

## Knock Bible School 2023

“In the beginning”: biblical reflections on care for the earth.

Anxiety about the environment is part of our we live nowadays and we are rightly exercised by it. What resources have we, as believers, to respond? In this short programme, we use as a guide the teaching of Pope Francis in his ground-breaking letter *Laudato Si'*. The particular focus of the programme will be on a passages from the bible which have direct relevance today.

Day 1

**Lecture 1:** Patterns of Goodness and Beauty (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

**Lecture 2:** Praying the gift of creation (Psalm 104)

Day 2

**Lecture 3:** The fingerprint of God (Job 28:1-28; Proverbs 1:20-33; 8:22-31 and 9:1-6; Sirach 24:1-12; Baruch 3:9-4:4; Wisdom 7-9)

**Lecture 4:** Let the last word be: He is the All (Sirach 42:15-43:33)

Day 3

**Lecture 5:** In the beginning was the Word (John 1:1-18)

**Lecture 6:** All things came into being through him (Colossians 1:15-23; Ephesians 1:3-14)

### Schedule

10.00 am	Lecture 1
12.00 pm	Celebration of Eucharist
2.30 pm	Lecture 2
4.30 pm	Lectio Divina

Presenter

Kieran J. O'Mahony OSA

[www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie)

[www.tarsusscriptureschool.ie](http://www.tarsusscriptureschool.ie)

## Lecture 1: Patterns of Goodness and Beauty (Genesis 1:-2:3)

### *Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath*

**Genesis 1:1** When God began to create the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. **3** Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

**Genesis 1:6** And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” **7** So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. **8** God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

**Genesis 1:9** And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

**Genesis 1:14** And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. **16** God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

**Genesis 1:20** And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” **21** So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

**Genesis 1:24** And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the

air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

**Genesis 1:27** So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

**Genesis 1:28** God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” **29** God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. **30** And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. **31** God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

**Genesis 2:1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. **2** On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

### **New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)**

Here’s the Old Greek version, which is interestingly different. Curiously, the Greek translation (LXX) is older than the *surviving* Hebrew text (MT)

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God made the sky and the earth. **2** Yet the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was over the abyss, and a divine wind was being carried along over the water. **3** And God said, “Let light come into being.” And light came into being. **4** And God saw the light, that it was good. And God separated between the light and between the darkness. **5** And God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, day one.

**Genesis 1:6** And God said, “Let a firmament come into being in the midst of the water, and let it be a separator between water and water.” And it became so. **7** And God made the firmament, and God separated between the water that was under the firmament and between the water that was above the firmament. **8** And God called the firmament Sky. And God saw that it was good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a second day.

**Genesis 1:9** And God said, “Let the water that is under the sky be gathered into one gathering, and let the dry land appear.” And it became so. And the water that was under the sky was gathered into their gatherings, and the dry land appeared. **10** And God called the dry land Earth, and the systems of the waters he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** And God said, “Let the earth put forth herbaceous vegetation, seeding seed according to kind and according to likeness, and a fruit-bearing tree producing fruit of which its seed is in it according to kind, on the earth.” And it became so. **12** And the earth brought forth herbaceous vegetation, seeding seed according to kind and according to likeness, and a fruit-bearing tree producing fruit of which its seed is in it according to kind, on the earth. And God saw that it was good. **13** And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a third day.

**Genesis 1:14** And God said, “Let luminaries come into being in the firmament of the sky for illumination of the earth, to separate between the day and between the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years, **15** and let them be for illumination in the firmament of the sky so as to give light upon the earth.” And it became so. **16** And God made the two great luminaries, the great luminary for rulership of the day and the lesser luminary for rulership of the night, and the stars. **17** And God set them in the firmament of the sky so as to give light upon the earth **18** and to rule the day and the night and to separate between the light and between the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a fourth day.

**Genesis 1:20** And God said, “Let the waters bring forth creeping things among living creatures and birds flying on the earth against the firmament of the sky.” And it became so. **21** And God made the great sea monsters and every creature among creeping animals, which the waters brought forth according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to kind. And God saw that they were good. **22** And God blessed them, saying, “Increase, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a fifth day.

**Genesis 1:24** And God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to kind: quadrupeds and creeping things and wild animals of the earth according to kind.” And it became so. **25** And God made the wild animals of the earth according to kind and the cattle according to kind and all the creeping things of the earth according to their kind. And God saw that they were good.

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, “Let us make humankind according to our image and according to likeness, and let them rule the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and the cattle and all the earth and all the creeping things that creep upon the earth.”

**27** And God made humankind;  
according to divine image he made it;  
male and female he made them.

**28** And God blessed them, saying, “Increase, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and all the cattle and all the earth and all the creeping things that creep upon the earth.” **29** And God said, “See, I have given to you any herbage, sowable, seeding seed, which is over all the earth, and any tree that has in itself fruit of sowable seed—to you it shall be for food— **30** and to all the wild animals of the earth and to all the birds of the sky and to every creeping thing that creeps on the earth that has in itself the animating force of life—and all green herbage for food.” And it became so. **31** And God saw all the things that he had made, and see, they were exceedingly good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a sixth day.

**Genesis 2:1** And the sky and the earth were finished, and all their arrangement. **2** And on the sixth day God finished his works that he had made, and he left off on the seventh day from all his works that he had made. **3** And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it he left off from all his works that God had begun to make.

## Lecture 2: Praying the gift of creation (Psalm 104)

- Psalm 104:1** Bless the LORD, O my soul.  
O LORD my God, you are very great.  
You are clothed with honour and majesty,  
2 wrapped in light as with a garment.  
You stretch out the heavens like a tent;  
3 you set the beams of your chambers on the waters;  
you make the clouds your chariot;  
you ride on the wings of the wind;  
4 you make the winds your messengers,  
fire and flame your ministers.
- Psalm 104:5** You set the earth on its foundations,  
so that it shall never be shaken.  
6 You cover it with the deep as with a garment;  
the waters stood above the mountains.  
7 At your rebuke they flee;  
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.  
8 They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys,  
to the place that you appointed for them.  
9 You set a boundary that they may not pass,  
so that they might not again cover the earth.
- Psalm 104:10** You make springs gush forth in the valleys;  
they flow between the hills,  
11 giving drink to every wild animal;  
the wild asses quench their thirst.  
12 By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;  
they sing among the branches.  
13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains;  
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
- Psalm 104:14** You cause the grass to grow for the cattle  
and plants for people to cultivate,  
to bring forth food from the earth  
15 and wine to gladden the human heart,  
oil to make the face shine  
and bread to strengthen the human heart.  
16 The trees of the field are watered abundantly,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.  
17 In them the birds build their nests;  
the stork has its home in the fir trees.  
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;  
the rocks are a refuge for the conies.  
19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons;  
the sun knows its time for setting.  
20 You make darkness, and it is night,  
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.  
21 The young lions roar for their prey,  
seeking their food from God.  
22 When the sun rises, they withdraw  
and lie down in their dens.  
23 People go out to their work  
and to their labor until the evening.

**Psalms 104:24** O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.

**25** There is the sea, great and wide;  
creeping things innumerable are there,  
living things both small and great.

**26** There go the ships  
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

**Psalms 104:27** These all look to you  
to give them their food in due season;  
**28** when you give to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

**29** When you hide your face, they are dismayed;  
when you take away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.

**30** When you send forth your spirit, they are created,  
and you renew the face of the ground.

**Psalms 104:31** May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
may the LORD rejoice in his works—

**32** who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke.

**33** I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

**34** May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
for I rejoice in the LORD.

**35** Let sinners be consumed from the earth,  
and let the wicked be no more.

Bless the LORD, O my soul.

Praise the LORD!

**Lecture 3: The fingerprint of God (Job 28:1-28; Proverbs 1:20-33; 8:22-31 and 9:1-6; Sirach 24:1-12; Baruch 3:9-4:4; Wisdom 7-9)**

- Job 28:1 “Surely there is a mine for silver  
and a place for gold to be refined.
- 2 Iron is taken out of the earth,  
and copper is smelted from ore.
- 3 Miners put an end to darkness  
and search out to the farthest bound  
the ore in gloom and deep darkness.
- 4 They open shafts in a valley away from human habitation;  
they are forgotten by travellers;  
they sway suspended, remote from people.
- 5 As for the earth, out of it comes bread,  
but underneath it is turned up as by fire.
- 6 Its stones are the place of sapphires,  
and its dust contains gold.
- Job 28:7 “That path no bird of prey knows,  
and the falcon’s eye has not seen it.
- 8 The proud wild animals have not trodden it;  
the lion has not passed over it.
- Job 28:9 “They put their hand to the flinty rock  
and overturn mountains by the roots.
- 10 They cut out channels in the rocks,  
and their eyes see every precious thing.
- 11 The sources of the rivers they probe;  
hidden things they bring to light.
- Job 28:12 “But where shall wisdom be found?  
And where is the place of understanding?
- 13 Mortals do not know the way to it,  
and it is not found in the land of the living.
- 14 The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’  
and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’
- 15 It cannot be gotten for gold,  
and silver cannot be weighed out as its price.
- 16 It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,  
in precious onyx or sapphire.
- 17 Gold and glass cannot equal it,  
nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.
- 18 No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal;  
the price of wisdom is above pearls.
- 19 The chrysolite of Cush cannot compare with it,  
nor can it be valued in pure gold.
- Job 28:20 “Where then does wisdom come from?  
And where is the place of understanding?
- 21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living  
and concealed from the birds of the air.
- 22 Abaddon and Death say,  
‘We have heard a rumour of it with our ears.’
- Job 28:23 “God understands the way to it,  
and he knows its place.
- 24 For he looks to the ends of the earth

and sees everything under the heavens.

- 25 When he gave to the wind its weight  
and apportioned out the waters by measure,  
26 when he made a decree for the rain,  
and a way for the thunderbolt,  
27 then he saw it and declared it;  
he established it and searched it out.  
28 And he said to humankind,  
'Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;  
and to depart from evil is understanding.'

### *Lady Wisdom*

- Proverbs 1:20 Wisdom cries out in the street;  
in the squares she raises her voice.  
21 At the busiest corner she cries out;  
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:  
22 "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?  
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing  
and fools hate knowledge?  
23 Give heed to my reproof;  
I will pour out my thoughts to you;  
I will make my words known to you.  
24 Because I have called and you refused,  
have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,  
25 and because you have ignored all my counsel  
and would have none of my reproof,  
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when panic strikes you,  
27 when panic strikes you like a storm  
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish come upon you.  
28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;  
they will seek me diligently but will not find me.  
29 Because they hated knowledge  
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,  
30 would have none of my counsel  
and despised all my reproof,  
31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way  
and be sated with their own devices.  
32 For waywardness kills the simple,  
and the complacency of fools destroys them;  
33 but those who listen to me will be secure  
and will live at ease without dread of disaster."

### *Wisdom's Part in Creation*

- Proverbs 8:22 "The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of long ago.  
23 Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.  
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,



- when there were no springs abounding with water.
- 25 Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth,
- 26 when he had not yet made earth and fields  
or the world's first bits of soil.
- 27 When he established the heavens, I was there;  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
- 28 when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,
- 29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
- 30 then I was beside him, like a master worker,  
and I was daily his delight,  
playing before him always,
- 31 playing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the human race.

### *Wisdom's Feast*

- Proverbs 9:1 Wisdom has built her house;  
she has hewn her seven pillars.
- 2 She has slaughtered her animals; she has mixed her wine;  
she has also set her table.
- 3 She has sent out her female servants; she calls  
from the highest places in the town,
- 4 "You who are simple, turn in here!"  
To those without sense she says,
- 5 "Come, eat of my bread  
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- 6 Lay aside immaturity and live,  
and walk in the way of insight."

### *Wisdom praises herself*

- Sirach 24:1 Wisdom praises herself  
and tells of her glory in the midst of her people.
- 2 In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth,  
and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory:
- 3 "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High  
and covered the earth like a mist.
- 4 I encamped in the heights,  
and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.
- 5 Alone I compassed the vault of heaven  
and traversed the depths of the abyss.
- 6 Over waves of the sea, over all the earth,  
and over every people and nation I have held sway.
- 7 Among all these I sought a resting place;  
in whose inheritance should I abide?
- Sirach 24:8 "Then the Creator of all things gave me a command,  
and my Creator pitched my tent.  
He said, 'Encamp in Jacob,

- and in Israel receive your inheritance.’
- 9 Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me,  
and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.
- 10 In the holy tent I ministered before him,  
and so I was established in Zion.
- 11 Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place,  
and in Jerusalem was my domain.
- 12 I took root in an honoured people;  
in the portion of the Lord is my inheritance.

*In Praise of Wisdom*

- Baruch 3:9** Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life;  
give ear and learn wisdom!
- 10 Why is it, O Israel, why is it that you are in the land of your enemies,  
that you are growing old in a foreign land,
- 11 that you are defiled with the dead,  
that you are counted among those in Hades?
- 12 You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom.
- 13 If you had walked in the way of God,  
you would be living in peace forever.
- 14 Learn where there is wisdom,  
where there is strength,  
where there is understanding,  
so that you may at the same time discern  
where there is length of days and life,  
where there is light for the eyes and peace.
- Baruch 3:15** Who has found her place,  
and who has entered her storehouses?
- 16 Where are the rulers of the nations  
and those who lorded it over the animals on earth;
- 17 those who made sport of the birds of the air  
and who hoarded up silver and gold  
in which people trust,  
and there is no end to their getting;
- 18 those who schemed to get silver and were anxious,  
but there is no trace of their works?
- 19 They have vanished and gone down to Hades,  
and others have arisen in their place.
- Baruch 3:20** Younger people have seen the light of day  
and have lived upon the earth,  
but they have not learned the way to knowledge,  
nor understood her paths,  
nor laid hold of her.
- 21 Their descendants have strayed far from their way.
- 22 She has not been heard of in Canaan  
or seen in Teman;
- 23 the descendants of Hagar, who seek for understanding on the earth,  
the merchants of Merran and Teman,  
the storytellers and the seekers for understanding,  
have not learned the way to wisdom  
or given thought to her paths.

- Baruch 3:24** O Israel, how great is the house of God,  
how vast the territory that he possesses!
- 25 It is great and has no bounds;  
it is high and immeasurable.
- 26 The giants were born there, who were famous of old,  
great in stature, expert in war.
- 27 God did not choose them  
or give them the way to knowledge,
- 28 so they perished because they had no wisdom;  
they perished through their folly.
- Baruch 3:29** Who has gone up into heaven and taken her  
and brought her down from the clouds?
- 30 Who has gone over the sea and found her  
and will buy her for pure gold?
- 31 No one knows the way to her  
or is concerned about the path to her.
- 32 But the one who knows all things knows her;  
he found her by his understanding.  
The one who prepared the earth for all time  
filled it with four-footed creatures;
- 33 the one who sends forth the light and it goes,  
he called it, and it obeyed him, trembling;
- 34 the stars shone in their watches and were glad;
- 35 he called them, and they said, "Here we are!"  
They shone with gladness for him who made them.
- 36 This is our God;  
no other can be compared to him.
- 37 He found the whole way to knowledge  
and gave her to his servant Jacob  
and to Israel, whom he loved.
- 38 Afterward she appeared on earth  
and lived with humankind.
- Baruch 4:1** She is the book of the commandments of God,  
the law that endures forever.  
All who hold her fast will live,  
and those who forsake her will die.
- 2 Turn, O Jacob, and take her;  
walk toward the shining of her light.
- 3 Do not give your glory to another  
or your advantages to a foreign nation.
- 4 Happy are we, O Israel,  
for we know what is pleasing to God.

*The King Is Like Other Mortals*

- Wisdom 7:1** I also am mortal like everyone else,  
a descendant of the first-formed child of earth,  
and in the womb of a mother I was moulded into flesh,
- 2 within the period of ten months, compacted with blood,  
from the seed of a man and the pleasure of marriage.
- 3 And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air  
and fell upon the kindred earth;

- my first sound was a cry, as is true of all.  
4 I was nursed with care in swaddling cloths.  
5 For no king has had a different beginning of existence;  
6 there is for all one entrance into life and one way out.

### *Respect for Wisdom*

- Wisdom 7:7** Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me;  
I called on God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.  
8 I preferred her to sceptres and thrones,  
and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her.  
9 Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem,  
because all gold is but a little sand in her sight,  
and silver will be accounted as clay before her.  
10 I loved her more than health and beauty,  
and I chose to have her rather than light  
because her radiance never ceases.  
11 All good things came to me along with her,  
and in her hands uncounted wealth.  
12 I rejoiced in them all because wisdom leads them,  
but I did not know that she was their mother.  
13 I learned without guile, and I impart without grudging;  
I do not hide her wealth,  
14 for it is an unfailing treasure for mortals;  
those who get it obtain friendship with God,  
commended for the gifts that come from instruction.

### *Prayer for Wisdom*

- Wisdom 7:15** May God grant me to speak with judgment  
and to have thoughts worthy of what I have received,  
for he is the guide even of wisdom  
and the corrector of the wise.  
16 For both we and our words are in his hand,  
as are all understanding and skill in crafts.  
17 For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists,  
to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements,  
18 the beginning and end and middle of times,  
the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons,  
19 the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars,  
20 the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals,  
the powers of spirits and the thoughts of human beings,  
the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots;  
21 I learned both what is secret and what is manifest,  
22 for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.

### *The Nature of Wisdom*

There is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy,  
unique, manifold, subtle,  
agile, clear, unpolluted,

- 23 distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen,  
irresistible, beneficent, humane,  
steadfast, sure, free from anxiety,  
all-powerful, overseeing all,  
and penetrating through all spirits  
that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle.
- 24 For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;  
because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things.
- 25 For she is a breath of the power of God  
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;  
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.
- 26 For she is a reflection of eternal light,  
a spotless mirror of the working of God,  
and an image of his goodness.
- 27 Although she is but one, she can do all things,  
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things;  
in every generation she passes into holy souls  
and makes them friends of God and prophets,
- 28 for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.
- 29 She is more beautiful than the sun  
and excels every constellation of the stars.  
Compared with the light she is found to be more radiant,
- 30 for it is succeeded by the night,  
but against wisdom evil does not prevail.
- Wisdom 8:1** She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other,  
and she orders all things well.

*Love for Wisdom*

- Wisdom 8:2** I loved her and sought her from my youth;  
I desired to take her for my bride  
and became enamoured of her beauty.
- 3 She glorifies her noble birth by living with God,  
and the Lord of all loves her.
- 4 For she is an initiate in the knowledge of God  
and an associate in his works.
- 5 If riches are a desirable possession in life,  
what is richer than wisdom, the active cause of all things?
- 6 And if understanding is effective,  
who more than she is fashioner of what exists?
- 7 And if anyone loves righteousness,  
her labours are virtues,  
for she teaches self-control and prudence,  
justice and courage;  
nothing in life is more profitable for mortals than these.
- 8 And if anyone longs for wide experience,  
she knows the things of old and infers the things to come;  
she understands turns of speech and the solutions of riddles;  
she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders  
and of the outcome of seasons and times.

*Wisdom Indispensable to Rulers*

**Wisdom 8:9** Therefore I determined to take her to live with me,  
knowing that she would give me good counsel  
and encouragement in cares and grief.

10 Because of her I shall have glory among the multitudes  
and honour in the presence of the elders, though I am young.

11 I shall be found keen in judgment,  
and in the sight of rulers I shall be admired.

12 When I am silent they will wait for me,  
and when I speak they will give heed;  
if I speak at greater length,  
they will put their hands on their mouths.

13 Because of her I shall have immortality  
and leave an everlasting remembrance to those who come after me.

14 I shall govern peoples,  
and nations will be subject to me;

15 dread monarchs will be afraid of me when they hear of me;  
among the people I shall show myself capable and courageous in war.

16 When I enter my house, I shall find rest with her,  
for companionship with her has no bitterness,  
and life with her has no pain but gladness and joy.

17 When I considered these things inwardly  
and pondered in my heart  
that in kinship with wisdom there is immortality,  
and in friendship with her, pure delight,  
and in the labours of her hands, unfailing wealth,  
and in the experience of her company, understanding,  
and renown in sharing her words,  
I went about seeking how to get her for myself.

19 As a child I was naturally gifted,  
and a good soul fell to my lot,  
20 or rather, being good, I entered an undefiled body.  
21 But I perceived that I would not possess wisdom unless God gave her to me—  
and it was a mark of insight to know whose gift she was—  
so I appealed to the Lord and implored him,  
and with my whole heart I said,

*Prayer for Wisdom*

**Wisdom 9:1** “O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy,  
who have made all things by your word  
2 and by your wisdom have formed humankind  
to have dominion over the creatures you have made  
3 and rule the world in holiness and righteousness  
and pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul,  
4 give me the wisdom that sits by your throne,  
and do not reject me from among your children.  
5 For I am your servant, the son of your female servant,  
a man who is weak and short-lived,  
with little understanding of judgment and laws,  
6 for even one who is perfect among humans

- will be regarded as nothing without the wisdom that comes from you.
- 7 You have chosen me to be king of your people  
and to be judge over your sons and daughters.
- 8 You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain  
and an altar in the city of your habitation,  
a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning.
- 9 With you is wisdom, she who knows your works  
and was present when you made the world;  
she understands what is pleasing in your sight  
and what is right according to your commandments.
- 10 Send her forth from the holy heavens,  
and from the throne of your glory send her,  
that she may labor at my side  
and that I may learn what is pleasing to you.
- 11 For she knows and understands all things,  
and she will guide me wisely in my actions  
and guard me with her glory.
- 12 Then my works will be acceptable,  
and I shall judge your people justly  
and shall be worthy of the throne of my father.
- 13 For who can learn the counsel of God?  
Or who can discern what the Lord wills?
- 14 For the reasoning of mortals is worthless,  
and our designs are likely to fail,  
15 for a perishable body weighs down the soul,  
and this earthy tent burdens the thoughtful mind.
- 16 We can hardly guess at what is on earth,  
and what is at hand we find with labor,  
but who has traced out what is in the heavens?
- 17 Who has learned your counsel  
unless you have given wisdom  
and sent your holy spirit from on high?
- 18 And thus the paths of those on earth were set right,  
and people were taught what pleases you  
and were saved by wisdom.”

## Lecture 4: Let the last word be: He is the All (Sirach 42:15-43:33)

### *The Works of God in Nature*

- Sirach 42:15** I will now call to mind the works of the Lord  
and will declare what I have seen.  
By the word of the Lord his works are made,  
and all his creatures do his will.
- 16** The sun looks down on everything with its light,  
and the work of the Lord is full of his glory.
- 17** The Lord has not empowered even his holy ones  
to recount all his marvellous works,  
which the Lord the Almighty has established  
so that the universe may stand firm in his glory.
- 18** He searches out the abyss and the human heart;  
he understands their subtleties.  
For the Most High knows all that may be known;  
he sees from of old the things that are to come.
- 19** He discloses what has been and what is to be,  
and he reveals the traces of hidden things.
- 20** No thought escapes him,  
and not a single word is hidden from him.
- 21** He has set in order the splendours of his wisdom;  
he is from all eternity one and the same.  
Nothing can be added or taken away,  
and he needs no one to be his counsellor.
- 22** How desirable are all his works,  
and how sparkling they are to see!
- 23** All these things live and remain forever;  
each creature is preserved to meet a particular need.
- 24** All things come in pairs, one opposite the other,  
and he has made nothing incomplete.
- 25** Each supplements the virtues of the other.  
Who could ever tire of seeing his glory?

### *The Splendour of the Sun*

- Sirach 43:1** The pride of the higher realms is the clear vault of the sky,  
as glorious to behold as the sight of the heavens.
- 2** The sun, when it appears, proclaims as it rises  
what a marvellous instrument it is, the work of the Most High.
- 3** At noon it parches the land,  
and who can withstand its burning heat?
- 4** A man tending a furnace works in burning heat,  
but three times as hot is the sun scorching the mountains;  
when it breathes out fiery vapours  
and when it shines forth its rays, it blinds the eyes.
- 5** Great is the Lord who made it;  
at his orders it hurries on its course.



*The Splendour of the Moon*

- Sirach 43:6** It is the moon that marks the changing seasons,  
governing the times, an everlasting sign.
- 7 From the moon comes the sign for festal days,  
a light that wanes when it completes its course.
- 8 The new moon, as its name suggests, renews itself;  
how marvellous it is in this change,  
a beacon to the hosts on high  
shining in the vault of the heavens!

*The Glory of the Stars and the Rainbow*

- Sirach 43:9** The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven,  
a glittering array in the heights of the Lord.
- 10 On the orders of the Holy One they stand in their appointed places;  
they never relax in their watches.
- 11 Look at the rainbow and praise him who made it;  
it is exceedingly beautiful in its brightness.
- 12 It encircles the sky with its glorious arc;  
the hands of the Most High have stretched it out.

*The Marvels of Nature*

- Sirach 43:13** By his command he sends the driving snow  
and speeds the lightnings of his judgment.
- 14 Therefore the storehouses are opened,  
and the clouds fly out like birds.
- 15 In his majesty he gives the clouds their strength,  
and the hailstones are broken in pieces.
- 17 The voice of his thunder causes the earth to tremble;  
16 when he appears, the mountains shake.
- At his will the south wind blows,  
[17b] so do the storm from the north and the whirlwind.  
He scatters the snow like birds flying down,  
and its descent is like locusts alighting.
- 18 The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness,  
and the mind is amazed as it falls.
- 19 He pours frost over the earth like salt,  
and icicles form like pointed thorns.
- 20 The cold north wind blows,  
and ice freezes on the water;  
it settles on every pool of water,  
and the water puts it on like a breastplate.
- 21 He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness  
and withers the tender grass like fire.
- 22 A mist quickly heals all things;  
the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat.
- Sirach 43:23** By his plan he stilled the deep  
and planted islands in it.
- 24 Those who sail the sea tell of its dangers,  
and we marvel at what we hear.

- 25 In it are strange and marvellous creatures,  
all kinds of living things, and mighty sea monsters.
- 26 Because of him each of his messengers succeeds,  
and by his word all things hold together.
- Sirach 43:27 We could say more but could never say enough;  
let the final word be: "He is the all."
- 28 Where can we find the strength to praise him?  
For he is greater than all his works.
- 29 Awesome is the Lord and very great,  
and marvellous is his power.
- 30 Glorify the Lord and exalt him as much as you can,  
for he surpasses even that.  
When you exalt him, summon all your strength,  
and do not grow weary, for you cannot praise him enough.
- 31 Who has seen him and can describe him?  
Or who can extol him as he is?
- 32 Many things greater than these lie hidden,  
for I have seen but few of his works.
- 33 For the Lord has made all things,  
and to the godly he has given wisdom.

## Lecture 5: In the beginning was the Word (John 1:1-18)

### *The Word Became Flesh*

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

**John 1:6** There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

**9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

**John 1:10** He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. **12** But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. **15** (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") **16** From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17** The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

## Lecture 6: All things came into being through him (Colossians 1:15-23 and Ephesians 1:3-14)

### *The Supremacy of Christ*

**Colossians 1:15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, **16** for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

**Colossians 1:21** And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22** he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, **23** provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a minister of this gospel.

### *Spiritual Blessings in Christ*

**Ephesians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. **5** He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace **8** that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight **9** he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. **11** In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, **12** so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; **14** this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.