

## Sirach 6:32–37: An Invitation to the Youth to Acquire Wisdom

ALEXANDER G. K. SALAKPI (UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON)

### ABSTRACT

*The youth aspire towards power, fame and wealth, and in their haste to acquire these, some indulge in wrongful acts, developing false identity to attain status. This attitude endangers their life in the future. The tendency creates educational challenges and thus raises an important question: What is the root of these phenomena and how can they be curbed? Ben Sira cautioned the youth of his era to have patience, to listen, to study, to learn and to be disciplined in order to achieve a fulfilling life. Recently, some members of the Ghanaian parliament consistently expressed regrettable attitudes that were not democratic, not a true sign of committed responsible states-men and women and unworthy of emulation by the youth. This article proposes a rhetorical study of Sir 6:32-37 with a didactic paradigm to enhance good moral formation in building a humane environment through acquisition of wisdom. The study invites the youth to acquire wisdom, which requires discipline, integrity, hard work, perseverance, endurance and discernment that they need to achieve long life in good health and prosperity and eventually become good leaders with good status in society.*

**KEYWORDS:** Invitation to acquire, Youth, Discipline, Wisdom, Positive Attitudes, Sirach 6:32–37

### A INTRODUCTION

Many people feel insecure and anxious when they are unable to control events in life. Trying to find solutions to life events leads to the quest for wisdom.<sup>1</sup> Wisdom and its related words from its roots appear more than 90 times in the

---

\* Alexander G. K. Salakpi, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon. Email: [asalakpi@ug.edu.gh](mailto:asalakpi@ug.edu.gh). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3508-0197>.

Submitted: 07/02/2025; peer-reviewed: 04/11/2025; accepted: 01/12/2025. Alexander G. K. Salakpi "Sirach 6:32–37: An Invitation to the Youth to Acquire Wisdom," *Old Testament Essays* 38 no. 1 (2025): 1–19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2025/v38n1a5>.

<sup>1</sup> A careful observation of the quest for wisdom is the prolongation of life. The sages go in the pursuit of good health, wealth, honour, offspring, long life and remembrance. See Katharine Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," in *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology* (ed. Brendan N. Wolfe et al., 2024), 4. Cited 26 November 2025. Online: <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/WisdomintheOldTestament>; J. L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 19.

book of Sirach.<sup>2</sup> Sirach 6:32–37, in particular, is a call for the youth to attain wisdom. The youth need wisdom. Some of them in their pursuit of power, fame and wealth, use wrongful means and develop false identity to attain this status; this is not wisdom.<sup>3</sup> These cultivated attitudes endanger their lives and pose challenges to both formal and informal education. To gain wisdom, they also need guidance<sup>4</sup> to develop good morals to use their good talents for the good of humanity. They, furthermore, need to know who they are and what society expects from them. Crenshaw refers to this awareness as an entity that comprises self-evident intuition on mastering life for the better.<sup>5</sup> Until raw gold is refined, one can have it without knowing it is gold. A piece of wood only becomes beautiful furniture after transformation. This transformative life is only achieved by those who have patience, a listening heart and the desire to learn.

Ben Sira saw life as having a secret code that must be decoded. In other words, the quest for truth is concealed in the created order and it must be sought, as it is only available to those who seek it. Those who have the key (intelligence) to the secret code of creation and know how to unlock it enjoy peace, happiness and long life. Those without this key (intelligence) are plagued with misfortune and unhappiness. The human need for wisdom is like the plants in the Garden of Eden for the great rivers.<sup>6</sup> The recent expressions of some negative behaviours in Ghanaian parliamentary proceedings are unfortunate and cause one to question the ability of some legislators. For example, the behaviours of legislators during the election of the speaker and the vetting of nominees for various positions in government are regrettable.<sup>7</sup> These unfortunate incidents are

<sup>2</sup> A. A. Di Lella, "Fear of the Lord as Wisdom: Ben Sira 1, 11–30," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference, 28–31 July, Soesterberg, Netherlands* (ed. P. C. Beentjes; BZAW 225; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 113.

<sup>3</sup> Lauren Calvin Cooke, "Wisdom's Pedagogy: Engaging Biblical Wisdom Literature with Young People" (Ph.D. diss., Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, 2023), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 13.

<sup>5</sup> Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 19.

<sup>6</sup> D. J. Harrington, *Jesus Ben Sira of Jerusalem: A Guide to Living Wisely* (ed. Barbara Green; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 104.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Naadi, "Ghana MPs Brawl in Parliament over Mobile Money Tax," 21 December 2021. Online: <https://www.bbc.com>. Cited 27 November 2025; "Brawl in Ghana's Parliament Taint Election of Speaker," m.youtube.com. 7 January 2021; see also Online: <https://www.Africanews.com>. Cited 27 November 2025; "Chaotic Scenes as MPs Scuffle in Ghana's Parliament," m.youtube.com; [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com). 1 February 2025. Cited 27 November 2025; "Four Lawmakers Suspended after Fight Erupts in Ghana's Parliament," 1 February 2025. <https://punchng.com>. Cited 27 November 2025; Eliane Revestimentos, "Minority Blocks Vetting of Supreme Court Nominee Justice Paul Baffoe-Bonne. 7 November 2025. Cited 27 November 2025. Online: <https://www.eliane.com>.

not a good sign of committed responsible leaders and do not augur well for the good governance for a country like Ghana. These regrettable scenes show the kind of education that our youth receive both at home and in school. Our educational system seems to have left some Ghanaians as uneducated literates because they have not been transformed by their education. This must be corrected.<sup>8</sup> The attitudes are not worthy of emulation by the youth who look up to these legislators and revere them as models. Since many of the legislators profess to be either Christians or Muslims, they ought to live and express their faith in their daily lives.

Wisdom, for Ben Sira, permeates all spheres of life and has no barrier, be it geographical, social, political or religious. It offers insight into all matters relating to life because it is a human response to YHWH and YHWH showers the blessings of insight on such a person who possesses wisdom (Sir 6:37). In terms of religion (Deut 4:5–8),<sup>9</sup> wisdom is seen as religious piety that involves good conduct of life in accord with the laws of YHWH.<sup>10</sup> The rewards of good life from YHWH because of one's obedience to the law<sup>11</sup> make wisdom a philosophy of life.<sup>12</sup>

This essay, as an invitation to the discipline of wisdom, offers a rhetorical critical study of the text (6:32–37) with a didactic paradigm to enhance good moral formation in building a humane environment through the acquisition of wisdom.<sup>13</sup> The acquired wisdom will endow the youth with integrity, responsibility, hard work, enabling them to achieve long life in good health and to build a decent and peaceful society in success and prosperity as responsible leaders. Thus, the article is divided into two parts —the analysis of the text and suggestions for the way forward. The aim is to enable the youth to learn and to make good choices in life.

## **B ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT**

The analysis of the text considers the larger context of the text, structure, parallelism and the metaphor in the text.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander G. K. Salakpi, "Discipline in Ghanaian Christian Schools: A Shared Responsibility," *JEP* 16/5 (2025). DOI: 10.7176/JEP/16-5-05.

<sup>9</sup> Paul R. House, "Examining the Narratives of Old Testament Narrative: An Exploration in Biblical Theology," *WTJ* 67 (2005): 236.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel I. Block, "The Grace of Torah: The Mosaic Prescription for Life (Deut. 4:1–8; 6:20–25)," *BS* 162 (2005): 13 (19–22).

<sup>11</sup> Alexander G. K. Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," *GJRT* 9/2 (2019): 25–47.

<sup>12</sup> W. G. Lambert, "Some New Babylonian Wisdom Literature," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (ed. J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 30–31.

<sup>13</sup> Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 7–10.

## 1 Background to Sir 6:32–37

The passage of Sir 6:32-37 belongs to a larger pericope of 6:18–37 and is like 24:3–29 in content. It is the concluding section of the larger pericope (6:18–37), which addresses mostly the youth in whom I have great interest. A survey of Sir 6:18–37 will help us appreciate more clearly the importance of the text under discussion.<sup>14</sup> The pericope is divided into three sections 6:18–22; 6:23–31; 6:32–37 and has 44 cola. Each of the strophes begin with τέκνον in v. 18a, v. 23a and v. 32a. The pattern is as follows: 6:18 has τέκνον and σοφίαν, an invitation to the youth to seek wisdom; 6:23 has τέκνον, ἄκουσον and μὴ ἀπαναίνου: an invitation to listen and not to reject the advice to pursue wisdom; 6:32 has τέκνον, θέλης, and παιδευθήση: the consent of the youth will enable them to have wisdom.

The first section (6:18–22) calls for discipline that will enable the youth to acquire wisdom that will last forever, even to their old age. The acquisition of wisdom is likened to the process in which a farmer works very hard on the farm and, consequently, rejoices at harvest time (Jas 5:7–8). The toil on the farm is disregarded at harvest time due to the abundance of the yield. Wisdom is not easily perceived by people due to the initial journey that involves undue effort and discipline, which sometimes undermine hope.<sup>15</sup>

In the second section (6:23–31), vv. 24–25 presents wisdom as a yoke that binds the whole body and makes no room for freedom. This idea echoes Jesus' metaphor of the yoke in Matt 11:29–30 that required discipline from the disciples in following Jesus.<sup>16</sup> Verses 26–28 speak about the search for wisdom. Wisdom demands the involvement of one's whole soul and might and when it is found, it is supposed to be grasped and not to be let go (Prov 4:13). In vv. 29–31, the embraced yoke, that is, the rigorous discipline of vv. 24–25 becomes a strong defense for protection and guidance; thus, transformed into enviable assets of life. These enviable assets are such as joy, happiness, long life, peace, prosperity, security, which are metaphorically riches associated with good life.

The text under discussion 6:32–37 is the third section. Verses 32–33 are an invitation to wisdom; vv. 34–36 talks of seeking and holding onto the person with wisdom. The best way in which a youth can become wise is to listen to the

<sup>14</sup> Rogers, in her article on Sir 6:18–37, considers Wisdom as a metaphor, a feminine personification. As a personified Woman, Wisdom as a figure function to highlight the attitudinal, affective dimensions of the wisdom quest. The metaphors used express the importance and vitality of wisdom to the youth. See Jessie Rogers, "As Ploughing and Reaping Draw near to Her: A Reading of Sirach 6:18–37," *OTE* 13/3 (2000): 364–379.

<sup>15</sup> Rogers, "As Ploughing and Reaping," 374.

<sup>16</sup> P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 193.

sage and abide by the teachings of the sage.<sup>17</sup> Listening is a necessary tool for gaining wisdom. Verse 37 states that the study of the Torah is the easiest way to acquire wisdom.<sup>18</sup>

Sirach 6:32–37 has 14 cola and contains 83 words. The text is divided into two parts; Part I (vv. 32–36) has 58 words and Part II (v. 37) has 25 words. Part I is divided into two strophes—strophe I (v. 32–33) contains 24 words and 4 cola. Each colon begins with a conditional clause ending with a modal. There is also a synthetic parallelism between v. 32a and v. 32b and a synonymous parallelism between v. 33a and v. 33b. Strophe II (vv. 34–36) has 34 words and 6 cola. Each colon has an imperative giving a command as to what must be done. The word *πρεσβυτέρων* in v. 34a has synonymous parallelism with *σοφός*. Wisdom is mostly associated with elders.<sup>19</sup> Part B has one strophe (v. 37) with 25 words and four cola. It has a rhetorical pattern of a: b and a': b' in v. 37ab in the first bi-colon and in the second bi-colon (v. 37cd).<sup>20</sup>

First bi-colon            a: b = *διανοοῦ: τοῖς προστάγμασιν κυρίου*

b': a' = *ταῖς ἐντολαῖς αὐτοῦ: μελέτα*

Second bi-colon a: b = *αὐτὸς στηριεῖ: τὴν καρδίαν σου*

b': a' = *ἡ ἐπιθυμία: τῆς σοφίας δοθήσεταιί σοι*

<sup>17</sup> Pauls and Franktyr in Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15–31, New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 466; Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 517; Bryan Murphy, “The Unalterable Word,” *MS* 26/2 (2015): 170–172.

<sup>18</sup> The Deuteronomistic Historian used Torah as a term to embrace all the books of the Pentateuch, but before then Torah was assigned to the individual laws, as evidence from the Tetrateuch shows: “The Torah of the burnt offering” (Lev 6:18); “The Torah of guilt offering” (Lev 7: 1); “The Torah of peace” (Lev 7:11); “Torah of the woman in confinement” (Lev 12:7); “The Torah of the leper” (Lev 14:2, 32, 54); “The Torah of jealousy” (Num 5:29) and “The Torah for the Nazirite” (Num 6:13, 21). “Torah” was attached to the individual laws and not the entire laws as an entity, as known of Pentateuch today.

<sup>19</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 195. The association of wisdom with elders is also remarked by the following: Ted Nelson Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice among the Ghana-Ewe and Their Relevance to the Christian Religion* (Ph.D. diss., Rome: Tipografia Olimpica, 1982), 68–72; John Kuada and Yao Chachah, *Ghana: Understanding the People and Their Culture* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Service, 1999), 43–44; Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

Each strophe has a theme, strophe I (vv. 32–33): “Personal Disposition, an Essential Means of Acquiring Wisdom;” strophe II (vv. 34–36): “Seeking out Wisdom” and strophe III (v. 37): “The Law of Yhwh as the Source of Wisdom.”

The words alluding to wisdom occurs 10 times (πανοῦργος, ἐκδέξη, σοφός, διήγησιν θείαν, συνέσεως, συνετόν, τοῖς προστάγμασιν, ταῖς ἐντολαῖς, στηριεῖ, σοφίας) and words that seek the attention of the youth to acquire wisdom occurs 11 times (θέλης, παιδευθήση, ἐπιδῶς, ἔση, ἀγαπήσης, ἐκδέξη, κλίνης, ἴδης, στηριεῖ, ἐπιθυμία, δοθήσεται).

## 2 Textual Analysis of Sir 6:32–37

The textual analysis follows the two-part division above namely vv. 32–36 and v. 37, using the titles of the three strophes.

### 1a Verses 32–33: Personal Disposition, an Essential means of Acquiring Wisdom

The invitation to the youth to seek wisdom demands full commitment on their part; thus, disposition<sup>21</sup> of will and the readiness to listen. Verse 32 offers the invitation and stresses the need for discipline to become wise.

- Verse 32

The future passive, παιδευθήση is the objective instruction needed for gaining wisdom. This objective instruction is easily acquired through teaching and guidance of an adult, a sage.<sup>22</sup> The youth must listen and absorb all the information that leads to a responsible life. To attain knowledge entails the total and humble submission of oneself (ἐπιδῶς); thus, the total giving of oneself or one’s will to the sage for transformation. After the submission, then the youth become πανοῦργος (clever, crafty, and sly) in handling matters pertaining to life. The process of becoming clever is like the clay that the potter kneads until it gives in, becoming supple and pliable, allowing the potter the ease to carve a perfect shape that is equipped for handling (πανοῦργος). Paul used the same word in referring to himself as a crafty fellow (2 Cor 12:16) in dealing with people.

- Verse 33

The verb ἐκδέξη expresses the patience needed to gain wisdom which denotes the idea of waiting for wisdom to come. There is a need to endure and be patient to attain wisdom. Patience goes with the discipline and the sacrifice the youth require for the acquisition of requisite skills for wisdom. This is for future satisfaction and well expressed in the Latin and the Syriac versions. The Latin says, “You will have wisdom” and the Syriac says, “You will be taught,

<sup>21</sup> Cooke, *Wisdom’s Pedagogy*, 41.

<sup>22</sup> A sage here refers to a wise elder that may equally be a parent, a family member, a teacher, a leader who may be young but in a dignified position to impact wisdom.

informed, or shown" wisdom. The verb is also used in Heb 11:10 in reference to Abraham waiting for the promise of YHWH to be fulfilled. Earlier in Sir 6:18–21 (cf. 4:17–19), Ben Sira used the imagery of a farmer sowing seeds to show that discipline and sacrifice are necessary in seeking wisdom. As the farmer rejoices at his or her harvest, so does the one who perseveres in search of wisdom. He or she will rejoice when wisdom makes its home within him or her. Wisdom aids those who seek its will; it helps and rewards them (Sir 4:12–14), but only after surmountable temptation in one's path of searching for it.

Inclining, bending, bowing (κλίνας) in humility is a mark of the youth ready for the admonition of the sage. The youth learn and absorb whatever they hear, making it a part of themselves. We hear of 'the hearing heart,' which is synonymous with being a sage.<sup>23</sup> The inclination of the ear is to pay attention and only the one who wishes to gain wisdom will take heed. To pay attention is to listen and listening plays a key role in sapiential discipline.<sup>24</sup> Wisdom constitutes a legacy passed on from parents to children. A parent had already listened at the feet of his or her parent:

<sup>4</sup>he taught me, and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words. keep my commandments, and live. <sup>5</sup>Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth" (Prov 4:4–5).

A parent becomes obliged to pass on his or her experience to the child and in this case, the parent has now evolved into a sage, imparting his or her maxims to the child, as in Sir 8:8–9:

<sup>8</sup>Do not slight the discourse of the sages, but busy yourself with their maxims, because from them you will learn discipline and how to serve princes. <sup>9</sup>Do not ignore the discourse of the aged, for they themselves learned from their parents; from them you learn how to understand and to give an answer when the need arises.

In the above text, Ben Sira speaks from the experience of his own mastery of the maxims. He illustrates to his pupils with the idea of reaping good fruits. Parents can only pass on to their children what they have learned, observed, practised and experienced to be true and useful; thus, a legacy is passed on. Not all knowledge is transmitted but the communicated knowledge is what we call wisdom. A parent, therefore, immortalises himself or herself in his or her child.

The wisdom that is inherited from the elders of the family equips their children for societal life.<sup>25</sup> This traditional ethic is what holds society together.

<sup>23</sup> Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 32–33.

<sup>24</sup> Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," 33.

<sup>25</sup> Pope Francis, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia no. 193* (Reprinted by Ghana Catholic Bishop's Conference; Vatican: Vatican Press, 2017), 147.

The failure to impart proper wisdom to the youth leads to chaos and final demise of the community.<sup>26</sup> A generation of immoral parents will usually produce immoral children, culminating in the visiting of the iniquities of the fathers upon their children even to the third and fourth generation (Exod 34:7; Num 14:18) as the children perpetuate the evil of their parents. Children emulate their parents, including the mistakes of their parents.<sup>27</sup> The role of the elders in the formation of their children is essential, since the elders are supposed to be the repository of wisdom.<sup>28</sup> They determine which law is good and worthy and which is bad and unworthy; and consequently, fix the sanctions for violating such laws. Blenkinsopp calls such laws "the specialisation of tribal wisdom."<sup>29</sup>

#### 1b Verses 34–36: Seeking Wisdom

The use of νεότητος (νεότης) in Sir 6:18 gives the impression that Ben Sira's listeners were youthful and much evidence has indicated the presence of wisdom schools in the ancient Near East. In Egypt, for instance, the court of Pharaoh became the base for wisdom tradition and the wisdom pursued is political.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of the wisdom schools in Egypt was to train the children of the elite to be successful in the proceedings of the royal court. The school, Ray notes, engages in complex writing systems, rote learning and learning of proverbs for rhetoric in private and public life and for good ethical and successful moral life.<sup>31</sup> The school produces a manual for moral conduct, which has a collective name *Sby3t*, "instruction" or "teaching," which has roots that are similar to "enlightenment," dating before 2300 BC and the discovery of papyrus.<sup>32</sup>

Scholars have identified similarities between the Egyptian wisdom literature and the book of Proverbs. Wallis Budge was the first to make such a remark in the original publication of the papyrus 10474 of the British Museum.<sup>33</sup> His observation was followed by the discovery of Adolf Erman and Hugo Gressman, "The Sayings of the Wise" in Prov 22:17–24:22.<sup>34</sup> Proverbs 22:17–

<sup>26</sup> Block, "The Grace of Torah," 7; Michael J. Vlach, "Israel's Repentance and the Kingdom of God," *MSJ* 27/1 (2016): 167; Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 50.

<sup>27</sup> J. Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 50.

<sup>28</sup> Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice among the Ghana-Ewe*, 68–72; Kuada and Chachah, *Ghana*, 43–44.

<sup>29</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*, 80.

<sup>30</sup> Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 56.

<sup>31</sup> J. D. Ray, "Egyptian Wisdom Literature," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (ed. J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18.

<sup>32</sup> Ray, "Egyptian Wisdom Literature," 18.

<sup>33</sup> G. E. Bryce, *A Legacy of Wisdom: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1979), 9.

<sup>34</sup> Bryce, *A Legacy of Wisdom*, 9.

24:22 is parallel to the Wisdom of Amenemope and is considered a masterpiece.<sup>35</sup> The most important copy of Amenemope is BM 10474 dated around the period of Ramesside, about 1250–1100 BC. The copy has thirty stanzas, which is supposed to be a deliberate mimicry of the thirty epitomised justices in ancient Egypt. The author of Amenemope came from the city of Akhmimi, which is known for its intellectual history.<sup>36</sup> The discovery was a turning point in the history of sapiential tradition.

In Mesopotamia, the temple school functions primarily as a place of wisdom and was propelled towards cultic practices.<sup>37</sup> Magic was practised and initiated by the sage.

In Israel, wisdom tradition seemed to have started during the period of the clan and flourished during the time of the royal court.<sup>38</sup> No matter how much the wisdom of Israel depends on the wisdom of Egypt (1 Kgs 5:10; 4:30) and Mesopotamia (Jer 50:35; 51:57; Dan 2:12), biblical texts show that the wisdom of Israel is rooted in YHWH.<sup>39</sup> There are indications of places of wisdom in Israel (2 Sam 8:16–17; 20:25; 1 Kgs 4:3; 2 Kgs 12:10; 18–19; 22; Isa 22:15–25; Jer 18:18; Ezek 7:26). Even at the time of Ben Sira, wisdom schools existed. The quest for wisdom took place in an educational setting.<sup>40</sup> In Sir 51:23–30, Ben Sira spoke of his wisdom school, calling on the ignorant and the uneducated to come and acquire wisdom. Ben Sira was himself a seeker of wisdom and was thankful to YHWH for filling his wine press with grapes (33:16–19).

- Verse 34

The Hebrew manuscript omits v. 34. The setting for wisdom as a guide to life has its origin in the family. The human family has a lot of people with wisdom. To acquire wisdom, one must identify with a sage. The use of *πλήθει* invokes an existence of a number of or assembly of a chosen group of elders with wisdom among the people.<sup>41</sup> For Ben Sira, there should be no excuse for anyone not to have wisdom because there are elders filled with wisdom.

---

<sup>35</sup> J. Day, "Foreign Semitic Influence on the Wisdom of Israel and Its Appropriation in the Book of Proverbs," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (ed. J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 55.

<sup>36</sup> Ray, "Egyptian Wisdom Literature," 23.

<sup>37</sup> Richard J. Clifford, *The Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 32.

<sup>38</sup> Gerard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (trans. J. M. Martin; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 11; Clifford, *The Wisdom Literature*, 48.

<sup>39</sup> The following texts confirm that Israel's wisdom is divine: Gen 41:8; Exod 7:11; 2 Kgs 4:30; Isa 19:11–15; Heb 5:9–10.

<sup>40</sup> Rogers, "As Ploughing and Reaping," 369.

<sup>41</sup> See also LXX of Josh 11:4–5 for the multitude of people.

The adjective, *πρεσβυτέρων* (of elders), refers to elders in a society who are considered to be the repository of wisdom.<sup>42</sup> An elderly person who cannot reason according to his or her age is never called an elder but a child among the Ewe.<sup>43</sup> The aorist imperative, *στήθι*, therefore, enjoins the youth to station himself or herself in the midst of these elders to seek wisdom. In *Jdt* 8:11, Judith stood among the elders to admonish them to set an example for their children (v. 24) and her long-standing wisdom was praised (v. 29). There is no other way to learn from the wise than to be in their presence and listen to them. When such an elder is found, the youth is to *προσκολλήθητι* (to cleave, stick, adhere to) to that wise elder. The verb, to cleave, is used in *Gen* 2:24 to describe the union between husband and wife and in *Deut* 28:21, to describe how the pestilence cleaves to the bodies of the Israelites. It implies that two things become one. The understanding of Ben Sira is that the youth should become one with the sage, be like the sage and be faithful to the maxims of the sage.

- Verse 35

The narrative, *διήγησις*, is an orderly description of facts, events, actions or words, a discourse of accounts. The word occurs again in 8:8; 11:8 and 2 *Macc* 6:17. Ben Sira’s work is not just any discourse but one with qualification: a godly, *θείαν*, discourse as he links wisdom to Torah in v. 37. *Sirach* 19:20 shows that the Torah imparts wisdom and that wisdom follows when one in the fear of YHWH fulfills the Torah; anything devoid of this is detestable (*Sir* 19:23). Any discourse must be godly.<sup>44</sup> In the era of Ben Sira, the Greeks gloried in philosophical wisdom, science and intellectual knowledge. The era witnessed the works of Alexander the Great with the Hellenisation of cities, which included

---

<sup>42</sup> Among the Ewe, an elder who distinguishes himself becomes an ancestor. An ancestor is a person of emulation who had a good moral life and had influence in the community, a symbol of wisdom. The Ewes inhabit South-Eastern Ghana, South of the Republic of Togo and Benin. Cf. K. A. Asamoah, *The Ewe of Ghana and Togo on the Eve of Colonization* (Tema: Ghana Publishing, 1986); Kuada and Chachah, *Ghana*, 41–44; Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 2003), 161–168; T.N. Adjakpey, “Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice among the Ghana-Ewe and Their Relevance to the Christian Religion” (Ph.D., diss. Roma: Tipografia Olimpica, 1982), 68–72; 1; A. K. Dotse, *The Origins and Brief History of the Ewe People* (2011), 4; <https://ferrusca.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/the-origins-and-brief-history-of-the-ewe-people.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> It is part of the beliefs of the Ewe of Ghana, Togo and Benin that a person must grow physically, spiritually and mentally and that should reflect in his or her daily activities.

<sup>44</sup> To regard something as godly, there must be some mystical elements about it. Among the Ewe, many of these sayings are linked with the divine and are noted as taboos. The godly link enforces the adherence to the discourse.

Palestine.<sup>45</sup> Greek culture was prevalent at that time and the quest for wisdom was high, hence, Ben Sira wrote to caution against the futility of Greek speculation.<sup>46</sup>

The maxim, *παροιμίαι* considered in this context, also includes pithy sayings, proverbs, figures of speech, veiled sayings that contain truths designed for living (Sir 39:3; 47:17) as sources of knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Knowledge brings understanding to things considered complex; hence, *σύνοσις* (intelligence, acuteness and insight) are essential factors of knowledge for a youth to claim wisdom. To demonstrate the attention needed to cleave to wise sayings, in an artistic language, Ben Sira used the verb *ἐκφεύγω* to show how wise sayings fly away if not grabbed.

- Verse 36

Ben Sira admonishes the youth to employ all their sensual faculties in their search for a sage and having seen (*ἴδης*) a *συνετόν*; that is, one who understands, has discernment, intelligent, sagacious, wise and has good sense, such a person should not be deserted. The verb, *ὀρθρίζω* commands the youth to get up very early in the morning to visit the *συνετόν*. Wisdom is a quest, which entails much effort no matter what it takes. In Sir 4:12, "Whoever loves her (wisdom) loves life, and those who seek her (wisdom) from early morning are filled with joy." Serious matters are dealt with in the early hours of the morning.<sup>48</sup> The idea of rising up early appears also in the LXX (Exod 24:4; Judg 9:33; 2 Kgs 6:15; Job 8:5). In the gospel, Luke 21:38 says, "and all the people will get up early in the morning to listen to him in the Temple." The people see Jesus as a sage and go after him; the very advice Ben Sira gave to the youth. The urgency of the matter is depicted with *πρὸς αὐτόν* and the Syriac offers a vivid expression, "seek him out." Wisdom 6:12–16 has similar words:

<sup>12</sup>Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her. <sup>13</sup>She hastens to

<sup>45</sup> Alexander Salakpi, "Christianity and Greek Culture," in *Introduction to Christianity: An African Reader* (ed. Kwaku Boamah, Ernestina Enyonam Novieto Isaac Boaheng; Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2022), 83–110.

<sup>46</sup> A. A. Di Lella, "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 142.

<sup>47</sup> African maxims demonstrate the pervasiveness of wisdom thinking. To be an elder in Africa means one has become articulate in these maxims. See Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 137–145.

<sup>48</sup> Among the Ewe and other Africans, a serious matter is dealt with in the early hours of the morning. It could be to seek a favour, to show a sign of appreciation for a favour received, to ask for pardon from someone or to lodge a complaint; these are in fact serious businesses that are done early in the morning. In much the same way, the chief and his council of elders meet early in the morning to deliberate on issues pertaining to the welfare of the people.

make herself known to those who desire her. <sup>14</sup>One who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty, for she will be found sitting at the gate. <sup>15</sup>To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding, and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care, <sup>16</sup>because she goes about seeking those who are worthy of her, and she graciously appears to them in the paths, and meets them in every thought.

However, early in the morning might also mean metaphorically, the prime of youth life. Those early years should be used wisely and judiciously. The youth is supposed to seek a wise one early in life to gain wisdom in order to live a worthy life.

The verb, "to cleave," in v. 34b is expressed again in a different form with a command ἐκτριβέτω (to wear out) the doorstep of the sage. The verb, ἐκτρίβω, which means removal of something by irritation, wear out or drive out is vividly expressed by the Syriac. Accordingly in Syriac, which best expressed the idea of Ben Sira, the feet of the youth become a mattock or spade or fork that bray, pound or decorticate the path that leads to the door of this wise person. In addition, βαθμούς (steps or footsteps) does not only mean tracing the foot paths but also the evolvment of the youth to a disciple. This disciple walks in the footsteps of the master and becomes the embodiment of the master.

The discipline acquired during this discipleship enables:

1. Self-control, without which one's life is like an invaded city left without walls (Prov 25:28),
2. Obedience that leads to honour and glory (Sir 4:15–16); and
3. Perseverance that leads to a good and happy life.<sup>49</sup>

In chapter 51, Ben Sira's prayer expresses the help of wisdom against the clutches of his enemies to gain happiness in life.<sup>50</sup> To find true and lasting happiness is wisdom and one must work for it. The quest for wisdom never ends because wisdom is like a baobab tree that cannot be embraced with both hands.<sup>51</sup> The easiest and surest way to acquire wisdom is by studying and meditating on the law in the presence of YHWH as Ben Sira did in chapter 51.

<sup>49</sup> Rogers, "As Ploughing and Reaping," 370.

<sup>50</sup> Verses 1–12 invite those who wish to acquire wisdom to dwell in the house of YHWH. Verses 13–17 give the result of his search for wisdom. He first put his quest into prayers; v. 13 and vv. 18–21 present the changes that have occurred in his life through self-discipline. In v. 27, Ben Sira says he has laboured little and found for himself serenity. Now, he looks at the years of long discipline and restraints of no importance compared to the fruit he is reaping from the wisdom he has acquired.

<sup>51</sup> This is an Eve proverb to show that wisdom is immense - and one person cannot possess it all. Baobab is a big tree that one cannot embrace with both hands.

## 1c Verse 37 The Law of YHWH as the Source of Wisdom

Verse 37 appears different from the rest of vv. 32–36. In the latter, the focus was on the sage as one who imparts wisdom, but in v. 37, the law of YHWH (Torah) becomes the source of wisdom.<sup>52</sup> It is YHWH who grants the heart's desire of those who seek him.<sup>53</sup> The youth who listens to "godly discourse" (v. 35) now can meditate on the law that has godly thoughts. In Ben Sira, Torah promotes a historic Jewish theological base that is not found in other biblical wisdom books<sup>54</sup> and thus, marks a milestone and a turning point in wisdom tradition.<sup>55</sup>

Torah, the law, is a revelatory knowledge that became legitimate subject for study. It is a sacred deposit that contain all the truth given to Israel<sup>56</sup> and thus, became an integral part of the people, giving them life.<sup>57</sup> Ben Sira himself was a scholar of the law (32:14–15; 39:1). He recommended (39:1) the study and the meditation of the law. A wise person will not despise the law, for the law is divine. It is YHWH who gives life and the law serves as a key to successful living (Deut 30:16).<sup>58</sup> Sufficiency is highly embedded in the law and to achieve this sufficiency, one must cleave to the law.

The Torah cannot be separated from wisdom.<sup>59</sup> According to Ben Sira, wisdom is the result of keeping the Torah; anyone who studies the Torah achieves wisdom and will have genuine fulfilment (Sir 15:1; see also Deut 4:5–6). Israel is supposed to be a wise, discerning and reputable people (Deut 1:13).<sup>60</sup> The Torah itself does not show the wisdom of Israel. The observance of the Torah sustains YHWH's proximity and that enables Israel's wisdom to emerge

<sup>52</sup> Rogers, "As Ploughing and Reaping," 370; Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," 40; Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 15.

<sup>53</sup> Tremper III. Longman, 2017, *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017); Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 5.

<sup>54</sup> R. N. Whybray, "Ben Sira and History," in *Treasure of Wisdom Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom* (ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeulen; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 137.

<sup>55</sup> Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 155.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>57</sup> House, "Examining the Narratives of Old Testament Narrative," 242.

<sup>58</sup> Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," 40.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 38–39.

<sup>60</sup> The identification of the observance of the law and manifestation of wisdom were late in the history of Israel. In wisdom literature, wisdom is a gift of YHWH through which one receives life and blessing of YHWH (Prov 8). Cf. A. D. H. Mays, *Deuteronomy* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphant Publishing, 1979), 150. However, wisdom as law for promulgation is found in the ancient Near Eastern law codes; for instance, in the law code of Hammurabi, *ANET* 164ff, 178.

for other nations to see.<sup>61</sup> The one who observes the Torah lives in wisdom and consequently has the knowledge to enhance his or her own life.

The observance of the Torah demands its reflection and putting it into practice and this is supplied by the verb *διανοοῦ* (to reflect, to have in mind, to consider), which is a directive to the youth to deliberate upon whatever they hear and in this verse, it is not only a wise godly discourse but the statutes (*προστάγμασιν*) of YHWH. The *πρόσταγμα* (orders, commandments, official directions, injunctions) are essential for life. The youth is to endeavour to improve his or her life by carefully studying, practising and cultivating the Torah. These characteristics go hand in hand with pain (Isa 33:18; Act 4:25) and this is expressed with the imperative, *μελέτα*. The verb, *μελετάω* means to cultivate, to work with 'something' definitive in mind or in meditation; and in this context, that 'something' is the Torah. The study of the Torah, therefore, will fix, *στηριέι*, the wisdom quest. The verb, *στηρίζω* (to fix firmly in place, set up, establish, support), has theological import in this verse. The desire of the youth for which they have sacrificed and disciplined will be fixed through the meditation of the law and it will be established in their hearts and mind. The youth will lean on wisdom and will never have shame (Sir 15:4). The effect is internal strength and joy (Ps 51:12). Wisdom is to be pursued and, when found, it is a blessing, Sir 14: 20–27:

<sup>20</sup>Happy is the person who meditates on wisdom and reasons intelligently, <sup>21</sup>who reflects in his heart on her ways and ponders her secrets, <sup>22</sup>pursuing her like a hunter, and lying in wait on her paths: <sup>23</sup>who peers through her windows and listens at her doors; <sup>24</sup>who camps near her house and fastens his tent pegs to her walls; <sup>25</sup>who pitches his tent near her, and so occupies an excellent lodging place; <sup>26</sup>who place his children under her shelter, and lodges under her boughs: <sup>27</sup>who is sheltered by her from the heat, and dwells in the midst of her glory.

It is YHWH who grants, *δοθήσεταιί*, wisdom and wisdom is a sign of his generosity to all who obey the Torah.<sup>62</sup> Wisdom is not achieved unless one fears YHWH, that is, in terms of reverence.

The term, 'fear of YHWH,' appears numerous times in the Bible. In Ben Sira, the phrase and its equivalents appear 55 to 60 times.<sup>63</sup> The phrase possibly

<sup>61</sup> Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," 39; N. MacDonald, "The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I–IV," *VT* LVI (2006): 213; Daniel P. Bricker, "'God so near: An Examination of the Ancient Near Eastern Setting for Deuteronomy 4:7 and קרבים,'" *BBR* 22/3 (2012): 337.

<sup>62</sup> In wisdom literature, wisdom is a gift of YHWH through which one receives life and blessing of YHWH (Prov 8). See Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," 38; Mays, *Deuteronomy*, 150.

<sup>63</sup> Di Lella, "Fear of the Lord as Wisdom: Ben Sira 1, 11–30," 113.

was borrowed by Israel from its neighbours.<sup>64</sup> The fear of a deity is common in Egypt but came late in their wisdom literature during the demotic period. For instance, Ankhsheshongy xiv, 10 reads, "make burnt offering and libation before the god; let the 'fear of him' be great in your heart." The phrase, fear of a deity, also appears in many writings in Babylonian literature.<sup>65</sup>

The phrase, "the fear of YHWH," becomes the beginning of all knowledge and probably the hallmark of attaining wisdom. It evolves into a religious obligation because the gift of wisdom must be properly responded to by respect, gratitude and right moral conduct. Cultivating good moral conduct means avoiding immoral conduct. Some scholars even regard the fear of YHWH as the theme of the book of Sirach.<sup>66</sup> Sirach 23:27, the so called "elegant conclusion," concludes: "Those who survive her will recognize that nothing is better than the fear of the Lord, and nothing sweeter than to heed the commandments of the Lord."<sup>67</sup> Wisdom is achieved through the fear of YHWH, which is embodied in observing the Torah.<sup>68</sup>

## C THE WAY FORWARD

The study thus far recommends the following attitudes to gain wisdom: submission, patience, listening, perseverance, fear of God to become clever to live a disciplined life.<sup>69</sup> Legislators must outgrow partisan politics and work together as leaders elected to serve the good of the country. The youth are watching and learning; head count in two classrooms show that almost two-thirds desire to enter politics. For them, it is the easier way to become rich as they see how some politicians live in society with fame, power and display of wealth. There is nevertheless need for prudence, discipline and integrity.<sup>70</sup> Almost all legislators are either Christians or Muslims and they boast of their faith, but they need to live and translate the faith they profess into concrete action (vv. 35, 37). Their faith should instil the fear of the Lord that is awe and

<sup>64</sup> Day, "Foreign Semitic Influence on the Wisdom of Israel," 66–67.

<sup>65</sup> Ludlul bēl nēmeqi, ii. 18, 25, 32; Babylonian Theodicy, line 22; Counsels of Wisdom, lines 143–147; the Shamash hymn, 165, cited in Day, "Foreign Semitic Influence on the Wisdom of Israel," 67.

<sup>66</sup> Di Lella, "Fear of the Lord as Wisdom: Ben Sira 1, 11–30," 113; see also Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 154; R. E. Murphy, "The Use of Proverbial Sayings in Sirach" in *Treasures of Wisdom Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom* (N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 39.

<sup>67</sup> Sirach 23:27 summarises the whole of chs. 1 to 23 and it is referred to as the "elegant conclusion." See Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 326.

<sup>68</sup> Salakpi, "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law," 38–39.

<sup>69</sup> Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 5; Tremper, III Longman, *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

<sup>70</sup> Alexander G. K. Salakpi, "A Life of Integrity: The Maccabean Story," *Religions* 14/1428 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14111428>.

reverence before God, which motivates ethical action even in the absence of legal obligation as well as awareness of oneself as the creature of God with the responsibility of recreating the world. Between the two lies a proper understanding of what can and cannot be known, which entails epistemic humility.<sup>71</sup> Ben Sira recommends mentorship, which is needed in parliament. The young legislators must learn from the wise seasoned legislators (vv. 33, 34, 36). Youthful exuberance should help their humility and patience to learn the dictates of parliamentary proceedings. This will help the youth to tow their path in life and live a life of integrity.

## **D CONCLUSION**

The invitation to the youth to seek wisdom is crucial. They are the future generation and they should understand life and its intricacies. Wisdom is found in everyday life (24:13–17) and it invites those who desire it to taste its resources of abundant knowledge as it enables those who acquired it to avoid sin and shame (24:19–22). This text, 6:32–37, therefore, becomes necessary for the youth because it has all the elements needed for one to have a fulfilled life. In a society, one finds about four groups of people—the educated literates, the educated illiterates, the uneducated literates and the uneducated illiterates. The call of Ben Sira for wisdom (Sir 6:32–37) is for the youth to become either educated literates or educated illiterates. Wisdom is achieved through sound education and it has many benefits (Sir 4:11–19)—instruction, help, life, joy, glory, blessings, service, security and knowledge from YHWH; these are the universal needs of the youth.

They are thus cautioned against imbibing all that they see and hear through the media. Scrutiny, deliberation and discernment are needed. The media has its role to play; ignoring it is to ignore wisdom, as the media enhances successful living. It behoves the youth to exercise integrity in assimilating that which come within their space of life. At the time of Ben Sira, Greek philosophy was dominant hence he wrote to admonish the youth. Society should motivate its youth to aspire towards power, fame and wealth but to be content. However, these values must be achieved through good moral habits and attitudes, cultivated and nurtured in both formal and informal education setting, devoid of any immoral means.

Human society consists of both the wise and the fool. To be wise is an honour, which comes through self-responsibility and self-discipline. Honour is attained with sacrifice, good discernment and the ability to seek out and learn from the wise. To be a fool goes with less pain, an easy life with happiness and gratification that looks real but leads to irreversible doom of suffering and shame. This study (Sir 6:32–37), therefore, invites the youth to acquire wisdom.

---

<sup>71</sup> Cooke, *Wisdom's Pedagogy*, 37.

This wisdom entails discipline, integrity, hard work, perseverance, endurance and discernment in order to achieve long life in good health and prosperity.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, the youth, in their attempt to acquire wisdom, should pursue careers that are rewarding and fulfilling, leading to a decent life with a good family. Ultimately, they will become good leaders and good citizens with a prosperous happy life.

## E BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adjakpey, T. N. "Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice among the Ghana-Ewe and Their Relevance to the Christian Religion." Ph.D. diss. Rome: Tipografia Olimpica, 1982.
- Asamoah, K.A. *The Ewe of Ghana and Togo on the Eve of Colonization*. Tema: Ghana Publishing, 1986.
- Beentjes, P. C. *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.
- Biblia sacra iuxta Latinam vulgatam versionem, 12: Sapientia Salomonis. Liber Hiesu fillii Sirach*. Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanus, 1964.
- Blenkinsopp, J. *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Block, D. I. "The Grace of Torah: The Mosaic Prescription for Life (Deut. 4:1–8; 6:20–25)." *BS* 162 (2005):1–22.
- Brueggemann, W. *Deuteronomy*. AOTC. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.
- Bryce, G. E. *A Legacy of Wisdom: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1979.
- Ceresko, A. R. *Introduction to Old Testament Wisdom: A Spirituality of Liberation*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Clements, R. E. *Wisdom for a Changing World Wisdom in Old Testament Theology*. Berkeley Series 2. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Wisdom in Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992.
- Cooke, L. C. "Wisdom's Pedagogy: Engaging Biblical Wisdom Literature with Young People." Ph.D. diss., Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, 2023.
- Crenshaw, J. L. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.
- Day, J. "Foreign Semitic Influence on the Wisdom of Israel and Its Appropriation in the Book of Proverbs." Pages 55–70 in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*. Edited by J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Dell, K. "Wisdom in the Old Testament." Pages 1–30 in *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*. Edited by Brendan N. Wolfe et al., 2024. Cited 26 November 2025. <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/WisdomintheOldTestament>
- Di Lella A. A. "Fear of the Lord and Belief and Hope in the Lord amid Trials: Sirach 2:1–18." Pages 188–204 in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm. on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 29. Washington: CBA, 1997.

<sup>72</sup> Dell, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 10.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Fear of the Lord as Wisdom: Ben Sira 1, 11–30." Pages 113–133 in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference, 28–31 July, Soesterberg, Netherlands*. Edited by P. C. Beentjes. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 225. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966): 139–154.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Facsimiles of the Fragments Hitherto Recovered of the Book of Ecclesiasticus in Hebrew*. London: Oxford University Press, 1901.
- Dotse, A. K. *The Origins and Brief History of the Ewe People*, 2011. <https://ferrusca.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/the-origins-and-brief-history-of-the-ewe-people.pdf>.
- Gyekye, K. *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*. Accra: Sankofa Publishing Co., 2003.
- Harrington, D. J. *Jesus Ben Sira of Jerusalem: A Guide to Living Wisely*. Edited by Barbara Green. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005.
- Kuada, J. and Y. Chachah. *Ghana: Understanding the People and Their Culture*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Service, 1999.
- Lambert, W. G. "Some New Babylonian Wisdom Literature." Pages 30–42 in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*. Edited by J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Liesen, J. "Strategical Self-Reference in Ben Sira." Pages 63–74 in *Treasure of Wisdom Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom of F. M. Gilbert*. Edited by N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeulen. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.
- Longman, T. III. *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- MacDonald, N. "The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I–IV." *Vetus Testamentum* LVI (2006): 203–224.
- Murphy, R. E. "The Use of Proverbial Sayings in Sirach." Pages 31–40 in *Treasures of Wisdom Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom of F. M. Gilbert*. Edited by N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeulen. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.
- Naadi, T. "Ghana MPs Brawl in Parliament over Mobile Money Tax." 21 December 2021. Cited 27 November 2025. <https://www.bbc.com>.
- Orlinsky, H. M. ed. *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1976.
- Pope Francis, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia no. 193*. Ghana Catholic Bishop's Conference. Vatican: Vatican Press, 2017.
- Rankin, O.S. *Israel's Wisdom Literature: Its Bearing on Theology and History of Religion*. New York: Schocken Books, 1936.
- Ray, J. D. "Egyptian Wisdom Literature." Pages 17–29 in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*. Edited by J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Revestimentos, E. "Minority Blocks Vetting of Supreme Court Nominee Justice Paul Baffoe-Bonne." Cited 27 November 2025. Online: <https://www.eliane.com>.
- Salakpi, A. G. K. "Deut 4:1–8 and the Observance of the Law." *Ghana Journal of Religion and Theology* 9/2 (2019): 25–47.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Christianity and Greek Culture." Pages 83–110 in *Introduction to Christianity: An African Reader*. Edited by Kwaku Boamah, Ernestina Enyonam Novieto Isaac Boaheng. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2022.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Life of Integrity: The Maccabean Story." *Religions* 14/1428 (2023): 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14111428>
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Discipline in Ghanaian Christian Schools: A Shared Responsibility." *Journal of Education and Practice* 16/5 (2025): 40–52. DOI: 10.7176/JEP/16-5-05.
- Scott, R. B.Y. *The Way of Wisdom in the Old Testament*. New York: Macmillan, 1971.
- Skehan, P. W. and A.A. Di Lella. *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*. AB 39. New York: Doubleday, 1987.
- Vlach, M. J. "Israel's Repentance and the Kingdom of God." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 27/1 (2016): 161–186.
- Von Rad, G. *Wisdom in Israel*. Translated by J. M. Martin. London: SCM, 1972.
- Whybray, R. N. "Ben Sira and History." Pages 137–146 in *Treasure of Wisdom Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom of F. M. Gilbert*. Edited by N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.
- Ziegler, J. *Sapientia Jesu Fillii Sirach*. Septuaginta 12/2. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966.