

CD	Track	Outline Section
1	1	Recap of earlier covenants
	2	Connecting the Wisdom Literature to the rest of the Old Testament
	3	Authorship, Dating and Setting of Proverbs
	4	Covenantal Language of Proverbs
	5	Covenantal Structure of Proverbs
	6	Proverbs Chapter 1
	7	Proverbs Chapter 2
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2	1	Why the Nuptial Language about Wisdom?
	2	Personified Wisdom in Proverbs as a type of the Holy Spirit
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	3	Introduction to Ecclesiastes
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	1	Job in the Canon of Scripture
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5	3	Genre and Structure of Job
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	3	God Speaks
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	5	The Nature of the Satanic Test
	6	Job's Soliloquy
	7	Job's Request for an Advocate
	8	Job's Oaths Revisited
9	God Responds	
6	1	The Poem about Leviathan
	2	Intro Notes to Song of Songs
	3	Not Awakening the Passions until the Proper Time
	4	The Bridegroom's Invitation to Elope
	5	The First Dream Sequence of the Song of Songs
	6	The First Dream Sequence Continued

- 7 The Second Dream Sequence
- 8 The Day Dream Sequence
- 9 Summary Comments on Song of Songs

- 7
 - 1 The Canonicity of The Book of Wisdom
 - 2 The Wisdom of Solomon Introduction
 - 3 A Description of the Worldview of the UnGodly
 - 4 Apparent Contradictions of God Blessing the Righteous
 - 5 Recap
 - 6 Major Sections of Wisdom
 - 7 Solomon's Love for Wisdom

- 8
 - 1 The Workings of Wisdom in History
 - 2 Authorship of Sirach
 - 3 Versions and Structure of Sirach
 - 4 Sirach as Synthesizing All of Scripture
 - 5 Sirach as Distinct from the other Wisdom Literature: Wisdom as the Mosaic Law
 - 6 Liturgy in Sirach

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 - 1 The Need of History for Wisdom
 - 2 The History of Israel in Sirach
 - 3 Corporeal Punishment in Sirach
 - 4 The Role of Women in Sirach
 - 5 The Celibate State in Sirach

Proverbs

Authorship:

Date:

Setting:

Wisdom is Covenantal

- I. *The address of the reader as _____* puts the reader in covenantal relationship with Solomon, heir of the Davidic covenant, and thus in a mediated covenantal relationship with God.
- II. The _____ structure of the book points to the “covenantal” nature of Wisdom:
 - a. P _____: chs. 1-9
 - i. Proverbs of _____ I: 10:1–22:16
 - ii. Of the _____ I: 22:17–24:22
 - iii. Of the _____ II: 24:23–34
 - iv. Of _____ II: 25:1–29:27
 - v. Of _____: 30:1–14
 - vi. N _____ Proverbs: 30:15–33
 - vii. Of L _____: 31:1-9
 - b. Epilogue: Song of the V _____ Woman 31:10-31

- III. The use of the w_____ as an icon of Wisdom points to a covenantal (nuptial) relationship with Wisdom/Truth.
- a. Corollary: the emphasis on sexual _____ in the opening chapters is not A_____; it is intrinsically related to spiritual reality and in particular to one's R_____ to God.
 - b. It is extremely important, then, for our relationship with God that we are rightly ordered with respect to matrimony and all that pertains to matrimony, i.e. romance and sexuality. The virtues of P_____ and F_____ are paramount for the pursuit of wisdom and of God.
 - c. All sin is a form of I_____, a turning away from our God to some other god—either ourselves or some other created thing.
 - d. Note the pattern of Covenant B_____ in the Bible and it's relationship to this theme.
 - e. The Personification of Wisdom as a Woman and a Bride/Wife suggests several things:
 - i. Truth is at base P_____
 - ii. One has to be faithful to Wisdom/Truth in order to find Wisdom/Truth.
 - f. Personified Wisdom is a type of both the _____ and of _____

IV. Note the theme of *Hesed*:

Prov. 3:3 Let not loyalty (*hesed*) and faithfulness forsake you; bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Prov. 11:17 A man who is kind (*hesed*) benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself.

Prov. 14:22 Do they not err that devise evil? Those who devise good meet loyalty (*hesed*) and faithfulness.

Prov. 16:6 By loyalty (*hesed*) and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.

Prov. 19:22 What is desired in a man is loyalty (*hesed*), and a poor man is better than a liar.

Prov. 20:6 Many a man proclaims his own loyalty (*hesed*), but a faithful man who can find?

Prov. 20:28 Loyalty (*hesed*) and faithfulness preserve the king, and his throne is upheld by righteousness.

Prov. 21:21 He who pursues righteousness and kindness (*hesed*) will find life and honor.

Prov. 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness (*hesed*) is on her tongue.

V. Proverbs 10-30: The Couplet Proverbs

Mostly teach Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude

A charge against the proverbs: they are simplistic in their outlook

Not really.

A. Remember: *I* _____ *L* _____.

B. The proverbs expound how to live in the *C* _____
O _____. The instructions work to the extent that the created order *operates as intended*. In other words, in the original state of creation, virtue would lead inevitably to blessing in the natural realm. However, the *created order is broken*. (example—Communist China). There is sin, a monkey wrench that makes things not work. But sin has not completely

broken the created order. Nonetheless sin and evil is a topic for other wisdom books: Ecclesiastes, Job, Wisdom, etc.

C. *Solomon and the sages do recognize ambiguity and paradox.* At least three paradoxes:

1. Wisdom comes from God, but God's actions defy _____ (Prov 21: 30-31)
2. One needs _____ even to apply the teachings of wisdom (26:4-5). Thus there is a limit to what can be taught.
3. Thus, wisdom is both a gift freely given and something you _____ at (Prov 2:1-6)
4. If you think you're _____, your not. When you attain wisdom, you realize you are not wise. (26:4-12).

VI. Proverbs 31:10-11: The Song of the Valiant Woman

Free notes:

Ecclesiastes

Date: 4th century B.C.? Based on language—but debatable.

Authorship: If not Solomonic historically, still the “voice of Solomon” is important hermeneutically for understanding the book, like the voice of Hamlet or Macbeth gives deeper significance to the speeches written for them.

Structure:

Prologue: 1:1-11

I. Part I: “Vanity”

A. Double Intro: 1:12-15

1:16-18

B. Six Units on the theme “Vanity”

1. 2:1-11

2. 2:12-17

3. 2:18-26

4. 3:1-4:6

5. 4:7-4:16

6. 5:1-6:9

II. Part II: “Ignorance”

A. Introduction: 6:10-12

B. Four Units on the theme “Can’t Find Out”

1. 7:1-14

2. 7:15-24

3. 7:25-29

4. 8:1-17

B. Four Units on the theme “Don’t know”

1. 9:1-12

2. 9:13-10:15

3. 10:16-11:2

4. 11:3-6

III. Poem on Age and Youth 11:7-12:8

Epilogue: 12:9-14

Ecclesiastes and Death

- I. Five things bother Solomon in Ecclesiastes:
 - a. The cyclical monotony of T_____
 - b. The unsatisfying nature of all P_____
 - c. I_____
 - d. Incomprehensibility/Unknowability of L_____
 - e. D_____
 - f. These five things are not random, but interrelated, and _____
is the kicker.
- II. Solomon's response in 2:24; 3:12-13 is E_____ D_____ and
take pleasure in your T_____
 - a. This is not H_____
 - b. It is grateful acceptance of simple pleasures as God's G_____
 - c. It is precisely what Adam and Eve failed to do.
 - d. It is a good and practical response but not complete or ultimate
 - e. Death continues to hang over the situation
- III. What about Life after Death?
 - a. The pericope 3:18-22 disturbs some people
 - i. The attitude here is A_____
 - ii. Solomon is adopting an attitude based on _____
alone
 - iii. There is a distinction between knowledge and faith
 - b. Likewise the pericope 9:2-6 is disturbing
 - i. Yet in a sense what he says is true, although not perhaps in the
sense in which he meant it.
 - ii. Compare John 11:49-52
 - c. On the other hand, these verses point toward hope in something
more:

- i. **Ecc. 3:11** He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.
- ii. **Ecc. 3:17** I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter, and for every work.
- iii. **Ecc. 8:12** Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him; **13** but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.
- iv. **Ecc. 11:9** Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.
- v. **Ecc. 12:1** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";
- vi. **Ecc. 12:7** and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
- vii. **Ecc. 12:14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

IV. The final poem on Age and Youth: 11:7-12:8

- a. The statements in 11:7-10 are all I _____, sapped of their energy
- b. The poem is a complex allegory:
 - i. The "keepers" =
 - ii. "strong men" =
 - iii. "grinders" =
 - iv. "windows" =
 - v. "doors" =
 - vi. "sound of the grinders" =
 - vii. "almond tree blossoms" =
 - viii. "grasshopper drags itself" =
- c. The book ends focussed on what has been the problem all along:

- d. The final words link Ecclesiastes to Proverbs and guide the proper interpretation of the book: these words are G _____

V. Making Theological Sense of Ecclesiastes:

- a. Ecclesiastes is P _____: Ecc. 4:7-8 describes most of the world

- b. _____ is the answer to the hypothetical questions of Ecclesiastes:
- i. **Ecc. 1:16** I said to myself, “I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.” Cf: **Matt. 12:42** The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.
 - ii. **Ecc. 3:21** Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth? **22** So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should enjoy his work, for that is his lot; who can bring him to see what will be after him?
 - iii. **Ecc. 6:12** For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?
 - iv. **Ecc. 7:13** Consider the work of God; who can make straight what he has made crooked?
 - v. **Ecc. 7:24** That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?
 - vi. **Ecc. 8:7** For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be?
 - vii. **Ecc. 10:14** A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him?
- c. The _____ is the “Vanity,” the “Absurdity”, that leads to a greater wisdom
- i. Compare 1 Cor 1:18-25
- d. Solomon’s counsel can be taken in a E_____ sense

Lecture on Job I

I. Introductory Issues

a. Date

b. Authorship

c. Genre

d. Structure

i. Prologue: 1-2

ii. Opening Speech: 3

iii. Cycle 1

1. Eliphaz

a. Job

2. Bildad

a. Job

3. Zophar

a. Job

iv. Cycle 2

1. Eliphaz

a. Job

2. Bildad

a. Job

3. Zophar

a. Job

v. Cycle 3

1. Eliphaz

a. Job

2. Bildad

a. Job

3. Zophar

a. Job

vi. Elihu's Speeches

vii. The Divine Dialogue

1. God
 - a. Job
 2. God
 - a. Job
- viii. Epilogue

- II. Do the Prologue and Epilogue belong, or are they just “cheap”, late additions that spoil the profundity of the poems that make up the bulk of the book?
- a. Yes, because only in the P & E that we find out Job is righteous
 - b. Yes, because only in the P & E do we find out this is a *Test*
 - c. *Without the P, we would think Job’s counselors were right, and the book would not be interesting.*
 - d. *Without the E, the book would be too fatalistic, without hope of the resurrection and final justice.*
- III. The nature of the Satanic test
- a. Calls into question Job’s integrity: “He only loves God for the benefits”
 - b. Calls into question God’s inherent desirability: “You only have the friends you buy; no one likes you for yourself.”
 - c. The book becomes a fight for the vindication of the divine-human covenant, for the integrity of the love relationship between God and man.

Job: Lecture II

1. Job 3 and “Uncreation”: The images used in Job 3, most scholars agree, are a kind of “uncreation”—parody of the creation account. Light turned to darkness, Day becomes dark, stars extinguished, humans unborn, “rest” of the Sabbath in Sheol.

Job is experiencing a Satanic “uncreation”—this is what has happened to him.

The original privation of creation “tohu wabohu”. Privation—evil, but not a thing. Satan always wants to return creation to this state where there are no created distinctions. Modern examples—abortion, homosexuality, Darwinism. Attacks on the order and integrity of creation.

Job 3 summarizes Job’s “descent into Hell”—like Christ he is undergoing a Satanic ordeal.

2. Eliphaz’s speeches, starting ch. 4-5, ch. 15, ch. 22

Observe the escalation: Ch. 4-5 very soft, encouraging.

Ch. 15—you are impious, indirect comparison with an evil man.

Ch. 22—outright accusations—you’re an anti-Robin Hood (rob homeless people, push little old ladies into the road, rob kids of their lunch money)

Observe Job’s replies: protests his innocence, wants to plead his case before God (13:3)

3. Discuss the three “advocate” passages (9:33; 16:19; 19:25-27)

Job 19:25-27 a high point, expresses the desire to “see” _____—not necessarily get the return of all his goods, but to be vindicated.

Legal v _____ and the *sight of* _____ somehow related.

See Psalm (11), 17, 27, (34), 42-43

Job and *D* _____ and the other psalmists are innocent sufferers who long for vindication by the sight of God.

These “advocate” passages point forward to the trinity, to the second person of the trinity.

4. Discuss the end of Job’s defense: chs. 29-30

Note that it is the loss of R _____ W _____ G _____ that is paramount—the other things are important only as a sign or indication of this

relationship. Never “Oh I wish I had my M_____ back.” Always, “Hear me, Oh Lord!” Satan is precisely w_____.

Ch. 31—extraordinary for its moral refinement, also the longest oath in ancient literature. “If ... then” construction. Self-curse. “Here is my signature”—a formal legal oath, calling upon God as judge. “Oh that I had the indictment written by my adversary!”—unwitting and ironic.

This is the turning point. God responds to this oath. Indicates in some measure the power of oaths—s_____.

5. Discuss the **Divine Poems ch. 38-42**

What is the point? Job: do you have A_____ K_____ to form a judgment about my justice? To make an adequate assessment you would have to know A_____ T_____.

Leviathan poem: climax and crucial point.

Leviathan is an I_____—mentioned in ch. 3 and ch. 41. Job—you called out Leviathan in your opening statement—was that a wise choice?

Who is Leviathan? Note Isaiah 27:1 in context. Note Revelation 12:9. In canonical perspective we can make the identification: Leviathan is a _____.

The point of God’s speech about Leviathan: Job, there are tremendous personal forces of evil in the universe (which you seem to have forgotten about). You cannot control them—(but I can!). Thus there is H_____!

6. **Job’s response;** he lays down his complaint, he is satisfied because “now my eye sees thee.” He “repents” not of evil doing, but of presuming to be able to J_____ the ways of the Almighty.

Return to this theme—“sight of the Almighty” and vindication—where do these themes show up in the NT? J_____! Look primarily in ch. 1, and ch. 14.

John combines the legal vindication, advocate, and “seeing God themes”

Somehow Jesus by his presence answers the desires of all his suffering saints through salvation history.

Song of Songs Lecture Notes

Try some of the pick-up lines in Song of Songs

How does it fit in the canon?

Almost in the middle between Genesis and Revelation, it gives us a beautiful picture of the love relationship between God and his people.

Author: unknown, about Solomon Date: 10th centl. B.C., ancient

Structure:

- I. Prologue: Opening Colloquy 1:1-2:7
- II. Bridegroom's Invitation to Elope: 2:8-17
- III. First Dream Sequence: 3:1-5
- IV. Vision of Solomon and Bride: 3:6-5:1
- V. Second Dream Sequence: 5:2-6:10
- VI. Day-Dream Sequence: 6:11-7:4
- VII. Epilogue: Concluding Colloquy 8:5-14

The book consists mostly, then, in *dreams* of the bride's upcoming union

Why should we interpret it this way?

1. First, because of the references to _____ in the text.
2. Secondly, because otherwise the whole book doesn't _____.

At the end of the book, she is still virginal: I am a wall ...

The marriage has not yet been consummated.

Thus the book ends on a note of longing: "Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle ..."

Know how to defend Songs against the claim that it portrays "free love" or promiscuity. Note the couple of places in the book that emphasize the virtue of chastity, and virginity before marriage. Note the importance of understanding the different narratives as *dream sequences*—the bride is not actually "running off" with her beloved, she is dreaming about, anticipating her upcoming marriage—and *not* in an unchaste way.

The predominant mood of the book: L_____.

Why the Song of Songs is important for Christians:

1. From earliest times the Song was understood M_____. “My David, my David.”
2. The Song provides the nuptial background for understanding certain NT scenes or events: the gifts of the Wise Men (Matt 2:11), the anointing at Bethany (John 12:1-8, esp. v. 3), the preparation of Jesus' body for burial (John 19:38-42, esp. 39).
3. The heavy emphasis on visual imagery--on *looking at* the beloved--ties into the theme of “seeing God” that is so important in the Bible, especially the Gospel of John (John 1:18; 1:29; 14:8-9), in our liturgical life (Eucharistic adoration in Mass and apart from Mass), and in our ultimate destiny (the Beatific Vision). “Seeing” is a form of communion--a deeper form, after all words have been spoken and nothing more is to be said, lovers still gaze upon one another.
4. The emphasis on *physicality*, on the body, is also important. Remember that in the New Covenant, we still experience the Love of our Bridegroom Messiah in an *embodied way*—we look on his flesh, we receive his flesh and blood. We look forward to the resurrection of our *bodies*. The body is important, and continues to be so in the New Covenant.
5. Understand how the end of Songs is like the end of the Book of Revelation. Be able to explain how we can read Songs *eschatologically* (as looking forward to the end of time) as well as *liturgically* (as referring to the Mass).

Song of Songs and Gospel of John

Creation week and the wedding at Cana—drawing on creational and Adam/Eve typology just like Songs.

Identified at the end of ch. 1 as the King

Jesus and Mary only characters identified specifically in this narrative about a wedding.

Jesus makes abundant wine: consider: Song 5:1 “Drink deeply, O Lovers!” Song 1:2 love is better than wine, the vineyard imagery throughout.

John 1:29 “He who has the bride is the bridegroom.” Who is the bride? Basically all the Israelites in the region. Resonates strongly with Song of Songs. Eschatological reading of this text.

John 4—cannot go into all the nuptial imagery here. The well alone is a nuptial image, but notice the discussion of “living water”—compare Songs 4:15

John 12—the anointing with nard—possibly a nuptial image—*only place* in the OT where “nard” occurs

Passion: nakedness, spiritual birth, “I thirst”, drink the “cup,” “It is finished” (consummated).

Burial—*100 pounds* of myrrh and aloes (Ps 45; Prov 7; Song 4)—take him to a *garden*—a *virginal* tomb

Now check it out:

Mary Magdalene:

- (1) while it was still dark (night)
- (2) weeping, longing (v. 11)
- (3) talks to the watchmen (gardeners); taken my “lord”=husband
- (4) immediately finds him (v. 17)

Now see Songs 3:

- 1) at night
- 2) seeking him
- 3) she goes out into the night
- 4) asks the “watchmen”
- 5) then immediately finds him
- 6) I held him—“do not hold me”

What is this suggesting? Song of Songs is about the relationship of the soul to Jesus—
Mary Magdalene is a model disciple.

This is why Songs 3 is read on the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene, July 22, paired with
John 20

Wisdom Lecture I: The Structure of the Book of Wisdom

I. The Reward of Righteousness is Life

- a. Exhortation to Righteousness, the key to life (1:1-15)
- b. The Worldview of the Unrighteous (1:16-2:24)
- c. The Fate of the Righteous and Unrighteous Contrasted
 - i. The Fate of the Righteous (3:1-4:19)
 - ii. The Fate of the Unrighteous (4:20-5:23)
- d. An Exhortation to Rulers to Seek Wisdom (6:1-6:20)

II. Solomon's Love for Wisdom

- a. The Lord gave Solomon Wisdom in answer to prayer (7:1-22)
- b. Solomon describes Wisdom as a beautiful bride (7:22-8:1)
- c. Solomon describes his romance with Wisdom (8:2-21)
- d. Solomon prays for Wisdom (9:1-18)

III. Wisdom at Work in History

- a. Wisdom at Work from Creation to Exodus (10:1-21)
- b. Wisdom at Work in the Exodus (chs. 11-19)
 - i. First Example: Water Punishes Egyptians and Benefits Israelites (11:6-14)
 - ii. Second Example: Animals Punish the Egyptians and Benefit the Israelites (11:15-16, 23-27, 15:18-16:15)
 1. Digression on God's Mercy 11:17-12:22)
 2. Digression on False Worship (13:1-15:17)

- iii. Third Example: Rain of Hail vs. Rain of Manna
- iv. Fourth Example: Darkness for Egyptians vs. Light for Israel
(17:1-18:4)
- v. Fifth Example: Death of Firstborn vs. Deliverance of Israel
(18:5-19:22)

Lecture on Wisdom II

Recap:

Introduction in chs. 1:1-15, sets forth several basic themes of the book: the way of unrighteousness will lead to death, the way of righteousness/wisdom leads inevitably to life. God desires life and created the universe that way (Edenic situation). So once again, wisdom/righteousness leads us back to Eden, to immortality with God.

The worldview of the ungodly; ch. 1:16-2:24

Here we see a surprisingly “modern” worldview, with anticipations of several modern philosophies:

2:2 we were born by mere chance: **Darwinism**

reason is a spark kindled by the beating of our hearts: **Epiphenomenalism**

2:3 **Materialism**

2:6 **Consumerism**

2:7 **Hedonism**

2:11 **Nietzschism**

What is presented here is a gradual degradation culminating in the persecution of the righteous. Why? Because the righteous person is an implicit rebuke, he irritates the conscience.

Two levels of meaning to this text; the general and the prophetic; a description of Christ—next to Ps 22, one of the clearest in the Bible.

The true destiny of the righteous: ch. 3:1-4:19

The righteous attain immortality; now the author addresses counter-examples:

early death: brings peace, result of “discipline,” eventual triumph; notice the “sacrificial offering” theme, remember that Job was called “blameless”; Ps 119:98-99

childlessness: cf. Psalm 127-128. Standard view. But Solomon says, not necessarily so: cf. Isa 56

The Final Judgment: 5:1-23. The wicked are exposed, confronted with the triumph of those they deemed foolish or mad. This is seriously what many atheist intellectuals think. The society of “Brites.” Daniel Dennet and Richard Dawkins in England. Lock religious people up in a zoo. Mother Theresa is “cognitively challenged.”

Exhortation to Rulers: Wisdom Leads to a Kingdom (ch. 6)

The famous Mother Theresa sorites: “If we are silent, we will pray. If we pray, we will believe; If we believe, we will love; If we love, we will serve.” (cf. Wis 6:17-20)

Lecture on Sirach I

Sirach

Date, authorship, structure.

Unusual situation that we know quite a bit about the human author and the transmission of this text. Jesus son of Sirach, 190-180 BC, translated 132 BC. Have both Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, in two recensions, a longer and a shorter. Raises interesting question about what is canonical. My take: the Church accepted into the canon the Greek translation in its longer recension—that’s what I would take as canonical. Obviously the Church was not reading the Hebrew in the shorter version. The “additions” are not of less value because they are “unoriginal”—this is partly due to a Protestant mindset.

Structure: Five part or three part
Five part is in the Navarre Bible.

Three part: 1-24, 25-43, 44-51 Marked by inclusio poems or hymns on Wisdom/creation. In this case, Jesus ben Sirach may be trying to pattern his book on the threefold division of the canon: law, prophets, and other writings.

This is what I mean by a synthesis: he is reflecting on the whole canon and considering it a “wisdom book”—yes, even the history and the psalms, much wisdom is to be gained by meditating on them.

Meditating on history: chs. 44-51
Meditating on the psalms: 3:18-23 (ps 131)
Meditating on Law: Exod 22:21-25; Sir 4:5-10

This is called “inner-biblical exegesis”

(digression: “inner-biblical exegesis” of woman wisdom, too. The same thing are done as in the book of wisdom)

Point: all of Scripture is a book of Wisdom.

In particular, Sirach is trying to integrate into the Wisdom worldview three things that are not so explicitly visible in the earlier wisdom literature: Law, Liturgy, and History.

Let’s take this first one: Law

Note for example 24:23

How do we reconcile this with the universalism of the Wisdom literature?

Couple of issues: Mosaic law is particular (nationalistic), and defective in some respects (divorce). How then can we integrate law and wisdom, particular law with natural law?

1) Heart of the law is the ten commandments, which encapsulate natural moral law. The rest of the law is largely applications of this.

but some of the applications seem defective—allowance for divorce.

but...

2) “Law” includes the entire Torah—Genesis through Deuteronomy. Genesis has no legal pronouncements, but it is considered “law”—it provides the proper context for interpretation.

3) The whole “Law” helps to interpret seemingly defective “laws.” Observe on the issue of marriage—creational order overrides Deuteronomy 24:1ff

4) The whole “Law” is more universal than the particular “laws.”

Now let’s take the Liturgy. How can Israel’s Liturgy be related to the Wisdom Worldview?

- 1) The beginning of wisdom is FEAR of the LORD. The implicit connection between wisdom and worship of the LORD was always recognized, even if not emphasized by earlier wisdom books.
- 2) In worship we recognize our true “End” or “Telos,” that for which we were made. This can be seen already in the Genesis creation account.
- 3) In the Liturgy we come to a truer understanding of the nature of Reality. See for example Psalm 73. Worship is an experience of “Orientation” that remedies the “Disorientation” that results from daily life.
- 4) For all these reasons, Jesus ben Sirach culminates his account of wisdom working in history with the beautiful image of Onias II performing the Liturgy of the Day of Atonement in Sirach 50.

Finally, History. How can History be a part of the Wisdom worldview?

At first History seems unrelated to Wisdom. Wisdom, like Philosophy, is about right thinking and doing in the present, so what does History have to do with it?

- 1) First of all, History (a form of memory) creates Identity, without which you can’t really think properly.
- 2) History provides examples both positive and negative of models to imitate, from which we can gain wisdom.

- 3) Pondering salvation history points to the centrality of the covenant relationship to God, which is indeed the wise thing to pursue.

Dealing with the “Politically Incorrect” passages of Sirach:

- 1) Corporal punishment of children: Sirach 30:1 “He who loves his son will whip him often, in order that he may rejoice at the way he turns out ...”
- 2) The role of women:
 - a. Sirach can scarcely be outdone in the hyperbole he lavishes on women: an evil woman/wife is utterly terrible, a good woman/wife is almost divine (see Sirach 25-26). It is the principle “*corruptio optimi pessima*.”
Sir. 36:24 He who acquires a wife gets his best possession, a helper fit for him and a pillar of support. 25 Where there is no fence, the property will be plundered; and where there is no wife, a man will wander about and sigh.
Sir. 40:19 Children and the building of a city establish a man’s name, but a blameless wife is accounted better than both.
 - b. He cannot be accused of discounted the _____ of women to human society!
 - c. These passages require interpretation:
Sir. 42:9 A daughter keeps her father secretly wakeful, and worry over her robs him of sleep; when she is young, lest she do not marry, or if married, lest she be hated; 10 while a virgin, lest she be defiled or become pregnant in her father’s house; or having a husband, lest she prove unfaithful, or, though married, lest she be barren. 11 Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter, lest she make you a laughingstock to your enemies, a byword in the city and notorious among the people, and put you to shame before the great multitude.
Sir. 42:12 Do not look upon any one for beauty, and do not sit in the midst of women; 13 for from garments comes the moth, and from a woman comes woman’s wickedness. 14 Better is the wickedness of a man

than a woman who does good; and it is a woman who brings shame and disgrace.

- d. What about the celibate state? This would be regarded as marriage to _____ itself.