

Wisdom 2 Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE)

2 For they reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves,

“Short and sorrowful is our life,
and there is no remedy when a man comes to his end,
and no one has been known to return from Hades.

²Because we were born by mere chance,
and hereafter we shall be as though we had never been;
because the breath in our nostrils is smoke,
and reason is a spark kindled by the beating of our hearts.

³When it is extinguished, the body will turn to ashes,
and the spirit will dissolve like empty air.

⁴Our name will be forgotten in time,
and no one will remember our works;
our life will pass away like the traces of a cloud,
and be scattered like mist
that is chased by the rays of the sun
and overcome by its heat.

⁵For our allotted time is the passing of a shadow,
and there is no return from our death,
because it is sealed up and no one turns back.

⁶“Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that exist,
and make use of the creation to the full as in youth.

⁷Let us take our fill of costly wine and perfumes,
and let no flower of spring pass by us.

⁸Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither.

⁹Let none of us fail to share in our revelry,
everywhere let us leave signs of enjoyment,
because this is our portion, and this our lot.

¹⁰Let us oppress the righteous poor man;
let us not spare the widow
nor regard the gray hairs of the aged.

¹¹But let our might be our law of right,
for what is weak proves itself to be useless.

¹²“Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;
he reproaches us for sins against the law,
and accuses us of sins against our training.

¹³He professes to have knowledge of God,

and calls himself a child^[a] of the Lord.

¹⁴He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;

¹⁵the very sight of him is a burden to us,
because his manner of life is unlike that of others,
and his ways are strange.

¹⁶We are considered by him as something base,
and he avoids our ways as unclean;
he calls the last end of the righteous happy,
and boasts that God is his father.

¹⁷Let us see if his words are true,
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;
¹⁸for if the righteous man is God's son, he will help him,
and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.

¹⁹Let us test him with insult and torture,
that we may find out how gentle he is,
and make trial of his forbearance.

²⁰Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

Error of the Wicked

²¹Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,
for their wickedness blinded them,

²²and they did not know the secret purposes of God,
nor hope for the wages of holiness,
nor discern the prize for blameless souls;

²³for God created man for incorruption,
and made him in the image of his own eternity,^[b]

²⁴but through the devil's envy death entered the world,
and those who belong to his party experience it.

Footnotes:

- a. [Wisdom 2:13](#) Or *servant*
- b. [Wisdom 2:23](#) Other ancient authorities read *nature*

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Miscellaneous Advice

- ⁷ Do no evil, and evil will never befall you.
- ² Stay away from wrong, and it will turn away from you.
- ³ My son, do not sow the furrows of injustice,
and you will not reap a sevenfold crop.
- ⁴ Do not seek from the Lord the highest office,
nor the seat of honor from the king.
- ⁵ Do not assert your righteousness before the Lord,
nor display your wisdom before the king.
- ⁶ Do not seek to become a judge,
lest you be unable to remove iniquity,
lest you be partial to a powerful man,
and thus put a blot on your integrity.
- ⁷ Do not offend against the public,
and do not disgrace yourself among the people.
- ⁸ Do not commit a sin twice;
even for one you will not go unpunished.
- ⁹ Do not say, "He will consider the multitude of my gifts,
and when I make an offering to the Most High God he will accept it."
- ¹⁰ Do not be fainthearted in your prayer,
nor neglect to give alms.
- ¹¹ Do not ridicule a man who is bitter in soul,
for there is One who abases and exalts.
- ¹² Do not devise^[a] a lie against your brother,
nor do the like to a friend.
- ¹³ Refuse to utter any lie,
for the habit of lying serves no good.
- ¹⁴ Do not prattle in the assembly of the elders,
nor repeat yourself in your prayer.
- ¹⁵ Do not hate toilsome labor,
or farm work, which were created by the Most High.
- ¹⁶ Do not count yourself among the crowd of sinners;
remember that wrath does not delay.
- ¹⁷ Humble yourself greatly,
for the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worms.^[b]

Relations with Others

- ¹⁸ Do not exchange a friend for money,
or a real brother for the gold of Ophir.
- ¹⁹ Do not deprive yourself of a wise and good wife,
for her charm is worth more than gold.

- ²⁰ Do not abuse a servant who performs his work faithfully,
or a hired laborer who devotes himself to you.
- ²¹ Let your soul love^[c] an intelligent servant;
do not withhold from him his freedom.
- ²² Do you have cattle? Look after them;
if they are profitable to you, keep them.
- ²³ Do you have children? Discipline them,
and make them obedient^[d] from their youth.
- ²⁴ Do you have daughters? Be concerned for their chastity,^[e]
and do not show yourself too indulgent with them.
- ²⁵ Give a daughter in marriage; you will have finished a great task.
But give her to a man of understanding.
- ²⁶ If you have a wife who pleases you,^[f] do not cast her out;
but do not trust yourself to one whom you detest.
- ²⁷ With all your heart honor your father,
and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother.
- ²⁸ Remember that through your parents^[g] you were born;
and what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?
- ²⁹ With all your soul fear the Lord,
and honor his priests.
- ³⁰ With all your might love your Maker,
and do not forsake his ministers.
- ³¹ Fear the Lord and honor the priest,
and give him his portion, as is commanded you:
the first fruits, the guilt offering, the gift of the shoulders,
the sacrifice of sanctification, and the first fruits of the holy things.
- ³² Stretch forth your hand to the poor,
so that your blessing may be complete.
- ³³ Give graciously to all the living,
and withhold not kindness from the dead.
- ³⁴ Do not fail those who weep,
but mourn with those who mourn.
- ³⁵ Do not shrink from visiting a sick man,
because for such deeds you will be loved.
- ³⁶ In all you do, remember the end of your life,
and then you will never sin.

Footnotes:

1. [Sirach 7:12](#) Heb: Gk *plow*
2. [Sirach 7:17](#) The Hebrew text reads *for the expectation of man is worms*
3. [Sirach 7:21](#) The Hebrew text reads *Love like yourself*
4. [Sirach 7:23](#) Gk *bend their necks*
5. [Sirach 7:24](#) Gk *body*
6. [Sirach 7:26](#) Heb Syr omit *who pleases you*
7. [Sirach 7:28](#) Gk *them*