

## Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

**Authorship:** Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach (Prologue and 50:27).

**Composition:** The book was composed c. 190-180 BC (cf. Simon the high priest 50:1) in Hebrew by Jesus. His grandson moved to Egypt during reign of Ptolemy VII (Psychon Euergetes II; c. 132 BC) and translated the book into Greek c. 117 BC.

**Canonicity:** The Hebrew text continued in use among Jews as it was quoted in the Talmud, and the majority of it has been found at Qumran and the Cairo Geniza (2/3 of book). The Greek text was used by the early church and came to be called the church book, from which comes the common name of this book, Ecclesiasticus (Latin transliteration of the Greek adj. ἐκκλησιαστικός), as it was used so commonly in catechesis (Origen, *In Num.*, *Hom.* 27; Athanasius, *Ep. Fest.* 39).

**Structure:** The book does not have any clear outline or flowing development. In general, though, the book can be divided at least into two parts (1-43 and 43-50), with a prologue and epilogue (51).

**Content:** Jesus ben Sirach is instructing his disciples that have gathered around him.

**Style:** As with the proverbs in the other wisdom literature, the style is usually synonymous or antithetical parallelism.

**New Testament and Early Church usage:** There are strong parallels between this book and Matthew (cp. Matt 11:28-29 and Sir 6:24-25; 51:26-27) and John (cp. John 6:35 and Sir 24:19-24). The earliest known clear quotation of the text is in *Didache* 4:5 and *Barnabas* 19:9.

**Personification of Wisdom:** As in the other books wisdom is personified here as well, particularly in 24 (cp. Wisdom 7, Prov 1:20-21; 8; 9:1-11; and John 1:1-18; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-2, in the 'feminine' חכמה σοφία

## Full of Grace in the Bible

<sup>BGT</sup> **Sirach 18:17** οὐκ ἰδοὺ λόγος ὑπὲρ δόμα ἀγαθόν καὶ ἀμφότερα παρὰ ἀνδρὶ κεχαριτωμένῳ

**κεχαριτωμένῳ** : Dative, Masculine, Singular, Perfect, Participle, Passive

<sup>RSV</sup> **Sirach 18:17** Indeed, does not a word surpass a good gift? Both are to be found in a gracious man.

<sup>VUL</sup> **Sirach 18:17** nonne ecce verbum super datum bonum et utraque cum homine iustificato

<sup>DRA</sup> **Sirach 18:17** Lo, is not a word better than a gift? but both are with a justified man.

<sup>BGT</sup> **Luke 1:28** καὶ εἰσελθὼν πρὸς αὐτὴν εἶπεν· χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ.

**κεχαριτωμένη** : Vocative, Feminine, Singular, Perfect, Participle, Passive

<sup>RSV</sup> **Luke 1:28** And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

<sup>VUL</sup> **Luke 1:28** et ingressus angelus ad eam dixit have gratia plena Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus

<sup>DRA</sup> **Luke 1:28** And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

<sup>BGT</sup> **Ephesians 1:6** εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ.

<sup>RSV</sup> **Ephesians 1:6** to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

<sup>VUL</sup> **Ephesians 1:6** in laudem gloriae gratiae suae in qua gratificavit nos in dilecto

<sup>DRA</sup> **Ephesians 1:6** Unto the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he hath graced us, in his beloved son.

**χαριτώω** (χάρις) 1 aor. ἐχαρίτωσα; pf. pass. ptc. κεχαριτωμένος (**Sir 18:17; Ps 17:26** Sym.; EpArist 225; TestJos 1:6; BGU 1026, XXIII, 24 [IV AD]; Cat. Cod. Astr. XII 162, 14; Rhet. Gr. I 429, 31; Achmes 2, 18) **to cause to be the recipient of a benefit, bestow favor on, favor highly, bless**, in our lit. only w. ref. to the divine χάρις