְלֹא יַחֲזִק אִישׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת חַטָּאת to men of lies.

MS B makes for a better parallel with v 20a, clarifying and extending the message, but in both MSS the message is evident, God is not to blame for man's sin. The grandson certainly conveyed this message when he translated (Sir 15.20),

¹⁵⁾ For citing and commentary on this poem see pp.176-178.

οὐκ ἐντείλατο
οὐδενὶ ἀσεβεῖν
καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἄνεσιν
οὐδενὶ ἁμαρτάνειν.

He has not commanded
any one to be ungodly
and He has not given permission
(for) any one to sin.

This important aspect of Sirach's doctrine of creation will be followed through as part of Sirach's next block of creation tradition (Sir 17.1-14). For the present, Sirach has laid a foundation stone with the above claim. The last line of this chapter, Sir 15.20cd, is seriously doubted by scholars as being original to the text. I Lévi describes v 20d as, "An unintelligible addition, to fill the line." ¹⁶⁾ To this it must be said first that the words " :ךוּס הַמִּלֵּךְ... " do not fill the line. The Cambridge Genizah fragment shows it neither reaching far to the left nor completing the page. There remains at least four centimeters of empty space at the bottom of the leaf. If by "fill" Lévi means complete the thought, its parallel in v 20c which reads, "אֵין מִרְחָם עָלָיו שׁוֹמֵן", No mercy on him that commits vanity" surely does not require the statement, "Nor on him that betrays a secret," to complete its intent. Sir 15.20 does offer excellent Hebrew parallelism but need that infer a later hand? For Sir 20cd the Greek is wanting, whereas the Latin has added a separate conclusion, "non enim concupiscit multitudinem filiorum infidelium et inutilium". For He desired not a multitude of faithless and unprofitable children." (Sir 15.22). However, in both MSS A and B, both statements appear unmutilated. HLA not only shows both MSS in agreement; it offers no indication of corruption. An important factor should be held in tension here; at this point the whole creation passage has reached its apex with Sir 15.20a but then a strong claim is added which does not seem to allow for compassion, forgiveness or mercy. Sirach himself is not always

¹⁶⁾ I. Lévi, op. cit., p.24, Note 'o'.

consistent, as is evidenced by the end of his third block of creation tradition (Sir 18.13). Here the mercy of God is said to be "upon all flesh." The "no mercy" of Sir 15.20c has now changed to the picture of one "turning back like a shepherd his flock."¹⁷⁾ It may be that the omission in the Greek is indicative of the grandson's desire to maintain a consistency by deleting inexplicably strong or seemingly inconsistent claims by his grandfather. The emotional tie of the grandson to grandfather undoubtedly was part of the persuasive power for the translating of his work, but it may also be that this same human tie led the grandson to ensure a consistent and acceptable theology. Modern scholarship should be wary of perpetuating this defensive line by claiming too hastily that a text is the work of a later hand, particularly when it is supported by two MSS of the original work.¹⁸⁾

The centrality of man amidst the created order (Sir 16.24-17.14)

This creation passage will be examined in three parts: 1/ the created order (Sir 16.24-30), 2/ man's place in creation (Sir 17.1-4), 3/ Sirach's synthesis (Sir 17.6-14).

¹⁷⁾ For a full translation and commentary on Sir 18.13 see pp.130-131.

¹⁸⁾ For a fuller explanation of discrepancies between the Greek and Hebrew see Appendix A, pp. 228-229.

Ἀκουσὸν μου, τέκνον,
 καὶ μάθε ἐπιστήμην
 καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ μου πρόσχε
 τῇ καρδίᾳ σου.
 ἔκφανώ ἐν σταθμῷ
 παιδείαν
 καὶ ἐν ἀκριβείᾳ
 ἀπαγγελάω ἐπιστήμην.
 Ἐν κρίσει κυρίου
 τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ
 ἀπ' ἀρχῆς,
 καὶ ἀπὸ ποιήσεως αὐτῶν
 διέστειλεν μερίδας αὐτῶν.
 ἔκσμησεν εἰς αἰῶνα
 τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ
 καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν εἰς
 γενεὰς αὐτῶν.
 οὔτε ἐπείνασαν
 οὔτε ἐκοπίασαν
 καὶ οὐκ ἐξέλιπον
 ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.
 ἕκαστος τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ
 οὐκ ἐξέβληψεν,
 καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος
 οὐκ ἀπειθήσουσιν
 τοῦ ῥήματος αὐτοῦ.
 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα κύριος
 εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐπέβλεψεν
 καὶ ἐνέπλησεν αὐτήν
 τῶν ἀγαθῶν αὐτοῦ.
 ψυχὴ παντὸς ἔωσεν
 ἔκαλυψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς,
 καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν ἡ ἀποστροφὴ αὐτῶν.

24. Listen to me, my son,
and learn knowledge
and hold fast my words
to your heart.
25. I will impart by weight
instruction
and by exactness
I will declare knowledge.
26. By judgement of the Lord
his works are
from the beginning,
and from creating them
he determined their divisions.
27. He arranged for an eternity
his works
and their dominion for their
generations.
They neither hunger
nor thirst
and they never cease
from their works.
28. Everyone does not squeeze aside
his neighbour,
and till eternity
they shall never disobey
his words.
29. And after this the Lord
looked upon the earth
and filled it
with his good things.
30. (With) All living beings
he covered the surface thereof,
and into it they return.

Only the exordium and the first clause of the poem on created works are extant in Hebrew. (Sir 16.22-24a),¹⁹⁾,

יְהוָה וְקוֹלִי יִשְׁמָע
 וְעַל דְּבָרַי שֶׁמֶן לֵב
 יִשְׁפֹּךְ בְּכֹחַ רוּחִי
 וְעַל חֲסִידָיו יִשְׁפֹּךְ

כְּבֹרָא לֵב מַעֲשֵׂי
 ... מַעֲשֵׂי

Listen to me and receive my wisdom
 and upon my words set your heart.
 I will pour by weight my spirit
 and in humility I will declare my
 knowledge.

When God created His works
 from the beginning ...

¹⁹⁾ Except for the phrase $\text{וְעַל חֲסִידָיו יִשְׁפֹּךְ}$ 'concerning their life' there is no further extant Hebrew till Sir 18.30 and from there it is very fragmented till Sir 30.11. Sir 16.22 (Heb) is 16.24 in the Greek.

We saw earlier in our comparative study with the P material how Gn 1.1 influenced v 24a.²⁰⁾ However it is more Sirach's use of this creation tradition that we are most concerned with at this juncture.²¹⁾

The eternal (αἰώνιος) attribute of God which was seen in Sir 1.1, 4 to be shared with wisdom is now also seen in the created works. By the use of the phrase "ἔργα αὐτοῦ", his works" in this context of Sir 16.26a it would seem the text is with specific reference to the created order. This becomes the more obvious from the statement, "διέσπειλεν μερίδας αὐτῶν", He determined their divisions, "(Sir 16.26b) which can only mean the works of separation: waters from the waters, waters from the land and day from night. ἐκόσμησεν in Sir 16.27a is more likely with reference to the placing of the luminaries but such a sharp distinction need not be insisted upon because the significant factor lies in the realization that the created order alone is being considered here : all of His works previous to creating ψυχῇ ζωῶς 'living beings' as described in Gn 1.1-25.²²⁾ Sirach's purpose was not merely to maintain P order. Let us recall what was said of 'His works' in the first creation text considered, "καὶ ἐξέχεεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ" and He poured her (wisdom) out upon all His works." (Sir 1.9c). Wisdom was from the beginning (ψυχῇ), placed within the created order. With this in mind let us now look further at the attributes of the created order. Besides being for an eternity (εἰς αἰῶνα) they have a dominion (ἀρχὰς). It is also

²⁰⁾ See comparative study p. 12.

²¹⁾ For comment on Sirach's highly personal claims in the exordium see "Schema In Sir", p. 192.

²²⁾ This same verb ἐκόσμησεν is used in Sir 42.21a. There it is with reference to ordering "the splendours of wisdom."

claimed that, "οὔτε ἐπείνασαν οὔτε ἐκσπίασαν, they neither hunger nor thirst." (Sir 16.27c). It is from the above attributes, coupled with the fact that the created works do not cease from their labour, nor crowd their neighbour aside and will never disobey God's word that a significant picture arises. This represents the closest Sirach comes to personifying the created order. The whole presentation of the ruling, satisfied, obedient and harmonious creation is to stand in contrast to, "ψυχῇ παντός ζώου, all living beings." A break is indicated to begin the contrast with the phrase, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα 'and after this' followed by the P refrain of God looking upon the earth. (Sir 16.29a). Although God's next act of creation covers the earth with ἀγαθῶν 'good things', they are finite. The limits of the flesh are best described in Sirach's own words (Sir 14.17),

כל השר	All flesh
כבוד יבלה	wears out like a garment
וקול עולם	and the decree from eternity is,
אנצו' אצו	"You shall surely die."

At best all physical flesh is but a short blaze of glory. It must return to the earth. At this point man's lot would seem to be far less than the created order. That Sirach leaves no room for doubting man's inclusion amongst ψυχῇ παντός ζώου 'all living beings' is made the more evident in our next strophe.

Man's place in creation (Sir 17.1-4)

κύριος ἐκτίσεν	1. The Lord created
ἐκ γῆς ἀνθρώπον	man of the earth (dust)
καὶ πάλιν ἀπέστρεψεν	and turned him back to it again.
αὐτὸν εἰς αὐτήν.	

ἡμέρας ἀριθμοῦ
 καὶ καιρὸν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς
 καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν
 τῶν ἐπὶ αὐτῆς.
 καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐνέδυσεν
 αὐτοῖς ἰσχύιν
 καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ
 ἐποίησεν αὐτούς.
 ἔθηκεν τὸν φόβον αὐτοῦ
 ἐπὶ πάσης σαρκὸς
 καὶ κατακυριεύειν
 θηρίων καὶ πετεινῶν.

2. Numbered days
and time he gave to them
but he gave them authority over
things there upon.
3. He gave them strength like unto
Himself
and like his own image
he created them.
4. He placed the fear of them
upon all flesh
and granted them dominion over
beasts and birds.²³⁾

The parallel statement to man's creation which quickly marks his end, "and turned him back to it (the earth) again," ensures that man is amongst the ψυχῇ παντὸς ζώου 'all living beings' that shared the same fate in the first strophe, even though the past tense of the verbs ἔκτισεν 'created' and ἀπέστρεψε 'turned' would seem to specify Adam. Adam stands as a harbinger for all mankind. Sir 17.2 changes to the plural αὐτοῖς 'them' and with it comes the ultimate mark of man's mortality. He is given numbered days, a limited time. Truly man's lot stands in stark contrast with that of the created order. However, with the emphatic use of καὶ 'but' there comes a radical turn about for man. Man is raised from dust to the highest estate. He is given authority 'ἐξουσίαν' and dominion 'κατακυριεύειν'. Here we note Sirach's reversal of order from that in Gn: giving numbered days before authority, authority before image, presentation of man in the negative first. It is true the created works in Sir 16.27c also exercise their own particular dominion, but God created man, "κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, like His own image." (Sir 17.3b). It is this that places man not only at the centre but above all created things. He has a potential of worth beyond all created things. The fear of man is

23) Codex Vaticanus adds as v 5,

ἔλαβον χρῆσιν τῶν πέντε
 τοῦ κυρίου ἐνεργήματων,
 ἐκτὸν δὲ νοῦν αὐτοῖς
 ἔδωκεν ὡς μερίδιον
 καὶ τὸν ἑβδόμον λόγον
 ἑρμηνεῖα τῶν ἐνεργήματων
 αὐτοῦ.

The use of five powers
 they received from the Lord,
 But as a sixth he distributed
 to them the gift of understanding
 and as a seventh the word
 the interpreter of His powers.

ἐπὶ πάσης σαρκὸς 'upon all flesh'. But, this shared sovereignty with God is not without its conditions. For these conditions we must turn to the third strophe where Sirach gives his synthesis.

Sirach's synthesis (Sir 17.6-14)²⁴⁾

διαβούλιον καὶ γλῶσσαν
καὶ ὀφθαλμούς ὦτα καὶ καρδίαν
ἔδωκεν διανεῖσθαι αὐτοῖς.
ἐπιστήμην συνέσεως
ἐνέπλησεν αὐτοὺς
καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὰ
ὑπέδειξεν αὐτοῖς.
ἔθηκεν τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν αὐτοῦ
ἐπὶ τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν
δείξαι αὐτοῖς
τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.
καὶ ὄνομα ἁγίασμοῦ
αἰνεσουσιν,
ἵνα διηγῶνται
τὰ μεγαλεῖα τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.
προέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ἐπιστήμην
καὶ νόμον ζωῆς
ἐκληροδότησεν αὐτοῖς.
διαθήκην αἰῶνος
ἔστησεν μετ' αὐτῶν
καὶ τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ
ὑπέδειξεν αὐτοῖς
μεγαλεῖον δόξης
εἶδον δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν,
καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς αὐτοῦ
ἤκουσεν τὸ οὖς αὐτῶν.

6. Inclination and tongue
and eyes, ears and a heart
he gave them for understanding.
7. The knowledge of understanding
he filled them with
and good and evil
he showed them.
8. He set his eye
upon their hearts
to show them
the majesty of his works.²⁵⁾
10. And His holy name
they shall praise,
that they may declare
the majesty of his works.
11. He bestowed knowledge upon them
and the law of life
he gave them for an inheritance.
12. An everlasting covenant
he established with them
and his judgements
he showed them.
13. The majesty of(his) glory
their eyes saw,
and the glory of his voice
their ear heard.

²⁴⁾ The Latin translator changed the versification placing v 6 as v 5 and collated the J statement to provide this reading "creavit ex ipso adjutorium simile sibi ... He created out of him a helpmate like himself ..." Codex B adds as v 5 a summary of v 6, for citation see p.118, Note 23. The order of vv 6-10 varies between the Syriac and Greek. This dislocation of vv causes much conjecture, but for reasons given on pp.120-121 we hold to the Greek order as cited above.

²⁵⁾ MSS 70 and 248 add as v 9,
καὶ ἔδωκε δι' αἰῶνων καύχασθαι
ἐπὶ τοῖς θαυμάσιοις αὐτοῦ.

And He gave them to boast for ever
of His wonders.

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς
 προσέχετε ἀπὸ πάντες ἀδίκου.
 καὶ ἐνετείλατο αὐτοῖς
 ἑκάστω περὶ τοῦ πλησίον.

14. And he said to them,
 "Beware of all unrighteousness".
 And he gave them commandment,
 each one concerning his neighbour.

The pronounced placement of διαβούλιον 'inclination' at the very opening is significant for the whole pericope. It is the same translation used for 173 'inclination' in Sir 15.14 where the Hebrew fragment gives a clear understanding of the importance of man's yetzer.

אֱלֹהִים מֵרֵאשִׁית
 ...בְּרָא אָדָם
 וַיִּתֵּן בְּיָדוֹ בִּיָּד
 :173

God from in the beginning
 created man ...
 and placed him in the hand of his
 inclination.

αὐτὸς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐποίησεν
 ἄνθρωπον
 καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ἐν
 διαβουλίου αὐτοῦ χειρὶ

He himself from the beginning created
 man
 and left him in the hand
 of his inclination.

Man's yetzer is most important for Sirach's doctrine of creation as it explains man's ability to choose between 110 'good' and 17 'evil'. The RSV and NEB switch the order of Sir 17.6a placing inclination or counsel at the end, but its seemingly odd placement at the opening makes it stand out. The positioning of inclination (yetzer) accentuates its significance. With this realization it is important that neither the wording nor the order of the words, nor versification order as given by the Greek, be changed despite the recommendation of some scholars. W. Oesterley is amongst those who propose that the Greek translator misunderstood by reading 173 ("counsel") for 173 ("and he formed").²⁶⁾ Some commentators also suggest following the Syriac order of verses which opens with the clause, "He filled them with understanding ..."²⁷⁾ Both of these

²⁶⁾ W. O. E. Oesterley, op. cit., p.116. In asking if the grandson misrepresented 173 'and he formed' as 173 'and an inclination' it should be noted the extant Hebrew reads 173 'his inclination or counsel' in Sir 15.14c which the grandson translated as διαβουλίου αὐτοῦ in Sir 14.14b.

²⁷⁾ ibid, p.116.

recommendations bring an unnecessary disruption to the text. The Latin translator, though prefacing the additional clause as indicated above in Note 24, retained the understanding of yetzer by translating consilium 'counsel'. Segal in his reconstruction chose נצח, (which BDB notes as neo Hebrew for impulse).²⁸⁾ The four words that follow διαβούλιον 'inclination' are also key words: γλῶσσαν 'tongue', ὀφθαλμούς 'eyes', ὠτα 'ears' and καρδίαν 'heart or mind'. All five together make up the total equipping of man for the receiving of wisdom. The created order reflects wisdom without choice; it must be unfailing in its work, obedience and rule. It must show respect with its neighbour. That is how God created it. It is not so with man. God equipped man, filled him with ἐπιστήμην συνέσεως 'understanding knowledge' and showed him ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακά 'good and evil' but gifted him with διαβούλιον. God runs the risk that man may disobey his word and live in chaos.

Following v 7 the Syriac and Sinaiticus read, "and that they might glory in His wondrous acts" as v 8. The order of vv 6-8 is also changed by the Syriac.²⁹⁾ The Greek order and the content of v 8, "He set His eye upon their hearts to show them the majesty of his works" are preferable for the following reasons. First the whole pericope is in the context of the all seeing God: Sir 16.17-23, which opens with the warning, "Do not say, 'I shall be hidden from the Lord ...'" and Sir 17.15 which concludes, "Their ways are always before Him, they will not be hid from His eyes." Secondly, it is with good intentions that God looks into man's heart; "δεῖξαι αὐτοῖς τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ", to show them the majesty of his works." (Sir 17.8b). In seeing the majesty of God's work man's desire

²⁸⁾ M. Segal, op. cit., p. 27.

²⁹⁾ The Syriac rearranges the Greek versification to read 7, 6, 8b, 8a consecutively. See W. O. Oesterley, The Wisdom of Ben-Sira, op. cit., p. 51 and Note 3.

relationship between $\pi\gamma\iota\eta$ and $\pi\lambda\omega\pi$ is given on pages 144 to 152 of this chapter. In our present pericope the theophany of Moses stands as an example of the wisdom of God in equipping man: man saw the $\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ $\delta\acute{o}\xi\eta\varsigma$ 'majesty of glory' and heard $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha\nu\ \phi\omega\nu\eta\varsigma$ 'the glory of His voice'. Man was not left with the evidence of wisdom in the created order alone, but was given a personal encounter whereby God spoke His wisdom saying "' $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon$, Beware of all unrighteousness'". This is the first of only two occasions in which Sirach has God speak directly (the second is Sir 24.8 where God addresses Wisdom). The first effect is the ultimate authority which the words carry and secondly it serves as a warning ($\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon$). All men must exercise their yetzer wisely. The choice of the commandment concerning one's $\pi\lambda\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ 'neighbour' is not because it has a greater importance than any other, instead the very word which closes out the whole pericope directs the reader's attention back to the previous strophe, Sir 16.28a, where the same word was employed to describe how the created order stood with respect for $\pi\lambda\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ 'his neighbour'.³⁰⁾ By receiving the gift of $\pi\lambda\omega\pi$ this same harmony could be experienced amongst mortal men. Just how in need man is of God's wisdom becomes the point of the fourth creation block (Sir 18.1-14).

God and Man (Sir 18.1-14)

For purposes of contrast this passage is best considered in three parts; the greatness of God (Sir 18.1-7), the limits of man (Sir 18.8-10) and God's great mercy (Sir 18.11-14).

³⁰⁾ Here we have an example of the subtlety in Sirach's style.

Ὁ ζῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
ἔκτισεν τὰ πάντα κοινῇ.
κύριος μόνος δίκαιωθήσεται
οὐθενὶ ἐξεποίησεν,
ἔξαγγεῖλαι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.
καὶ τίς ἐξιχνεύσει
τὰ μεγαλέα αὐτοῦ;
κράτος μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ
τίς ἐξαριθμήσεται;
καὶ τίς προσθήσει ἐκδιηγῆσθαι
τὰ ἑλέη αὐτοῦ;
οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλαττώσαι
οὐδὲ προσθεῖναι
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξιχνιάσαι
τὰ θαυμάσια τοῦ κυρίου.
ὅταν συντελέσῃ ἄνθρωπος,
τότε ἄρχεται
καὶ ὅταν παύσῃται
τότε ἀπορηθήσεται.

1. He who lives for ever
created all things together.
2. The Lord alone shall be
declared righteous. 31)
4. To none has he given power
to declare His works
and who can trace out
His mighty works?
5. His majestic strength
who can measure?
and who can fully recount
His mercies?
6. It is not possible to diminish
them
nor increase them
and it is not possible to trace
out
the wonders of the Lord.
7. When a man is finished
at that time he is beginning
and when he stops
at that time he will be at a loss.

This poem echoes parallels in form and language with Sir 1.1-10, the creation statement introducing Wisdom. The repeated use of the rhetorical question in Sir 18.4b-5 draws parallels with the same form seen in Sir 1.2,6. The verbs 'trace out' and 'recount' are common to both passages. Sir 18.1-7 reinforces much of what was said in the opening poem, but there is one very significant difference; here God is the main subject. Wisdom is not even mentioned. Immediately, in the opening verse of Sir 18 the writer heralds God's eternal character, "Ὁ ζῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, He who lives for ever". (Sir 18.1a). The phrase εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα is also stated in Sir 1.1. but there it had a shared if not pointed emphasis on wisdom. In

31) Codex B adds,
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλος πληγὴ αὐτοῦ.

οἱ ἀκιζῶν τὸν κόσμον
ἐν σπιθαμῇ χειρὸς αὐτοῦ
καὶ πάντα ὑπακούει τῷ
βελήματι αὐτοῦ,
αὐτὸς γὰρ βασιλεὺς πάντων
ἐν κράτει αὐτοῦ
διαστέλλων ἐν αὐτοῖς
ἄγνια ἀπὸ βέβηλων.

- 2b. And there are no others besides
Him
3. Who guides the world
in the hollow of His hand
and all things are obedient to His
will,
for He is King of all things
in His power
He separates among them
good things from bad things.

this context "for ever" is specifically referring to God's eternal nature. Although the opening verse only states "Ὁ ζῶν" He is openly named in v 2 with *κύριος*. The result of God's creative action in Sir 1.1,9 was Wisdom; however in Sir 18.1 it is *τὰ πάντα*. The use of *κοινῇ*, common or together simply means at the same time. This hardly seems to add insight; its significance eludes unless one holds in tension the opening poem (Sir 1.1-10).¹ There Wisdom was created separately. In Sir 1.4a it reads, "προτέρᾳ πάντων ἔκτισται σοφία, Before all things Wisdom was created." Sir 18.1 now gives account for the creation of all (other) things.

This realization of pre-existent Wisdom is not to hold her too high for the indirect references themselves keep her well back. Wisdom is never given the position of being equal to God at any point in Sir. In Sir 18.2 it is apparent that no one can be compared to God for, "*κύριος μόνος δικαιωθήσεται*, The Lord alone shall be declared righteous." *μόνος* distances the Lord from *τὰ πάντα*, including wisdom. The Greek MS Codex B, adds the emphatic statement, "and there are no others besides Him." Of this clause, and v 3 which is excluded from the main MSS, (see note 31, p.124) it can best be said that these are notes that are supplied to bring out the implied meaning. It is interesting that the Latin, which often includes notes and at the same time expands by way of commentary³²⁾, to Sir 18.1 it adds, "... et manet invictus rex in aeternum, and He remains an invincible king for ever." From this brief addition it goes immediately to what is v 4 in the Greek MSS. Here the Latin makes a change of form placing it as a question "Quis sufficit enarrare opera illius? Who is able to declare His works?" (Sir 18.2). The Greek translation places it as a declarative statement, "*οὐθενὶ ἐξέποιήσεν ἑξαγγεῖλαι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ* .

³²⁾ For example see the Latin translation at Sir 1.5, 8,9.

To none has He given power to declare His works." (Sir 18.4a). The emphasis on none makes one wonder if Wisdom has been forgotten or distanced. The introductory poem to Wisdom says the Lord poured her out on " *πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ* , all His works." (Sir 1.9b). Two factors help explain this claim of Sir 18.4a. First, the concern in this Sir 18 poem is with all things created in common. None of these of themselves declare His works. Secondly, the main focus here is not moving toward all things or personified Wisdom but man. Man, when endowed with the gift of wisdom can begin to declare God's works. This is well demonstrated by Sirach himself in Sir 42.15-43.33; the whole of which is on "*לִשְׁכַּחַשׁ*". Sir 18.4b may explain why the Latin translator put the whole of v 4 in the form of two questions; for the Greek translator, having said none can declare God's works, now turns to the rhetorical form asking, "and who can trace out his mighty works?" Both the verb *ἐξιχνεύω* , 'to trace out' and the rhetorical form first appeared in Sir 1.3b in attempting to describe the immeasurable quality of Wisdom. Since Wisdom is part of God's creative work, though pre-existent, it only presses further the fathomless works of God.

In Sir 18.5 the character of God is stated more explicitly. Previously Sirach had described God as, "*לִבְּחֵן וְיִדְּוֹרָה לִגְבוּרָה*, mighty in power and sees all things." (Sir 15.18b). The Greek offers an exact translation. Now in Sir 18.5 the omnipresent God is seen as also being omnipotent. Placing the earlier claim that He is "mighty in power" within the rhetorical form gives the added effect (Sir 18.5a),

<i>κράτος μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ</i>	His majestic strength
<i>τίς ἐξαριθμήσεται;</i>	who can measure?

The *κράτος μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ*table. He is omnipotent. Paralleling the claim on God's power is another characteristic which unlike anything else balances out the picture of this awesome power. The parallel is His mercy. Again the rhetorical form is effective in giving the impression of the

immeasurable mercies of God, "καὶ τίς προσθήσει ἐκδιηγῆσασθαι τὰ ἐλέη αὐτοῦ", and who can fully recount His mercies?" This claim on God's abundant mercy will be taken a step further in the third part of this creation poem (Sir 18.11-14). For the present it is stressed that it is not possible "to diminish them nor increase them." (Sir 18.6a). Both the strength and mercy of God are steadfast; no one can change them. For the created works and their continuation this is most vital; for it offers both assurance and consistency. Using the same verb ἐξιχνεύω, to trace out, employed in Sir 1.3 and Sir 18.4b it is said of God's created works, "καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξιχνιάσαι τὰ θαυμάσια τοῦ κυρίου" and it is not possible to trace out the wonders of the Lord." (Sir 18.6b). Indeed not only is it the same verb as Sir 18.4b but the same thought, but now the rhetorical form is dropped for an outright claim.

The translator drives further the impossibility of tracing out the works of the Lord by closing out this pericope on "The Greatness of God" with the following description of anyone who would try to recount (Sir 18.7),

ὅταν συντελέσῃ ἄνθρωπος,
τότε ἄρχεται
καὶ ὅταν παύσῃται,
τότε ἀπορηθήσεται.

When a man is finished
at that time he is beginning
and when he stops
at that time he will be at a loss.

Sirach himself having presented many of the works of the Lord in his hymn בְּרַשְׁמִי concluded in Sir 43.32b "בְּרַשְׁמִי רָאִיתִי מִמֶּנִּי, I have seen (but) a few of His works." In his Wisdom, in his striving, Sirach saw but the fringe of God's expanse. With the realization of man's limits in Sir 18.7 two things are accomplished, the greatness of God is resounded and the second portion of this creation passage, which is on the limits of man, is introduced.

τί ἄνθρωπος,
καὶ τί ἡ χρῆσις αὐτοῦ;
τί τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτοῦ
καὶ τί τὸ κακὸν αὐτοῦ
ἀριθμὸς ἡμερῶν ἀνθρώπου
πολλὰ ἔτη ἑκατόν.
ὥς σταγὼν ὕδατος
ἀπὸ θαλάσσης
καὶ ψῆφος ἄμμου,
οὕτως ὀλίγα ἔτη
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ αἰῶνος.

8. What is man,
and of what use is he?
What is his good
and what is his evil?
9. The number of man's days
is great (at) a hundred years.
10. Like a drop of water
from the sea
and a pebble from the sand,
so are a few years
in the day of eternity.

The first observation of Sir 18.8-10 is its relative brevity in comparison to the account on "The Greatness of God" in Sir 18.1-7. The second observation is that contrary to the very positive view given in the first part of this creation poem, Sir 18.8-10 is a very negative statement. It requires very little to measure man. The succinct opening verse says it all in two questions. The *τί ἄνθρωπος* question ³³⁾ is the first indication that here a comparison is being drawn with the description on the greatness of God. Any measure about man which might be given is stopped by the second question, "*καὶ τί ἡ χρῆσις αὐτοῦ*; and of what use is he?" If this question is taken as a continuation of the rhetorical style, which assumes an answer, one feels at this point the answer is issued. The answer is "nothing". Sir 18.8b must assume the same rhetorical style with the same response "nothing" or it is left with a deafening silence.

The translator has placed before the reader only one consideration for man, his limited days. This reality was already stated in Sir 17.2a where the creation of man was considered,

ἡμέρας ἀριθμοῦ Numbered days
καὶ καιρὸν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς and time he gave them ...

³³⁾ For discussion on the question, 'What is man?' and other OT passages which raise the same question see pp.47-49.

Just previous to this verse it was stated that, "The Lord created man of the earth and turned him back to it again." Here, and in the message that follows in Sir 18.9-10, there is an impression that not only is man limited but all seems in vain. If the creative power of God stopped with the mere physical creation it would be in vain. Sirach is fully aware here, and throughout his book, that there needs to be a connecting and continuing power between God and man. Wisdom becomes that power and displays herself fully as such in the next and most crucial block of creation tradition, Sir 24. Meanwhile the creation theme continues to build on the two realities of God's greatness and man's limits. He does this by reintroducing the concept of man's limited days in Sir 18.9-10. In brief, v 9 is simply saying if man lives to be one hundred, that is considered many years, but by further employment of the comparative style in v 10 the writer is really saying that is negligible beside "the day of eternity." This is achieved ingeniously by echoing a message given in Sir 1.2. There the phrases: "ἄμμον θαλασσῶν, sand of the seas", "σταγόνας ὕετοῦ, drops of rain", "ἡμέρας αἰῶνος, days of eternity" were used to demonstrate the immeasurable quality of wisdom but now in Sir 18.10 "σταγὼν ὕδατος, drop of water", "ψῆφος ἄμμου, a pebble from sand", "ἡμέρα αἰῶνος, day of eternity" are effectively used to show the meagre measure of man's days. The author has accomplished this by one slight change in each analogy; in Sir 1.2 all three elements are in the plural but in Sir 18.10 all are in the singular. Thus, sand of the seas" becomes "a pebble from the sand"; "drops of rain" becomes "a drop of water" and "days of eternity" becomes "the day of eternity." What does Sirach want the reader to see in the correspondence between Sir 1.2 and Sir 18.10? At minimum it is that limited man has nothing to offer but the God of abundance does. That reality points to the final portion of this creation passage.

διὰ τοῦτο ἔμακροθύμησεν
 κύριος ἐπ' αὐτοῖς
 καὶ ἐξέχεεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς
 τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ.
 εἶδεν καὶ ἐπέγνω
 τὴν καταστροφὴν αὐτῶν
 ὅτι πονηρὰ
 διὰ τοῦτο ἐπλήθυνεν
 τὸν ἔξιλασμόν αὐτοῦ.
 ἔλεος ἀνθρώπου
 ἐπὶ τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ,
 ἔλεος δὲ κυρίου
 ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σὰρκα
 ἐλέγχων καὶ παιδεύων
 καὶ διδάσκων
 καὶ ἐπιστρέφων
 ὡς ποιμὴν
 τὸ ποίμνιον αὐτοῦ.
 τοὺς ἐκδεχομένους παιδείαν ἑλεῶ

καὶ τοὺς κατασπεύδοντας
 ἐπὶ τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ.

11. Therefore long suffering
 is the Lord toward them
 and pours out upon them
 His mercy.
12. He sees and knows
 that their sudden end
 is evil
 therefore He increased
 His forgiveness.
13. The mercy of man is
 upon his neighbour.
 The mercy of the Lord is
 upon all flesh
 reproving and training
 and teaching
 and turning back
 like a shepherd
 his flock.
14. He has mercy upon them
 that accept training
 and that diligently seek
 after His judgements.

Having established man's limited state to the point that his very existence seems in vain the translator makes a sharp change with *διὰ τοῦτο*. He announces two things in Sir 18.11 which bring hope to man's circumstances. The Lord is long suffering, which is yet another positive added to the earlier character description of God in Sir 18.1-5. The second tells of an action by God, saying, "*καὶ ἐξέχεεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ* and pours out upon them His mercy." (Sir 8.11b). The employment of the verb *ἐξέχεεν* brings a correspondence with an earlier action whereby God, "...*ἐξέχεεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ* , poured her (wisdom) out upon all His works." (Sir 1.9c).

God's reasoning for pouring out His mercy comes in Sir 18.12a. Behind this verse stands the earlier tradition seen in Sir 15.19 where Sirach declared,

בְּיָדָיו
 יִשְׁמַח
 וְיָדָע
 כָּל
 עֲשֵׂת
 אָדָם

The eyes of God
 see His works
 and He knows
 every deed of man.

The above text, Sir 15.19, is considered on pp.111-112 of this chapter. In Sir 18.12a God acts because He sees and knows man's end. The term *καταστροφήν* 'end' combined with *πονηρά* indicates that it is not just the span, but the condition of man's end that is in view. With this return to man's plight a second *διὰ τοῦτο* announces another crucial response by God. God increases, "*τὸν ἐξιλασμόν αὐτοῦ* , His forgiveness." (Sir 18.12b).

Returning to the now very familiar comparative style there is a contrasting of man's mercy and God's mercy in Sir 18.13. Man's is limited to, "*πλησίον αὐτοῦ* , his neighbour" while the mercy of God is "*ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα*, upon all flesh". This phrase describing the placement of God's mercy, coupled with the earlier thought of mercy being "poured out" in Sir 18.11b, combines to give a strong echo of Sir 1.9b-10a. There Wisdom which was poured out upon God's works was also said to be "*μετὰ πάσης σαρκὸς*, with all flesh." While mercy holds hope for the whole of creation, the parallel with wisdom, reminds one that Wisdom awaits to fulfil her role. The analogy which follows in Sir 18.13b, of leading like a shepherd his flock, builds further the picture of mercy generously poured out. For a brief moment it would appear mercy is also personified with the training, teaching and shepherding.³⁴⁾ However, this generous gifting of mercy with such an important role is somewhat restrained, as the following verse, Sir 18.14, makes it clear that there are certain conditions to man's

³⁴⁾ JB translators state, "... God's all-embracing mercy in its instructive aspect emphasised here (v 13c,d), appears for the first time in the OT at this point." op. cit., p.1059, Note c.

receiving mercy. He must accept training and seek God's judgements. With this realization we are back to the reality that man must exercise his yetzer. But this same conditional statement points to the fact that man has a guide. That guide is God's judgements. But all of this, the greatness of God, depravity of man, linking of mercy and Wisdom and pointing the way is a preparation for the most important creation passage, Sir 24. For there we see how Wisdom becomes the connecting and continuing bond between God and man.

Chapter 24, for the purposes of this study, will be divided into the following sections: Wisdom bestowed on the beloved (Sir 24.1-12), The Paradise of Wisdom (Sir 24.13-22), $\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{N}}$ and $\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{N}}$ (Sir 24.23), Paradise continued (Sir 24.25-29) and Sirach's testimony to Wisdom (Sir 24.30-34).

Wisdom bestowed on the beloved (Sir 24.1-12)

Ἡ σοφία αἰνέσει
 ψυχὴν αὐτῆς
 καὶ ἐν μέσῳ λαοῦ αὐτῆς
 καυχῆσεται.
 ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ὑψίστου

στόμα αὐτῆς ἀνοίξει,
 καὶ ἐναντὶ δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ
 καυχῆσεται

1. Wisdom will praise
 her life³⁵⁾
 and in the midst of her people
 will glory.
2. In the congregation of the Most
 High
 she will open her mouth
 and in the presence of his power
 she will glory

³⁵⁾ We hold to the more literal translation 'her life' rather than the idiomatic 'herself' because nowhere in Sir does Wisdom praise self, but always the created works of God. See notation on pp.133-134.

Ἐγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου
 ἐξηλθόν
 καὶ ὡς ἐμίγλη
 κατεκάλυψα γῆν.
 Ἐγὼ ἐν ὑψηλοῖς κατεσκήνωσα,
 καὶ ὁ θρόνος μου
 ἐν στύλῳ νεφέλης.
 γύρον οὐρανοῦ ἐκύκλωσα
 καὶ ἐν βάθει ἀβύσσων ^{μόνη}
 περιεπάτησα.
 ἐν κύμασιν θαλάσσης
 καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ
 καὶ ἐν παντὶ λαῷ
 καὶ ἔθνει ἐκτησάμην.
 μετὰ τούτων πάντων
 ἀνέπαυσιν ἐλήτησα
 καὶ ἐν κληρονομίᾳ
 τίνος αὐλίσθησομαι.
 τότε ἐνετείλατό μοι ὁ
 καὶ ὁ κτίσας ^{κτίστης} ἀπάντων,
 κατέπαυσεν τὴν σκηνήν μου
 καὶ εἶπεν
 Ἐν Ιακωβ κατασκήνωσον
 καὶ ἐν Ἰσραὴλ
 κατακληρονομήθητι.
 πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος
 ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐκτίσέν με,
 καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος
 οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπῃ.
 ἐν σκηνῇ ἁγίᾳ
 ἐνώπιόν αὐτοῦ ἐλειτεύρησα
 καὶ οὕτως ἐν Σιών ἐστηρίχθην.
 ἐν πόλει ἡγαπημένῃ
 ὁμοίως με κατέπαυσεν
 καὶ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἡ ἐξουσία μου.
 καὶ ἐρρίξωσα ἐν λαῷ
 δεδοξασμένῳ
 ἐν μερίδι κυρίου,
 κληρονομίᾳς αὐτοῦ.

3. I from the mouth of the Most High
came forth
and like a mist
covered the earth.
4. I dwelt in high places,
and my throne was
in a pillar of cloud.
5. Alone I encompassed the heavenly
circle
and walked in the depths of the
abyss.
6. In the waves of the sea
and in the whole earth
and in every people
and nation I made a possession.
7. With all of these
I sought a resting place
and in whose inheritance
shall I rest?
8. Then the Creator of all things
commanded me,
and the one who created me
caused my tent to rest
and he said,
"In Jacob let your dwelling tent
be,
and in Israel
be your inheritance".
9. For an eternity
from the beginning he created me,
and until eternity
I shall not cease.
10. In the holy tent
before him I ministered
and so I was established in Zion.
11. In the beloved city
likewise he caused me to rest
and in Jerusalem was my dominion.
12. And I took root in a people
that was honoured
In the Lord's portion,
his inheritance.

Sirach begins with a brief exordium but its purpose here, unlike Sir
 16.22-24 where Sirach was about to speak wisdom, is to present personified
 Wisdom who will speak for herself. The opening line states, "Ἡ σοφία
 αἰνέσει ψυχὴν αὐτῆς, Wisdom will praise her life"; in this context
life seems a better translation for πνῶθ which probably stood behind

the Greek translation *ψυχὴν* . It allows a better preparation for the whole poem in which the attributes of Wisdom are praised. The RSV understandably chose to translate *ψυχὴν αὐτῆς* as 'herself'. However we hold to the above translation as an acknowledgement of the Lord's excellence in creation rather than a flight into self praise. For never in Sir does Wisdom enter into self praise. This contrasts with the Proverbs picture of Wisdom singing her own praises in Pr 8.12-21. Such a translation also helps underline that this creation poem in Sir 24 is no mere copy of the Pr 8 presentation. Admittedly in his enthusiastic presentation, with its repeated use of *καυχῆσεται* 'she will glory', Sirach has left a fine line between boasting of self for self and boasting of self for the Lord. This may help explain why the Latin translator added, "et in Deo honorabitur, and in God shall be honoured." (Sir 24.1). For Sirach Wisdom's greatness must never be exalted to or beyond the Lord (a point which we saw made very evident in Sir 1.1-10 and again in Sir 18.1-14). Wisdom's confinement to the *ἐκκλησία* 'congregation' to glorify before God's *δυναμείας* 'power' also ensures that it is a glorifying which will be directed to the Lord. In sum, the glorifying by Wisdom is no different from that seen in the created order or Sirach's own testimony at the end of this same poem. Sirach states elsewhere, " *וְכָל בְּרִיאָתוֹ יְשַׁבַּח וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח*... and the glory of the Lord is upon all his works." (Sir 42.16b). Since God created *בְּרִיאָתוֹ* , including Wisdom, it is His glory that fills *בְּרִיאָתוֹ* .

When the translator writes that Wisdom will " *στόμα αὐτῆς ἀνοίξει*, will open her mouth," it is not only a poetic way of saying she is about to speak: it links up with the opening words of Wisdom's speech which tell of her source, " *Ἐγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου ἐξῆλθον*, I came forth from the mouth of the Most High." The Lord spoke her into creation. This has a

close correspondence with the Gn 1 refrain, "וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים" and God said," but it is closer yet to DI 45.23; 48.3; 55.11 all of which describe the **וַיֵּצֵא** going forth from the mouth of the Lord.³⁶⁾ Considering Sirach's strong dependence on both P and DI it is very likely that we have a synthesis here, but the DI reference is sufficiently dominant, so that it is hardly necessary to force such a dual dependence. If a second formative influence is sought for this text it is more likely that of Gn 2.6. It is here that Sir 1.5 which is wanting in most of the Greek MSS but included in the Latin, Syro-Hex and Codex 248, needs consideration.

πηγὴ σοφίας λόγος θεοῦ
 ἐν ὑψίστοις
 καὶ αἱ πορεῖαι αὐτῆς
 ἐντολαὶ αἰώνιοι.

The source of wisdom is God's word
 on high
 and her ways are
 the eternal commandments.

This links well with Wisdom being spoken into existence. **πηγὴ** which is a rare OT word was first used in Gn 2.6. Besides its employment in Sir 1.5 a synonym **δυσίχλη** 'mist' is used in Sir 24.3b to describe how Wisdom was spread over the earth. These correspondences within Sir and between Sir and Gn 2.6 give rise to two concerns. Sir 1.5 which is viewed by three MSS as primary to Sir and shares a close correspondence with Sir 24.3b should be seen at minimum as an important early commentary on the text. It makes explicit what is implicit. It also provides a bridge between Gn 2.6 and Sir 24.36 making stronger the case that Wisdom came forth like the **πηγὴ** (**קַיִן**) of creation. Like the **πηγὴ** of Gn 2.6 Wisdom also **κατεκάλυψα γῆν** 'covered the earth'. In Sir 39.22b Sirach said God's blessing floods like the Nile "וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים... and saturates the world like the river."The grandson brought the analogy yet closer to Gn 2.6

³⁶⁾ It is interesting to note J. G. Snaith's reference to the NEB translation, "I am the word which was spoken by the Most High", op. cit., pp.119;121. He justifies the rendering by reference to DI 55.11 and Gn 1-2.

by translating בִּיַּד as Ξηράν 'dry land'. Nowhere else in the LXX does Ξηράν render בִּיַּד . This verse also corresponds with Gn 2.6 and Sir 24.23b. It becomes a particularly strong bridge if we consider that the blessing is Wisdom.

At this point scholarship may be right in questioning the order of versification. R. A. F. MacKenzie is one who notes that Sir 24.3 should be followed by Sir 24.9.³⁷⁾

πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος
ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐκτίσέν με,
καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος
οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπω.

For an eternity
from the beginning He created me,
and until eternity
I shall not cease.

It allows for better continuity between vv 8 to 10 and appropriately restates Sirach's earlier claim that Wisdom comes from the Lord and shall remain for an eternity (Sir 1.1). The relocation of v 9 continues a smooth syntax with the verse which follows, "ἐγὼ ἐν ὑψηλοῖς κατεσκήνωσα, I dwelt in high places ..." (Sir 24.4a). The use of θρόνος μου, my throne, in Sir 24.4b could be a veiled reference toward Wisdom's authority in Sir 24.11b; however, it is a delegated ἐξουσία commanded by the One who is wise sitting upon the throne (Sir 1.8). There is no indication that she ruled with God; there is no understanding of wisdom ever ruling in Sir until her appointment to Jerusalem.

Without any actual reference to the act of creation, personified Wisdom testifies to having walked the whole of the created order: γύρον οὐρανοῦ 'the heavenly circle', βάθει ἀβύσσων 'depths of the abyss', κύμασιν θαλάσσης 'waves of the sea', πάσῃ τῇ γῇ 'the whole earth'. She investigates בִּיַּד . The investigation by Wisdom continues in v 6b. Here she is said to have searched every nation and people. The purpose of the

³⁷⁾ R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p.101. We would add that such a change of versification would match the order of presentation of Wisdom's source and eternal quality given in the opening words of the book (Sir 1.1-4).

search is given in v 7. *μετὰ τούτων πάντων*, that is, with all peoples and nations Wisdom inquired, "... *καὶ ἐν κληρονομίᾳ τίνος αὐλισθήσομαι*" and in whose inheritance shall I rest?" This of course was not just to rest from her lengthy walk throughout the *בִּצְתָּ* but to make her dwelling. Following the break in Wisdom's speech provided by *τότε* in v 8a, the answer to her question comes by a commandment from *ὁ κτίστης ἅπánτων* 'the Creator of all things'. The Creator instructed Wisdom, "'In Jacob let your dwelling tent be, and in Israel be your inheritance'." (Sir 24.8b). This appears to support the general, Rabbinic view that God offered Torah to all nations but only Israel accepted. Not only did she enter Israel but *Σιών* where she then went, "*ἐν σκηνῇ ἁγίᾳ*, into the Holy Tent." (Sir 24.10a).³⁸⁾ On entering the Tabernacle Wisdom describes herself as having assumed priestly functions when she says, "*ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐλειτουργῆσα*, before him I ministered." (Sir 24.10a). Finally in answer to which inheritance Wisdom should possess, it is not their inheritance, that is the children of Israel, but 'His inheritance' (*κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ*). It is not the land she inherits but the people. Wisdom had already been poured out into the created works but now she can say, "*καὶ ἐρρίχῃσα ἐν λαῷ δεδοξασμένῳ*, and I took root in an honoured people." (Sir 24.12a). God's gift of Wisdom promised in Sir 1.10b has now been made, "*τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν*, to those who love Him." In note 9 on p. 107 of this chapter we drew attention to the debate which exists about the universalistic or particularistic view of man in Sir. A. Schökel says, "In sum, I think that Ben Sira is talking from the beginning to the end about man in general."³⁹⁾ He then clarifies, "He speaks of man in general

³⁸⁾ Wisdom's taking up residence in Zion shows correspondence with Ps 132.8; 13-15. For the discussion see the comparative study p. 56.

³⁹⁾ A. Schökel, *op. cit.*, p.243 (our underlining indicates italics by author).

from the point of view of Israel."⁴⁰⁾ Besides his study of the text, which is based on Sir 16.24, Schökel points to the prologue where the grandson uses the phrase "those on the outside." Schökel takes this to mean that the windows of Sirach's school have been mentally opened, that all might hear. It is an imaginative interpretation; however *τοῖς ἑκὸς* need not mean man in general. Indeed, even if we do allow for man in general with verse 5a in the prologue, by v 30 of the prologue the grandson is referring to, "*τοῖς ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ* , those who live in a foreign land."⁴¹⁾ By this stage, that the grandson is specifically referring to the dispersed Jews is made the more evident with the additional description, "... *προκατασκευαζομένους τὰ ἥθη ἐν νόμῳ βιοτεύειν* , (those) being already predisposed, in regard to their ethical culture, to live in accordance with the law." (Sir Prologue v 35). In Sir 24.23c "*συναγωγαῖς Ἰακωβ*, congregations of Jacob" would seem to offer support for the concept of the dispersed Jews. Sirach's prayer for Israel demonstrates both the pluralistic reality and his pointed concern for the dispersed, (Sir 36.11),

אסוף כל שבטי יִצְקָב
וְיִתְחַלְלוּ כִּימֵי קִדְשׁ

Gather all the tribes of Jacob
that they may receive their
inheritance as in days of old.

In sum, by Sir 24.12, with the bestowing of Wisdom on the beloved, one must conclude at minimum that Sirach sees the Jews as very much favoured with Wisdom. She has taken root in their midst. Her presence and her gifts are first given to Israel. It is in Jerusalem that Wisdom has her *ἐξουσία* 'dominion'. Here Sirach's message has moved from universalistic to particularistic.⁴²⁾

⁴⁰⁾ *ibid.*, p.243 (again underlining indicates author's italics).

⁴¹⁾ Such a movement from the general to the particular in the prologue would also match the flow within Sir for it too moves from the universalistic to the particularistic. Just how particularistic Sir has become is evidenced by the exclusively Jewish honour roll (Sir 44 -50).

⁴²⁾ For further discussion see p.221 of Chapter Nine, "Conclusions".

ὡς κέδρος ἀνυψώθην
ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ
καὶ ὡς κυπάρισσος
ἐν ὄρεσιν Ἀερμων.
ὡς φοῖνιξ ἀνυψώθην
ἐν Αἰγγαδοῖς
καὶ ὡς φυτὰ ῥόδου
ἐν Ιερικῷ,
ὡς ἐλαία εὐπρεπής
ἐν πεδίῳ

καὶ ἀνυψώθην
ὡς πλάτανος.
ὡς κιννάμωμον καὶ ἀσπάλαθος
ἰκρωμάτων δέδωκα ὀσμὴν
καὶ ὡς σμύρνα ἐκλεκτὴ
διέδωκα εὐωδίαν,
ὡς χαλβάνη καὶ ὄνυξ
καὶ στακτὴ
καὶ ὡς λιβάνου ἁτμῖς
ἐν σκηνῇ.

ἐγὼ ὡς τερέμινθος
ἐξέτεινα κλάδους μου,
καὶ οἱ κλάδοι μου κλάδοι
δόξης καὶ χάριτος.
ἐγὼ ὡς ἄμπελος
ἐβλάστησα χάριν,
καὶ τὰ ἄνθη μου
καρπὶς δόξης καὶ πλούτου.

προσέλθετε πρὸς με,
οἱ ἐπιθυμοῦντές μου,
καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γεννημάτων μου
ἐμπλήσθητε.
τὸ γὰρ μνημόσυνόν μου
ὑπὲρ τοῦ μέλι γλυκύ
καὶ ἡ κληρονομία μου
ὑπὲρ μέλιτος κηρίου.
οἱ ἐσθιόντές με
ἐτι πεινάσουσιν,
καὶ οἱ πίνοντές με
ἐτι διψήσουσιν.

13. I was exalted like a cedar
in Lebanon
And like a cypress
on the hills of Hermon.
14. I was exalted like a palm tree
in Engedi
and like rose plants
in Jericho,
like a comely olive
on the plain
and I was exalted
like a plane tree.
15. Like cinnamon and aspalathus
I gave a scent of spices
and like choice myrrh
I spread a sweet smell,
like galbanum and onyx
and stacte
and like the fume of frankincense
in the tent.
16. I like the terebinth —
extended my branches,
and my branches are branches
of glory and grace.
17. I like a vine
caused thankfulness to grow,
and my blossoms
are the fruit of glory and
riches.⁴³⁾
19. Come to me,
you who desire me,
and from my produce
have your fill.
20. For the remembrance of me
is sweeter than honey
and my inheritance
than the honeycomb.
21. Those that eat me
will (still) hunger,
and those who drink me
will (still) thirst.

43) The Latin adds, "Ego mater pulchrae dilectionis, et timoris, et agnitionis, et sanctae spei In me gratia omnis viae et veritatis; in me omnis spes vitae et virtutis. I am the mother of fair love, and fear and knowledge and holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and truth; in me is all hope of life and truth." The first verse is probably with reference to Mary while the second is a Christian gloss based on a text similar to John 14.6. Greek cursives 70 and 248 add a similar statement as the one on "Mother of fair love".

ὁ ὑπακούων μου
οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσεται,
καὶ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι ἐν ἐμοὶ
οὐχ ἁμαρτήσουσιν.

22. Those who obey me
will not be put to shame,
and those who work in me
will not sin.

Few commentators give a satisfactory interpretation to this text which constitutes one third of Sirach's central chapter. J. Snaith openly admits the various images seem of "uncertain significance."⁴⁴) In our exegesis it will be seen that this passage is built on the image of the Paradise Garden (Gn 2-3). Indeed this same claim is true for the whole of Sir 24. Although there are other dependencies, the overall scheme is based on Gn 2-3. The πηγὴ having covered the earth in Gn 2.6 enables the most beautiful, bountiful and fruitful garden. It is a garden pleasing to the sight and taste. Sirach likewise presents Wisdom as a garden which is the most beautiful, aromatic and fruitful. The form of this garden poem which makes such a dependent use of ὡς 'like' coupled with repeated use of the verb ἀνυψόω 'to exalt' presents Wisdom in the most inviting terms. As seen above, Wisdom also came forth from the Lord like the πηγὴ covering the whole earth, but then concentrating her efforts in one garden. The results of her efforts seem to out stride that of Eden (both in presentation and as will be seen, in her fruits). While trees are primary to Eden (Gn 2.9) and Wisdom's garden (Sir 24.13-14), Sirach places much emphasis on the aromatic with the inclusion of: κιννάμωμον 'cinnamon', ἀσπάλαθος (aspalathus which is used in making perfume), χαλβάνη (galbanum, sweet smelling resin), ὄνυξ (onyx, which is not the stone but a special substance used to give sweet odour), στακτὴ (stacte, an odoriferous gum). This savoury list serves the purpose of drawing Wisdom's association yet closer to the temple and cult (the previous pericope already depicted Wisdom in a priestly role). Stacte, onycha and galbanum

⁴⁴) J. Snaith, op. cit., p.123.

were all used in the making of incense in Exodus 30.34. When we consider the comparative style of the poem, indicated by the repetition of *ὥς* (a style used only a second time in Sir, that being in the description of the High Priest, Simon, in Sir 50.6-10) Wisdom's identity with temple and cult is even more conspicuous. Wisdom says of herself, "... I gave forth the aroma of spices and spread a pleasant odour." (Sir 24.15bc). The presence of Wisdom filled the *σκηνῇ* with a pleasing odour, as pleasing as any incense.

Most commentators make reference to the place names which are given with the various trees as indicating some form of geographic boundary.⁴⁵⁾ It could be another subtlety of Sirach's style; however in the previous pericope Wisdom's bounds are openly stated by God, "*Ἐν Ιακωβ κατασκήνωσον καὶ ἐν Ισραὴλ κατακληρονομήθῃτι*. In Jacob let your dwelling tent be, and in Israel be your inheritance." (Sir 24.8cd). The specific 'resting place' within *Ιακωβ* or *Ισραὴλ* is then named when Wisdom says, "*καὶ οὕτως ἐν Σιών ἐστηρίχθην*, And so I was established in Zion." (Sir 24.10b). Zion has become the new Garden of Eden. This had already been prophesied in DI 51.3. The LXX of this DI prophecy says of *Σιών* that *τὰ ἔρημα αὐτῆς* will be made "*ὥς παράδεισον κυρίου*, like the garden of the Lord." The Hebrew states that the desert of *יִישׁ* will be made *יְדֵן* 'like Eden' and her desert-plain *תִּיב' - יַדֵּן* 'like the garden of the Lord'. For the restored Zion, besides gladness and joy, the sound of thanksgiving will be an outward sign. While the LXX of DI has the verb *ἐξομολογέομαι* (to make full acknowledgement, give thanks) the Sir text has the noun *χάριν* (thankfulness, grace). *χάρις* is described as one

⁴⁵⁾ See J. Snaith, op. cit., p.123 where he considers the bounds to include the whole of Israel and R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p.101 who draws a similar conclusion.

of the fruits of Wisdom, "ἐγὼ ὡς ἄμπελος ἐβλάστησα χάριν , I like a vine caused thankfulness to sprout." (Sir 24.17a). Although χάριν can mean grace (that is probably its understanding in the verse which immediately precedes which portrays the branches of Wisdom as branches of δόξης καὶ χάριτος), its second occurrence is more in keeping with the result it brings on the part of the recipient. L and S define χάρις on the part of the receiver as thankfulness, thanks and gratitude.⁴⁶⁾ χάριν is later described in the grandson's translation as being "ὡς παράδεισος ἐν εὐλογίαις , like a Paradise of blessings." (Sir 40.17).⁴⁷⁾ However it is not till Sir 40.27 that the clear link between Wisdom and Paradise is presented. There Sirach wrote,

יראיהו אלהים כעדן ברכה

Fear of the Lord is like an Eden of blessing

וכן כל כבוד חפציה

and over all glory is its canopy.

For Sir 40.27a the grandson translated כעדן ברכה as ὡς παράδεισος εὐλογίας . It would appear that the grandson saw 'Eden' and 'paradise' as interchangeable.

A. Fournier-Bidoz is one recent commentator who also draws parallels between the Genesis Paradise account and Sir 24.12-17.⁴⁸⁾ His lines of correspondence are drawn too closely to the tree of life, saying "le grand arbre renvoie à un paradis, à l'arbre de vie: profond et fécond symbole, qui, dans le texte du Siracide, éclaire utilement, croyons-nous l'ensemble

⁴⁶⁾ H. Liddell, R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1889, Eighth Edition, p.882.

⁴⁷⁾ The grandson has obviously translated this under the influence of Sir 40.27, for the Hebrew of Sir 40.17 reads וחסד לנפולו לא יבטל ורחמים וצדקה לא יבטל , and kindness shall never be removed and almsgiving endures for ever".

⁴⁸⁾ A. Fournier-Bidoz, "L'Arbre Et La Demeure: Siracide XXIV 10-17", VT, XXIV No. 1, 1984, pp.1-10. Our own Sir/Gn correspondence had been well formulated before this article was published but we note it with interest as a direction in which Sir studies are moving.

XXIV 12-17 ..."⁴⁹⁾ Proverbs is the only other OT text which takes up the analogy of $\Pi''\eta-\gamma\gamma$ (tree of life).⁵⁰⁾ Sirach never used the term $\Pi''\eta-\gamma\gamma$. The very form of Sirach's Paradise text is laid out in such a fashion as to avoid this single analogy. On the other hand, the invitation of Wisdom which follows the garden scene does seem to have a veiled reference to the Genesis saga of the tree of knowledge, 'good and evil' ($\gamma\gamma$ $\text{וְרָעָה וְטוֹב וְיָדָעַתָּה}$), which was "desired to make one wise". (Gn 3.6). The Sir phrase $\text{οἱ ἐπιθυμοῦντές μου}$ 'those who desire me', combined with the invitation to eat γενημάτων μου 'my produce' could be seen as a direct opposition to the Genesis tree of wisdom.⁵¹⁾ It is as if Wisdom invites her partakers to a communion in which they eat and drink of her yet they will πείνᾳ σούσιν 'still hunger' and διψήσουσιν 'still thirst'. She does not offer a quick panacea but as Fournier-Bidoz rightly notes,

La Sagesse persuade et séduit, mais ceux qui, la désirant, viendront à elle, ne connaîtront pas la honte (Sir XXIV 19-21); ils ne seront pas chassés du paradis, mais bien comblés de Sagesse (Sir XXIV 25-27): ils trouveront en elle le repos et la joie (Sir VI.28), la vie (Sir IV.12).⁵²⁾

Wisdom's speech ends with her claims of no shame or sin to the obedient, but the Garden of Eden imagery will be developed yet further. Temporarily, however, this creation symbolism is interrupted by Sirach's inclusion of a brief summary statement (Sir 24.23): as promised in Chapter 1 page 6 this text will now be given close consideration.

⁴⁹⁾ *ibid.*, p.6.

⁵⁰⁾ For a discussion on $\Pi''\eta-\gamma\gamma$ see our comparative study p.75.

⁵¹⁾ Sir 24.19 is the only invitation by Wisdom in Sir. Sir 6.19 is an invitation to Wisdom while Sir 15.3 is a promise about Wisdom. In Sir 15.3 her produce is named as "the bread of understanding" and "the water of Wisdom."

⁵²⁾ A Fournier-Bidoz, *op. cit.*, p.9.

Ταῦτα πάντα βίβλος διαθήκης
θεοῦ ὑψίστου,
νόμον ὃν ἐντείλατο ἡμῖν Μωυσῆς
κληρονομίαν συναγωγαῖς

Ιακωβ,

All this is the book of the covenant
of the Most High God,
the law, which Moses commanded us
as an inheritance for the
congregations
of Jacob.

Before beginning the exegesis of this passage we shall present a brief survey of OT scholarship on the understanding of νόμος 'law' within this text. G. Sheppard makes the outright claim that νόμος is equated with Pentateuch because of the lack of attention given to the legal material and the restricting of Wisdom's autobiographical history to the narratives of the Pentateuch.⁵³⁾ We accept that νόμος does not simply mean an aggregate of the law as might be suggested by the term βίβλος διαθήκης 'book of the covenant'.⁵⁴⁾ We question G. Sheppard's claim, on the other hand, that Wisdom's autobiographical statement is confined to the Pentateuchal narratives. As evidenced in our exegesis thus far, much of Sir 24 is dependent on Gn 1-3. As will be seen shortly, other influences for Sir 24 include Pss and Pr (see pp.147-150). J. Blenkinsopp begins on a more cautious note by making a justifiably strong plea that the grandson's prologue represents a tripartite canon; but suggests that Sirach's own text (Sir 39.1) might represent a mature stage in the development of a threefold canon.⁵⁵⁾ By the time he considers Sir 24.23, however, he concludes that Wisdom is assimilated with Torah. That he actually means

⁵³⁾ G. Sheppard, op. cit., p.14, Note 59.

⁵⁴⁾ J. Morgenstern sees the material of 'the Book of the Covenant' confined to Ex 20.23-22.19; 23.10-19. See his four part study, "The Book of the Covenant", HUCA, Vol V, 1928, pp.1-151, Vol VII, 1930, pp.19-258; Vol VIII-IX, 1931-32, pp.1-50; Vol XXXIII, 1962, pp.59-105.

⁵⁵⁾ J. Blenkinsopp, op. cit., p.1.

Pentateuch by Torah is not readily evident until he addresses the dependence of Sir on the Psalms, which, he stresses, in themselves have a Pentateuchal form.⁵⁶⁾ The influence of the Psalms on this text is one we shall consider in greater detail shortly. E. Jacob takes a more open view of Torah in this text when he writes, "It designates the Pentateuch and perhaps even the totality of the biblical books (Sir 24:23)."⁵⁷⁾ Finally, J. A. Sanders in his introduction to Torah and Canon, said, "Neither the ancient Hebrew nor Greek Old Testament manuscript traditions use the word Torah (Greek nomos) to designate Pentateuch. Perhaps the earliest really clear use of the word law to refer exclusively to the Pentateuch is the prologue to Sirach ..."⁵⁸⁾ All of this points out two realities: 1) the uncertainty as to when Torah came to equal Pentateuch, 2) there exists a variety of opinions on the understanding of νόμος in Sir 24.23. With this, it must be underlined, our purpose is not to determine a dating for the formulation of a threefold canon, but more concisely, to determine whether Sirach chose to restrict his understanding of Torah to Pentateuch.

The word νόμος which the LXX most frequently uses in translating תורה is found six times in Sir previous to Sir 24.23. In not one of these (Sir 2.16; 9.15; 15.1; 17.11; 19.20; 21.11) is there any lengthy consideration of תורה.⁵⁹⁾ The fourth citing (Sir 17.11) employs νομον

56) *ibid.*, p.144-145.

57) E. Jacob, "Wisdom and Religion in Sirach," in Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien, edited by J. G. Gammell et al, Scholars Press, New York, 1978, p.255.

58) J. A. Sanders, Torah and Canon, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1972, p.2. J. Sanders does later concede that the Aramic and Hebrew words in Ezra and Nehemiah are possibly reference to the Pentateuch as known then.

59) For a study of Torah see, G. Östborn, Tōrā in the OT, Lund, Håkan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1945. There are very few books on the study of Torah but this is an excellent one. See also, J. W. Beecher, "Torah: A Word-Study in the Old Testament", JBL, Vol XXIV, 1905, pp.1-16. For an explanation of "most frequently", please see Note 65 on p.149.

ζωῆς 'law of life' and offers but a brief inference to the theophany of Moses (the same term occurs again in Sir 45.5). Following Sir 24.23 there are only two major references to Torah: (Sir 32.14-33.3) on keeping the Torah or commandments and (Sir 39.1-11) the student of the law.⁶⁰⁾ It would appear that Sirach is working on an assumption. With what does he equate Torah? Even if we allow for the argument that by second century BC Torah was considered to equate Pentateuch; contemporary 'theology' was not readily assumed by Sirach. This was the main point of our findings in the previous chapter, "Sirach and Early Jewish Apocalyptic." Of Sir 24.23 itself, one of the most conspicuous observations is that Sir 24.23b is a direct quote from Deuteronomy 33.4.⁶¹⁾ The grandson translates Sir 24.23b as follows,

νόμον ὃν ἐνετείλατο ἡμῖν Μωσῆς The law which Moses commanded us
κληρονομίαν συναγωγαῖς Ἰακωβ, as an inheritance for the
 congregations of Jacob.

Here we have a very strong pointer to the understanding of νόμος . From this direct dependence in thought it can be assumed Sirach was aware of a book similar to our present canonical text of Deuteronomy.⁶²⁾ Out of this it is an easy step to realize Sirach was exposed to the understanding of Divine will in תורה which is expressed in Deuteronomy 4.6-8 where Moses is commanding תורה to Israel. The LXX of DT 4.6-8 reads,

⁶⁰⁾ On the question of possible divisions within Sir see p.209-211.

⁶¹⁾ For DT 33.4 the LXX varies from the MT in that συναγωγαῖς 'congregations' is actually ἡ πόλις 'congregation of' in the MT. The LXX has changed from the singular to the plural.

⁶²⁾ Since there is no extant Hebrew for Sir 24 we must, as in all previous incidences, use Greek as our primary text. The agreement amongst the Greek MSS for Sir 24.23 gives no cause to believe we have a corrupt text. Thus we are working on the premise that Sir 24.23 represents Sirach's thought. However, only a few GK MSS include Sir 24.24 which reads,

μη' ἐκλύεσθε ἰσχύειν	Do not cease to be strong
ἐν κυρίῳ	in the Lord,
κολλᾶσθε δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν	cling to Him that He
ἵνα κραταιώσῃ ὑμᾶς,	may strengthen you;
κύριος παντοκράτωρ θεὸς	The Lord Almighty alone
μόνος ἐστίν.	is God,
καὶ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἔτι πλὴν	and there is no saviour
αὐτοῦ σωτῆρ.	besides Him.

καὶ φυλάξεσθε καὶ ποιήσετε
ἐπὶ αὐτῇ ἡ σοφία ὑμῶν
καὶ ἡ σύγχεσις ἐναντίον
πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν
ὅσοι ἂν ἀκούσωσιν
πάντα τὰ δικαιώματα ταῦτα
καὶ ἐροῦσιν
Ἰδοὺ λαὸς σοφὸς
καὶ ἐπιστήμων
τὸ ἔθνος τὸ μέγα τοῦτο...
καὶ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν μέγα
ὡς ἔστιν αὐτῶν
δικαιώματα καὶ κρίματα δίκαια
κατὰ πάντα τὸν νόμον τοῦτον,
ὃν ἐγὼ δίδωμι ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν σήμερον;

And keep them and do them
for this is your wisdom
and your understanding in the sight
of all nations
which shall hear
all these statutes
and say,
"Surely a wise people
and understanding
is this great nation ...
And what great nation
is there that has
righteous statutes and judgements
according to all this law,
which I set before you today?

This text places a foundation for the relationship between **ΠῚΠ** and **ΠῚΠ**. Torah is the will of God and the Wisdom of the people. There is a developmental process which grows out of this within the wisdom school, but before looking to this, more specific instructions on the keeping of **ΠῚΠ** follow in this same speech by Moses (Deut. 6.6-7),

καὶ ἔσται τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα
ὅσα ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι
σοι σήμερον
ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου
καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ σου.
καὶ προβιβάσεις αὐτὰ
τοὺς υἱοὺς σου
καὶ λαλήσεις ἐν αὐτοῖς
καθήμενος ἐν οἴκῳ
καὶ παρευόμενος ἐν ὁδῷ
καὶ κοιταζόμενος
καὶ διανιστάμενος.

And all these words
which I command
you today
shall be in your heart
and in your soul.
And you shall teach them diligently,
to your children
and talk of them
sitting in the house
and walking in the way
and lying down
and standing up.

That this understanding of **ΠῚΠ** as will of God and wisdom of the people is carried forward by the wisdom school is marked by the wise man's statement (Proverbs 6.20-23),

Υἱέ, φύλασσε νόμους πατρός σου
καὶ μὴ ἀπώσῃ θεσμούς μητρός σου.
ἄφρασαι δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῇ ψυχῇ διὰ πάντας
καὶ ἐγκλοῖωσαι ἐπὶ τῷ τραχήλῳ.
ἡνίκα ἂν περιπατῇς, ἐπάγου αὐτήν,
καὶ μετὰ σοῦ ἔστω.
ὡς δ' ἂν καθεύδῃς, φυλασσέτω σε

My son, keep your father's law
and reject not your mother's teaching.
Bind them upon your soul always
and tie them about your neck.
When you walk, they will lead you,
and be with your household.
When you lie down they will watch over
you

ἵνα ἐγειρομένῳ συλλαλήῃ σοι.
ὅτι λύχτος ἐντελὴς νόμου.

ἔτι λυχρὸς ἐνταλὴ νόμου

καὶ ὁδὸς ζωῆς ἔλεγχος καὶ ^{καὶ φῶς}
παιδεία.

when you wake they will talk with you.

For the commandment is a lamp and the
law a light

and a way of life are the reproofs and
instruction.

In both language and thought pattern the Deuteronomy dependency is apparent. Not only did the wise man draw from the past, he projected this $\Pi\Gamma\text{I}\nabla$ understanding into the future. This text provides two important bridges with Sir. The concluding phrase which describes Torah as a $\acute{\omicron}\delta\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \text{ ζωῆς}$ 'way of life', corresponds closely to that used in Sir 17.12 where $\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\nu \text{ ζωῆς}$ 'law of life' is used in reference to Moses receiving the law. It is used a second time where Sirach gives account of Moses on the honour roll (Sir 45.5d). For the wise man, " $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota \lambda\acute{\upsilon}\chi\eta\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\gamma\tau\omicron\lambda\eta \nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\nu \kappa\alpha\iota \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$, the commandment of law is a lamp and a light" (Pr 6.23a). The Hebrew for Pr 6.23a reads, $\Pi\Gamma\text{I}\nabla \text{ } \Pi\text{I}\text{S} \text{ } \text{I} \text{ } \text{I}$ $\text{I}\text{I}\chi$. Likewise, Sirach considers " $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma \text{ παιδείαν}$, teaching like a light." (Sir 24.27a).⁶³ At the end of this central creation chapter Sirach promises in his testimony to Wisdom, " $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\iota \text{ παιδείαν } \acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\omicron}\rho\theta\rho\omicron\nu \phi\omega\tau\iota\acute{\omega}$, I will yet make instruction shine forth like the dawn." (Sir 24.32a).

There are at least three other syntactic moves by which Sirach further aligns his thinking on Torah with that of the Wisdom School. Just prior to equating Wisdom with Torah there stands this seemingly insignificant comment (Sir 24.20).

τὸ γὰρ μνημόσυνόν μου
ὑπὲρ τοῦ μέλι γλυκύ,
καὶ ἡ κληρονομία μου
ὑπὲρ μέλιτος κηρίον.

For the remembrance of me
is sweeter than honey,
and my inheritance
sweeter than the honeycomb.

Again we return to Proverbs where the wise man encourages the eating of μέλι 'honey' and κηρίον 'honeycomb'. Pr 24.13-14a reads,

⁶³⁾ For discussion on the translation ὡς φῶς παύειν see p.153.

φάγε μέλι, υἱέ,
 ἀγαθὸν γὰρ κηρίον
 ἵνα γλυκανθῇ
 σου ὁ φάρυγξ
 οὕτως αἰσθήσῃ
 σοφίαν τῇ σῇ ψυχῇ

My son eat honey
 for the honeycomb is good,
 in that it sweetens
 your mouth
 so also know
 wisdom is to your soul ...⁶⁴⁾

The Psalmist presented this same analogy of μέλι καὶ κηρίον 'honey and the honeycomb' to ὁ νόμος . (Ps 18.11b GK). In a second Torah Psalm we read, "... τὰ λόγια σου, ὑπὲρ μέλι καὶ κηρίον τῷ στόματι μου, His word is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth." (Ps 118.103 GK). These three texts are the only occurrences of this analogy in the OT. It would appear as a subtlety in Sirach's style to have made the above statement drawing on all three texts, fully aware that his early readers would know of its application to both Wisdom and Torah. For Sirach it offered a superb syntactic link, immediately before equating Wisdom with Torah. These same Psalms hold an explanation for the infrequent use of the term νόμος within Sir previous to Sir 24.23. Synonyms are frequently employed for νόμος in the above wisdom Psalms. The list includes at least ten possible synonyms for νόμος : word, saying, commandment, statutes, judgements, precepts, way, testimony, knowledge and covenant.⁶⁵⁾ The grandson, in referring to Moses (Sir 45.5) employs four of these (all of which refer to Torah): ἐντολάς 'commandments'; ἐπιστήμης 'knowledge', διαθήκην 'covenant' and κρίματα 'judgements'. He also includes a fifth which is indigenous to Sir, νόμον ζωῆς 'law of life'. The Hebrew fragment reads (Sir 45.5b),

⁶⁴⁾ The comparison is made the more apparent in the Hebrew with the reading, "...ךָ יָדַעְתָּ כִּי יָדָעַתְּ כִּי יָדָעַתְּ... , thus know wisdom is (such) to your soul." (Pr 24.14a). Here we take 'knowledge of wisdom' to mean Torah. Likewise with Pss 18.11b GK and 118.103 GK; the context of the analogies of honey within these Torah Psalms lends weight to the fact that they do apply to Torah.

⁶⁵⁾ Ps 118(GK) alone contains eight of the above synonyms. In Proverbs 6.20 νόμος translates נִסְיוֹן and θεσμούς translates מִצְוֹת . It is for this reason we said νόμος translates מִצְוֹת "most frequently" on p. 145 ; however this seeming inconsistency shows that not only can alternative words be used for Torah, νόμος may also be supplanted.

וישם בידו מצוה

והורח חיים ותבונה:
ללמד ביעקב חקיו

ועדותיו ומשפטיו
לישראֵל:

and He placed into his hand the
commandment
instruction of life and discernment.
That He might teach unto Jacob His
statutes
and His testimonies and judgements
to Israel.

The description of the responsibility of Aaron's priestly office contains a similar array of synonyms for νόμος (Sir 45.17 GK). The list in itself shows the wide concept of Torah which had developed within the Wisdom School. Yet, Sirach makes one other syntactic link: this time specifically with the torah Psalm (118 GK). The Psalmist opens with the promise that those who, "...πορευόμενοι ἐν νόμῳ κυρίου", walk in the law of the Lord," will not be put to shame. This becomes a theme refrain for the Psalmist (Ps 118.6a, 31, 46, 80). It is also a theme in Sir; first listing things of which one should be ashamed (Sir 41.17-28), then things of which not to be ashamed (Sir 42.1-5). Sirach begins his list of 'not to be ashamed' with (Sir 42.2a),

על תורת עֲלִיוֹן
...ודוק

Of the law of the Most High
and the statute ...

In Sir 24.22a Wisdom herself promises, "ὁ ὑπακούων μου οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσεται", the one who obeys me will not be put to shame." Again, just before the marriage of חכמה and תורה this promise is made.

One might well ask, "Why the importance of form, language and theological links with Deuteronomy, Psalms and Proverbs?" In all three תורה = will of God. Few would dispute this as the case for the Deuteronomy passages cited and Proverbs, but as we saw earlier J. Blenkinsopp equated תורה as Pentateuch in Sir 24.23 largely on the basis of the Torah Psalms.⁶⁶⁾ A. F. Kirkpatrick in commenting on תורת יהוה in Ps 119 (Hebrew) said,

⁶⁶⁾ For our earlier discussion on J. Blenkinsopp's theory see p.144-145.

The 'Law of God', which the Psalmist describes in its manifold aspects as His Law, word, promise, commandments, statutes, judgements, precepts, testimonies, ways, is not the law in the narrower sense of the Mosaic legislation or the Pentateuch. The Hebrew word torah has a wider range of meaning, and here as in Pss. i and xix, it must be understood to mean all Divine revelation as the guide of life.⁶⁷⁾

A. A. Anderson in his more recent commentary responds to this claim by Kirkpatrick saying,

Some such view as that of Kirkpatrick ... may well be near the mark, in affirming that this law is not 'the Mosaic legislation or the Pentateuch' in the narrower sense, but rather 'all Divine revelation as the guide of life.'⁶⁸⁾

Likewise A. Weiser in his excellent book, The Psalms, underlines that the Torah man in Psalm 1 is not the orthodox view of man acquiring knowledge of the law, but a challenge for man to yield his whole being to the will of God.⁶⁹⁾ This admirable description is the closest possible parallel to an understanding of Torah in Sir 24.23. It is a definition which holds true throughout Sirach's whole book, which culminates with the picture of Sirach's own contemporary, Simon the High Priest, leading the Assembly of Jacob in worship (Sir 50.1-24). In sum, E. Jacob was at least moving in the right direction with his comment on Sir 24.23 as being Pentateuch and possibly all the biblical books.⁷⁰⁾ To restrict Torah merely to a definition of Pentateuch is to seriously limit the fuller meaning of Sir. Sirach simply developed his inherited wisdom view that Torah = will of God a step further by adding Torah = Wisdom. That is why Wisdom is the main

⁶⁷⁾ A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Book of the Psalms, Cambridge, at the University Press 1917, p.700.

⁶⁸⁾ A. A. Anderson, Psalms, Vol 2 (New Century Bible), Oliphants, London, 1972, p.807.

⁶⁹⁾ A. Weiser, The Psalms, translated by H. Hartwell, OTL, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Nineth edition, 1976, p.104.

⁷⁰⁾ E. Jacob, op. cit., p.255. Although by 2nd century BC, in main stream Judaism, Torah may have equated Pentateuch, it would appear Sirach chose to hold to the broader interpretation developed by the old Wisdom School.

focal point in this central chapter and not Torah. Sirach was already well aware that all word which instructs or points the way to the will of God is $\overline{\Pi\overline{\Gamma\overline{\Pi}}}$. Thus the assumption held in Sir is that Torah equates will of God. From this Sirach developed the theory that Torah equates Wisdom. For further discussion see pp.214-215.

Following Sirach's summary statement on $\overline{\Pi\overline{\Gamma\overline{\Pi}}}$ and $\overline{\Pi\overline{\Lambda\overline{\Pi}}}$ he continues his Paradise imagery by drawing further on the Genesis creation account.

Paradise continued (Sir 24.25-29)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| ὁ πιμπλῶν ὡς φῖσων | 25. | It fills one like the Pishon |
| σοφίαν | | with wisdom |
| καὶ ὡς Τίγρις | | and like the Tigris |
| ἐν ἡμέραις νέων, | | in the days of new (fruits), |
| ὁ ἀναπληρῶν ὡς Εὐφράτης | 26. | it swells one like the Euphrates |
| σύνεσιν | | with understanding |
| καὶ ὡς Ιορδάνης | | and like the Jordan |
| ἐν ἡμέραις θερισμοῦ | | in the days of harvest, |
| ὁ ἐκφαίνων ὡς φῶς παιδείαν | 27. | it shines forth teaching like |
| ὡς ἤτων | | light, |
| ἐν ἡμέραις τρυγῆτος. | | like the Gihon |
| οὐ συνετέλεσεν ὁ πρῶτος | 28. | in the days of harvest. |
| γινῶναι αὐτήν | | The first one did not know her |
| καὶ οὕτως ὁ ἔσχατος οὐκ | | perfectly, |
| ἐξιχνίασεν αὐτήν. | | and likewise the last one has not |
| ἀπὸ γὰρ θαλάσσης ἐπληρέθη | 29. | searched her out. |
| διανόημα αὐτῆς | | For filled from the sea are |
| καὶ ἡ βουλή αὐτῆς | | her thoughts |
| ἀπὸ ἀβύσσου μεγάλης. | | and her counsels |
| | | from the great abyss. |

Sirach's return to the Genesis saga of the Garden of Eden becomes apparent with his listing of rivers in Sir 24.25-27. In Gn 2.10-14 the LXX lists:

Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates. The MT of Gn 2.10-14 records: Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates. Sir 24.25-27 includes: Pishon, Tigris, Euphrates, Jordan and Gihon. Thus, the Sir text includes three of the MT and all four of the LXX listing. If we accept that Tigris is the Greek equivalent of Hiddekel then Sir includes the complete list of both traditions. Together the rivers give a very clear analogy: the will of God as revealed through all νόμος fills man with σοφία 'wisdom', σύνεσις 'understanding' and παιδεία 'teaching'. Two rivers of creation are linked with a season which enables an even greater sense of fullness: Τίγρις ἐν ἡμέραις νέων 'Tigris in the days of new (fruits)'; Γήων ἐν ἡμέραις τρυγῆτος 'Gihon in the days of harvest'. The inclusion of the Jordan with the rivers of creation helps draw the attention to Israel, wherein Wisdom has made her inheritance. Some commentators change the translation for 'light' to 'Nile' on the grounds that the grandson read 7X7 (sic) for 7X7.⁷¹⁾ Given the fact that the grandson is aware that he is translating a list of rivers it would be more understandable if the proposal were in reverse, that is translating, 7X7 for 7X7. This is not an unusual or new analogy for wisdom; earlier syntax showed how Pr 6.23a stated 7X7 7X7 'Torah is light'. Baruch 4.1-3, which is directly influenced by Sir 24, credits 7X7 with light. Finally the same verb employed in translating ἐκφαίνων ὡς φῶς 'shine forth like light,' in Sir 24.27 is restated where Sirach writes of instruction and prophecy in his testimony, "καὶ ἐκφανῶ αὐτὰ ἕως εἰς μακρὰν, and I will make them shine afar." (Sir 24.32b). In this second citing it is promised

⁷¹⁾W. O. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, op. cit., p.162, also R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p.103. Despite such suggestions the RSV simply uses 'light' in Sir 24.27, offering no alternative reading. The JB reads 'Nile' but acknowledges it as a correction on the basis of the Syriac.

that teaching will shine *ὡς ὄρθρον*, like the dawn. All of the above suggests the text should stand as translated.

Immediately following the analogy of the rivers of creation Sirach recalls *ὁ πρῶτος* 'the first one'. This too is, in both order of occurrence and theme, a close modelling on the Genesis saga where the naming of the rivers is followed by God taking *τὸν ἄνθρωπον* into the garden where he is given the commandment about the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil.' The fact that Wisdom is the fathomless one helps explain why Sirach paralleled *ὁ πρῶτος* 'the first one,' (Adam) with *ὁ ἔσχατος* 'the last one'. No man can fully search her out. Besides adding to the fullness of Wisdom already seen in the analogy of the rivers, the employment of *ἐξιχνίασεν αὐτήν* 'searched her out' with *θαλάσσης* 'sea' and *ἄβύσσου* 'abyss' reminds the reader of Sirach's earlier message on fathomless wisdom (Sir .1.2-3). In this new context it is the *διανόημα* 'thoughts' and *βουλή* 'counsels' of Wisdom that are said to be immeasurable, for they come from the boundless *θαλάσσης* and *ἄβύσσου*. As if this does not make Wisdom inviting enough Sirach turns now to his personal encounter with Wisdom's Eden.

Sirach's testimony to Wisdom (Sir 24.30-34)

<i>Κἀγὼ ὡς διῶρυξ</i>	30. And I like a canal
<i>ἀπὸ ποταμοῦ</i>	from a river
<i>καὶ ὡς ὕδαγωγὸς</i>	and like a watering canal
<i>ἐξηλθὼν εἰς παράδεισον.</i>	came into a Garden of Eden. ⁷²⁾

⁷²⁾ In light of our textual study in Sir showing the overall dependency on Genesis 2-3 especially in Sir 24, we are intentionally standing apart from other English translations in using 'Garden of Eden'. In Sir 40.27, we also noted on p.142 how the grandson translated *קִנְיָן* *קִנְיָן* as *ὡς παράδεισος εὐλογίας*. Finally, L and S give 'Garden of Eden' as a possible rendering for *παράδεισος*, op cit., p.595.

εἶπα Ποτιῶ μου τὸν κῆπον,
καὶ μεθύσω μου τὴν πρασίαν
καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγένετό μοι ἡ διώρυξ
εἰς ποταμόν
καὶ ὁ ποταμός μου ἐγένετο
εἰς θαλάσσαν.
ἔτι παιδεῖαν ὡς ὄρθρον φωτιῶ

καὶ ἐκφανῶ αὐτὰ ἕως εἰς μακράν.
ἔτι διδασκαλίαν ὡς προφητεῖαν
ἐκχεῶ

καὶ καταλείψω αὐτὴν
εἰς γενεὰς αἰώνων.
ἴδετε ὅτι οὐκ ἔμοι μόνῳ

ἐκοπίασα,
ἀλλ' ἅπασιν τοῖς ἐκζητοῦσιν αὐτήν.

31. I said "I will water my orchard
and soak my garden plot"
and behold my canal became
into a river
and my river became
into a sea.
32. I will yet make teaching shine
forth like the dawn
and will make them shine afar.
33. I will yet pour out instruction
like prophecy.
And leave it
unto generations of eternity.
34. Behold that I have not laboured
for myself alone,
but for all them that seek her.

The Latin translation considers the above text as simply a continuation of Wisdom's speech stating, "Ego sapientia effudi flumina, I wisdom have poured out rivers." (Sir 24.40). The Greek, "καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ, And I", while maintaining the first person form familiar throughout the poem, would seem to indicate that Sirach is speaking. This same autobiographical form appears elsewhere in Sir.⁷³⁾ Finally the same claim made in Sir 24.34, that Sirach did not labour for himself alone is restated in Sir 33.18 GK,

κατανοήσατε ὅτι οὐκ ἔμοι
μόνῳ ἐκοπίασα
ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν τοῖς ζητοῦσιν
παιδείαν.

- Consider that I laboured not for
myself alone
but for all them that seek
instruction.

Sirach's experience as a child of wisdom is summarized in highly poetic form in the first half of this strophe. (Sir 33.16-17 GK). Building further on the Genesis Garden imagery (with the stream becoming four rivers) he envisages his canal entering Paradise, becoming a river and ultimately a sea. Sirach's personal description with μου τὸν κῆπον 'my orchard' and μου τὴν πρασίαν 'my garden' echoes both Wisdom's Paradise

⁷³⁾ See Sir 33.16-18; 39.12,32; 50.27; 51.13-32 for further autobiographical statements.

and the Garden of trees depicted in Gn 2.9. It also reflects the possessive style Sirach used in his exordium, Sir 16.22-24a (H), with words like "my wisdom", "my spirit" and "my knowledge." The watering that results in a sea, links back to his earlier poetic analogies on the immeasurable Wisdom whose thoughts ' *διανόημα* ' are from the sea (Sir 24.29a). Sirach has fully entered into the boundless source of Wisdom. Out of this sea of wisdom he promises to shine instruction far and wide, "unto generations of eternity." (Sir 24.33b). It is as if he is a lighthouse in this great sea beaconing and pointing from his own experience to the course that must be followed. Who ultimately determines that course becomes Sirach's theme for his sixth creation block.

Inequality in Creation (Sir 33.7-19)⁷⁴⁾

This block of creation tradition will be presented in three parts, Sir 33.7-9, Inequality amongs created works; Sir 33.10-15, Inequality amongst Men; Sir 33.16-19, Sirach's testimony to God's exalting.

⁷⁴⁾ As noted on p.12, Note 4, the chapter numbers between Sir 30-36 vary considerably in the Hebrew and Greek. With no extant Hebrew for this passage we must not only accept the translators verse and chapter numbering but use the grandson's translation as our primary text.

Διὰ τί ἡμέρα
ἡμέρας ὑπερέχει
καὶ πᾶν φῶς ἡμέρας
ἐνιαυτοῦ ἀφ' ἡλίου;
ἐν γνῶσει κυρίου
διεχωρίσθησαν,
καὶ ἡλλοίωσεν καιροὺς
καὶ ἐορτάς;
ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀνύψωσεν
καὶ ἡγίασεν
καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔθηκεν
εἰς ἀριθμὸν ἡμερῶν.

7. Why does one day
surpass other days
and the light of every day
in the year is from the sun?
8. By the knowledge of the Lord
they were distinguished,
and he varied the seasons
and feasts
9. Some of them He exalted
and hallowed
and some of them he made
into ordinary days.

The issue of inequality within the created works is hit directly with a question which highlights the discrepancy. In a word, Sirach wants to know why one day is any better than another when they are all as a result of the same source, the sun. It is a hard hitting practical example which could bring one into the whole realm of how the created order operates. Although Sirach offers a poem on the sun in Sir 43.2-5, nowhere does he enter into any detailed discussion of the actual influence of the sun on days. He is not concerned about the scientific workings or even the discrepancies within the created order. No, despite the logic of the question and its possible avenues for exploration, Sirach moves at once, seemingly to avoid any negative account of creation, to a succinct explanation for the inequality. The grandson records his answer with the words, "ἐν γνῶσει κυρίου διεχωρίσθησαν... By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished ..." (Sir 33.8a). Behind γνῶσει one assumes the word $\aleph \aleph \gamma$ 'knowledge'. This same Hebrew word can also mean wisdom, particularly within Wisdom literature. (See BDB, op. cit., p.395). Thus one can assume that either $\aleph \aleph \gamma$ stood behind γνῶσει in Sir 33.8a or $\pi \alpha \omega \pi$. It was by God's wisdom that the inequality of days was determined. From 'days' in general Sirach moves in Sir 33.8b to the

calendar with its focus on varied seasons and feasts. In Sir 43.6-8, where Sirach offers a poem to the moon he indicates that it is by the moon that the calendar is determined.⁷⁵⁾ But that only brings one back full circle for since God created the moon it must be said that all days are determined by God's wisdom. Sir 33.9 serves both as a summary of what has been claimed and a link for what follows. By God's decision some days are "exalted" and "hallowed" while others are made "ordinary" days. There is no attempt to explain beyond the fact of God's choice. For as Sirach said elsewhere, "וְיָצַק בְּכֹחַ דְּבָרָיו ... and by His words He does His will." (Sir 43.26b). In sum, God determined the inequality, for He can do as He pleases.

Inequality amongst Men (Sir 33.10-15)

- | | |
|--|---|
| καὶ ἄνθρωποι πάντες
ἀπὸ ἑδάφους,
καὶ ἐκ γῆς
ἐκτίσθη Ἀδάμ.
ἐν πλήθει ἐπιστήμης
κύριος διεχώρισεν αὐτοὺς
καὶ ἡλλοίωσεν
τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῶν.
ἐξ αὐτῶν εὐλόγησεν
καὶ ἁγύψωσεν
καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἡγίασεν
καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἤγγισεν
ἀπ' αὐτῶν κατήράσατο
καὶ ἑταπείνωσεν
καὶ ἀνέστρεψεν αὐτοὺς
ἀπὸ στάσεως αὐτῶν. | 10. And all men
are from the ground,
and out of the dust
Adam was created.
11. In the fullness of His knowledge
the Lord distinguished them
and varied
their ways.
12. Some of them He blessed
and exalted
and some of them He made holy
and brought near to Himself
But some of them He cursed
and brought low
and He turned them
from their place. |
|--|---|

⁷⁵⁾ Both the poem to the sun and the one on the moon are discussed in our final creation block on pp.176-179.

- ὡς πηλὸς κεραμέως 13. Like the potter's clay
 ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ in His hand
 - πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ - all His ways
 κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ -, are according to His pleasure -,
 οὕτως ἄνθρωποι ἐν χειρὶ thus men are in the hand
 τοῦ ποιήσαντος αὐτοὺς of Him who created them
 ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς to give them
 κατὰ τὴν κρίσιν αὐτοῦ . according to His judgement.
 14. Opposite evil
 ἀπέναντι τοῦ κακοῦ is good
 τὸ ἀγαθόν and opposite death
 καὶ ἀπέναντι τοῦ θανάτου is life
 ἡ ζωή, Thus opposite the godly
 οὕτως ἀπέναντι εὐσεβοῦς is the sinner.
 ἁμαρτωλός . 15. And thus look
 καὶ οὕτως ἑμβλεψον upon all the works
 εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔργα of the Most High
 τοῦ ὑψίστου two by two
 δύο δύο , one opposite the other.
 ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ἐνός .

Just as the days have a common source in the sun, men too have a common source. ἄνθρωποι πάντες , 'all men' are from the ground. With the naming of Adam in Sir 33.10b the translator has retained for us a prototype; while at the same time underlining that all men, from the first to the last, are from a common base.⁷⁶⁾ Unlike in Sir 33.7 the form used in Sir 33.10 is not that of a question but an outright fact. But any equality ends with the common creation substance. As in Sir 33.8 the writer quickly shifts to an explanation of their differences. The answer remains the same, " ἐν πλήθει ἐπιστήμης, in fullness of His knowledge" God determined their ways.⁷⁷⁾ By God's fullness of knowledge He varied the lot of men. Just as the days vary, so too with men. In Sir 33.12 there follows a picture of just how varied the ways of men are. It opens with language very much in keeping with that employed for the description of varied days.

⁷⁶⁾ In Sir 24.28, though unnamed, Adam is also used as a prototype in enabling a common link with all men.

⁷⁷⁾ L and S, op. cit., p.302 indicates that the meaning of ἐπιστήμη can range from knowledge in a particular skill as in archery or war, to knowledge as in wisdom or scientific knowledge.

In fact two of the verbs are repeated. Both days and men are ἀγύψωσεν 'exalted' and ἡγίασεν 'made holy'. The correspondence between the two demonstrates God's consistency in action through all of creation. In Sir the greatest evidence of man being 'blessed', 'exalted' and made 'holy' is the lengthy honour roll (Sir 44-50). However, nowhere is this concept of God's choosing to exalt man more clearly described than at the end of the historic roll where Simon prays (Sir 50.22),

Καὶ νῦν εὐλογήσατε	And now bless
τὸν θεὸν πάντων	the God of all
τὸν μεγάλα ποιοῦντα πάντα,	who does great things
τὸν ὑψοῦντα ἡμέρας ἡμῶν	who exalts our days
ἐκ μήτρας	from the womb
καὶ ποιοῦντα μεθ' ἡμῶν	who does with us
κατὰ τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ.	according to His mercy.

In Sirach's own words the prayer reads (Sir 50.22),

נַח נַח בְּרַכּוּ יְיָ	Now bless
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ	Lord God of Israel
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ	who does wondrously on earth
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ	who exalts man from the womb
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ	and who does unto him
כְּרִצּוֹן	according to His pleasure.

The actual exegesis of this prayer is presented in our "Schema In Sir", p.208. For the present the phrase בְּרַכּוּ 'who exalts' is our main concern. Both the Hebrew and Greek agree on the fact that God exalts. The translator did choose ἡμέρας ἡμῶν 'our days' instead of נַח ; however the original intent of Sirach's message stands.

But in returning to Sir 33.12b there exists a contrasting picture, just as there was with days. But the contrast amongst men is made far sharper. For while some days were simply made "ordinary" in Sir 33.9b, of men it is said some are "cursed", "brought low" and turned out. The verbs do ring an echo of Gn 3.17-23 where God is said to curse the ground on account of Adam. Adam was brought low by being reminded that he was dust and ashes and he was turned out of Eden. The fact that Adam is named in

Sir 33.10b makes the correspondence the more likely.⁷⁸⁾ In Sir 33.13 there follows an explanation for the inequality amongst men. Using the potter imagery and having already stated earlier that all men are "from the ground" (Sir 33.10a), the claim is made that man is shaped by God's will. Previously, in Sir 33.8-9 the impression was given that God does as He pleases, but now it is openly stated in Sir 33.13b,

-πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ all His ways
κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ- are according to His pleasure -

This very phrase was employed in Simon's prayer where Sirach wrote " ἡψχ' :111373 ...and who does unto him according to His pleasure." (Sir 50.22d). In short, God will do with man as he decides, or "according to His judgement" (Sir 33.13d). This whole presentation seems to dictate against the concept of yetzer built up in Sir 15.14-20. It would appear men are merely moulded into shape by God's decision. However, it would also appear Sirach moves toward amending this discrepancy in Sir 33.14-15. He brings back the reality of opposites, "evil and good", "death and life", "godly and sinner"; a contrast of choice which is similar to that given in Sir 15.16-17, where the concept of yetzer was first presented. This correspondence at least hints that man has choice. But when v 14 is combined with Sir 33.15 which has the concept of "pairs" it points to another direction of hope. The hope that is implied is based on the fact that there is a builtin order for "πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ ὑψίστου, all the works of the Most High." (Sir 33.15a). From this glimmer of hope which should help man accept any inequalities or differences, Sirach moves to a personal testimony. For the moment this becomes the strongest point of hope.

⁷⁸⁾ The amazing factor with this implied claim is that Adam is actually highly exalted by Sirach's honour roll in Sir 49.16b. This may explain, however, why Sirach has been less than explicit here in Sir 33.12cd.

Κἀγὼ ἔσχατος
ἡγρύπνησα
ὡς καλαμώμενος
ὀπίσω τρυγητῶν.
ἐν εὐλογίᾳ κυρίου
ἐφθάσα
καὶ ὡς τρυγῶν
ἐπλήρωσα ληνόν.
κατανοήσατε ὅτι οὐκ
ἐμοὶ μόνῳ ἐκοπίασα
ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν τοῖς
ζητοῦσιν παιδεῖαν.
ἀκούσατέ μου,
μεγιστᾶνες λαοῦ,

καὶ οἱ ἡγούμενοι
ἐκκλησίας
ἐνωτίσασθε.

16. I was last of all
on watch
like one who gleanes
after the grape-gatherers.
17. By the blessing of the Lord
I excelled (came first)
and like a grape-gatherer
I filled my wine press.
18. Consider that I have not
laboured for myself alone
but for all
who seek instruction.
19. Listen to me
you who are great among the
people
and you leaders
of the congregation
hearken.

The measure by which Sirach was exalted is stressed by the movement from being last, a gleaner, to one who excelled. φθάσω can also carry the meaning, "to come or do first or before others."⁷⁹⁾ Sirach turns again to what has become a formula in Sir 33.7-19; that is, having stated the case in one introductory sentence he immediately states a claim crediting the Lord. In Sir 33.8 it was "by the knowledge of the Lord" that inequality existed amongst days; in Sir 33.11 it was in the "fullness of knowledge", that the Lord varied man's ways and now in Sir 33.17 it was "by the blessing of the Lord" that Sirach claims to have been exalted. Sirach's wine press was changed from that of a gleaner to being filled. The first hint that Sirach had any part in his gain comes in Sir 33.18 where it says

⁷⁹⁾ L and S, op cit., p.859.

the author did not labour for himself alone but for all who seek instruction. This whole verse is based on a similar autobiographical claim in Sir 24.34, but in the context of Sir 24.30-34 it is more obvious that Sirach made choices. The very style whereby the whole account is written in the first person shows he assumed some responsibility for his future. Sirach made choices, exercised his yetzer. Thus the restating in Sir 33.17 serves as a reminder of the decisions made by Sirach. That all was not done for "ἐμοὶ μόνῳ, self alone" also brings hope to the reader. It was done for any who are willing to seek instruction (παιδείαν).⁸⁰⁾ However, we are not long left with the testimonial statement as a main source of hope. The hope pointed to when it was stated in Sir 33.15 that "all the works of the Most High" are in opposites or pairs, giving the impression that despite inequalities there is an order in creation, is developed in the next creation block.

God's order and control of creation (Sir 39.16-35)

This passage will be examined under the following headings, A good creation in God's control (Sir 39.16-21); God's purpose in all created things (Sir 39.22-31); The good creation, a cause for praise (Sir 39.32-35).

⁸⁰⁾ Sir 51.13-22 also holds an autobiographical statement wherein he again tells of having sought out Wisdom. It is followed by an invitation for all who lack instruction to enter his שְׁרַת מִלֵּךְ. (Sir 51.23b).

[מעשי] אל כלם טובים
וכל צורך בעתו יספיק:

וְהָהָהּ תַּעֲרִיךְ יְיָ
וּמוֹצֵא פִּי

אוצרו:
וְהָהָהּ יִן רְצוֹנוֹ יַעֲלֶיהָ

ואין מצור
לְתַשׁוּעָתוֹ:
בְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ כָּל
בֶּשֶׂר נִגְדוּ

ואין [ן] נסתר
מִנֶּגֶד עֵינָיו:
מִצֹּלָם וְעַד
עוֹלָם יָדִית
לְהַשְׁכֵּחַ מִסֵּפֶר
לְתַשׁוּעָתוֹ:

אין קטן ומעט עמו

ואין נפלא
וְהַדָּק מִמּוֹנוֹ:
אין לאמר
זֶה לְמַה זֶה
כִּי הֵכֵל לְצָרְכּוֹ נִבְרָר

אין לאמר
זֶה רַע מִזֶּה
כִּי הֵכֵל בְּעָתוֹ
יִגֹּר:

16. God's works, all of them are good
and every need He provides in His
time.

17. (Water's) stood heaped יְיָ
that which goes forth from His
mouth

His store chamber.

18. (Forthwith) His will attains its
end

and there is no restraint
to His salvation

19. The works of all
flesh are before Him
and nothing can be hid
from in front of His eyes.

20. From everlasting unto
everlasting He beholds
is there a limit
to His salvation?
Nothing is small or insignificant
to Him

and nothing is too wonderful
or too hard for Him.

21. None can say,
"This for what reason is this?"
For everything has been chosen
for its purpose

none can say,
"This is worse than that"
for everything in its own time
is excellent.

Sirach opens with the P affirmation that all of God's works are good.⁸¹⁾ With this approval of created works Sir 39.16b then adds that God meets every need, nothing is wanting. Scribal correction supports this with יספיקו. But the phrase וְהָהָהּ clarifies that this is done in His own time. This enables a sense of order and makes it plain from the outset that God controls. The grandson's translation varies for Sir 39.16. It reads,

⁸¹⁾ A marginal note in MS B changes כלם to הכול, though it gives a smoother reading the correction is not a crucial one for the content. A more crucial correction is that in Sir 39.16 b where יספיק is corrected to read יספיקו.

Τὰ ἔργα κυρίου πάντα
ὅτι καλὰ σφόδρα
καὶ πᾶν πρόσταγμα
ἐν καιρῷ αὐτοῦ ἔσται.
οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν,
τί τοῦτο; εἰς τί τοῦτο;
πάντα γὰρ ἐν καιρῷ αὐτοῦ
ζητηθήσεται.

All the works of the Lord
are very good
and all He commands
is done in His time.
No one can say,
"What is this?" "For what is that?"
For all things in His time
will be sought out.

The grandson has changed 110 to *καλὰ σφόδρα* 'very good' perhaps under the influence of 772' in Sir 39.21d. For 772' he has translated *πᾶν πρόσταγμα*. Neither changes the essence of the message but the insertion of Sir 39.16cd is a major change from the Hebrew. It can be accounted for however by the fact that v 16cd is actually Sir 39.21ab in the Hebrew fragment. So here we simply have a change in versification. For the purpose of our exegesis the Hebrew order will be retained.⁸²⁾

For Sir 39.17a, which is seriously mutilated, HLA suggested a possible reading may be, "... *בַּיָּדָיו יַעֲרִיךְ נֶרְ*, at His word (the waters) stood in a heap."⁸³⁾ The grandson's translation corresponds with this. The second part of this verse "*וְכִנּוּזָּא פִּי אִצְרָנִי*", that which goes forth from His mouth, His store chamber" becomes *καὶ ἐν ῥήματι στόματος αὐτοῦ ἀποδοχεῖα ὑδάτων*, and at the words of His mouth reservoirs of water." (Sir 39.17b); not only returns to the Hebrew versification but is supported by the Hebrew text. The whole of v 17 gives a picture of God's controlling power. It may be drawing on the historic moment of the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14.21) or it could also be with reference to the creation account where P describes God separating the dry land and thereby containing the waters. (Gn 1.9-10). Indeed, it is possible that he has included both in this single verse. Sir 39.18b carries through the sense of salvation or deliverance but the whole verse emphasises that God's will

⁸²⁾ The RSV complicated the versification the more by placing Sir 39.16cd as v 17ab.

⁸³⁾ HLA, op. cit., p.40. It also suggests the first word of v 18a read *יִתְּנֵנוּ* and that v 20b read, "*לֹא יִתְּנֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַיָּדָיו*". Here too the texts are difficult to decipher.

is always carried out. In Sir 33.7-13 it was made clear that God could do as He pleases, but here in Sir 39.18 there is a slight shift to this claim with the words, "רצונו יצליח ... His will attains its end." What God wills is made complete, it is finished. This gives an amazing sense of God's authority and control over all things. The remainder of v 18 underlines this with the words, "ואין מעצור לתשועתו:" and there is no restraint to His salvation. In Sir 39.19, Sirach returns to his concept of the omnipresent God saying, the works of כל בשר, all flesh, are before Him and nothing can be "נסתר מנגד עיניו", hid from in front of His eyes." This picks up on Sirach's earlier claim in Sir 15.18-20 where God is said to see "all things" and know "every deed of man." Because of God's eternal nature described in v 20a there is no end to His observing all, "מעולם ... ועד עולם יביט.", From everlasting to everlasting He beholds." This ultimate control and oversight by God gives immeasurable hope. v 20b is not easily deciphered. Lévi sees it in the form of a rhetorical question, " : ... [הי]ש מספר לתשועתו : is there a limit to His salvation?"; while HLA simply restates the thought of v 18b, "על כל : לתשועתו ;) thus to His salvation there is no limit." In either case God's ultimate authority and control is undeniable. Sirach continues this thought by stating in Sir 39.20cd,

אין קטן ומעט עמו

Nothing is small or insignificant to Him

ואין נפלא
והדק במנו:

and nothing is too wonderful
or too hard for Him.

To all living creatures small and great this is good news. The grandson does not carry this fuller message for Sir 39.20. Instead, having translated, "From everlasting to everlasting He beholds them" in Sir 39.20a, the Greek simply concludes with "καὶ οὐθέν ἐστὶν θαυμασιόν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ", and nothing is marvellous to Him." It would appear the

grandson took as a summary statement": **ממנו ... נפלג** , יאין , and nothing is too wonderful ... for Him." (Sir 39.20d). In Sir 39.21 both the Hebrew and Greek are at one with the message that all things have been created with a purpose. Both preface the claim with the fact that none can question the purpose of things. To question the purpose of existence of a thing is unnecessary because all things (**הכל**) have their purpose. Not only does everything have purpose, but it is senseless to compare for " **הכל בעתו יגבר** : " , everything in its own time is excellent." (Sir 39.21d). **יגבר** links back to the opening appeal of Sir 39.16a, that all God's works are **טובים** . It also sustains the sense of purpose in all creation which will be developed further in the second portion of this creation block.

God's purpose in all created things (Sir 39.22-31)

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| ברכות כיאר הציפה | 22. His blessing overflows like the Nile |
| וכוהר תבל ריותה: | and saturates the world like a river. |
| כן דעמו גוים יוריש | 23. Thus His indignation drives out nations |
| ויהפך למלח משקה: | and He turns a watered land to salt. |
| ארחות תמים ישרו | 24. The paths of the perfect are straight. |
| כן לדרים יסהוללו: | Thus to the wicked they are stumbling blocks |
| [טוב לט]וב חלק מראש | 25. Good things were created for the good from the beginning |
| כן לרעים טוב וריע: | Thus to the evil, good and evil ⁸⁴⁾ |
| [ראש כל צרף] | 26. First of all things necessary |
| לחיי אדם | to the life of man |
| מים ואש וברזל ומלח: | water and fire and iron and salt |
| [חלב חטה] חלב ודבש | flour of wheat, milk and honey |
| רענוב יצהר ובגד: | blood of the grape, oil and clothing. |

⁸⁴⁾ Because of the mutilated state of the fragment this is based on the Greek.

כל אלה [לה] ל[ט] ובים ייטבו
כן לרעים לרעה נהפכו:

יש ר[ח] ודוח למשפט נולצרו

[ובאפס הר]ים יעתיק[ו:]

[בעת עברה כהם יראו

וחרון בוראם יניחו:]

אש וברד רע ודבר

הם אלה למשפט ו[וצרו:]

חית שן עקרב ופתן

וחרב נקמות
להחרים ר[ע]ים:
כל אלה לצורכם נבראו

והמה באוצר ולעת יפקדו:
בצותו אתם ישישו
ובחקם לא ימרו פיו:

27. All these are good to the good
Thus to the evil they are turned
to evil.

28. There are winds created for
judgement
and their wrath lay on their
scourges heavily.
In the time of the end they pour
out their wrath,
and appease the wrath of Him that
created them.⁸⁵⁾

29. Fire and hail, famine and
pestilence
These also were created for
judgement.

30. Beasts of prey, scorpions and
vipers
and the avenging sword
to slay the wicked
all of these were created for
their purposes
and are in store till he appoints.
31. When He commands them they rejoice
and in their prescribed task they
rebel not against His mouth.

Sirach begins with a creation statement reflective of the J description of the waters springing up to flood the dry ground in Gn 2.5-6. Sirach sees God's blessing saturating the נחל. His analogy of the river, here specifically naming the Nile, is mindful of the comparison of Wisdom with the five major rivers in Sir 24.25-26. In Sir 47.14b Solomon is said to "והצף כגאר מוסר", overflow like the Nile with instruction." Collating the three texts (Sir 24.25-26; 39.22; 47.14b) it becomes clear that God's 'blessing' is Wisdom. In contrast to Sir 39.22 in the following verse זעמ 'His indignation' drives out nations, turns well watered ground to salt. Here we are reminded of the inequalities in creation seen in Sir 33.12 where it was said some men are 'blessed' while others are 'cursed' and 'turned out'. If God can exercise this authority with individuals it follows that He can do likewise with גוים 'nations'. Sirach continues on the theme of the faithful and the wicked in vv 24-25 by

⁸⁵⁾ This verse is similarly dependent on the Greek. הקם יניחו.. is indicated as a possible reading by HLA in v 28d.

adding that the straight paths of the $\pi' \wedge \pi$ are stumbling blocks to the wicked. With Sir 39.25b, Sirach's claim of 'good and evil' being created for the evil is not simply to create contrast but to underline that there is purpose in all God's works. This sense of purpose in all things is then illustrated in Sir 39.26-30.

Beginning with the essentials which sustain man in Sir 39.26, Sirach compiles his list to illustrate the essence of all things. The basic needs of man include water, fire, iron and salt, flour of wheat, milk and honey, blood of the grape and clothing. All come as part of God's created works and undoubtedly are included with the 'good' which the evil are said to share (Sir 39.25b). The purpose of all these basics is unquestionable. In v 27 it is said that all these are good to the good but to the evil they are "לרעה נהפכו", turned to evil." So, even though the evil share in 'good', to them it becomes evil. This is not unlike the earlier claim in v 24 that what is good for the good becomes a 'stumbling block' for the wicked. In Sir 39.28-29 the listing of elements: winds, fire, hail and pestilence which would appear to have no use are turned into God's armaments. He uses them for judgement (למשפט). In sum, what is good becomes evil to the evil and what appears as evil God turns to good. The final portion of His list contained in v 30 includes beasts of prey, scorpions, vipers and the avenging sword. All of these could also be considered useless, but Sirach concludes the list with the words, "כל אלה לטוב נבראו" ... all of these were created for their purposes." (Sir 39.30c). The fact that all are in (His) store chamber holds in tension the earlier promise in Sir 39.16b that every need will be met, $\pi \wedge \pi$. Sir 39.30 further echoes the opening claim of v 16a that all God's works are good. The obedience of the created works seen in Sir 16.28b with the words

"they will never disobey His words", is re-emphasised in Sir 39.31. But in this new context they are not only obedient, they are said to "rejoice" at his command. The final expression in v 31 "וְיִרְדְּקוּ לֹא יִמְרוּ פִּיו:", and in their prescribed task they rebel not against His mouth" simply underlines their obedience; that is, they will not disobey his word. This willing obedience opens the way for Sirach's concluding portion to this seventh creation block.

The good creation, a cause for praise (Sir 39.32-35)

על כן מראש התעלמותי
והתבוננותי
ובכתב הונחתי:
מעשה אל כלם טובים
לכל צורך בעתו יִסְפֹּק:
אל לאמר זה רע מה זה
כי הכל בעתו יגביר:
עתה בכל לב
הרנינו
וברכו את שם הֶקֶל [רוש]:

32. Thus from the first I stood firm
and when I had considered it
I set it down in writing.
33. The works of God all of them are
good
they supply every need in His
time.
34. (None) can say, "This is worse
than that"
For everything shows its strength
in its time.
35. Now with all your heart
sing praise
and bless the Name of the Holy
One.

The importance of v 32 lies in its context as much as content. The fact that this autobiographical statement comes at the conclusion of this major creation passage adds much significance. With the presentation of this seventh major creation statement Sirach has now formulated his own doctrine of creation. Thus, the personal statement is a claim not just for Sir 39.16-35, but the whole of his now formulated doctrine of creation. Indeed, not just the creation material, but the whole book is a result of

Sirach's having 'stood firm', 'considered' and 'written it down'. Sir 39.33 simply restates the opening claim of Sir 39.16 that all the works of God are good and are used in His time. Despite inequalities, contrasts and peculiarities such as famine and pestilence, all are good and will find use **וְכָל**. The final **וְכָל** given in Sir 39.33b places once again the reality of order and purpose in **הַכֹּל**. The whole of Sir 39.34 reinforces the sense of purpose and timing which God has built into creation. The fact that all is good is underlined by the statement, "None can say, 'This is worse than that'".⁸⁶⁾ There is no sense comparing, for as Sirach said, "**כָּל־טוֹבֵי עוֹלָם**". With the final claims establishing the doctrine of creation within his book he now calls all to praise. This call is offered in Sir 39.35 with the words,

עַתָּה בְּכָל לֵב
 הִרְרִינוּ
 וְרַכּוּ אֶת הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ

Now with all your heart⁸⁷⁾
 sing praise
 and bless the name of the Holy One.

Sirach himself does just that by writing a creation hymn of praise in Sir 42.15-43.33.

Hymn of Praise on the Works of God (Sir 42.15-43.33)

This lengthy creation hymn will be considered under the following headings, Creation reflects the majesty and might of God (Sir 42.15-25); God's wonders in the firmament, earth and deep (Sir 43.1-26); A call to Praise (Sir 43.27-33).

⁸⁶⁾ The reading for 'none' is made possible by the marginal correction in MS B which changes **לֹא** to **אֵין**.

⁸⁷⁾ The scribal addition **הִרְרִינוּ** following **לֵב** is unnecessary. This is surely understood with the expression **הִרְרִינוּ**.

אזכר נא מעשי אל
 ודך הדיתי ואספרה:
 באומר אלהים רצונך
 ופעל רצונו לקדו:
 שמש זורח
 על כל נגלותה
 וכבוד יי על כל מעשיו:
 לא הספיקו קדושי אל
 לספר נפלאות יי:
 אימץ אלהים צבאיו
 להתחדק לפני כבודו:
 תהום ולב הקר
 ובכל מערומיהם יתבונן:
 כי ידע (ל) [ע] ליון כל יי
 (נ) מבית איתות עולם:
 מחיה חליפות
 נהיות
 ומגלה הקר נסתרות:
 לא נעדר ממנו כל שכל
 ולא חלפו כל דבר:
 גבורת חכמתו ותכן
 אחד הוא מעולם:
 לא נוסף
 (ו) לא נאצל
 ולא צריך לכל מבינ:

15. I will recall to mind the works
 of the Lord
 and that which I have seen I will
 recount.
 By God's word is His pleasure
 and He does His will by His
 decree.
16. The rising of the sun
 is revealed over all
 and the glory of the Lord is upon
 all His works.
17. The Holy Ones of God have not the
 power
 to recount the wonders of the
 Lord.
 God has given strength to His
 hosts
 to stand in the presence of His
 glory.
18. He searches the deep and the
 heart
 and discerns all their secrets.
 For the Most High knows all
 things
 and He looks into the eternal⁸⁸⁾
 signs.
19. He declares things that are past
 (and) things yet to come
 and reveals the traces of hidden
 things.
20. No knowledge is lacking from Him
 and not a word escapes Him
21. The mighty words of His wisdom
 has he ordered
 One is He from everlasting
 nothing has been added
 and nothing taken away
 and He needs none to instruct⁸⁹⁾
 (Him).

⁸⁸⁾ Sir 42.18cd is found only in the Masada Scroll. See HLA, op. cit., p.49.

⁸⁹⁾ From Sir 42.21d-25 the Hebrew fragment verses are dislocated, however, HLA reorders and includes v 22 which is found only in the Masada Scroll. For purposes of citing, except for v 22, we continue our quotation from I Lévi. His order is the same as HLA.

הלוא כל מעשיו נחמדם [ע]
 עד ניצוץ וחדות מראה:
 הוא חני ועומד ל[עזר]
 ולכל צורך הכל ישמע:
 כלם שונים דה מזה
 ולא עשה מהם שי יי... [ע]
 דה על [ד]ה חלק טובו:
 וימי ישוב [ע] ל[ה]ביט ותוארם

22. How desirable are all His works
for ever shining visions to
behold.
23. He lives and abides for ever
and for every need all are
obedient.
24. All things are different, this
from that
and He made not one of them
25. One thing surpasses another in
its goodness.
And who shall be filled with
beholding (their) beauty?

Sirach begins the hymn by saying he will recount what he has seen of God's created works. He then recalls how God's works were done by His word. This P theological concept is more obviously linked by the Masada Scroll which reads", בְּאִמַּר אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשָׂיו , By the word of the Lord are His works." (Sir 42.15c). Sirach adds to this claim by divine fiat, "וְכַל וְכָדוֹן לְקִדּוֹ , and He does His will by His decree." His creative power fulfills His creative pleasure. This same creation concept was established in Sir 33.13 with the words, "all His ways are according to His pleasure." Likewise the sun which was said to give light to every day in Sir 33.7, now floods its light כָּל עַל . (Sir 42.16a). With this claim that the sun reveals God's works, Sirach next offers the theme of his whole hymn, " וְכָדוֹן יִי עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו , and the glory of the Lord is upon all His works." (Sir 42.16b). What follows in vv 17-25 is largely a summary of previous creation statements. He begins with the fact that God's works are immeasurable, a fact implicit throughout Sir, but openly stated in Sir 18.4, "To none has He given power to declare His works. And who can trace out His mighty works?" Here in Sir 42.17a that even God's 'holy ones' or 'His hosts' can not recount His works therefore, comes as no surprise. If we accept מַלְאָכָיו as angelic beings it is no surprise either that faithful men who magnify the Lord can not fully recount; a matter to which Sirach himself concedes by the end of his hymn in Sir 43.30d 32(H). Though none

can fully fathom His works, God's 'Holy Ones' are said to have been given the strength to stand לִפְנֵי כְבוֹדוֹ (Sir 42.17d). Standing לִפְנֵי כְבוֹדוֹ means they see God's glory; a glory evidenced in the created works. But this measure of searching out is also made possible by God's gift of אֵמֶץ . אֵמֶץ is not simply physical strength but the power of insight, wisdom. This restriction of even His 'Holy Ones' is now contrasted in Sir 42.18-20 by yet another picture of the omnipotent and omnipresent God. The fact that God searches the קְדֻמּוֹת and אֲחֵרִים stresses in a single parallel how he searches the depths of created works and the depths of man. He also sees deep into the past and deep into the future. In sum Sirach says, "וְלֹא אֶחָד חָלַף מִלִּפְנֵי דְבָרֶיךָ" A similar claim was made in Sir 39.19b, "וְאֵין מִן הַמְּסֻתָּרִים מִן עֵינֶיךָ" and nothing can be hid from His eyes." Sirach's references in Sir 42.19 to 'things that are past', 'things yet to come' and 'hidden things' would appear to carry apocalyptic overtones, but in context it can be said, at most, that he is using contemporary language of his day to express as fully as possible God's wisdom and might. In short, it is the message, not merely the words, that are the real point of focus here. Indeed, this same claim was first made in Sir 39.20a without the use of apocalyptic language, "מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם יִבְרָא", From eternity to eternity He beholds." This eternal quality of God is seen in His works in Sir 42.22, which are said to be "forever shining visions to behold." The 'shining visions' are most likely with reference to the created works of the firmament. This is said in part because Sir 42.23a makes the claim that, "He lives and abides for ever"; however, the חַי וְקַיִם of MS B reads as לְכָל in the Masada Scroll and is translated by the grandson as " πάντα ταῦτα ζῆν all of these live". לְכָל of the Masada Scroll we take to mean the eternal works of the created order, in particular the firmament. These

works later become a focal point for Sirach's pen with his poem "Wonders of the firmament." (Sir 43.1-12). Although the creation statement of Sir 42.23a is very much within Sirach's Doctrine of creation, it is out of context if one holds to the employment of $\chi\iota\eta$, for the message that follows in Sir 42.23b-25 is also with reference to created works. Sir 42.23b speaks of the obedience of the created works. This concept was seen in Sir 16.28b and again at the end of Sirach's list of created things in Sir 39.30cd where it states, "all of these were created for their purposes and are in (His) store chamber." This sense of purpose and order is continued by Sirach's statement in Sir 42.24a, $\eta\tau\alpha\eta\tau\eta\sigma\omega\iota\eta\kappa$ "... , all things are different, this from that." But this too is building on the earlier concept of pairs seen in Sir 33.15. The grandson's translation of Sir 42.24 gives a very vivid picture of the 'twofold' order and enables an insight into how the lost portion of the fragment may have read. His translation reads,

πάντα δισδᾶ
ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ἐνός
καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν
οὐδὲν ἑλλείπον.

All things are twofold
one opposite the other
and He has not made
anything incomplete.

Sirach finally closes out this portion of his hymn by reaffirming the 'goodness' of created things and then raises a rhetorical question. A combination of a correction in MS B and the reading of the Masada Scroll enables the word $\iota\eta$. However the full question, "and who shall be filled with beholding (their) beauty?" still holds uncertainty. MS B which is fragmented at v 25b has a scribal note which adds the word $\gamma\chi\iota\eta$, but the Masada Scroll reads $\eta\tau\eta\eta$. The grandson translated it as, $\delta\delta\epsilon\alpha\nu\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$. It is most likely that the Masada Scroll retains the original thought. As was seen in Sir 42.23a, the Masada Scroll's use of $\eta\tau\eta$ instead of $\chi\iota\eta$ made for a more logical reading. Here too the main subject is

'works', thus the employment of ל 'their' maintains a consistency in the message. Although it is true that the works are of God, therefore 'His glory' is implicit, the hymn continues on the theme of beholding the beauty or splendour of His works.

God's wonders in the firmament, earth and deep (Sir 43.1-26)

This creation passage will be examined under subdivisions as follows, Wonders in the firmament (Sir 43.1-12); Wonders on earth (Sir 43.13-22); Wonders in the deep (Sir 43.23-26).

Wonders in the firmament (Sir 43.1-12)

תאר מרום
ורקיע לטהר
ועצם שמים
מרבית קדרו:
שמש מביע בצרתו חמה
מה נורא מעשי יי:

בהצהירו
ירתיח תבול
לפני חרבו
מי יתכלכל:

1. The beauty of the height
is the pure firmament
and the vault of the heavens⁹⁰⁾
spreading out its splendour.
2. The sun swells with burning heat
How terrible are the works of the
Lord.
3. When it shines at noon
it scorches the world
before its burning heat
who can stand?

⁹⁰⁾ For Sir 43.1 Lévi has only the letter 'ל' but from the Masada Scroll v 1a. is extant and a fragment of v 1b. HLA enables the full text of v 1b; thus our quotation of Sir 43.1 is based on these two readings. See HLA, op. cit., p.50.

כור נפוח מהם מצוק

שולח שמש
ידליק הרים:
לשאון מאור
תגמר נושבת
ומנורה תכנה עין:

כי גדיל יי עושהו
ודבריו ינצח אביריו:

וגם ירח ילך צהוה שבוה

ממשלת קץ ואות עולם:

ב(ו) מוצר וזמני חוק
וחדץ ציונה בזהקופתו:

חדש בחדשו הוא מתחדש

מה נורא בהשתנותו:

כלי צבא נבלי מרום
מרצף רקיע מזהירחו:

הואר שמים
והדר כוכב
ואורו מזחין
במרומי אל:
בדבר אל יצמד חק

ולא ישה באשמרוהם:

ראה קשת
וברך עושיה
כי מאד נאדרה [בה] ור:

חוק הקיפה בכבודה

ויר אל נשתה

4. A heated furnace makes (works)⁹¹⁾
melt.

The sending forth of the sun
(sets) mountains ablaze.
The rays from the light
scorches the inhabited earth
and light from the lamp scorches
the eyes.

5. For great is the Lord who made it
and His words cause His mighty ones
to gleam.

6. The moon also shines from time to
time
for rule of time and an
everlasting sign.

7. From it are the festivals and
times of decree
(and it changes at the time) when
it is full.

8. The month renews itself from the
moon
how terrible is she in her
changing.

An instrument of the host on high
she paves the firmament with her
shining.

9. The beauty of heaven
is the splendour of the stars
a gleaming array
in the heights of God.

10. By the word of God the order
stands
and they are not sleepy at their
watches.

11. See the rainbow
and bless the One who created it
for exceedingly (majestic is its
glory).

12. It encompasses the vault in its
glory
and the hand of God stretched⁹²⁾
it out

In Sirach's poem on the wonders of the רקיע he includes all four
lights of creation: sun, moon, stars and rainbow. רקיע was considered
in Hebrew thought as a beat-out, bowl-shaped⁹¹⁾ expanse which held back the

⁹¹⁾ HLA notes מַהֲמָה as erroneous but the Masada Scroll has מַעֲשֵׂי
instead of מַהֲמָה, ibid., p.50.

⁹²⁾ HLA enables the final word for Sir 43.12b, בְּגִבּוֹרָה, 'in
might'. See HLA op. cit., p.51.

upper waters. Besides using what is a P creation word, Sirach kept the P listing of Gn 1.16 which names the sun, moon and stars in that order. Thus Sirach singles out the sun for his first detailed description of the firmament. In the opening portion of his hymn, Sir 42.16a, the sun was presented as if it was an eye over the whole of creation. This imagery was made the more obvious by the grandson's translation, " ἡλῖος φωτίζειν κατὰ πᾶν ἐπέβλεψεν , The sun looks down on everything with its light." (Sir 42.16a). But in Sir 43.2 the sun itself is an example of the splendour in the created works. Having referred to its burning heat, Sirach wrote, "How terrible are the works of the Lord." (Sir 43.2b). $\overline{\text{ררר}} \overline{\text{רר}}$ means 'awe inspiring' as opposed to something to be dreaded. Yet, at its zenith Sirach asks of $\overline{\text{ררר}}$, 'its burning heat,' "who can stand it?" (Sir 43.3b). This question gives rise for a comparison in Sir 43.4 between the sun and a heated furnace. But, there is no real comparison for the furnace may melt its works⁹³⁾ but the sun sets⁹⁴⁾ mountains on fire. The words $\overline{\text{רר}}$ and $\overline{\text{רר}}$ are used instead of $\overline{\text{ררר}}$ in Sir 43.4cd. Thus the sun not only sets mountains ablaze, it scorches the earth and the eyes. However, all this power of the sun is but a reflection of God's greatness, a matter which Sirach stresses by writing " כִּי גָדִיל ... $\overline{\text{ררר}}$, For great is the Lord who made it ..." (Sir 43.5a). He furthers this sense of God's power by adding that it is His $\overline{\text{ררר}}$ which causes the sun to gleam. Again, the grandson is more graphic in his translation by writing, --" καὶ ἐν λόγοις αὐτοῦ κατέσπευσεν πορείαν, at His word it hastens on its journey." (Sir 43.5b).

⁹³⁾ See note 91, p.177.

⁹⁴⁾ A marginal note in MS B corrects the spelling from $\overline{\text{ררר}}$ to $\overline{\text{רר}}$.

Sir 43.6-8 contains a brief poem on the work of the moon. The moon's influence in forming the lunar calendar⁹⁵⁾ is pointed to with the words, "חֲמִשָּׁלוֹת קָץ", for rule of time" in v 6b. The fact that this same verse describes the moon as an "everlasting sign" places it amongst the eternal works inferred by the Masada Scroll in Sir 42.23a. The חֲמִשָּׁלוֹת also means it has a shared quality with Wisdom and the Lord as seen in Sir 1.1; 18.1. Its rule of time is continued in Sir 43.7-8a in that it determines the festivals and the months. The same expression used in describing the sun in Sir 43.2b, מִן הַיּוֹרֵךְ, is also applied to the moon in v 8b. From the text "...כִּלְיָ צִבְיָה נִבְלִי מְרוֹם", an instrument of the host on high" in Sir 43.8c, צִבְיָה could be an abbreviated form for 'God of hosts'. This would be more in keeping with the earlier thought that the sun is dependent on the יְיָ; so too the moon is His instrument. However that would call for a hapax legomenon; thus it is more likely that צִבְיָה simply means the 'army' or full parade of lights in the קִיץ. Amongst this army the moon is chosen as an instrument for rule of time.

Immediately following this description of the moon Sirach gives a short account on the stars. Their greatest renown is their beauty, for Sirach writes, "The beauty of heaven is the splendour of the stars ..." (Sir 43.9a). Like the sun this "gleaming array" is commanded by God's יְיָ. In Sir 43.10 they not only respond to God's word but never are they sleepy or relaxed in their watches. The words 'not sleepy' appear simply to stress how they perform their watches. With all three created works a built-in purpose has been named - the sun brings light and heat, the moon provides time and the stars stand on watch.

The rainbow is reserved for the final comment on the wonders of the firmament. In Sir 43.11 the קִשְׁטָה becomes the source of inspiration for

⁹⁵⁾ For an earlier reference on the Lunar calendar see p. 19, Note 9.

a call to bless the Lord. Sirach wrote, "...וְרָאָה קִשְׁתוֹ וּבֵרַךְ עֹשֶׂיהָ. See the rainbow and bless the One who created it." This touches on the purpose of the whole hymn; that is, on beholding the beauty of created things it should evoke praise to the One who created them, for as Sirach later writes, "וְהוּא גָדוֹל מִכָּל מַעֲשָׂיו"; and He is greater than all His works." (Sir 43.28b). One final unique factor about the rainbow is the manner in which it was created. Whereas the לְבָר brought forth and sustained the sun and stars, Sirach says, "וַיֵּר אֱלֹהִים, and the hand of God" stretched out the rainbow. (Sir 43.12b). This reference to God creating 'by hand' could be explained by the original P context in Gn 9.13a where it states, "וְנָתַתִּי אֶת-קִשְׁתִּי בַעֲנַן, I set my rainbow in the clouds" The verb נָתַתִּי gives rise to the more demonstrative creation act in which God by His hand stretched out or placed the rainbow. As he effortlessly spoke the creation into being, so with his hand he placed with ease a rainbow across the רִקְיעַ. Finally, although the moon stands as an "אֶתְנֶנְתִּי עוֹלָם", everlasting sign" in Sir 43.6b the rainbow was known to be placed as an eternal promise that God would never again destroy his creation.⁹⁶⁾

Wonders on earth (Sir 43.13-22)

גְּבוּרָתוֹ וְהַיּוֹד בָּרַק
וְהַנִּצָּח דִּיקוֹתָ [בְּמִשְׁפָּט:]

לְמַעַן בָּרַא אוֹצָר
וַיַּעַף עָנָן כְּרֶשֶׁף:]

13. His might sends out the lightning and makes its flashes bright (in judgement)
14. For it He created a store house and clouds fly forth (like a bird.).

⁹⁶⁾ See Gn 9.12-16 for the full account of God's 'everlasting covenant.'

גבורתו ודזק עון
 ותגרע א[ב]ני ברד :
 קול רעמו
 יחול ארצו
 ובכחו דעים הרים:
 אימתו ותהרף תימן
 דלעפון[ת] צפון
 סופה וסערה:
 [בר]שף יניף שלגו
 וכארה
 ישכון דרתו:
 תואר לבנה יהודה ציונים
 וממטרו יהמה לבו:
 וגם כפור כמלח ישכון
 ויציץ כספיר ציצים:
 צינת רוח צפון ישיב
 וכרקב יקפיא מקורו:
 על כל מעמד מים יקרים
 וכשרין ילבש מקוד
 יבול הרים
 כחרב ישיק
 ונוה צמחים
 כלדבה:
 ברפא כל
 מצדף עון
 של פורע לרשן שרב:

15. By His might he makes the clouds strong
and the hail stones are broken⁹⁷⁾
in pieces.
16. The voice of His thunder
makes the earth to travail
and by His strength He shakes⁹⁸⁾
the mountains.
17. And fear of Him stirs up the
south wind,
the whirlwind of the north
hurricane and tempest!
Like birds He sprinkles His snow
and like settling locusts
is the coming down thereof.
18. The beauty of its whiteness
dazzles the eyes
and the heart is wonder struck at
its coming down.
19. Also the hoar-frost (He pours
out) like salt,
and it causes flowers to bloom
like sapphires.
20. The cold of the north wind He
causes to blow
and like a bottle hardens the
pond.
Upon every gathering of water he
spreads a crust
and like a breastplate the pond
puts it on
21. The produce of the mountains
He dries up with scorching heat
and the springing grass of the
meadows
as (with) a flame.
22. Healing for all things
is the dropping from the clouds
the dew which quickly refreshes
the parched ground.

In Sir 39.28a; 30b the winds, fire, hail, famine and pestilence were
 said to be created למשפט 'for judgement'. Now in Sir 43.13 the lightning
 is added to this list. --In Sir 39.30d all are said to be בלעזר. The

⁹⁷⁾ Because only a few letters are extant in MS B Sir 43.15 is
 dependent on the Masada Scroll.

⁹⁸⁾ The order has been lost in vv 16-17. HLA places v 17a where Lévi
 has v 16a. In the Greek v 16b is v 17a.

present text, Sir 43.14a again reminds that God has "[ך]צא ארב , created a store chamber." The lightning is also placed in it. The אצא becomes a symbol of God's might and His control over creation. For Sir 43.14b it would appear the clouds also fly out of the store chamber. The grandson certainly has this impression when he writes in Sir 43.14, "διὰ τοῦτο ἠνεύχθησαν θησαυροί, καὶ ἐξέπτησαν νεφέλαι ὡς πετεινά. Therefore the storehouses are opened and the clouds fly forth like birds." The might of God is once again stressed in Sir 43.15 by His 'strengthening' the clouds and breaking the hailstones in pieces. This picture of God's might continues in the following verse where the voice of "His thunder" is said to cause the earth to travail while the mountains shake by "His strength." (Sir 43.16). God's influence over the elements is resumed in v 17 with the listing of the south wind, whirlwind of the north, hurricane and tempest. All are initiated by "fear of Him." In Sir 43.17b Sirach paints a vivid picture of God scattering the snow like birds and like settling locusts. With Sir 43.18-21, there follows a description which these elements cause. The whiteness of the falling snow dazzles the eyes and excites the heart. A marginal note in v 19a אצא 'He pours out', enables the description of God pouring out the hoar frost like salt. This display of God's strength is said to cause "flowers to bloom like sapphires." (Sir 43.19b). The results of the hoar frost are vividly pictured by the Latin translator "... et dum gelaverit, fiet tanguam cacumina tribuli, and when it freezes it shall become like the tops of thistles." (Sir 43.21b). The results of God's - causing the north wind to blow, harden the pond "like a bottle", give the waters a crust and the pond a breastplate. (Sir 43.20). The rather unusual expression אצא is simply translated by the Greek as, "καὶ παγήσεται κρύσταλλος ἐφ' ὕδατος, and ice freezes over the water."

(Sir 43.20b). The effects of the sun described in Sir 43.3-4 are again mentioned in Sir 43.21. רָרָר which was used in the first account of the sun's heat is again employed in v 21a. In Sir 43.21 the 'scorching heat' is said to dry up the produce of the mountains and (burn) like a flame the grass of the meadows. In contrast to this burning heat of the sun Sirach closes out this portion of his hymn by adding that the rain brings "ברפא כל, healing for all things" and the טל 'dew' refreshes the parched ground. This final comment serves to remind that there is a balancing influence amidst the wonders on earth. It also reaffirms that there is a purpose for all things.

Wonders of the deep (Sir 43.23-26)

מַדְשִׁבוֹתָי
וַיִּטְּ בְּתֵהוֹם אֵיִים:
יֹרְדֵי הַיָּם
יִסְפְּרוּ קִצְלוֹ
לְשִׁמְעֵי אֲזִנוֹ נִשְׁתַּחֲוִיִּים:

שֶׁם פְּלִאוֹתָ
תִּמְהֵי מַעֲשֶׂהָ
מִן כָּל דֵּי
וּגְבוּרוֹת רַבּוֹת:
לְמַעַן יִצְלַח מְלָאָךְ

וּבְדַבְּרֵי יִפְעַל רָצוֹן:

23. By His counsel
He stilled the great deep
and planted islands in the deep.
24. They that go down to the sea
declare its end (expanse)
and when our ears hear it we
marvel.
25. There in are wonders,
marvels of His works
all manner of living things
and monsters of the deep.
26. For His own sake He makes His
work to prosper
and by His words He does His
pleasure.

God's control of the deep is proclaimed immediately, for Sirach says, "מַדְשִׁבוֹתָי, by His counsel", God stilled the רָרָר. This is mindful of the רָרָר moving over the face of the תְּהוֹמוֹת in Gn 1.2. Sirach actually employs תְּהוֹמוֹת in Sir 43.23b; however the description of God planting

islands in the **יְהוָה** is unique to Sir. This image of God does much to underline His absolute control over all of creation. It is as if the immeasurable God is showing just how measurable even the **יְהוָה** is to Him. In Sir 43.24a the message of those that go down to the sea tells of "its end." **קִצְתָּהּ** was translated by the grandson as "κίνδυνον αὐτῆς", its dangers." Although 'dangers' fits the context well, especially with the **גבורות** mentioned in Sir 43.25b, **קִצְתָּהּ** is clearly present in the extant Hebrew. **קִצְתָּהּ** need not be read as 'end' literally but could be seen as an expression of the sea's expanse or vastness. This too gives cause for marvel. The contents of the deep are simply named as "all manner of living things." The only specific reference is to "גבורות רבות", monsters of the deep." One is left wondering what these great creatures were. The Latin translator endeavoured to give an answer when he wrote, "... et omnium pecorum et creatura belluarum, and all living things and monstrous creatures of whales." (Sir 43.27b). Sirach closes out this portion of his hymn with a brief explanation on the existence of the works of the deep saying, "למענו יצא מלאך" for His own sake He makes His work to prosper." (Sir 43.26a). It may have been the theology of this statement, the thought of God acting on selfish motives, combined with the fact that **מלאך** could read either 'messenger' or 'work', that forced a later scribe to correct this claim so as to read, "למענו יצא מלאך", because of His messenger He makes His work to prosper." This may also be, in part, the reason for the grandson translating, "δι' αὐτὸν εὐοδοῖ ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ", because of Him His messenger has a prosperous journey." (Sir 43.26a). The problem with translating "His messenger" is that there is no previous reference to "His messenger" elsewhere in Sir. Secondly, the whole theme of Sir 43.23-26(H) continues the discussion on God's works. 'Messengers' could be read with **קדושי אלהים** in mind; these were the "Holy Ones" or "angels

of God" mentioned in Sir 42.17a. But the scribal correction of Sir 43.26a has the singular, 'messenger'. It may be that the reference is to Sirach himself, but Sirach has elsewhere in his book either referred to himself by name or by using the first person pronoun 'I'. From the manner in which the grandson translated, it would appear he intends by 'messenger', those who go down to the sea. He may also be specifically thinking of his grandfather who according to Sir 51.13a did travel considerably; however all of this makes a considerable trek from the original text which reads, " למענו יצליח מלאך , For His own sake He makes His work to prosper.." (Sir 43.26a).⁹⁹⁾ When one considers that the text, as it stands, makes an excellent parallel with the second part of the verse, " וידבריו יפעל רצון , and by His will He does His pleasure", and more than paralleling it continues the theme of the whole hymn, there seems little justification for either the emendation or Greek translation. Sir 43.1-26 has given a detailed description of מלאך . Accepting the reading as it stands in Sir 43.26a places the whole verse as a conclusion to this portion of the hymn about the Wonders of creation. Sirach then follows with a conclusion to the whole hymn in Sir 43.27-33.

A call to Praise (Sir 43.27-33)

עוד כאלה לא נוסף
וקץ דבר הוא הכל:

27. Yet more like these will not be
added
The end word is, 'He is all'.

⁹⁹⁾ DI 42.10b uses the expression, " הים ומלאכו , the sea and its entire contents." It could be that such an expression determined Sirach's use of the older form מלאך instead of the more normal word מלאכה ; especially since his theme in Sir 43.23-26 is on works of the sea.

ו[גד]ל[ה] עוֹד
 כִּי לֹא נִדְקָוּר
 וְהוּא גָדוֹל מִכָּל מַעֲשָׂיו:

ו[נִרְאָה] יִי [מ]אֵד מֵאֵד
 וּנְפִלְאוֹת דְּבָרָיו:
 מ[גִּדְלָה] לִי יִי
 הִרְיֵמוּ קוֹל
 בְּכָל תּוֹכְלוֹ
 כִּי יֵשׁ עוֹד:
 מְרוֹמִים וְהִדְלִיפוּ כֹחַ

וְאֵל תִּלְאֹ
 כִּי לֹא תִי' [חִקְרוּ]:

רֹב וּנְפִלְאוֹת מֵאֵלָה

מַעַשׂ רֵאיוֹתֵי מַמְעָשָׁיו

אֵת הַכֹּל [עֲשֶׂה יִי]
 וְלִ[חֲסִידִים נֹתֵן חֲכָמָה]:

28. We will yet magnify
 though we can not fathom
 For He is greater than all His
 works.

29. Exceedingly terrible is the Lord
 and wonderful are His words.

30. You that magnify the Lord
 lift up your voice
 with all your strength
 for there is yet more.
 You that exalt Him renew your
 strength

and weary not,
 for you will never fully
 search Him out. 100)

32. Many things greater than these
 lie hidden

Only a few of His works have I
 seen

33. All things has the Lord created
 and to (the faithful has He given
 wisdom.)

Sirach has reached the end of illustrating God's might and majesty in creation. He makes this plain with the clipped statement, "Yet more like these will not be added." (Sir 43.27a). Attention is now focused directly on the Creator. The change is accomplished with an even more succinct statement, " , הוּא הַכֹּל , He is all'." (Sir 43.27b). Behind this brief statement lie three important factors for Sirach's doctrine of creation. The One who created all things is both omnipotent and omnipresent. God controls all things; for at His word, by His command He does His pleasure. That control extends to man who, although he has free will, is still like clay in the Father's hand. Besides being present to all things and controlling all things God is above all things. With this

100) The Greek includes as v 31,

τίς ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν
 καὶ ἐκδιηγῆσεται;
 καὶ τίς μεγαλυνεῖ αὐτὸν
 καθὼς ἐστίν;

Who has seen him
 and can describe Him?
 and who can extol Him
 as He is?

Since it is wanting in the Hebrew, introduces a new theological concept in v 31a not previously stated in Sir and breaks the syntax of vv 30-32 of the Hebrew, it is possibly a later addition.

third factor we understand "'He is all'" to mean He is all this and more. It carries much the same effect as "Ταῦτα πάντα, all this" in Sir 24.23a. In that context Wisdom or Torah was considered to be all that was previously described and more.¹⁰¹ The fact that God is greater than all His works is openly stated by Sirach "וְהוּא גָדוֹל מִכָּל מַעֲשָׂיו" (Sir 43.28b). Just previous to this claim Sirach had decided "We will yet magnify though we can not fathom." (Sir 43.28a). In His all, God is unfathomable. In this same hymn it was stated twice when describing God's works "מִהוּ נִרְאֶה, how terrible," (Sir 43.2b; 8b), but now of the Lord Sirach writes, "...[נִרְאֶה] יְיָ [מִהוּ נִרְאֶה], Exceedingly terrible is the Lord." (Sir 43.29a). God's words are then described as 'wonderful'. A scribal correction changed גְּבוּרָתוֹ to דְּבָרָיו, 'His might.' The grandson translated, "καὶ θαυμαστάς ἡ δυνάστεία αὐτοῦ, and marvellous in His power." (Sir 43.29b). The expression בְּדִבְרֵי אֱלֹהִים, 'by the word of God' in Sir 43.10a carries the same intent as בְּגִבּוּרָתוֹ, 'by His might' in Sir 43.15a or וּבִכְחֹ, 'and by His strength' in Sir 43.16b. All speak of the creative power of God. דְּבָרָיו in Sir 43.29 carries the same understanding. It would appear both the scribe and the grandson wanted to spell that out rather than allowing the original wording to stand. Although both have honoured the message in its immediate context, the loss comes in recalling that Sirach opened his hymn with the concept of creation by divine fiat "בְּאֹמַר אֱלֹהִים רָצוֹנוֹ", By God's word is His pleasure" (Sir 42.15c); דְּבָרָיו was a significant part of the creation act. Just prior to the text under consideration, Sir 43.26, stated "וּבְדִבְרָיו יַעֲלֶה רָצוֹנוֹ", and by His words He does His pleasure." The use of the plural 'His words' gives even

¹⁰¹⁾ For our earlier discussion on Wisdom = Torah see pp. 151-152.

more cause for maintaining the expression **וְלִירֵי** in Sir 43.29b. It must be said that the full statement, "and wonderful are His words" is consistent with Sirach's doctrine of creation and retains an echoing link across the hymn; therefore, it should remain unaltered.

By Sir 43.30, Sirach who has already entered into praise through the claims made in vv 28b-29, now invites others to praise. However it is not a general invitation; it is for, "You that magnify the Lord ..." (Sir 43.30a). In Sir 1.10b it was noted that Wisdom was supplied "to those who love Him" and in Sir 15.10 Sirach wrote, "**...בִּפְהֵי חֲכָמִים וְעֹמְדֵי יְהוָה**", in the mouth of the wise praise is uttered ..."¹⁰²⁾ Those who love God and know Wisdom are invited to lift their voices to full strength in praise. But even the exercising of full strength is not enough "**כִּי יֵשׁ עוֹד**", for there is yet more." (Sir 43.30b). They are encouraged to renew their strength and "weary not" for, the more, literally means there is no end to the cause for praise. Sirach concludes, "**כִּי לֹא תֵי [תִקְרֶוּ:]**", for you will never fully search Him out." (Sir 43.30d). Why not? Because His Wisdom is unfathomable, Sir 1.2-4, God Himself is unfathomable (Sir 18.5; 43.28, 30d) and His works can not be traced out (Sir 18.6b). It is with this third reality that Sirach concludes his hymn saying, "many things greater than these lie hidden." That Sirach should name the works last is understandable for 'God's works' have been the theme of this whole creation hymn. Their immeasurable quality is again emphasised with Sirach's personal statement, "**מֵעַשׂ כִּי רָאִיתִי מִמְעַשָּׁיו**", only a few of His works have I seen." (Sir 43.32b). This same expression recalls his opening words,

¹⁰²⁾ In our earlier discussion of "those who love Him" on p.107, we cautioned against particularizing too hastily, but here in Sir 43.30, Sirach has become very particularistic.

אֲדַכֵּר וְאֶמְעַשֵּׂה אֵל, I will call to mind the works of the Lord." (Sir 42.15a). A summary statement, not just for this creation hymn, but for Sirach's whole doctrine of creation is presented with the concluding words, " [יִי] אֵת הַכֹּל , all things has the Lord created." (Sir 43.33a). The second part of this final verse, "and to (the faithful He has given Wisdom)"¹⁰³, opens the door to the bridge building which Sirach has used to establish schema in his book.

¹⁰³) The strength of the context, whereby Sirach has just sung the creation hymn of praise and called the wise to praise, then offers his lengthy list of the praiseworthy; all this, provides the main basis for the assumed reading. See Lévi, op. cit., p.58, Note 'f'. In the same text the Greek and Latin translate, "... and to the godly he has given Wisdom."

CHAPTER EIGHT

SCHEMA IN SIRACH

The possibility of schema in Sir is not a matter which scholarship has seriously considered. Usually the possibility of any schema in Sir is dismissed by way of a brief comment. G. von Rad is representative of such an approach when he writes in his study, "The Wisdom of Jesus Sirach", the following claim,

His book, too, defies all attempts to impose a schema on it. But it is characteristic of Sirach that he deals with specific 'themes' in fairly comprehensive units (respect of one's father: 3.1-16; relations with the poor: 4.1-10; with friends: 6.6-17; with women 9.1-9; on rulers: 9.17-10.18; on physicians: 38.1-15; etc.). But even these units reveal no inner structure; they are to be thought of, rather, as bodies of traditions in which all kinds of material - relevant, old and well¹⁾ known, but also new and surprising - have come together.

The translators of the JB have this comment on Sir form in their, "Introduction To Ecclesiasticus,"

In form, the book resembles its predecessors and models. Apart from the section hymning the glory of God in nature, 42.15-43:33, and in history, 44:1-50:29, with the appendices of, respectively, a hymn of thanksgiving, 51:1-12, and a poem on the quest for wisdom, 51:13-30, the book is no more logically put together than Proverbs or Ecclesiastes. The most diverse topics are dealt with, in no order and with some repetition; the topics are presented in small groups of loosely connected maxims.²⁾

1) G. von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, op. cit., p.240, Note 2.

2) JB op. cit., p.1034.

The decision of no schema is based on the arrangement of wise sayings with no consideration for the high measure of creation tradition in Sir. Also much weight in the JB description is placed on the book's "predecessors and models." From our study of dependencies it is now open to question what Sirach's models included. Certainly they can no longer be exclusive to the Wisdom Tradition. The above comments allow little room for Sirach's genius at developing and extending older traditional material; creating a synthesis which offers a whole fresh understanding of creation theology. Sirach was no mere imitator in either his form or theology.

To make such a charge of "no order" against the work of a man who sought out order in all things seems astounding.³⁾ Sirach searched out and held up order as a basic component of God's works (Sir 39.16-35).⁴⁾ For Sirach nothing was haphazard. Why should such a charge be allowed to stand against his work? Disarray would not seem to be part of his vocabulary. Most commentators are willing to concede that Sirach did rearrange the proverbial sayings around themes. This is but one indication of just how ordered Sirach was in his whole presentation. Some of the autobiographical comments within his book help indicate just how carefully Sirach thought through the presentation of his findings. By way of introduction to his third block of creation tradition, Sirach wrote the following exordium (Sir 16.22-24a),

שמעו אלי וקחו שכלי
ועל דברי שימו לב
אביצה במשקל רוהי
ובקצנץ אדוה דעי:
כברא אל מעשיו
מראש...

Listen to me and receive my wisdom
and upon my words set your heart.
I will pour by weight my spirit
and in humility I will declare my
knowledge.
When God created His works
from the beginning ...

³⁾ ibid., p.1034

⁴⁾ For a discussion of this passage see pp.163-171.

The fact that Sirach has thought through to an 'owned state' rather than simply echoing the thinking of past wise ones, is witnessed by the words; "my wisdom", "my words" and "my knowledge." Sirach shows little hesitation in claiming what he has thought through. This introductory statement portrays the author as one who has taken a highly schematic approach. He has requested the ear of his audience, assured them of his careful thinking, then leads immediately into his subject on creation with a statement that shouts of form.⁵⁾ By way of introduction to Sirach's seventh block of creation material (unfortunately there is no extant Hebrew) the grandson translated "Ἐτι διανοηθεὶς ἐκδιηγέσθαι, Yet more will I utter what I have thought through ..." (Sir 39.12a). At the end of this very important portion of his creation tradition Sirach wrote, Sir 39.32,

על כן מראש דתעצבתי
והתבוננתי
וכתבתי הנחותי:

Thus from the first I stood firm
and when I had considered it
I set it down in writing.

Not only do these words conclude the seventh major creation passage; they draw to a close what is now Sirach's fully developed doctrine of creation. Beginning at Sir 1.1 through to Sir 39.35 Sirach has placed seven major creation statements which sum up his understanding of the Judaic doctrine of creation. One major creation text follows, Sir 42.15-43.33, but it adds no new theological insights. That is not to say his hymn of praise, Sir 42.15-43.33, is not a significant part of Sirach's continuing schema. On the contrary it is highly important, as are two other texts which close out the book, Sir 50.1-11; 22-23. As a final proof of schema in Sir these two passages combined with the eight major creation statements will now be

⁵⁾ Sirach's final statement, which rings with familiarity of Gn 1.1 provides the added effect of assuring his listeners of a sound base while at the same time enabling an acceptable form in which to broach his subject.

investigated on the basis of content, context, and inter-textual links. So that we might see the unfolding schema all passages will be presented in order of occurrence; beginning with Sir 1.1-10. On completion of our hypothesis of creation schema consideration will then be given to its relationship with the whole of Sir (see pp. 209-218).

The first major part of Sirach's thesis is laid in the opening words of his book with the poem on Wisdom. That Wisdom is with the Lord for eternity, and existed before all other created things and the fact that she was created by the Lord, poured into all His created works and gifted to those who love Him, provides the foundation blocks for building Sirach's Doctrine of creation. More than enabling this doctrinal statement, it also becomes the basis for explaining how man can receive wisdom and thereby understand the ways and sayings of the wise. It is fair to say this claim is made in retrospect, that is, having considered all that follows. However, at minimum one would say of the context of Sir 1.1-10, at the very opening of Sir, that this poem contains a significant theme which can be anticipated to develop as the book unfolds.⁶⁾ He does develop it and in a highly schematic fashion.

Why then have so many people missed the schema? Possibly the biggest decoy to not seeing a schema in Sir lies in the fact that the second creation text does not occur till Sir 15.14-20, but at that point three major blocks are implanted in very quick succession. Admittedly, it would have made Sirach's schema more conspicuous if he had placed one or more of these three texts earlier in his book. Why did Sirach arrange them so? This becomes understandable when all three passages are considered by

⁶⁾ The word 'minimum' is used here because in any literary work one anticipates that what stands at the first is significant and indicative of the direction in which the author will move.

content and context. In his second creation block, Sir 15.14-20, Sirach opens another key part of his creation theology. Using a form reflective of Gn 1.1 for his opening statement, "God from in the beginning created man ...", he immediately introduces man as the main subject of his pericope. To this opening statement Sirach adds that man has been given free will, yetzer. It is made clear that although there will be much demanding man's choice, including the spoiler, Sirach concludes the opening statement with the reality that decision is left in the hand of man. He can follow the temptations and lures which satisfy self-will or choose the will of God. The choices before man are then placed in the contrasting forms of fire and water, life and death. But, man is not cut adrift to make his decisions. He has God's commandment. To this he adds, "(it is) wisdom to do (God's) will". (Sir 15.15b). We now have before us a third crucial aspect of what might well be called Sirach's triune theology: God, wisdom and man. How man can receive God's gift of wisdom now becomes the pointed issue.

From the first portion of Sirach's third creation block, Sir 16.24-30 (G), creation itself is made the basis for understanding how this triune concept works. Following his exordium which introduces this creation passage, Sirach returns to the Gn 1.1 form which was used in the previous creation block. Sirach introduces the next development in his creation thought with this statement, "...כִּלְרָג אֶל מַעֲשֵׂי מְרָאשׁ..", From the beginning when God created His works." (Sir 16.24a). This repeated form gives an immediate link with Sir 15.14-20, with the main difference being that the subject is no longer man but God's works. What is the link between man and God's works? Well, with this introductory statement there follows a poem lauding the created works as: orderly, eternal, neither hungering nor thirsting, respectful of neighbour, and always obedient. This

harmonious picture of creation provides an important background for the second portion of this creation block, Sir 17.1-4, which again focuses its attention back to man. The opening description of man being of the earth and being turned back after limited days stands as a sharp contrast to that of the eternal, harmonious created works. This is not to deny that man has been favoured by God. Indeed, man has been favoured, for as Sirach indicates man has received God's image, strength and a position of rule or dominion. Sirach follows through this theme in Sir 17.6-14, showing the more God's favour on man. God has equipped man mentally, physically and emotionally. God has also gifted man with the 'law of life', 'knowledge', 'everlasting covenant' and 'judgements'. In sum, man has been given the ability and means to follow a certain way. πλησίον , the final word in Sir 17.6-14 stands as a syntactical move which directs the reader's attention back to the created order, particularly in Sir 16.28a where it says of the harmonious order, "Everyone does not squeeze aside his neighbour." It must also be noted that the first word in the list of man's attributes, Sir 17.6, is διαβούλιον . This not only marks the importance of 'free will', but becomes a key linguistic link back to the second block of creation tradition which introduced the reality of man's διαβούλιον or yetzer. (Sir 15.14c).

The fourth block of creation tradition follows close behind the above developments. In Sir 18.1-14, a three part poem on the limitless nature of the eternal God, the restricted nature of man and the abundant mercy of God underlines several realities. Man desperately needs to be somehow connected to the eternal, all wise, omnipotent God. It is by God's mercy alone that such a saving link could be initiated, but man will still have to decide or make a choice. In these three creation blocks, which

extend from Sir 15.14-18.14, Sirach has developed a God/man theology but he has never said what the saving link might be. Nor did Sirach explicitly indicate what enables the created works to be so harmonious and eternal. It could only be assumed from the first creation block, with its claim that God created wisdom, "and poured her out on all His works" (Sir 1.9b), that wisdom is the cause for the happy state amongst the created works. However, there exists certain linguistic and form links which holds Sir 1.1-10 in the picture. Those links are especially strong with Sir 18.1-10. Not only is there a correspondence in length between this portion of the fourth creation block and Sir 1.1-10, the eternal quality of wisdom seen in the first poem is explicitly attributed to God in Sir 18.1. The verb *ἐξίχνεύω* 'to trace out' first seen in Sir 1.3b is employed twice in this poem on the eternal God. Those citations are Sir 18.4b, 6b. As with its use in Sir 1.3b the verb is chosen in both Sir 18.4b, 6b to indicate the immeasurable. In its new context the verb is employed with reference to God's immeasurable works or wonders. God's strength and mercies are also considered immeasurable in Sir 18.5. The immeasurable nature and work of God is all presented by way of rhetorical questions. In thought pattern and form this establishes close parallel with Sir 1.3. Why have these lines been drawn with the first creation poem? By doing so Sirach holds before the reader the fact that the attributes of God are shared with wisdom. Sirach made one other syntactical link. That link was between Sir 18.10 and Sir 1.3. In Sir 18.10, by changing his comparative analogies: sand of the seas, drops of rain and days of eternity to three similar analogies, but all in the singular: drop of water from the sea, pebble from the sand, and day of eternity, he has achieved the reverse result. Man's days are presented in the most minute, measurable quantity. The

significance of this correspondence is not simply because it contrasts; no, its real importance lies in that it points to Wisdom while underlining man's deprivation. With this realization a new proposition is raised. If Wisdom shares God's attributes and holds what man so desperately lacks, if man can acquire Wisdom, the created pre-existent one, then the necessary link with God could be accomplished. In sum, all that has been said thus far stands as a powerful ploy for man's accepting Wisdom. But what about the placement of these first four blocks of creation theology? The first block being placed at the opening of Sir is understandable in that it announces what is to come. In considering the above three creation blocks, Sir 15.14-18.14 their close interdependence was evidenced. Sirach could not afford to separate these important components of his creation doctrine. They belong as one. They offer one message: man is free to choose, created works are harmonious and eternal without choice, man is equipped for his choosing. The picture of contrast between God's abundant nature and man's deprivation in Sir 18.1-10 would indicate the most logical choice to be God's will. This choice was pointed to at the outset, with Sirach's words, "... and wisdom is to do His will." (Sir 15.15b). If Sirach had broken up the last three blocks of creation tradition by placing one earlier in his book, Sir 18.1-14 would seem the logical choice because of its correspondence with Sir 1.1-10. But, one factor discredits that proposal. In its present context Sir 18.1-14 is not only used to draw parallels with Wisdom in Sir 1.1-10; thereby drawing the two poems closer together, but by speaking of man's deprivation and God's mercy it opens the door for the all important message contained in Sirach's central chapter. Sir 24 is not only central by context but content.

Sir 24 not only builds on the overall schema it also holds schema within schema. The internal schema, which is based on the J document, has Wisdom come forth covering the earth like a mist and eventually concentrating in Zion. In Zion Wisdom becomes like a garden, presents an invitation to man and fills him like rivers at their time of fullness. The rivers of creation form the main part of the analogy.⁷⁾ The manner in which Wisdom portrays herself at the opening of Sir 24 holds correspondence with Sir 1.1-10. In Sir 24.3 Wisdom says, "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High" but this is only an elaboration on Sir 1.9a where it is claimed, "The Lord Himself created her ..." The fact that Wisdom reminds her listeners in Sir 24.4 that, "I dwelt in high places, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud" can only be explained by the fact that Wisdom pre-existed. In Sir 1.4, a direct parallel even to the very location in the two poems, reads "Wisdom was created before all things and prudent understanding from eternity." Her entry into creation has moved from being "poured out upon all His works" (Sir 1.9b) to the personified Wisdom now walking the לכך. In Sir 24.5-6b, לכך is actually named with the employment of the words heaven, abyss and earth. In Sir 1.3 heaven, earth and abyss were named as comparative analogies for Wisdom, whereas in Sir 24.5-6b they have become paths for her journeys in search of a special place, a particular people. The whole of creation is merely a route to a chosen place. It is under a commandment from "The creator of all things" in Sir 24.8, that Wisdom finally rests in Zion. In Zion She became the most beautiful, aromatic and fruitful part of creation. For Sirach's overall schema it can now be said that Wisdom is not only in creation, She is like the choicest of created things. She is now at home and extends the

⁷⁾ For a fuller outline see p.30 and for the detailed study of Sir 24 see pp. 132-136.

invitation, "Come to me, you who desire me and eat your fill of my produce." (Sir 24.19). In Sir 6.19 an invitation was extended for Wisdom, saying, "Come to her like one who plows and sows and wait for her good harvest." In Sir 15.3 the produce of Wisdom is said to be "bread of understanding" and "water of wisdom." It is not till this central chapter, Sir 24.19, that Wisdom herself invites listeners to partake of her produce.

There follows in Sir 24.23 another important schematic move. In Sir 15.15a it was said that man can choose if he desires to keep the commandment and to it was added this proviso "... Wisdom is to do His will..." (Sir 15.15b). In our exegesis of Sir 24.23 on pages 144 to 152 we saw how Torah = will of God, but also Wisdom = Torah. The verging of Wisdom and Torah was like the joining of two mighty rivers. The rivers analogy in Sir 24.25-27, which draws heavily on the Gn 2 creation list of rivers, is not just to demonstrate the fullness of Wisdom, but her influence on man. Using the phrase *οὐκ ἐξίχυσεν* linguistic links are established with Sir 1.3b which also describes the immeasurable Wisdom. While showing Wisdom to be fathomless, at the same time Sir 24.28 points to the limits of man for neither the first (Adam) nor the last one have been able to fathom her. This theme of limited man had already been considered in Sir 18.8-10. The term "last one" could be with reference to Sirach himself; in any case he continues building his schema by offering a personal testimony to the fullness that Wisdom brings to any who accepts her invitation. He is a convert to Wisdom and will preach her gospel. Thus, Sirach makes the concluding promise of Sir 24.34, "Behold that I have not laboured for myself alone but for all those that seek her." This form of the personal testimony holds links with Sir 39.12, 32; 50.27; 51.13-23. All these offer personal statements by Sirach. Also the invitation of

Wisdom in Sir 24.19 is echoed by Sirach's personal invitation in Sir 51.23, "Draw near to me, you who are untaught, and lodge in my school."

At this point it would appear Sirach has successfully accomplished the goal of using creation as his schema; however as his book continues, so too does his schema. The wise one writes eight more chapters of wise sayings only to be interrupted by yet another creation statement in Sir 33.7-19. For any person who might receive wisdom and be tempted with an exaggerated picture of self, or be tempted to deify Wisdom, Sirach establishes in his sixth major creation block a statement on the ultimate authority of God. Despite its seeming conflict with the picture of man and free will presented in Sir 15.14-20, the present creation block acts to declare that things stand as they do in creation because that is the way God decided. The seeming inequality is throughout the created order and amongst man. In Sir 33.13a we learn that man is to God like the clay in a potter's hand. The best explanation for God's actions comes in Sir 33.13b, "... for all His ways are as He pleases ...". This same statement is echoed in Sirach's prayer for Israel, Sir 36.8b(H), כִּי מִי יֹאמַר לָךְ מֶלֶךְ... וְיִשְׁעֶךָ, for who will say to you, "What are you making?" It becomes a creation refrain in Sir 39.18a(H) and Sir 43.26b(H). God is ultimately in control of all things. The brief creation statement in Sir 33.10 claiming all men to be "from the ground", not only serves as a syntactical link which gives man a common base, just as the days have a common base in that all come from the sun, it also links back to the first full creation statement of man in Sir 17.1-4. In Sir 17.1 man was said to be of the earth and destined to return to it. It must now be said that despite man's superlative gifts wherein he looks like God, shares His strength and has dominion, it is God who ultimately decides who will be raised up and who

will be brought low. In sum, all the supreme equipping of man described in Sir 17.2-12 is now held in check, by the reality in Sir 33.11-12 that God ultimately determines man's lot. In concluding this creation block Sirach restates the portion of his testimony given in Sir 24.34. In Sir 33.18(G) it states "Consider that I have not laboured for myself alone but for all who seek instruction." In both citings it is used as a concluding statement to the creation block. In its new context it serves not simply to parallel the testimony, but the whole message of Sir 24, concerning the fullness of Wisdom, is held before the reader. It is Wisdom that Sirach will make shine and the practical efforts of establishing a school in Sir 51.23 demonstrates the full extent to which Sirach did go in enabling her to shine. The closing exhortation "Listen to me", in Sir 39.19(G), echoes the exordium of Sir 16.22-24(H), which opened the third creation block. In fact the same command is given in Sir 16.22a with the words, "...שִׁמְעוּ אֵלַי."

It is in Sirach's seventh block of creation tradition, Sir 39.16-35, that he elaborates on God's purpose and timing in all things. This explanation of purpose started to unfold in Sir 33.15 with the comment "And thus look upon all the works of the Most High (they exist) two by two, one opposite the other." Sirach now resumes this theme on purpose in creation. We noted earlier on p.192 Sirach's personal statement, "Yet more will I utter which I have thought through ..." (Sir 39.12a). The more, would appear to be in direct relationship to the unfinished claims on God's purpose in Sir 33.15. Indeed, Sirach opens his next creation statement with the words, "God's works are all good and every need He provides in His time." (Sir 39.16). Again, there is the echoing of Sir 33.13b in Sir 39.18a(H) with the words, "His will attains its end." The theme of the all

seeing God presented in Sir 15.18-19 is then affirmed in Sir 39.19 with the words, "The works of all flesh are before Him and nothing can be hid from in front of His eyes." Sir 39.22 with its description of God's blessing overflowing like the Nile, saturating the world like a river, rings of familiar claims made for Wisdom in Sir 24.3b, 25-27. From our exegesis of Sir 24.3 on pp. 135-136 it was suggested that God's 'blessing' is Wisdom. She overflows like rivers and has covered the whole earth. Some scholars would claim that the phrase "like the Nile" actually existed in Sir 24.27a; however, we do not share that view for the reasons given on p.153 . Nor does Sir 39.22 need this added correspondence to affirm its parallels with Sir 24. It is in Sir 39.26-30, with his list of the basic needs of man, followed by the declaring of function for: winds, hail, famine and pestilence, that Sirach pushes to the ultimate his belief that God has put purpose in all created things. Sirach's ensuing description of created things rejoicing at His command and not rebelling against His word draws correspondence with the earlier claim in Sir 16.28b, "... they shall never disobey His word." Sirach then finally brings toward a close his seventh creation block with the personal claim, "Thus, from the first I stood firm and when I had considered it I set it down in writing." (Sir 39.32). Such a statement underlines just how schematic Sirach's approach has been; not just because of his systematic manner of standing firm, considering and then putting pen to paper. In its creation context and when viewed in relation to Sir 39.12a, "Yet more will I utter which I have thought through ...," and when one looks back over the previous six major creation statements, seeing how he has used each to carefully construct his case, the comment in Sir 39.32 carries considerable weight in favouring a schema in Sir. This same statement signals an end to the major theological

arguments which have been used to formulate Sirach's understanding of the Judaic doctrine of creation. Yet, though there is nothing new to add, the schema built on creation faith does not end. The final statement in the seventh creation block is to sing praise and bless the name of the Holy One. (Sir 39.35). This is precisely what Sirach will do in his eighth creation block, Sir 42.15-43.33. Herein Sirach writes a lengthy hymn of praise which summarizes much of his creation theology. It is a hymn that not only sings of the majesty and might of God, but demonstrates much of what Sirach said previously. A simplistic summary of Sirach's creation thought is first contained in Sir 42.15-25.⁸⁾ One major fact is missing; the role of wisdom. It is now understood. God is the main subject with the most explicit statement on Wisdom being, "The mighty works of His Wisdom has He ordained." (Sir 42.21a). In Sir 18.1-6 the nature of the Eternal One was described in a brief, carefully placed statement but now Sirach sings of God's glory with all of his might.

The second major portion of Sirach's hymn, Sir 43.1-26, looks at wonders in the heavens, earth and deep. These stand as a summary of the whole created order. These same concepts of creation: heavens, earth and deep were employed in the identical order in Sir 1.3 to describe immeasurable Wisdom. But within the context of Sir 43.1-26 it is their own immeasurability that is accented. Sirach concluded in Sir 43.27a "Yet more of these things will not be added ..." and later confessed in Sir 43.32b, "... only a few of His works have I seen." The beauty and vastness of these created wonders all serve to reflect the glory of God, the Creator of all things. Ultimately, stirred by the full array, Sirach moves into a

⁸⁾ For contents of this outline please see pp.172-176 of chapter seven.

call to Praise. But with the call, Sirach reminds that God can not be fully searched out. The verb 'search out' sparks connections from Sir 1-43.⁹⁾

In context Sirach's creation hymn does yet more. It provides a platform for the whole of the historic roll. It was previously noted in the exegesis of Sir 43.30 that the call to praise was only for the faithful.¹⁰⁾ From the creation hymn to the historic roll, Sirach moves from the glory of God in creation to the glory of God in created man. The lengthy list of the hasidim men, Sir 44-50, is indicative of many who have accepted Wisdom and praised the Lord. Having said, "...רב כבוד דלק עליין...", great glory the Most High has allotted them," in Sir 44.2a, Sirach then describes them in Sir 44.3-5 as a group of men who are: rulers, wise in counsel, prophetic, wise in speech and authors of wise sayings and psalms. All of these attributes are the fruits of having accepted Wisdom. Just as God created His works to reflect His glory, so too with faithful men. The first and last named on Sirach's honours list are set apart as particularly outstanding men. Enoch, who heads the list, is described by Sirach as a "אין דערה", sign of knowledge," in Sir 44.16b. A second favourable statement on Enoch is given in Sir 49.14a, "מעט נוצר על הארץ כהניך" ... , few have been created on earth like Enoch ..."¹¹⁾ The last one on the formal list is Adam. Of Adam, Sirach wrote, "ועל כל די תפארתו"¹²⁾ ווארט, and above all living things is the glory of Adam." (Sir 49.16b). That it is Adam and not simply 'man' may be taken from the fact that the whole context is that of a listing of individuals for honours. Adam is

⁹⁾For occurrences see Sir 1.3; 18.4,6; 24.28; 43.28a(H), 30d(H).

¹⁰⁾See p.188 of chapter seven.

¹¹⁾The grandson's translation offered an even more superlative claim for Enoch by writing "Οὐδείς ἐκτίσθη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τοιοῦτος ὡς Ἐνώχ". No one was created on earth like Enoch." (Sir 49.14a).

¹²⁾This is the first positive account of Adam since the Gn 3 event.

referred to in Sir 40.1b and indirectly in Sir 24.28a. He is nowhere else on the honours roll. With the content of Sir 49.16 being the listing of prediluvial characters, in reverse order, Adam would follow naturally after Shem and Seth. The Greek and Latin both translate Adam. Finally, contemporary scholars such as R. A. F. MacKenzie assume this translation for אָדָם (R. A. F. MacKenzie op. cit, p.188). Therefore, although Enoch was a 'sign of knowledge' or 'wisdom', the fact that Adam was above all in his glory, may account for Sirach's more reserved statement that, "Few have been created on earth like Enoch ..." (Sir 44.14a).

Sirach made one other syntactical move which completed his schema. As a special tribute to his contemporary, Simon the High Priest, Sirach wrote a poem in Sir 50.5-11 and a prayer, Sir 50.22-23, which closes out the formal part of his book. Together, the poem and the prayer bring to a head much of what has already been claimed in Sirach's creation theology. The context of the poem is that of Simon coming forth to lead the congregation in worship. Of particular relevance to our study of the poem is the description in Sir 50.5-7,11. Sirach wrote here of Simon,

מה נהדר
 בהשגידו מאד ל
 ונצאתו מבית הפרכות:
 ככוכב אור מבין ענני
 וכירח מלא (מבין) בימי מועד:
 וכשמש משרקת אל היכל
 המלך
 וכקשת נראתה בענן:
 וכקשת נראתה בענן:
 ... בעשותו בגדי כבוד
 ודחלבו בגדי תפארת:

5. How glorious was he
 when he looked forth from the tent
 when he came out of the house of
 atonement.
6. Like star light from between the
 clouds
 and like the full moon on the
 feast days.¹³⁾
7. And like the sun shining upon the
 temple of the king
 and like the rainbow appearing in
 the cloud.
11. ... When he put on his glorious
 robes
 and clothed himself in full
 splendour.

¹³⁾ מִבִּין is noted as erroneous by HLA. It is perhaps a lapsus from v 6a.

בַּעֲלוֹתָו עַל מִזְבֵּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ

וַיְהַדֵּר עֲזָרְתוֹ מִקֹּדֶשׁ:

When he went up to the altar of
majesty
and made glorious the court of the
sanctuary.

This is man reflecting God's glory at its fullest. The form of the poem with its repeated use of 'like', is similar to that in Sir 24.13-18. Sir 50.5-10 is the only other occasion when Sirach has written a poem based on this comparative form. Both poems are similar in length; there are twelve counts of 'like' in Sir 24.13-17 and eleven in Sir 50.5-11. In the first poem Wisdom is described in the most superlative terms. The syntactical move in form enables a very close parallel between personified Wisdom and Simon. Also the contents of Sir 50.8-10, of the Simon poem, with its comparative references to: roses in days of first fruits, lilies by the stream, fire and incense, olive and cypress¹⁴⁾ trees, are all reflective of Sir 24.13-17. The specific naming of Lebanon in Sir 50.8c draws a direct correspondence with the opening verse of the poem on Wisdom where Wisdom said, "I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon." (Sir 24.13a).¹⁵⁾ Sirach's description of Simon does more than link his schema back to the central chapter. The comparative analogies: "כְּכֹכַב אֹרֶךְ", like star light;" "וְכִירוֹחַ בִּלְגָּא", and like the full moon"; "וְכֶשֶׁם שֶׁשׁ", and like the sun"; "וְכֶקֶשׁ הַ", and like the rainbow" - all these give a direct link back to Sirach's hymn of Praise. In Sir 43.1-12 the beauty or splendour of the firmament is portrayed by writing a poem on each of the four created works: sun, moon, stars and rainbow. In Sir 50.6-7 Simon is figuratively dressed in these glorious works of creation. The opening expression in the Simon

¹⁴⁾ The Hebrew fragment has 'like an oleaster' instead of 'like a cypress' which the Greek translates; however our accent here is on the comparative use of trees.

¹⁵⁾ In Sir 50.12d(H) the 'Sons of Aaron' standing by Simon are described, "Like young cedar trees in Lebanon." This draws yet closer to Sir 24.13a.

poem, "מִה וְהָרָר, how glorious", holds a direct correspondence with the opening words of Simon's poem on the wonders of the firmament. HLA, which enables the reading of Sir 43.1b, describes the vault of heaven "דִּרְבִּיט הָרָר, spreading out its splendour." We see the link as based on the employment of דָּרָר; however it is interesting that a similar form to מִה וְהָרָר is used in Sir 43.2b, with the expression, "מִה וְהָרָר, how terrible." The same word דָּרָר is used a second time in the poem on the wonders of the firmament. The second occurrence is in Sir 43.9a where MS B has, "וְהָרָר שָׁמַיִם וְהָרָר כֹּכַב, The beauty of heaven is the splendour of the stars." It may have been this second citing which had the greatest influence. For having pictured Simon in his initial appearance with glory or splendour in Sir 50.5, Sirach moves immediately to employ as his first comparative analogy, the expression, "כְּכֹכֵב אֹר". The grandson translates, what in Hebrew is literally 'like star of light', as "ὡς ἀστὴρ ἑωθινός, like a morning star." (Sir 50.6a). The comparative analogy of the moon which follows in Sir 50.6b not only holds correspondence with Sir 43.6-8, which is Sirach's poem on the moon, it also links back to the seventh creation block. In Sir 39.12b, which opens the creation statement, Sirach is seen making this claim of himself, "καὶ ὡς διχομηνία ἐπληρώθην, And I am filled like the moon at full." Although the Hebrew is not extant for Sir 39.12b Sirach's own description of Simon in Sir 50.6b reads, "וְכִירָח מְלֵא (מְבִין) בַּיָּמִי מוֹעֵד:", like the full moon on the feast days". This not only links the two creation texts into the schema, but enables a close identity of the two wise men, Simon and Sirach. וְכִקְשָׁת in Sir 50.7b offers a direct correspondence with Sirach's account of the וְכִקְשָׁת in Sir 43.11-12. Two other adjectives describe Simon's dress in Sir 50.11. His robes are said to be 'glorious' and Simon is described as

clothed in 'full splendour'. In Sir 50.11d it is said that on entering the sanctuary Simon made it 'glorious'. The opening words of this poem said Simon was glorious with the use of the expression **מִדָּן נִהְדָּר**. In Sir 50.11d **נִהְדָּר** becomes a syntactical link within the Simon poem, but on this occasion it is used in the verbal form so that Simon is seen as spreading glory.

That the glory is not confined to Simon's outward appearance is evidenced by his prayer at the close of the service. Sirach uses Simon's prayer as a final syntactical move to complete his schema. The main part of Simon's benediction reads in Sir 50.22-23,¹⁶⁾

עֲתֵד בִּרְכוּ נָא אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַמַּכְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת וְאֵרֶץ:

הַמַּגְדִּיל אָדָם מִרֶחֶם
וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ כִרְצוֹנוֹ:

יְתֵן לָכֶם חֵכְמָה לִבּוֹ
וַיְהִי בְשָׁלוֹם בֵּינֵיכֶם:

22. Now bless the Lord
God of Israel
who does wonderful things on
earth.
Who exalted man from the womb
and does unto him according to
His will.
23. May He grant unto you wisdom of
heart
and may there be peace among
you.

The title 'God of Israel' is translated **τὸν θεὸν πάντων**, God of all. Such a change in the Greek seems quite unnecessary. 'God of Israel' by this point in Sirach's thesis surely also entails 'God of all'. Sirach actually used the title **אֱלֹהֵי הַכֹּל** in Sir 36.1a(H) and again in Sir 45.23c with the phrase, "**לְאֵלֹהֵי כֹל** , for the God of all." But even without the title Sirach's book has implied from the opening poem that God is the God of **הַכֹּל**. It is openly stated at other points such as Sir 43.33, "all things has the Lord created." It is understandable that Sirach should choose the title 'God of Israel' at this stage of his thesis, for

¹⁶⁾ A third verse, Sir 50.24, appears to be Simon's personal plea for mercy and deliverance but the grandson translates it as a plea for all. Simon's plea for **חֲסִדֵּי** in Sir 50.24a could be a word play with **חֲסִידֵי** in Sir 44.1a which announces the honour roll. He certainly is named with the honoured.

his message has become more and more particularized. Simon's reference to God doing wondrously on earth could be a specific link back to the 'Wonders on earth' depicted in Sirach's poem, Sir 43.13-22, but it is more likely with regard to all the mighty deeds of God in creation. The statement, "who exalted man from the womb ..." smacks of God's decision and ultimate authority described in the sixth creation block, Sir 33.7-19. There it was underlined that God exalts or makes man low as He decides. The claim which closes out Sir 50.22 affirms this. In fact the expression, "and does unto him according to His will" stands as a resounding echo to "and all His ways are according to His pleasure", which is stated in the midst of the imagery of man being to God as clay is to the potter's hand. (Sir 33.13). It is also one more addition to the creation refrain already described on p.200. This refrain not only builds schema, but provides a main plank which runs through the center of Sirach's creation theology. The words of the prayer in Sir 50.23 really sum the basic purpose of the book; that man might gain **לִבְרַח חִכְמָה וְשָׁלוֹם** and **שָׁלוֹם**. It is for this reason that the doors of Sirach's house of learning are opened in Sir 51.23-25. Having extended the invitation in Sir 51.23a with the words, "פִּנּוּ אֵלַי סִכְלִים , turn unto me you unlearned," Sirach then adds, "קִנוּ לָכֶם חִכְמָה... , get wisdom for yourselves ..." (Sir 51.25b). The purpose of Sirach's book is not simply that others might know wise sayings but that they might seek Wisdom for themselves. Sirach, who found Wisdom in his youth, lays a path that others might discover her.¹⁷⁾ The pathway-which Sirach formed was through the doctrine of creation which spans right across his book.

But the question that remains is, how does the creation schema lend support for all the material in Sirach's book? Broadly speaking all of Sir

¹⁷⁾ Sirach testified in Sir 51.15(H), "My foot trod in her footstep; from my youth I learned Wisdom."

can be divided into three major units. The term 'unit' is not inherent to Sir but is one we are employing for the purpose of this study. Nor are the units themselves necessarily inherent to the book. We view them as natural divisions into which Sir can be allocated, without seriously impairing the larger message. Indeed, it would be impossible to argue that such divisions or units were intended as a part of the original structure by Sirach. Thus, we see them as plausible subsections largely for the purpose of our examination. The three units are, Sir 1-23; Sir 24-42.14; Sir 42.15-51. We are not the first to propose subdivision in Sir. R. A. F. MacKenzie suggested a twofold division with the first part ending with Sirach's testimony in Sir 33.16-18.¹⁸⁾ The problem we see with such an approach is that there are at least five testimonial statements, Sir 24.30-34, 33.16-18; 39.12-13; 39.32; 51.13-22. Three of these could be considered as concluding statements, Sir 24.30-34; 33.16-18; 51.13-22. For any working units within Sir, we believe the decision needs to be based more upon the content of all the material and not simply a particular literary style.

There are three reasons for our wanting to separate Sir into the above recommended units. All three units begin with a creation statement. Sir 1-23 opens with the creation poem on Wisdom in Sir 1.1-10. Sir 24, which introduces the second unit, is central to the whole of Sir both literally and figuratively (for discussion see pp.132-156). Sir 42.15-43.33, the lengthiest creation statement in Sir, introduces the whole historical account. The relationship between this creation hymn and the historical unit, which has already been discussed on pp.204-205 of this chapter, is such that the creation block bridges the whole of Sir with what

¹⁸⁾ R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p.127.

might otherwise be considered an isolated topic in Sir. The second reason for choosing our three units is that there is material peculiar to each. Sir 1-23, though interspersed with creation theology, is largely proverbial sayings. Sir 24-42.14 declares the relationship between Torah and Wisdom while adding yet more proverbial sayings. Sir 42.15-51 speaks of the historical reality of Wisdom. Finally, the three divisions we propose are based on the assumption that there is an underlying message and that each unit builds upon the other. Thus, the units may be seen as steps within the book. However this developmental claim opens up the whole consideration of schema. Close examination will now be given particularly to the first two units for, as indicated above, unit three has already been largely considered.

At the outset two factors should be noted about Sirach's proverbs. Sirach did not simply parrot earlier proverbs but restated and created new ones. Of all the proverbs in Sir, R. B. Y. Scott notes that there were only two or three direct quotations made from the book of Proverbs.¹⁹⁾ It was because of this that Sirach could write at the formal conclusion of his book, Sir 50.27a

מוסר שכל ומושל אופנים

לשמעון בן יסוע
בן אלעזר
בן סירא :

Wise instruction and well thought out
proverbs
belonging to Simeon, son of Jesus,
son of Eleazar,
son of Sira.

The translation of אופנים is following that suggested by the JB (see Note 'T', p.1109). However, the exact translation of אופנים remains in question. Although this word in Sir 50.27a may be uncertain the claim placed on the work by Sirach is not in doubt. A similar claim of authorship for the whole of Sir is stated a second time at the close of the Hebrew text. In Sir 51.30iii it says,

¹⁹⁾ R. B. Y. Scott, op. cit., p.209.

עַד הֵנָּה דַּבְּרֵי שִׁמְעוֹן
בֶּן יִשׁוּעַ שִׁנְקֵרָא בֶּן סִירָא:

Thus far the words of Simeon,
son of Jesus, called Ben Sira.

The second point for consideration is that Sirach believed those who understood the wise sayings would be able to create their own proverbs. Although the Hebrew is not extant for Sir 18:29 the Greek translation reads,

συνετοὶ ἐν λόγοις
καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσοφίσαντο
καὶ ἀνῴμωβρησαν
παροιμίας ἀκριβεῖς.

Those who understand sayings
and become skilled themselves
also pour forth²⁰⁾
apt proverbs.

This points to the purpose of Sirach's book; that others might gain Wisdom and show forth her fruit for themselves. Such results are only possible for those who heed Sirach's invitation to "...קַח לְךָ חֵכְמָה...". (Sir 51.25b).

The contents of Sir 1-23 is primarily that of proverbial sayings. The sheer bulk of material created by the long lists of proverbs demands attention.²¹⁾ But, what does one see on examination? What could be the purpose of such a prolific outflow? On examination one sees lengthy lists of proverbs arranged around themes,²²⁾ most of which are concerned with practical daily living. They become a code of conduct for life. Only the wise can understand and follow them. But they are more than a code for living. These wise sayings are the fruit out of the heart of one who has

²⁰⁾ The second καὶ is translated as emphatic instead of simply copulative. It makes for a clearer translation and stresses the underlying purpose of Sirach's work as stated above.

²¹⁾ On p. 193 of this chapter it was stated that the large block of material between the first two creation statements stood as a decoy or deception to schema. We now claim that that need not be the case.

²²⁾ Some of the themes include, The fear of God, Sir 1.11-25; Friendship, Sir 6.5-17; the Poor, Sir 7.32-37; Pride, Sir 10.6-18; Envy and Greed, Sir 14.3-19; Self-control, Sir 18.30-19.3 and Swearing, Sir 23.7-15.

received Wisdom. The lists of wise sayings are far from being exhaustive, but are sufficient to serve as an enticement to any who are seeking Wisdom. This may help to explain why the invitation by Wisdom does not come till Sir 24.19. By this point the evidence of Wisdom's benefits are well known. With all of this, Wisdom's beauty and bounty are ultimately described in one final poem in Sir 24.13-18 and then Personified Wisdom announces her invitation, "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my produce." (Sir 24.19). The accent in the invitation is with those who desire. If we recall the four creation texts which support this body of material, Sirach told the reader that Wisdom was eternal, a gift from God for those who love Him (Sir 1.1-10). He also made it apparent that man has yetzer, ability to choose. Man is also created with all the necessary equipment to incorporate Wisdom into his life (Sir 15.14-17.14). In a resounding statement in Sir 18.1-14, Sirach made it very clear that God stands behind or above all things including Wisdom. It is God who will gift her to those who desire her. With this picture of the fruit of Wisdom Sir 24 stands as a mid point pillar to the whole book. In Sir 24 Personified Wisdom makes the open invitation and Sirach testifies personally to her benefits. His testimony is not simply based on the words of Sir 24.30-34, but on all that has been said thus far. No longer need the lengthy lists of wise sayings be a deception but a declaration. All of this has come out of the heart of one who received Wisdom.

Sir 24, which stands at the heart of the book, not only closes out unit one but becomes the launching pad for unit two, Sir 24-42.14. The base which Sir 24 provides is not just a full creation statement, but a claim that Wisdom equals Torah. The "All this" which introduces the claim in Sir 24.23a, we take to mean all that has been said thus far in the whole book about Wisdom. All that has been said about Wisdom to date also holds

true for Torah. It too fills man with wisdom, understanding and instruction. A brief poem, Sir 24.23-27, describes Torah's influence on man. Sirach returns to familiar analogies used in Sir 1.3; 18.10 to describe the immeasurable Torah/Wisdom. This claim of Torah equalling Wisdom is not a departure from Sirach's earlier thought, but a development. Hints of the relationship between Torah and Wisdom were seen earlier in proverbial sayings.²³⁾

Immediately following Sir 24, there continue throughout the next unit further lists of proverbial sayings united under themes. In some cases the themes are repeated but new proverbs are created.²⁴⁾ Besides these same themes, many new ones are also composed, such as table manners in Sir 31.12-32.17; Wisdom from travel, Sir 34.9-17 and respect for the physician in Sir 38.1-15. This unit is also used to make two statements on Torah. They are found in Sir 32.15-33 and Sir 39.1-15. On p.145 of chapter seven we noted with some surprise the lack of Torah references or discussion in the first twenty four chapters of Sir. This could be taken to mean that he is simply following an assumed understanding of Torah such as Torah = Pentateuch which by Sirach's time was a fairly widely accepted view. He is working on an assumption, but it is made clear in Sir 24.23-29 that Wisdom = Torah. Once this assumption is clarified it is then apparent

²³⁾ See Sir 1.26a "If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments ..."
Sir 15.1b "... he who holds to the law will obtain wisdom."
Sir 19.20 "All wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and in all wisdom there is the fulfilment of the law."
Sir 21.11 "Whoever keeps the law controls his thoughts, and wisdom is the fulfilment of the fear of the Lord."

²⁴⁾ Examples of themes repeated are, Parenting, Sir 7.22-30; 30.1-13, Women, Sir 9.1-13; 25.13-26.27; Friendship, Sir 6.5-17; 37.1-6.

that all which is said about Wisdom is applicable to Torah. "To seek the Law" and "to fear the Lord" become one and the same thing; indeed these two clauses are used in the opening verses of the first full statement on Torah, Sir 32.15-16. Since Torah and Wisdom are one and the same it can be said of the student of the law, "If the great Lord is willing, he will be filled with the spirit of understanding; he will pour forth words of wisdom" (Sir 39.6). If Torah = Wisdom, what is said of Torah in the two above passages also holds true for Wisdom. Since Wisdom can not be confined solely to a set of laws or even a particular set of books, a much broader concept for Torah must be understood in Sir. It was for this reason, in part, that we argued on pp.150-152 of chapter seven, that Torah = will of God. Torah must therefore also mean 'a way of life'. Not only is this in keeping with the understanding of Torah in the earlier Wisdom School, it fits the whole of Sirach's wisdom message. The one who finds wisdom has a way of life that is built on the will of God.

The creation material which stands as a part of this unit, Sir 24;32.7-18; 39.16-35 underlines the fact that although man has choice, the Creator of all things is ultimately in control. This was made understood in the opening clause of Sir 39.6 with the words, "If the great Lord is willing ...". This ultimate authority is balanced out by the fact that God has also placed order and purpose within all of creation. This larger picture of creation, that of Torah and Wisdom developed in unit two, holds in-tension a statement made in the first unit, "If you desire you can keep the commandment and (it is) wisdom to do His will." (Sir 15.15ab, H). In this second unit Sirach makes use of the testimonial as a part of his creation tradition.²⁵⁾ As one who was created in the image of God, gifted

²⁵⁾ See Sir 24.30-34; 33.16-17; 39.12,32.

with all the necessary attributes to receive Wisdom, and given the opportunity to study the law²⁶⁾, Sirach's life bears witness to the transforming power of Wisdom. Although the lengthy lists of wise sayings would imply a large measure of Wisdom, Sirach steps out from behind the many proverbial statements to lay claim to them, yet stresses the fact that Wisdom is the source. They are the fruit of Wisdom. But here again it was equally important that Sirach develop his creation theology to the point that the reader realizes that God who rules over all ultimately determines the lot of each man. At the same time, the hope which Sirach's testimony holds out is that he, who once was a gleaner, now boasts a full harvest. If he had simply compiled the wise sayings without laying such strong personal claim his work would have lacked considerable impact. As it now stands all the wise sayings are but the fruit of a life of Wisdom. The hope stands that others who so seek may also be transformed from gleaners to harvesters.

The third unit which opens with the lengthy creation hymn sings of the wisdom of God, not evidenced simply in Torah now, but in the very creation itself. This opens the way to the historical roll²⁷⁾ and brings Sirach's thesis to its sharpest point; man who has become a recipient of wisdom reflects the glory of God and bears out the virtues of Wisdom. That Sirach intended the honour roll to be updated is apparent from the addition of his contemporary, Simon. From Sir 50.1-24, it would seem that Sirach viewed Simon as a living example of Wisdom embodied. Sirach then closes out his book with a final testimony in which claim is laid to all that is written within, but only after a poem, equal in length to the one that

²⁶⁾ His diligent study of all the word of God is testified to, not just by his book, but by the words of his grandson in the prologue.

²⁷⁾ For earlier discussion see pp.204-208 of this chapter.

opened the book, attributes his searching out of Wisdom as the source of his gain. Sirach concludes the poem with the remark in Sir 51.22 that the Lord gave him a tongue as a reward and with it he would praise the Lord. Praise would appear to be a particular mark of the wise. In Sir 15.10H Sirach said, "in the mouth of the wise praise is uttered."²⁸⁾ All mankind, having been created in the image of God, is free to search out Wisdom as all the faithful ones have done. It is therefore significant that Sirach should conclude his book with a second invitation to any who desire a heart of wisdom.²⁹⁾ The closing words of the invitation read, " קוֹן לְכָפֹד ...
 קִיְּסֵם לְךָ חָכְמָה בְּלֹא כֶסֶף get wisdom for yourself without silver." (Sir 51.25b).³⁰⁾ Wisdom, who was poured into all of creation, awaits any who will freely receive her. The creation schema is ultimately tied to all that Sirach has said in his book. Such a schema lifts Sir far above any claim of disorder.

In sum, the eight blocks of creation tradition, coupled with the Simon poem and prayer, act as pillars supporting Sirach's message from Sir 1-51. The mid point pillar is Sir 24, where Wisdom avails Herself in highly evocative creation imagery. The pillars together form a bridge which is the doctrine of creation. On one side of the bridge stands God and Wisdom, who waits to be gifted to those who love Him, and on the other end stands man. Although Simon is last named it would appear he stands first in the queue, symbolic of what happens when man accepts the gift of

²⁸⁾ It was for this reason that only the faithful were invited to praise in Sir 43.30. For discussion see p.188 of chapter 7.

²⁹⁾ The second formal invitation appears in Sir 51.23-25.

³⁰⁾ That is not to say Sirach would not charge tuition, Sir 51.28 shows he will, but Wisdom Herself is freely gifted "to those who love (the Lord)." (Sir 1.10b).

Wisdom. Simon reflects the glory of God and stands in harmony with the whole of creation, and at the pinnacle of creation. Faithful men alone can respond in praise to God. Ultimately, the doctrine of creation has not just given schema by bridging the whole of Sir, but enabled the presence of a God/man theology for Sirach. It is this God/man theology which forms the overall purpose of Sirach's book. In brief, there stands the reality of eternal Wisdom, her influence on the created works is evidenced, but man is left to choose. If he chooses Wisdom, which equals Torah, which equals will of God, not only will man reflect the same harmony and glory of the created works; he will be at one with God. The attributes of eternal God shared in eternal Wisdom will be assumed by man. He will be able to praise God, the Creator of all things. Man will be given an 'everlasting' name.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this research we agreed to hold in tension the three questions raised by Ph.B. Harner for measuring the degree of creation faith in Sir. On the basis of our findings we can now conclude: 1/ creation faith within Sir goes well beyond an ancillary function, 2/ it provides the main form for his total thought structure, 3/ rather than being merely a presupposition, the doctrine of creation is developed as an intricate part of Sirach's message. It can be said that Sirach has a distinct doctrine of creation running throughout his whole text, which gives it both form and authority.

Sirach's dependencies in developing his own unique statement on the doctrine of creation are expansive in tradition and chronology, running from J to Jubilees. Of the whole range of sources at his disposal it was Gn 1-11 that afforded the greatest measure of formative influence. It served as the model, providing Sirach with the greatest content in language and theology for his doctrine of creation and enabled the key form for Sir with its movement from a universalistic to a particularistic message. (This will receive further elaboration briefly). When one adds to this the interest in Priestly acts and cult, the measure of P influence is considerable. But without J he would not only have lacked crucial language and theology, but also, the form for his central chapter on Wisdom and creation. If all the P and J correspondences were removed from Sir it would fall flat as a tent without the central pole. DI comes as a close

second on formative influence: its influence is literally from the opening to the closing words of Sir. The rhetorical question is the main form borrowed from DI. We saw some direct borrowings in language, some of which help identify a personal testimony to this great Prophet of comfort. The Psalms on first sight seem to carry a very substantial influence, but from the comparative study, it was realized that the influence is largely rhetoric, absorbed from temple and cult into Sirach's vocabulary. Rarely do the Psalms raise or answer any real issues within Sirach's doctrine of creation or elsewhere in Sir. If they were removed there would be a loss of colour particularly when attributing praise and glory to the Creator of all things. Perhaps the biggest surprise lies in the wisdom literature; it offers little to Sirach's creation faith. Even the major wisdom texts of Job 28 and Proverbs 8, which have long been associated with Sir, contribute little by way of direct influence upon his doctrine of creation. Perhaps the greatest wisdom contribution is the concept of Torah being the divine will of God. In sum, Sirach borrows where scholarship gives little credit and borrows little from sources considered influential. At minimum we must ask for a review of past and current scholarship concerning the sources upon which Sirach was dependent. Such a review would not only open to us the full range of Sir sources but a deeper insight into this wisdom teacher and his book.

Sirach's literary style has for too long been cramped into the category of slavish imitation. With his syntactical style Sirach was able to stand apart from traditional sources, indicating a strong independence. Accepting the tradition of P and J Sirach was able to create a synthesis which, like his text, has his name written across it. He had

no hesitation in owning the faith inherited, nor in shaping it according to a new Sitz im Leben. The very style of his text, in particular Sir 24, shows his freedom to reshape. Unlike G. von Rad's claim¹⁾ that Sir lacks any schema, it must be said the doctrine of creation undergirds the whole of Sir. With the inclusion of creation material it is true he is in line with the Wisdom School; however, no wisdom writer previous to Sirach developed the doctrine of creation to such a full extent. In short, he has included more creation tradition than any wisdom writer, indeed more than any other OT book apart from Genesis. For DI, the most scholars will concede is that the doctrine of creation has a high degree of influence but never reaches the status of an independent article of faith, often remaining beneath the shadow of Heilsgeschichte.²⁾ The Exodus saga is hardly even a peripheral issue in Sir; instead, Sirach moves from the doctrine of creation into the doctrine of election, much as Gn 1-11 turns to the call of Abram in Gn 12.1-3. As the sending out of Abram points to one people, one nation, likewise, God's commanding Wisdom to rest in Zion points to the election of one people, one Nation. This combining of creation and history in Sir 24 places the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of election back to back. It was for this reason we cautioned against dovetailing Sirach's universalistic message with a particularistic emphasis too quickly. Although there are early signs of the creation faith being developed with one people in mind, by Sir 24 there is no doubt about who the chosen ones are. Wisdom's pitching her tent on Zion, having

¹⁾ G. von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, op. cit., p.240. Note 2.

²⁾ See results of Ph.B. Harner's search of creation faith in DI, op. cit., p.305.

searched out ^להַחֵן , places the seal on Israel. Following this claim Sirach's message becomes more and more particularistic. There is the lengthy prayer for Israel in Sir 36.1-17, a final creation statement in Sir 42.15-43.33, followed immediately by Israel's honour roll reaching its apex in Sir 50 with a portrayal of Simon, Israel's spiritual and political leader. The book concludes with Sirach, the Jerusalemite, offering a final testimony of his Judaic faith and heritage: a heritage which will be endowed to thirsty souls who may come to his 'house of learning.' (Sir 51.23-25). His movement from creation to election faith places Sirach well outside the older Wisdom tradition which was content to keep Wisdom as a universalistic message.

The whole of Sirach's text is a well planned symphony, every note, every movement is part of the whole. There are subtleties and allusions throughout which must be seen as notes which give fullness and harmony to his message. Nowhere can the accusation of writing without consideration be legitimately raised. This holds true for the five final names added to the honour roll which J. L. Crenshaw described as an afterthought.³⁾ The hand of Sirach was too intentional for such a charge. Instead of a restricted, legalistic view of Torah and Wisdom as held by some scholars, it must now be seen that both were written into his text with a very wide definition. It is the narrow restricted view of Sir that gives rise to comments like that by G. A. F. Knight in his publication, The Psalms. Having accused the Jewish faith of slipping into a legalism, he added, "For example already by 180 BC Ben Sira could write: 'Water extinguishes a

³⁾ J. L. Crenshaw, op. cit., p.152. His comment is in reference to Sir 49.14-16.

blazing fire; so almsgiving atones for sin' (Ecclesiasticus 3:30)."⁴⁾
Despite his love of Torah, temple and cult Sirach could also write (Sir 34.26),

So if a man fasts for his sins, and goes again and does the same things, who will listen to his prayer? And what has he gained by humbling himself?

Torah, temple and cult had significance only because they pointed the way, enabled glory and praise to the Creator of all things. There needs to be a shift in OT scholarship's view of Sir. For too long it has been branded with old forms and concepts which do not fit. Here too we believe a fresh perspective will open new doors of understanding, turning Sir from one of the most dormant extant texts to one of the most alive in twentieth century OT scholarship.

This strong defense of Sir is not to intimate that the text is without inconsistencies. Sirach, while making the case that God is the Creator of all, moves quickly to the faith stance that God is the God of one people, one nation. This militates against his image of a free God who acts according to his own pleasure. This is an unquestioned, inherited problem found throughout the OT. The problem of Y in creation is one Sirach endeavours to address without accepting the resolve of a rewarding after life, yet holding tightly to the traditional views on retribution despite the works of Job and Qoheleth. Sirach attempts instead to meet the challenge with a twofold presentation: all the created works are harmonious and eternal but all men, who are endowed with freewill, must suffer Angst by day and night but sinners seven times over. Leaving a rather untidy package here, Sirach turns his efforts fully to the dual

⁴⁾ G. A. F. Knight, op. cit., p.255.

themes of God's praise and glory. Man is given a yetzer, yet despite the gift of freewill Sirach ultimately concludes that inequality within creation is of God's decision (knowledge). He will raise up or bring low the man he chooses. These are real issues for which even wisdom has no easy answer. They are found as unresolved challenges in the whole of the OT. Sirach adds little of real insight here.

Despite Sirach's inconsistencies there is much within the text which deserves its receiving a more open acknowledgement. We say this not to raise the whole issue of canonical status. This has already been argued.⁵⁾ The fact remains, we have a very closed canon. It must be noted, however, that in its history covering two millennia, some have given Sir an elevated credibility: it has been accepted into both the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox canons. The Douay Bible contains this preface statement,

As it was written after the time of Esdras, it is not in the Jewish canon: but it is received as canonical and divine by the catholic church, instructed by apostolical tradition, and directed by the Spirit of God.⁶⁾

On the Protestant, evangelical stance John Bunyan had these words, following a year long search for a text which to his surprise belonged to Sir 2.10,

⁵⁾ W. F. Howard, in calling for a study and re-instatement of the Apocrypha, comments,

Good Methodists need have no fear that by doing so they are wandering into dangerous by-paths. Wesley's hymns give back many an echo from the Apocrypha. May we venture to express a hope that when our Lectionary is revised a few alternative passages will be chosen from Wisdom or Ecclesiasticus, at least ... Signs are not wanting which point to the reinstatement of the Old Testament Apocrypha in the intelligent regard of lovers of the Bible.

W. F. Howard, "A Wesleyan Methodist on the Re-instatement of the Apocrypha", IJA, No 40, Series XI, 1915, p.43. See also: J. A. Sanders, Torah and Canon, op. cit., pp.117-121; J. Blenkinsopp, "The Canon and the Authority of the Bible", in Prophecy And Canon, University of Notre Dame Press, London, 1977; B. S. Childs, Introduction To The Old Testament as Scripture, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1979, pp.59-64.

⁶⁾ Douay Bible, Printed and Published by Robert & Daniel Read, Belfast, 1847, p.495. The discovery of the Hebrew fragments post-dates this statement on canonical status. However, in the JB op. cit., p.1034 it is stated, "The Church recognizes the canonicity only of the Greek text ...".

This, at first, did somewhat daunt me; but because, by this time, I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered that though it was not in those Texts that we call Holy and Canonical, yet forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the Promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it; and I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me: that word doth still, at times, shine before my face.⁷⁾

It is on this personal level that the authority of Sir will find its real root, its rightful place. Structures can legislate but the heart must desire to search out, know and hold truth.

Finally, because Sir serves as a bridge for the biblical doctrine of creation which runs from Gn to Rv it is our hope that the research which we must leave at this juncture will be followed through by another into later Apocalyptic and NT works. The influence of Sir on the Wisdom of Solomon and Baruch would soon be apparent. It is the words of St Paul, one who shares more than a passing awareness of Sir, that summarize best what we have learned through "Sirach And The Judaic Doctrine Of Creation". (Romans 11.33-36)

Ὡς βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ
ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ.
Τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου;
ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο;
ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ,
καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;
Ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα.
αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. ἀμήν.

7) J. Bunyan, Grace Abounding, John Brown edition, 1888, p.65. (We acknowledge this quote as first drawn to our attention by R. E. Murphy; op. cit., pp.100-101.) ---

Appendix A

Historicity of Sirach: The Problem of Textual Traditions

The title of Sir in the Greek cursives A and S reads, *Σοφία Ἰησοῦ υἱοῦ Σ(ε)ϊράχ*. Codex B abbreviates this to *Σοφία Σιραχ*. Although codex 248 follows A and S it prefaces this title with, *Εκκλησιαστικός*. This addition may explain the Latin Vulgate title, *Ecclesiasticus*, which has dominated the Western church. Although the Greek versions have enabled the Christian Church to cherish the text through its liturgy, and its adoption as part of the deuterocanonical books at the Council of Trent by the Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish community had suppressed the book. It was not placed amongst the books that defile the hands.¹⁾ Despite this action the Hebrew text of Sir was still extant till the time of St Jerome (died AD 420). In the preface to his books of Solomon St Jerome wrote,

*Fertur et πανάρετος Jesu filii Sirach liber, et
alius ψευδεπίγραφος, qui Sapientia Salomonis inscribitur.
Quorum priorem Hebraicum reperi, non Ecclesiasticum, ut apud
Latinos, sed Parabolas praenotatum... 2)*

Further discussion on the historicity of the Hebrew text will be resumed shortly. Evidence for the authenticity of Sir goes beyond the author's

¹⁾ Rab. Joseph said, "If our masters had not hidden the Book of Ben Sira we might interpret the good things which are in it." Cf S. Schechter, "The Quotations from Ecclesiasticus in Rabbinic Literature", JQR, 1891, Vol. 3, p.687. It is noteworthy that the Genizah which housed many of the Sir MSS fragments is derived from the root תלך, to "hide", and is applied to a room adjoining the synagogue where discarded books were stored in lieu of destroying them.

²⁾ PL, 28, 130 f. cf. A. A. Di Lella, The Hebrew Text of Sirach, Moulton & Co., The Hague, 1966, p.150.

name appearing in some of the titles of the various MSS.³⁾ The name appears in the Grandson's prologue and is written across the text itself. The grandson, who translated the Hebrew book into Greek referred to the author as, ὁ πάππος μου Ἰησοῦς. All the Greek cursives have what appears to have been virtually the signature of the author in the original text, "Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Σιραχ Ἐλεάζαρ ὁ ἱεροσολυμίτης" (Sir 50.27c). Sinaiticus adds to this ἱερεύς ὁ σολυμεΐτης; however, all modern Greek texts of Sir exclude this phrase noting it as a gloss.⁴⁾ W. Oesterley rightly described this phrase as a "scribe's conjecture".⁵⁾ Moreover, it is excluded from the Latin Vulgate and does not occur in the Hebrew Fragment. The Hebrew MS B has for this same text, "רַחֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ... :אֲנִי בְּיָמָיו". The addition of ὁ ἱεροσολυμίτης by the various Greek MSS is simply an extra mark of identification given by the grandson. The fact that Sirach is of Jerusalem is also apparent from his familiarity with the temple and cult: the autobiographical statement in Sir 51.13-14 would also seem to confirm that his early days were spent in Jerusalem. This issue of his locale is also considered in chapter four, page 62.

Sirach's name appears as a subscript, σοφία Ἰησοῦ υἱοῦ Σεΐραχ, in the Greek cursives B, S and A. The Hebrew MS B includes the name of its

³⁾ The Syriac version is entitled 'Wisdom of Bar Sira'.

⁴⁾ A. Rahlfs, "ΣΟΦΙΑ ΣΙΡΑΧ" in Septuaginta, Vol 2, p.468, Note 27³. J. Hart, Ecclesiasticus in Greek, Cambridge, University Press, 1909, pp.69;225. H. B. Swete, "ΣΟΦΙΑ ΣΕΪΡΑΧ" in The Old Testament in Greek, Vol 2, Cambridge, University Press, 1922, p.752. J. Ziegler, Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach (Septuaginta Vol XII, 2), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980, p.362. Although the above represent the main Greek versions consulted for our study we have consistently used A. Rahlfs' edition when quoting within our thesis.

⁵⁾ W. O. E. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, Cambridge, University Press, 1912, p.XV, Note 1.

author twice in its concluding statement (Sir 51.30 iii; iv). In the first citing it reads, שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יִשׁוּעַ שׁוֹקְרָא בֶן סִירָא. The second and final reference deletes the phrase, "who is called", and adds בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר. The one name which most consistently appears amongst the variations of all the MSS in both Hebrew and Greek is סִירָא (Σιραχ). It was this realization which ultimately decided the author's name and title for his work within our thesis.

Besides Sirach's name and origin the exact dating of Sir helps strengthen its historicity. The grandson made reference in his prologue to the thirty eighth year of King Euergetes. Euergetes I, reigned only twenty five years while Euergetes II, known also as Ptolemy VII, reigned fifty four years: the thirty eighth year of his reign would be 132 BC. Allowing a fifty year span between Sirach and his grandson places the Hebrew document circa 182 BC. Most scholars agree to the first quarter of the second century.⁶⁾ This dating is also confirmed within Sir 51.1 with reference to the high priest Simon who was a contemporary with Sirach. Simon II, who was son of Onias II, died circa 195 B.C.⁷⁾

The variations between the Greek and Hebrew MSS are partially explained by the grandson's comment, which openly acknowledges the problems of translating, "For things originally spoken in Hebrew have not the same

⁶⁾ On the dating of Sir see J. H. Hart, op. cit., p.253; G. Box; W. O. Oesterley, APOT, Vol 1, op. cit., p.293; W. O. Oesterley, "Ecclesiasticus" in An Introduction To The Books Of The Apocrypha, London, SPCK, 1958, p.226; A. A. Di Lella, op. cit., p.150, Note 1; I. Lévi, op. cit., p.v; J. Snaith, op. cit., p.1.

⁷⁾ For a succinct description of the high priestly office during the first quarter of the second century BC see, W. Oesterley, Ecclesiasticus, Cambridge, University Press, 1912, pp.xlii-xliv; 336. Sir 50.1-4 lists some of the renovations Simon completed on the Temple.

force in them, when they are translated into another tongue ...". It may also be that the grandfather's document was not easy to decipher, or that he was working from a copy of the original. Sir 11.14 in the Heb MS A is an instance in which the Greek deletes (see chapter three, page 37), while Sir 44.16 $\eta\lambda\gamma\eta\ \eta\lambda\chi$ is read as *ὑπόδειγμα μετανοίας*. In Sir 49.14a 'few' in the Hebrew was translated as 'none' by the grandson. Such examples may represent what W. Oesterley calls "purposely modified".⁸⁾ This, however, does seem too strong a charge to substantiate. On the other hand, H. Cadbury's explanation for the variants in the Greek seems too soft when he writes, "They are natural psychological phenomena, unconscious tendencies such as any of us may have and may never notice".⁹⁾ It cannot be assumed that the grandson had the same intellectual familiarity with the earlier documents of the Fathers as did Sirach. This may in fact explain why in Sir 43.27-33, although the Greek renders a good summary of Sirach's call to praise, it has lost the direct dependency on DI which the original, Hebrew text showed (see chapter three, page 43). Neither was the grandson always aware of the theology of his grandfather.¹⁰⁾ Beyond the grandson's work it must be acknowledged that other hands made glosses such as seen above with *ἱερέυς ὁ σοθυμείτης* in codex S. Besides the Greek MSS there was a Syriac translation seemingly based largely on the Hebrew, but as Y. Yadin

8) W. O. Oesterley, *ibid.*, p.xcix.

9) H. Cadbury, "The Grandson of Ben Sira", *BT*, Vol.VII, 1956, p.80.

10) This may best explain the change of 'sign of knowledge' to 'sign of repentance' in Sir 44.16b; similarly in Sir 44.17b where the Greek renders $\eta\lambda\gamma\eta$ as *ἀνταλλαγμα*. In opening the main creation text, Sir 16.26, the change of $\eta\lambda\chi$ to *ἐν κρίσει* may represent the grandson's lack of awareness for both the early tradition links and the full significance of the doctrine of creation within his grandfather's text at this point.

underlines the Peshitta or Syriac version was much later than the grandson's work and shows awareness of the Greek.¹¹⁾ The Latin and Syro-Hexaplar translations were largely dependent on the Greek MSS.

It was the loss of the Hebrew text which forced such a long historical dependency on the Greek and other versions; however, it was the discovery of a large number of Hebrew fragments in the Genizah of the synagogue, at old Cairo in 1896, which opened Sirach studies anew. The addition of a substantial fragment, Sir 40-49.11, from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, lead to the formation of four distinct MSS: A, B, C and D. In 1931 J. Marcus discovered a new Sir leaf amongst the Adler Genizah collection at the Jewish Theological Seminary. It was designated MS E.¹²⁾ Subsequent finds were made by J. Schirmann between 1958-60 which gave additional material to MSS B and C.¹³⁾ Qumran discoveries added two minor fragments to MS A in 1964.¹⁴⁾ With the discovery of the Masada Scroll in 1964, another documentary source was added for Sir 39.27-43.30. In all there are now eight extant documents representing slightly more than two thirds of the total book by Sirach.

The historicity of the Hebrew MSS is an area of Sir studies which has received close consideration. Included in the scholarly list are works by Schechter and Taylor, Box and Oesterley, Lévi, Smend and Segal. The most convincing of recent studies is the text-critical one by A. Di Lella which concludes,

¹¹⁾ Y. Yadin, The Ben Sira Scroll From Masada, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1965, p.6 (English text).

¹²⁾ A. Di Lella, op. cit., p.15.

¹³⁾ J. Schirmann, "A New Leaf from the Hebrew 'Ecclesiasticus' (Ben Sira)" Tarbiz, 27, 1958/59. pp.440-443; "Some Additional Leaves From Ecclesiasticus in Hebrew", Tarbiz, 29, 1959/60 pp.125-134.

¹⁴⁾ M. H. Segal, "Ben-Sira In Qumran", Tarbiz, 33, 1964, p.243.

Since there are so many vv. whose authenticity is incontestable, we must conclude that unless the contrary is demonstrated the Geniza MSS contain the original text or something very near to the original text of Ben Sira. Indeed, the Cairo MSS must be presumed genuine unless serious and weighty evidence¹⁵⁾ can be adduced against the originality of a particular passage.

T. Penar, using the principles of Northwest Semitic philology, confirmed Di Lella's findings saying, "Di Lella is right, when stating that 'The Cairo MSS must be presumed genuine ...'"¹⁶⁾

Of the Sir Hebrew copies available we have relied mainly on two sources. The sources are the Semitic Studies Series reprint of I. Lévi's, The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus,¹⁷⁾ and The Book of Ben Sira,¹⁸⁾ which is referred to elsewhere in our research as HLA. On comparing the Lévi edition with MSS at the Cambridge Genizah collection we have found it meticulous. Lévi readily acknowledges when a text is illegible and includes marginal corrections which occur in the MSS. His book also has a very clear format. It is this that ultimately determined our decision to use it as the source for all direct quotations of the Hebrew within our research. Its drawback lies in its early dating. Even since the reprinted form new materials have been discovered. Neither is it easy to discern in Lévi's book which of the documentary sources is being

¹⁵⁾ A. Di Lella, op. cit., p.148.

See also textual studies by W. Taylor, "The Originality of the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira", (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, Toronto, 1910), and C. A. MacRae, "The Hebrew Text of Ben Sira" (39.15-43.33), (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, 1910).

¹⁶⁾ T. Penar, Northwest Semitic Philology And The Hebrew Fragments Of Ben Sira, Biblical Institute Press, Rome, 1975, p.1.

¹⁷⁾ I. Lévi, The Hebrew Text Of the Book Of Ecclesiasticus, Semitic Studies Series No. 3, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1904, Photomechanical reprint, R. Gottheil, M. Jastrow (eds.), 1969.

¹⁸⁾ The Book Of Ben Sira, (Text, Concordance and an Analysis of the Vocabulary), Published by, The Academy of the Hebrew Language and the Shrine of the Book, Jerusalem, 1973.

quoted. This is where HLA provides an invaluable second source. It delineates all available sources in a comparative form. This collating the sources into one, yet keeping the documents identified, makes variations readily apparent. Although this proves superb for exegetical work, for purposes of citing it would have been far too ponderous. Thus, our approach was to quote Lévi, but hold it in check against HLA. Early editions of the Hebrew by Schechter¹⁹⁾ and Smend²⁰⁾ were also taken into consideration.

The exact dating, authorship and text-critical proofs leave ample reason for believing that the Hebrew MSS closely represent the original document composed by Sirach. Consequently, in our research we have tended to give priority of credibility to the extant Hebrew, unless the various Greek MSS offer a strong case for doing otherwise. On the other hand, because the Greek affords the earliest full account of Sir it has proved an invaluable source. The Latin Vulgate, despite its many emendations, proved a helpful third reference. In sum, there are three textual traditions employed for our research. Order of priority of credibility is Hebrew (1), Greek (2), and Latin (3). Where the Hebrew is not extant the Greek has been used as the number one primary document. For purposes of comparative

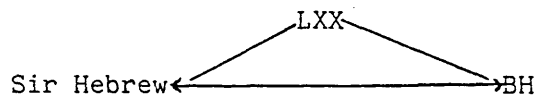
¹⁹⁾ S. Schechter; C. Taylor, The Wisdom of Ben Sira, University Press, Cambridge, 1899.

²⁰⁾ R. Smend, Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, hebräisch und deutsch, Berlin, 1906.

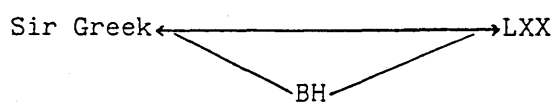
study, where Sir Hebrew is extant BH is cited, but LXX taken into consideration. If only the Sir Greek is extant, it is quoted as primary and LXX employed for comparative citation, while BH is held in tension to ensure, as far as possible, the original context and content are respected. Where both Sir Hebrew and Greek exist, but a serious variation stands, both are cited and appeal made according to exegetical principles.²¹⁾

²¹⁾ The following is a graph of our process for citation,

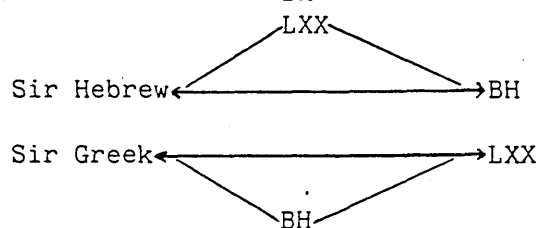
A) Sir Hebrew extant,



B) Sir Greek only,



C) Both 1 and 2 available,
but discrepancies



Appendix B

Verbs and Verbal Roots of Creation in Sir

<u>Sir text</u>	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Hebrew Fragment</u>
1.4	ἔκτισται	____ (text destroyed)
1.9	ἔκτισεν	____
1.14	συνεκτίσθη	____
2.18	_____	יָשַׁע (HLA)
4.6	ποιήσας	וַיַּעַשׂ
7.15	ἔκτισμένην	וַיַּעַשׂ
7.30	ποιήσαντα	וַיַּעַשׂ
10.12	ποιήσαντος	וַיַּעַשׂ
10.18	οὐκ ἔκτισται	וַיַּעַשׂ
15.11	οὐ ποιήσει	וַיַּעַשׂ
15.14	ἐποίησεν	וַיַּעַשׂ
16.14	ποιήσει; τὰ ἔργα	וַיַּעַשׂ; כְּמַעַל
16.17	ἀμετρήτῳ κτίσει	וַיַּעַשׂ וַיַּעַשׂ וַיַּעַשׂ
16.26a (16.24a Heb)	ἐν κτίσει	וַיַּעַשׂ
16.26b	ποιήσεως	____
17.1	ἔκτισεν	____
17.3b	ἐποίησεν	____
18.1	ἔκτισεν	____
23.20	κτισθῆναι	____
24.8	κτίστης; κτίσας	____
31.27d	ἔκτισται	וַיַּעַשׂ (marginal note)
33.10	ἐκτίσθη	____
33.13c	ποιήσαντος	____

36.8b	—— (text omitted)	וַעֲשֶׂה
36.14(36.15a Hebrew)	κτίσασίν	מַעֲשֵׂיךָ
38.1	ἔκτισεν	חָלַק
38.4	ἔκτισεν	בָּרָא (marginal note)
38.12	ἔκτισεν ¹⁾	
38.15	ποιήσαντος	וַעֲשֶׂהוּ
39.19	ἔργα πάσης	מַעֲשֵׂהוּ כָל
39.21	ἔκτισται	——
39.25	ἔκτισται	חָלַק
39.28a	ἔκτισται	בָּרָא (marginal note)
39.28d	ποιήσαντος	——
39.29d(39.30c Hebrew)	ἔκτισται	בָּרָא
40.1	ἔκτισται	חָלַק
40.10	ἔκτισθη	בָּרָא
42.15a,c	τὰ ἔργα κυρίου; τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ	⁽²⁾ מַעֲשֵׂי; מַעֲשֵׂי
43.5	ποιήσας	וַעֲשֶׂהוּ
43.11	ποιήσαντα	וַעֲשֶׂהוּ
43.32	τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ	מַעֲשֵׂיוֹ
43.33	ἐποίησεν	——
44.2	ἔκτισεν	חָלַק
47.8	ποιήσαντα	וַעֲשֶׂהוּ
49.14	ἔκτισθη	נוֹצַר
49.16	τῇ κτίσει	כָּל הַ
51.12d	——	יוֹצֵר

The three main verbs of creation employed by Sirach will now be considered in the following order: $\pi\psi\epsilon$, $\alpha\beta\alpha$, $\epsilon\zeta$.

¹⁾ Considered an addition from Sir 38.1; see G. Box and W. Oesterley, "Sirach" in, APOT, Vol. 1, edited by R. H. Charles, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913, p.450. Note g-g.

²⁾ Marginal note.

a) $\pi\psi\chi$

This appears to be the most frequently used creation verb in the OT.³⁾ Its frequency is partly explained by the fact that $\pi\psi\chi$ can mean 'make' (create) or 'do'. The majority of occurrences carry the meaning 'do'. $\pi\psi\chi$ can also have either man or God as subject. When God is subject it is often used for cosmic entities: creating the firmament, firmament and the earth or the sea.⁴⁾ This is the verb of creation most often used by Sirach: the above table indicates at least fourteen citings of the verb or its root. Of the verbal forms above all have God as subject. The Greek is consistent with the Hebrew fragment except in Sir 15.11; here the Hebrew has 'He', meaning God as subject, but the Greek changes to the pronoun 'you'.⁵⁾ Only the Greek of 15.11 carries the sense of 'do'; but both Hebrew and Greek imply 'do' in Sir 16.14. The remainder are in reference to acts of creation. All of the nouns refer to the creatorship of God except Sir 36.15a $\pi\psi\chi$ which could mean deeds of salvation or works of creation; however the context in this case does little to clarify.⁶⁾

³⁾ BDB lists 2622X, p.793; KHB notes 2600X, p.284.

⁴⁾ See Gn 1.7, 16, 25; 3.1; Neh 9.6; Job 9.9; Proverbs 8.26; 2 Chron 2.11; Pss 95.5; 100.3; 102.26; 119.73; 146.6. Occasionally other concrete objects may follow, such as: garments, Gn 3.21; tablets, Exodus 32.16; Israel, Dt 32.6, 15.

⁵⁾ The context seems to allow either 'he' or 'you' but the Hebrew is favoured by its parallel Sir 15.11a. The pronoun 'you' contradicts the message in Sir 15.11a. The following verse resumes with 'he'. The NEB translated the message to align with the Greek translator's employment of 'you' but it does not note the Hebrew. The RSV appropriately translates 'he' within the Sir 15.11 text but notes the Greek.

⁶⁾ The JB confirms this by stating, "The exact sense is uncertain ...". It then continues with a range of four possibilities: Israel, the seven patriarchs who were said to have been created before the world, Wisdom as the first created or the Messiah's appearance. The translators rightly conclude the list with a question mark, thereby underlining again the uncertainty of interpretation for Sir 36.15a (Heb).

b) בָּרָא

It is a rare verb of creation which is largely confined to Gn, DI and the Psalms.⁷⁾ Its uniqueness lies in that God is always subject. The object is most frequently acts of creation but some exceptions include: new historical circumstances in DI 45.8; 48.6; a clean heart in Ps 51.12 and a transformed people in Is 65.18. Sirach has at least six citings of בָּרָא . While the LXX consistently translated בָּרָא with ποιεω in Gn, elsewhere in the OT κτιζω is most frequently used.⁸⁾ The grandson kept this OT pattern found outside of Genesis by using κτιζω in all but one of the available passages. The one exception is Sir 15.14 where בָּרָא is rendered ἐποίησεν . Since the context, "אֱלֹהִים מְבַרְאֵי אֶת בָּרָא אֲדָם", is clearly a Genesis dependency this may account for his resorting to ποιεω for this text. From this it could be concluded that unless the context dictates a P dependency the grandson consistently used κτιζω when translating בָּרָא . This does not mean κτιζω can only represent בָּרָא for the above Sir table clearly indicates that it can translate all three main verbs of creation. κτιζω is also used by the Greek translator to render a creation interpretation of כָּלַק .⁹⁾

⁷⁾ Gn 10x; DI 16x; Pss 6x.

See P. Humbert's "Emploi et portée du verbe bārā (créer) dans L'Ancien Testament", dans Opuscules D'un Hébraïsant, Neuchatel, 1958, pp.147-165. Humbert only accredits 44 citings in the OT in contrast to BDB which figures 53x. Considering the frequency of בָּרָא in the psalms BDB is hasty in stating, "seldom except in P and Is" (p.135).

G. Singgih suggests that Ecclesiastes 12.1 may be spurious as בָּרָא is not found, "... in any other wisdom literature." The Sirach citings, though not capable of authenticating the Ecclesiastes passage, certainly question the logic of Singgih's argument. E. G. Singgih, "The Concept of Creation In Prophetic Tradition From Amos to Deutero Isaiah" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University, Glasgow, 1981), p.300 note 4.

⁸⁾ Other LXX translations for בָּרָא in the OT are as follows.

κτιζω : DT 4.32; DI 45.7,8; Jr 38.22; Ezk 28.13, 15; Amos 4.13; ML 2.10; PSS 50.12; 88.13,48; 101.19; 103.30; 148.5; Ec 12.1.

ποιεω : DI 42.5; 43.1; 45.7,12,18; Is 65.18.

κατασκευάζω : DI 40.28; 43.7; 45.7.

καταδείκνυμι : DI 40.26; 41.20; 43.15

γίνεται : DI 48.7.

⁹⁾ See Sir 7.15; 38.1; 39.25; 40.1; 44.2. A discussion of this follows on pp.239-240.

c) צ'ר

This OT verb of creation is frequently associated with the J document where it is employed three times, with reference to creating man in Gn 2.7,8 and animals in Gn 2.19. As demonstrated by these three citings צ'ר is associated with the potter language. It may have either God or man as subject. Although the above J citings depict God as a potter, Is 29.16;41.25, and Jeremiah 18.4-6 portray man as a potter, thereby affirming its flexibility of subject. The Jeremiah Psalm (Jer 10.16; 51.19) uses this same pottery expression to present God as the one who has formed הכל . Sir offers four possible renderings for צ'ר . The first word listed on the above table צ'ר , his Rock, is translated by the Greek as ποσειδας giving the impression that the grandson mistakenly read צ'ר for צ'ר . The Syriac also translates as 'his Creator'. However, MS A of the Hebrew fragment clearly indicates צ'ר . The second citing, which refers to God's forming man does appear in the Hebrew. It offers a superlative statement on Enoch, מַעַט נֹצֵר עַל הָאָרֶץ "...כְּהִנִּיךְ" (Sir 49.14a).¹⁰ Sir 31.27d, which describes God's creating wine, indicates that the object can be other than man within Sir.¹¹⁾ The final citing, Sir 51.12d is spurious.¹²⁾

What can be concluded from this lengthy list of creation verbs and verbal roots in Sir? Since with all three verbs the objects are not

10) מַעַט is changed to οὐδείς , 'No one' by the Greek translator. See p. 229 for earlier comment. It may have been the realization that Enoch heads the honours list, that forced the grandson to make the stronger claim. However, this decision overlooks the fact that, although Adam was last on the formal list Sirach described Adam's glory as "above all living things ..." Sir 49.16b.

11) This is in keeping with OT usage, see DI 44.9,10,12 the forming of idols: DI 54.7, the forming of weapons.

12) For discussion see "Sirach and the Psalms" of this study, p.61.

consistently creation or cosmic entities in the OT and whereas Sirach and his translators have maintained a pattern not dissimilar to that of the OT we would again urge that the context be the guide. The degree of creation faith can only be measured by the full text and not the occurrence of any single word including the above verbs of creation. If weight were given simply to a word it might well be argued that the Psalms were the source of influence for אָרַב in Sir rather than DI or Gn. As we evidenced in chapters two and three of this thesis, context supports the reverse. Moreover, קָבַח which ordinarily is never associated with creation, but with the settlement in the land (Jos 18.2), is given a creation interpretation by context in Sir.¹³⁾ When Sir 39.25; 40.1 fragments are paralleled with the Greek and Latin the influence of context in determining a creation interpretation becomes very apparent. (Sir 39.25a; Hebrew and Greek; Sir 39.30a, Latin).

...שָׂרִים קָבַח וּבְרִיָּה

Good things were created for the good
from the beginning ...

ἀγαθὰ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἐκτίσται
ἀπ' ἀρχῆς...

Good things were created for the good
from the beginning ...

Bona bonis creata sunt ab initio,

Good things were created for the good
from the beginning ...

In the above parallel it might be argued that the creation interpretation is largely the influence of the translator not the context. In Sir 40.1a, this argument does not hold.

בָּחַל בְּכֶבֶד בְּיָדָא קִדְמָא

God has apportioned (created) a great
burden

בְּיָדָא קִדְמָא
...:דְּמִיָּה בְּנֵי

a heavy yoke upon
the sons of Adam ...

Ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἐκτίσται
παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ
καὶ ζυγὸς βαρὺς ἐπὶ
υἱοῦς Ἀδάμ...

Much labour was created
for every man
and a heavy yoke upon
the sons of Adam ...

¹³⁾ See Sir 7.15; 38.1; 39.25; 40.1; 44.2.

Occupatio magna creata
est omnibus hominibus,
et jugum grave super
filios Adam, ...

Great labour is created
for all men
and a heavy yoke is upon
the sons of Adam ...

The above text is clearly based on creation tradition with the second part of verse (Sir 40.1b) adding the distinct Genesis creation concept of the sons of Adam returning to " : 'π' כ' π... , mother of all life". It is such a contextual basis which best explains why the grandson consistently translated $\rho \pi$ with $\kappa\tau\iota\lambda\omega$.

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