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1. Introduction

A sapiential writing in the Apocrypha, Ben Sira is well known for associating wisdom with the Torah more explicitly than the Old Testament sapiential books. However, no sufficient attention has been paid, especially in the Korean scholarship, to more comprehensive ways in which Ben Sira draws on the Torah than simply equating wisdom with the Torah.¹ The

1 I found two Korean articles related to Ben Sira's view of wisdom. Keun-Jo.Ahn, "Preservation and Innovation of Jewish Wisdom Tradition in the Period of Hellenism from the Perspective of the Book of Ben Sira", *Korean Presbyterian Journal of Theology* 44/2 (2012), 129-49; Jeong Soo Park, "The

present article seeks to explore Ben Sira's deeper connections with the Torah by looking at its use of the Genesis Adam story. It will be argued that Ben Sira's view of humanity, Israel, and the condition of human existence in the world is shaped by its interpretation of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve in Gen 1-3.

To place Ben Sira in context, Ben Sira was composed in Hebrew between 196 and 175 B.C.E.² by the Palestine sage named "Jeshua son of Eleazar son of Sira" (50:27), and was later translated in Greek by his grandson (Prologue).³ During this period, the policy of Hellenization instigated by Alexander the Great was sustained in Palestine, consecutively by the Egyptian and Syrian

Character of Jewish Wisdom in the Early Hellenistic Period: By Qohelet and Ben Sira", *Korean New Testament Studies* 12/1 (2005), 219-48. For the Korean works on the biblical wisdom literature, see Hyung Youn "The Dynamic Relationship Between Wisdom and Creation in Proverbs 8:22-31," *Korean Journal of Old Testament Studies* 26/1 (2020), 93-119, and Unha Cha, "Wisdom Literature and Sermons: in the Case of Ecclesiastes," *Korean Journal of Old Testament Studies* 24/1 (2018), 162-88.

- 2 Scholars generally agree that it was written before the reign of Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.E.) (showing no awareness of Antiochus IV's persecution of the Jews) and after the death of Simon II (219-196 B.C.E.) (describing him like a deceased person in ch.50). See e.g. Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes*, AB 39 (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 8-9; Geroge W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 62.
- 3 The book's complex textual history includes two Hebrew manuscripts (one original, the other modified) giving rise to two Greek manuscripts (the grandson's translation of the Hebrew original, the translation of the other Hebrew text), ultimately leading to the extant versions in many different languages. While the entirety of the book was preserved in Greek, only about two thirds of the Hebrew text survived in the medieval copies from Cairo Genizah, whose faithfulness to the Hebrew original was confirmed by the manuscripts found at Qumran and Masada. See Corrado Martone, "The Ben Sira MSS from Qumran and Masada," Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes(ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference (28-31 July 1996)* (BZAW 255; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 82-94 for details. For our purposes, we will use the Göttingen edition of LXX by Joseph Ziegler(ed.), *Sapientia Iesu filii Sirach. 2., durchgesehene Aufl. Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum*, v. 12, 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980). And all the Hebrew texts cited in this article come from Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, ed., *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and A Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (VTSupp 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997). For an English translation of Ben Sira LXX, we will use Benjamin G. Wright III, "Wisdom of Iesus Son of Sirach," Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright III(eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 715-62.

rulers,⁴ Although the religious persecution by Antiochus IV was yet to occur, the increasing cultural threat by Hellenization,⁵ together with some internal conflicts surrounding the Jerusalem priesthood,⁶ provided the need for Ben Sira to publish this book “to bolster the faith and confidence of his fellow Jews” with particular emphasis on the Torah and the Jerusalem hierocracy.⁷ This emphasis on the legitimacy of the current state of Israel shapes Ben Sira’s use of the Adam story and its moral universe,

Below we will first examine Ben Sira’s use of Gen 1-2 in understanding humanity and Israel and then observe his use of Adam in describing Israel’s current high priest. We will then explore his use of the story of Adam’s fall in Gen 3 in understanding the moral state of the world and the reality of human mortality.

2. Adam as Humanity and Israel

Ben Sira’s use of Gen 1-2 in describing humanity and Israel is clearest and most elaborate in 17:1-14, and 24:1-29. 17:1-14 is situated within the larger

unit of 15:9(11)-18:14,⁸ in which Ben Sira responds to the challenge that humans are not responsible for their sin. This challenge is first raised by the claim that human sins result from God’s control (15:11), and then raised in another way by the assertion that human deeds are inconsequential because of the insignificance of human beings “in a boundless creation” (16:17-18), and their inability to understand God’s mysterious workings in the world (16:19-22). It is in response to the second challenge that Ben Sira highlights the significance and capacity of human beings in 17:1-14, and in so doing appeals to Gen 1-2. Two observations are relevant for our purposes,

First, in 17: 1-10, Ben Sira ascribes to humanity the qualities attributed to Adam in Gen 1-2,⁹ God “made” human beings “out of earth” (v. 1),¹⁰ in “his own image” (v. 3),¹¹ granting them “authority over everything on the earth” and “dominion over beasts and birds” (vv. 2, 4).¹² This way of drawing language and imagery from Gen 1-2 and applying them directly to humanity

4 Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 13-16.

5 Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 16. Cf. John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic age* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 41.

6 See Benjamin Wright III, “Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest’: Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood”, Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes(ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference (28-31 July 1996)*, BZAW 255 (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 190-222 for his hypothesis that Ben Sira is at least partially polemical against those who challenge the Jerusalem priestly establishment. Saul M. Olyan, “Ben Sira’s Relationship to the Priesthood”, *Harvard Theological Review* 80 (1987), 261-86, specifically hypothesizes the conflict between the “Aaronids” and “non-Aaronid Levites,” with Ben Sira supporting the former.

7 Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 16; similarly James L. Crenshaw, “The Book of Sirach: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections” (NIB 5: Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 612-13.

8 Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as A Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (BZAW 151; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 722; John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSupp 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 34; Johannes Marböck, *Weisheit Im Wandel: Untersuchungen Zur Weisheitstheologie Bei Ben Sira*, (BZAW 272; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 136.

9 Burton L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew epic: Ben Sira’s Hymn in Praise of the Fathers*, *Chicago Studies in the history of Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 115, who reads this passage as the description of Adam as “the representative of humankind.” Greg S. Goering, *Wisdom’s Root Revealed: Ben Sira and the Election of Israel* (JSJSupp 139; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 83, helpfully observes that ἄνθρωπον in v. 1 is referred to by the third person plural pronouns in vv. 2-3 (αὐτοῖς, αὐτοῦς), which means that ἄνθρωπον denotes “human beings” rather than a single man. Ben Sira is thus better seen as applying Gen 1-2 directly to humanity rather than via Adam.

10 The idea of creating human beings from earth alludes to Gen 2:7, but the expression ἐκ γῆς, together with the idea of returning (ἀπέστρεψεν) to earth, alludes to LXX Gen 3:20 (So Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 281). For the implications of this double allusion, see the first part in “Ben Sira’s conception of death” below.

11 This alludes to LXX Gen 1:27.

12 The idea of having dominion over the creatures alludes to LXX Gen 1:26 and LXX Ps 8:6.

implies that for Ben Sira, the narrative in Gen 1-2, though presented as a story of the first man (and this is how Ben Sira reads it too, as will be seen below), is capable of communicating God's creational intentions applicable to all humanity.

Second, the way in which Ben Sira makes a transition from 17:1-10 to 17:11-14 suggests that he views Israel as a special group within humanity, which reflects God's creational intentions in Gen 1-2 more fully. This is seen in the way Ben Sira describes humanity in vv. 1-10, and then abruptly inserts in vv. 11-14 the elements pertaining specifically to Israel, with no indication of any shift of focus.

11 He bestowed knowledge upon them (αὐτοῖς), and allotted to them (αὐτοῖς) the law of life. 12 He established with them (αὐτῶν) an eternal covenant, and revealed to them (αὐτοῖς) his decrees. 13 Their (αὐτῶν) eyes saw his glorious majesty, and their (αὐτῶν) ears heard the glory of his voice.

The third person plural pronoun αὐτός in vv. 11-13 points back to humanity being described in vv. 1-10 within the context of Gen 1-2. Ben Sira, however, in these very sentences that refer to humanity, suddenly introduces the expressions specifically indicative of Israel: "the law of life (νόμον ζωῆς)," ¹³ "eternal covenant (διαθήκην αἰῶνος)," ¹⁴ "his decrees (τὰ

13 Scholars agree that this phrase, reappearing in connection with Moses in 45:5, refers to the Mosaic law and is derived from Deut 30:15-20. E.g., Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 81; Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 282; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 59; Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 91; Jeremy Corley, *Sirach* (NCBC 21; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013), 50; Josef Schreiner, *Jesus Sirach 1-24* (NEB 38; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002), 95-96, also points to Deut 4:40.

14 Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 59, and Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 282 note that this phrase also refers to the Mosaic covenant (as confirmed by the parallel expression in Bar 4:1b, "the law that endures forever"). Schreiner, *Sirach 1-24*, 96 further points to Ps 105:10.

κρίματα)," ¹⁵ and the experience of seeing "his glorious majesty" ¹⁶ and hearing "the glory of his voice" ¹⁷ all allude to Israel's reception of the law at Sinai. Some scholars interpret Ben Sira's insertion of these Israel-specific elements as his attempt to universalize Israel's experience at Sinai. ¹⁸ G. S. Goering, however, rightly draws attention to v. 17, where Ben Sira unequivocally distinguishes Israel from the rest of humanity: God "appointed a ruler for every nation, but Israel is the Lord's own portion." ¹⁹ For Goering, this verse confirms that Ben Sira is not conflating Israel with humanity. ²⁰ Indeed, Ben Sira affirms the special status of Israel and does so by connecting Israel with God's creational intentions for humanity. In other words, by pointing to Israel's experience at Sinai while still describing humanity in the context of Gen 1-2, Ben Sira makes the point that Israel, "the Lord's portion," is a special group *within* humanity, in which God's creational intentions for humanity in Gen 1-2 is epitomized.

This view is confirmed and further elaborated in 24:1-34, where personified Wisdom "praises herself" (v. 1) and "tells of her glory" (v. 2) in

15 τὰ κρίματα is frequently combined with τὰ δικαιώματα (LXX Deut 5:1; 6:4; 26:16, 17) and additionally with τὰς ἐντολάς (LXX Deut 5:31; 6:1; 7:11; 8:11; cf. 6:20), to denote the totality of the Mosaic law.

16 Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 81; Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 282; and Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 92 trace the idea of seeing God's glory to Exod 24:16-17 (cf. 19:11, 16; 20:18).

17 Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 282 refer to Exod 19:16-19; Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 92 further points to 20:18, 22; Schreiner, *Sirach 1-24*, 96 adds Deut 5:22.

18 E.g., Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 59-60 writes: "... [Ben Sira] collapses the interval between the creation and the giving of the Torah. The implication of the passage is that the "law of life," and the attendant choice between life and death, was given to humanity from the beginning."

19 Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 233, and also Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 283, both noting allusions to Deut 32:8-9 and Dan 10:13-21.

20 Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 233 helpfully introduces here the view by Harry M. Orlinsky, "Nationalism-Universalism and Internationalism in Ancient Israel", *Translating and understanding the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 213, that for Ben Sira, God is neither national (the God of Israel only) nor international (the God of all the nations equally), but "universal-national" (the God of the whole world ruling directly only over Israel for the world).

the first person speech, describing her function as a divinely created agent who carries out God's purposes and exercises God's authorities,²¹ Wisdom came forth from God's mouth (v. 4), "dwelt in the highest heavens," with her "throne" in the "pillar of cloud," and was involved in God's creation and governance of the world (vv. 3, 5-6). Upon God's command, this Wisdom made her dwelling in Israel (vv. 10-11), where it took root in "an honored people, in the portion of the Lord" (v. 12), and grew tall like a tree that bears delight-giving, thirst-quenching, and hunger-satisfying fruits (vv. 13-21). In this portrayal of the origin and movement of personified Wisdom, Ben Sira interweaves the historical elements pertaining to Israel's identity with the primordial context, just as he did in 17:1-14.²² This leads some interpreters to think that in this passage the historical particularity of Israel is overwhelmed by God's universal and cosmic intentions revealed at the primordial time.²³ More convincing, however, is the interpretation that Ben Sira's close association between Israel and creation affirms, rather than annuls, Israel's special status as a representative embodiment of God's original vision for humanity. Previously in 17:1-14, God's creational intention to give wisdom to humanity ("filling them with knowledge and understanding" in

21 As noted by Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 21, and Martha Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of Ben Sira", Jamie S Scott and Paul Simpson-Housley(eds.), *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 73, personified Wisdom's first person speech is reminiscent of Prov 8. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 57 also notes a possible connection with the Hellenistic goddess, Isis. See Alice M. Sinnott, *The Personification of Wisdom* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2005) for a thorough recent treatment of the personification of wisdom.

22 Wisdom's activities in Israel's history - i.e., wisdom's being enthroned in "a pillar of cloud" (17:4, referring to Exod 13:21; 14:19), her choice to dwell in Israel (17:8-9), and her work in the tabernacle and the Jerusalem temple (17:10-11) - are interspersed with Wisdom's primordial activities (17:3, 5-6) and existence (17:9). For more details, see Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 32-50.

23 E.g., Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 57, asserts that these allusions to "the progress of Israel's history. . . [are] subsumed into the process of creation."

17:7) was paradigmatically fulfilled in God's giving of the "law of life" to Israel at Sinai (17:11). Likewise in this passage, God's wisdom, here personified as an agent involved in creating and ruling over the earth and the nations, made her "dwelling" in Israel and flourished therein (vv. 7-22), being explicitly identified with Torah (v. 23).²⁴ The point is the same: Israel is the people in which God's creational intentions for humanity and the world are quintessentially expressed.

This point is further elaborated in the immediately following verses. Having identified Wisdom with Torah in v. 24, Ben Sira portrays this Wisdom-Torah as overflowing to the world like "Pishon," "Tigris," "Euphrates," and "Gihon" (vv. 25-29), the four primordial rivers watering, and flowing from, the garden of Eden in Gen 2:10-14. This shows that for Ben Sira, the land of Israel is the Garden of Eden, and the Torah is the source of rivers that water Israel first and then flow to the world.²⁵ This is reminiscent of Ezekiel's use of the same image of water in describing the centrality and cosmic significance of Israel's temple

24 Scholars are largely divided into four positions regarding the nature of this identification or correlation between Wisdom and the Torah. They interpret it in terms of (i) Wisdom instantiated in the Torah (e.g., Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 58,); (ii) Wisdom in a "dialectic" relationship with the Torah (e.g., E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 332, aligning himself with Marböck; cf. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom and Ethics* (WUNT 16: Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 91); (iii) Wisdom confined to the Torah (e.g., Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 Vols, John Bowden(trans.) (London: S.C.M. Press, 1974), 1:160-161; (iv) Wisdom and the Torah both God's revelation but in two different forms - the former "general" and the latter "special" (Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 71-72; similarly Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 117, in terms of "literary canonical category" [the former] and "intellectual concept" [the latter]). The last view seems to resonate best with the unity and difference between humanity and Israel implied in Ben Sira's use of Gen 1-2.

25 Robert Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order: Some Observations on Ben Sira's Attitude to the Temple Service", S. W. Sykes(ed.), *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 26-27. Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 70, further argues that Ben Sira's mention of the names of these rivers along with the river "Jordan" in 24:26, is aimed at describing "the great river boundaries of the Promised Land."

(Ezekiel 47).²⁶ Ben Sira's emphasis on the Torah does not conflict with Ezekiel's emphasis on the Temple. As Goering rightly points out, Ben Sira speaks of the Torah as encompassing or even emphasizing the temple cult rather than as providing the ground of Israel's identity and life independently of the Jerusalem temple.²⁷ Ben Sira's stress on the temple is seen in the way in which Wisdom takes up special residence in Israel through the wilderness tabernacle ("ministering" in the "holy tent" in 24:10a)²⁸ and the Jerusalem temple ("established in Zion" in 24:10b and having "Jerusalem" as her domain in 24:11), and also seen in the way in which Wisdom is likened to the spices used in Israel's cultic practice in 24:15 (i. e., "cassia," "choice myrrh" "galbanum," "onycha," "stacte," and "incense").²⁹ This indicates that for Ben Sira, it is the cultic laws in the Torah that is the ultimate expression of Wisdom's special presence in Israel.³⁰ That is, the temple cult in Jerusalem is the essence of Wisdom-Torah that "waters" Israel and then flows to the

26 Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden," 73, 75, however, correctly observes that "Ben Sira parts company with Ezekiel and the author of the Book of the Watchers, who bring these aspects of Eden to the Temple only in the eschatological future."

27 E.g., in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, the Torah is not only independent from the Jerusalem temple but also prioritized over wisdom. Burkes, Shannon, "Life' Redefined: Wisdom and Law in Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch", *CBQ* 63 (2001), 69.

28 "minister"(λειτουργικός) is descriptive of the priestly service (e.g., LXX Exod 28:35, 28:43, 29:30, 30:20, 35:19, 36:33, 38:27, 39:11-12) and "tent"(σκηνή) refers to the tabernacle (*passim* LXX Exod 25-40).

29 Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 174 (also Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 334-335; Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 174) identifies the cultic use of these spices in Exodus passages: respectively, κιννάμωμον (Exod 30:23), σμύρνα ἐκλεκτή (Exod 30:23), γάλαβανη (Exod 30:34), ὄνουξ (Exod 30:34), στακτή (Exod 30:34), λιβάνου (Exod 30:34).

30 Pace Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 90, who argues from 35:1-5 that for Ben Sira, "the ethical demands of the Law are more important than sacrifices." Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 31, and Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 171, correctly argue that the cultic and ethical laws jointly constitute the Torah. Thus in 30:1-5, Ben Sira's point is the necessity of the latter for the validity of the former. See Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 417-18.

nations like rivers.³¹ This emphasis on the temple fits well with Ben Sira's overall support for the Jerusalem hierarchy.³²

To conclude this section: Ben Sira's use of language and imagery from Gen 1-2 in 17:1-17 and 24:1-27 reveals that at the centre of Ben Sira's moral universe is Israel under her current Jerusalem hierarchy, portrayed as the epitome of God's creational intentions for humanity revealed in Gen 1-2.

3. Adam and Israel's high priest

For Ben Sira, Gen 1-2 are both paradigmatic (a paradigm of what God does to all humanity) and historical (a real description of what God did to one man). This section focuses on the latter. It will be shown that Ben Sira views Adam as the high priestly first man whose influence can be compared to the influence of Israel's high priest.

The first reference to Adam as an individual is found in 24:28. Having described Wisdom as overflowing like the four primordial rivers in 24:25-27, Ben Sira states in 24:28 that "the first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her." The emphasis of this statement is the inexhaustibility of wisdom.³³ Contrary to the opinions of some scholars, however, "the first man" and "the last man" do not simply refer to the first and the last person

31 Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 26-27; Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 238 states that "Ben Sira's association of Wisdom with the Jerusalem temple indicates that he views participation in the cult as having the effect of sustaining and renewing the cosmic order upon which the world is founded... Torah observance benefits all humankind, indeed the entire created world."

32 Wright III, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest," 192-96.

33 So Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 71; Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 337; Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 46; Schreiner, *Sirach* 1-24, 133.

of all of the human beings who have ever existed,³⁴ Rather, Ben Sira's mention of these two figures within the context of describing Wisdom's climactic expression - i.e., her special dwelling in the Jerusalem temple and subsequent overflowing from it - suggests that "first man" and "last man" refer to two particular figures involved in Wisdom's climactic outworking through the Jerusalem temple: "the first man" is identified with Adam, and the "last man" refers to Simon the high priest. That Ben Sira has Simon in view here is suggested by the fact that the tree imagery ("cedar," "palm tree") used in the present passage to describe Wisdom's dwelling in the Jerusalem temple (24:13-14) is taken up again when portraying Simon's high priestly role in 50:12.³⁵ More decisive evidence, however, comes from the fact that in 50:1, Ben Sira presents Simon as the historical counterpart of Adam,

This can be observed in the way in which Ben Sira concludes his long praises of the glorious ancestors in Israel's history (44:1-49:15) by highlighting Adam (49:16), and then immediately begins his lengthy description of Simon (50:1-24).

Hebrew MS B

49:16 ושם ושתי ואנוש ועל כל חי תפארת אדם

50:1 גדול אחיו ותפארת עם שמעון בן יוחנן הכהן

The word "splendor" (תפארת)³⁶ characterizes both Adam in 49:16b

34 Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 337: 46; cf. Schreiner, *Sirach* 1-24, 133.

35 Goering, *Wisdom's Root*, 175-76; Sinnott, *Personification of Wisdom*, 124.

36 So Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 545, who says that תראפת is "a *mot crochet* connecting this poem and the next one (50:1-24)."

("Adam's splendor (תפארת אדם) is above every living being")³⁷ and Simon in 50:1a ("The greatest of his brothers and the splendor of his people [תפארת עמו])."³⁸ This word can be used widely to denote the qualities of beauty, grandeur, and/or strength of a variety of objects, but it is also used specifically to describe the garment of the high priest Aaron in Ex 28:2.³⁹ It is in this last sense that Ben Sira is using the word "splendor" here, for briefly after describing Adam and Simon, Ben Sira uses this word again in explicit reference to Simon's high priestly garment (בגדי תפארת in 50:11) in relation to his high priestly work.⁴⁰ Moreover, the only other instance of the word in this whole section on Israel's praiseworthy ancestors in history (44:1-49:16) is found in 45:8, where again Aaron's high priestly garment is in view (ויילבישהו כליל תפארת). This suggests that when Ben Sira describes Adam as having the unsurpassed splendor in Israel's history, he is presenting him as the greatest high priestly figure, to whom Simon the high priest can be compared.⁴¹ They are the "first man" and "last man" who enjoyed Wisdom's special presence while unable to exhaust Wisdom's richness. This fits well with Ben Sira's presentation of Israel in terms of Gen 1-2. The basic point is

37 The English translation of the Hebrew text of 49:16b and 50:1a provided here comes from Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 27. In the Greek text, Adam's splendor is not highlighted: Σημ και Σηθ εν ανθρωποις εδοξασθησαν και υπερ παν ζων εν τη κτισει Αδαμ.

38 50:1a is missing in the Greek manuscript, which starts from 50:1b (Σιμων Ονιου υιος ιερευς ο μεγας ος εν ζωη αυτου υπεραγαγεν οικον και εν ημεραις αυτου εστερευωσεν ναον). NASB includes 50:1a from Hebrew MS B.

39 HALOT.

40 Fearghas Ó Fearghail, "Sir 50:5-21 : Yom Kippur or the Daily Whole-Offering?", *Biblica* 59/3 (1978), 301-16 (followed by Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 551-52; likely Corley, *Sirach*, 142) argues that what is in view in 50:5-21 is daily whole offering (Exod 29:38-42, Num 28:1-10, and Exod 30:1-9) rather than the Day of Atonement (Lev 16).

41 Goring, *Wisdom's Root*, 178. Pace Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 45, who fails to capture Ben Sira's particular focus on Adam-Simon comparison.

the same: Simon's priestly rule in Israel through the Jerusalem temple is the ultimate re-enactment of Adam's priestly rule in the Garden of Eden in Gen 1-2.⁴²

Adam in Gen 1-2, then, for Ben Sira, is not merely an abstraction of God's general vision for humanity. He is the first father of Israel who, on the one hand, embodies God's creational intentions for humanity, and on the other hand, exercises the priestly role in the Garden of Eden. For Ben Sira, then, the Adam story of Gen 1-2 functions to establish the anthropological framework in which Israel are "Adamic" in paradigmatically embodying God's creational intentions for humanity, with Israel's current high priest Simon reenacting the priestly role of Adam himself. This clear emphasis on Israel as the focal point of the fulfillment of God's creational intentions and as the moral centre of God's created world is a basic structural feature of the Torah's worldview now reflected in Ben Sira.⁴³

4. The Primeval Fall and the Post-Fall World

The concept of Adam's fall requires that Adam be not only paradigmatic but also epochally influential. That is, Adam occupies the unique position of influencing all of his descendants, so much so that the *consequences of*

42 Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order," 28, draws attention to Simon's possession of both religious and political authority, and this resonates well with the historical background of the book (the Jerusalem hierarchy with no king) and also with Gen 1-2's portrayal of Adam as a type of "priest-king." See also Dempster, Stephen G., *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (NSBT 15; Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 62. This portrayal of Adam paves the ground for the later Jewish authors' association of Adam with Messianic figure(s), as noted by Crenshaw, *Book of Sirach*, 856.

43 Understanding Israel as succeeding to Adam's identity, role, and even destiny is crucial in the OT in general and the Torah in particular. See Postell, S. D., *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012).

Adam's transgression (God's curses including death) are applied not only to himself but also to his descendants, creating new moral conditions in the world (Gen 3:16-19, 22-24).

One passage suggests that Ben Sira operates with the concept of Adam's fall. The passage in question is 25:24, where it is stated that "from a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die."⁴⁴ While the majority of interpreters read this statement as alluding to the primeval fall in Gen 3,⁴⁵ J. R. Levison argues that when properly read within its literary context, the statement is not about the primeval fall but about the misery of having an evil wife.⁴⁶ Noting that Ben Sira's argumentative goal in the larger section (25:16-26) is to expose the harmfulness of an evil wife, Levison claims that what is really in view in the statement is an evil wife and her harmful influence on her husband, rather than Eve's fall and universal death.⁴⁷ Levison is right with regard to Ben Sira's argumentative focus. He is wrong, however, in disregarding the fact that Eve was also a wife. That is to say, it is possible that Ben Sira is using Eve as an example of an evil wife, and universal death

44 This English translation closely reflects both the Greek and Hebrew manuscript (MS C)

45 E.g., Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 18; Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 348-49; Vermes, Geza, "Genesis 1-3 in Post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Literature Before the Mishnah", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43 (1992), 223; Crenshaw, *Book of Sirach*, 764; Marböck, *Weisheit Im Wandel*, 152; Friedrich Reiterer, "Die Vorstellung vom Tod und den Toten nach Ben Sira", Tobias Nicklas, Friedrich Reiterer, Pancratius C. Beentjes, Nuria Calduch-Benages and Benjamin G. Wright(eds.), *The Human Body in Death and Resurrection* (Berlin: Water de Gruyter, 2009), 189-90; Miryam T. Brand, *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 114.

46 Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 617-23. Similarly John J. Collins "Before the Fall: The Earliest Interpretation of Adam and Eve", Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman(eds.), *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (JSJSupp 83; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 297-298, says that "it is possible that Ben Sira was laying the blame for sin and death on woman in general rather than on Eve in particular."

47 Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 619-23.

as an example of the miserable consequence caused by an evil wife. This indeed seems to be the case given Ben Sira's low view of woman⁴⁸ and his high view of Adam as an ideal high priest. In other words, by drawing on the motif of the primeval fall with emphasis on Eve's culpability,⁴⁹ Ben Sira is providing a fitting historical example of how miserable things can happen as a result of having an evil wife.⁵⁰

Levison's argument is further undermined by the fact that his proposed reading of 25:24 - i. e., "From the [evil] wife is the beginning of sin, / and because of her we [husbands] all die."⁵¹ - is supported neither by the text of 25:24 itself nor by the supposed parallel from the Qumran sapiential poem, *4QWiles of the Wicked Woman* (4Q184). The point in Levison's reading is that *evil wives make their husbands* suffer death. But this is not what the text says.

NETS

from a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die

Hebrew MS B

מאשה / תחלת עון ובגללה גוענו / (חד)24:25

48 Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 620 rightly points this out from 9:2-6, 9:42:12-14.

49 Collins, "Before the Fall," 297, notes that blaming Eve in connection with the primeval fall "becomes standard in later tradition" - i. e., the *Apocalypse of Moses*, L.A.B. 13:10, 1 Tim 2:13-14. Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 348, adds 2 Cor 11:3. Paul, however, unlike Ben Sira, holds Adam primarily culpable (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22).

50 Similarly Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 114, judges that "Sir 25:24 is principally an observation regarding the wicked wife that may nevertheless allude to the tradition according to which death or sin came to the world through the sin of Adam and Eve"(emphasis original).

51 Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 619.

LXX

(25:24) ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ἀποθνήσκομεν πάντες.

Both texts make it clear that a *single* woman (γυναικὸς/השׂא) makes *all of us* die (ἀποθνήσκομεν πάντες/גוענו) - the idea of 'the one and the many' implied in the concept of fall. If Ben Sira had wanted to make Levison's point, he would have done so by representing two groups of people equally (by using either singular or plural nouns for *both* groups), just as he did in the preceding verses (γυνή/ἀνήρ in 26:20, 22, 23; ἁσά/שׂא in 26:20; ἁσά/בעל in 26:22, 23).⁵² Nor is Levison's reading supported by *4QWiles of the Wicked Woman*. In this Qumran sapiential poem too, which portrays the harmful effects of the evil woman on "all who inherit, . . . [and] grasp her," the dynamic is again between one woman and many victims, which does not fit with Levison's point. More importantly, this poem is not really about an evil wife. "Wicked woman" in the poem either represents "the Wisdom of the enemies of the sect"⁵³ or a personification of the abstract concept of evil.⁵⁴ This sapiential poem is ultimately irrelevant to Ben Sira's point in 25:24.⁵⁵ It is therefore safe to interpret 25:24 as revealing Ben Sira's belief in the primeval fall.⁵⁶

52 I made the same argument in Janghoon Park, "Paul's Conception of Sin and Death in Romans 5-8 and 1 Corinthians 15," PhD dissertation (University of St Andrews, 2018), 76.

53 Corrado Martone, "The Ben Sira MSS from Qumran and Masada," Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes(ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference* (28-31 July 1996) (BZAW 255; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 87.

54 Rick D. Moore, "Personification of the Seduction of the Evil - The Wiles of the Wicked Woman", *Revue de Qumran* 10/4 (1981), 505-19.

55 Collins, "Before the Fall," 297, may be right in saying that "no one takes the Qumran text to refer to Eve" but wrong in thinking that it refers to a real evil woman.

56 While Ben Sira denies the existence of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil (17:7), he acknowledges the existence of the negative commandment, namely "beware of all evil" (17:14). Skehan

Ben Sira's belief in the primeval fall is reflected also in his view of death,⁵⁷ Ben Sira describes death as a basic condition of human existence. But this is not because he understands human mortality as part of God's creational intention for humanity but because he views humanity as living in the post-fall reality - i.e. the world into which the elements of curses are introduced and some modifications on the pre-fall conditions are incorporated.⁵⁸ This is best reflected 17:1-4 where Ben Sira describes the creation and existence of humanity by drawing on both the pre-fall context of Gen 1-2 and the post-fall situation assumed in Gen 3, 6 and 9.

1 The Lord created human beings out of earth, and makes them return to it again, 2 He gave them a fixed number of days but granted them authority over everything on the earth, 3 He endowed them with strength like his own, and made them in his own image, 4 He put the fear of them in all living beings, and gave them dominion over beasts and birds,

While vv. 1a, 2b, 3 are drawn from the pre-fall context (Gen 2:7, 1:26, 27 respectively), vv. 1b, 2a, 4 reflect the post-fall situation. Human beings' destiny of "returning" (ἀπέστρεψεν) to earth alludes to Gen 3:19 where God announces the sentence of death in response to the sin of the primeval

and Di Lella, Ben Sira, 282-83 (also Reiterer, "Die Vorstellung vom Tod," 226), notes that this is "a summary of all of the negative commandments," especially the first part of the Decalogue. Adam's sin, then, is tantamount to a violation of the Decalogue.

57 Ben Sira's view of death is notoriously complex. E.g., Reiterer, "Die Vorstellung vom Tod," 167-204, discusses Ben Sira's notion of death under five main categories with further subsections.

58 I made the same point with a similar line of reasoning to the one advanced in this section, in Park, "Paul's Conception," 77.

couple.⁵⁹ God's act of fixing the life span of human beings echoes Gen 6:3, and God's putting of fear in all the creatures for the sake of humans' dominion over them alludes to Gen 9:1-2 - both of which belong to the flood narrative.⁶⁰ For Levison, Ben Sira combines the elements from the pre-fall context with those from the post-fall chapters because he denies the primeval fall and thus make the post-fall chapters collapse into the pre-fall context of Gen 1-2.⁶¹ However, given the evidence for Ben Sira's belief in the primeval fall provided in 25:24, what Ben Sira is doing here should be understood rather as collapsing the pre-fall chapters into the post-fall context. In other words, Ben Sira is *re-presenting God's creational intentions originally revealed in Gen 1-2, within the post-fall context*. This is similar to what the author of Genesis does in Gen 9:1-7, where the old elements from Gen 1-2 (Gen 9:1, 3, 7) are re-presented along with newly incorporated elements that characterize the post-fall reality (Gen 9:4-6). Ben Sira's conflation of Gen 1-2 and the subsequent chapters, then, reveals his hermeneutical recognition that for all of the "children of Adam" (40:1),⁶² God's creational intentions revealed in the pre-fall context are now carried out within the post-fall reality of inevitable physical death.⁶³

59 So Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 76.

60 So Sheppard, *Hermeneutical Construct*, 76-77.

61 Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 618.

62 That Ben Sira conceives of humanity as Adam's descendants born in the post-fall reality is clear in 40:1 (MS B). In this passage, humanity is represented as "the children of Adam" (בני אדם/Αδαμ) - in distinction to the idiomatic meaning of בני אדם ("sons of man") in 3:28 (Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 42) - and the verb "return" (שוב) and the phrase "mother of all the living" (אם כל חי) respectively refer to God's curse in Gen 3:19 and Adam's post-fall naming of Eve in Gen 3:20.

63 This accounts for Ben Sira's oscillation between affirming what Reiterer ("Die Vorstellung vom Tod," 170) calls "Selbstverständlichkeit des Todes" (41:1-4; 14:17-18) and acknowledging the harsh reality of facing death (40:1-11). The former addresses the given-ness of the post-fall reality, and the latter recognizes the dimension of curse inherent in it. However, even in the passages belonging to the former,

5. Conclusion

Ben Sira understands the story of Adam in Gen 1-3 both as the revelation of God's creational intentions for humanity and the story of the primeval couple who made negative epochal changes in the moral conditions of the world. By drawing on the former, Ben Sira represents the current Israel under the rule of the high priest Simon, as an "Adamic" people under the rule of the priestly Adam in God's Edenic presence. This portrayal brings Israel to the center of Ben Sira's moral-anthropological universe. By drawing on the latter, Ben Sira describes the moral condition of the present world as resulting from the fall of the primeval couple, with the post-fall humanity subject to God's decree of humanity's earth-bound destiny in Gen 3:19. These findings suggest that Ben Sira heavily draws on the Genesis Adam story in the Torah to understand and portray the status and the state of the contemporary Israel, humanity, and the world.

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the terms that are thought to communicate "Selbstverständlichkeit des Todes," namely κρίμα θανάτου (41:4) and διαθήκη (14:17), are used elsewhere in the covenantal and/or forensic context - i.e., κρίμα (17:12; 19:25; 21:5; 32:16; 38:33-34; 42:2; 45:5, 17; 48:7) and διαθήκη (16:22; 17:12; 24:23; 28:7; 38:33; 39:8; 41:20; 42:2; 44:12; 44:18; 44:20; 44:23; 45:5, 7, 15, 17, 24; 47:11). Reiterer fails to appreciate this covenantal/forensic dimension when he implies that regelhaftigkeit is the point made by using expressions κρίμα θανάτου (41:4) and διαθήκη (14:17).

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Keywords

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집회서의 창세기 1-3장 아담 이야기 사용

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구약 외경의 지혜 문헌인 집회서는 구약 정경의 지혜 문헌들과는 달리 지혜를 토라와 분명히 동일시하는 것으로 알려져 있다. 하지만 집회서가 단순히 지혜를 토라와 동일시하는 것을 넘어서서 더 포괄적으로 토라의 영향을 받지 않았을까? 이 질문은 특히 국내 구약 학계에서는 많이 탐구되지 않았다. 본 논문은 이 질문에 답하고자 집회서가 어떻게 토라의 기초가 되는 창세기 아담 이야기를 사용하는지를 탐구한다. 탐구의 결과는 다음의 세 가지이다. 첫째, 집회서는 창세기 1-2장의 아담 이야기를 인간에 대한 하나님의 창조 목적으로 해석하여 이 창조 목적이 그 당시 이스라엘에게 특별히 구현된 것으로 표현한다. 이를 위해 집회서는 아담 이야기에 사용된 언어와 이미지를 사용하여 집회서 당시의 이스라엘을 아담적 백성으로 그리고 예루살렘을 에덴과 같은 곳으로 묘사한다. 둘째, 집회서는 창세기 1-2장의 아담 이야기를 아담이라는 첫 인간의 이야기로도 해석하여, 그 당시 이스라엘의 대제사장 시몬을 첫 아담에 상응하는 인물로 묘사한다. 이 두 결론은 성전의

구심점으로 한 이스라엘을 하나님의 창조 목적이 특별히 구현된 아담적 백성으로
그러서 세상에 대한 도덕적 패러다임으로 제시하는 토라의 아담-이스라엘 중심적
세계관이 집회서에서도 작용하고 있음을 암시한다. 셋째, 집회서는 창세기 3장의
아담과 이브의 타락 이야기를 인류의 도덕적 상태에 대전환을 가져온 사건으로 이
해하여, 죽음이 당연시되는 현 세상의 상태를 하나님의 창조 의도가 아닌 아담과
이브의 타락의 결과로 나타낸다. 이는 이스라엘의 아담적 지위와 역할이 펼쳐지
는 현 세상이 아담과 이브의 타락에 의해 죽음이 보편화된 타락 후 세상임을 시사
한다. 이 결론들은 집회서가 그 당시 이스라엘과 인류의 소명과 세상의 상태를 이
해하고 묘사하는 데 토라의 기초인 창세기 1-3장 아담 이야기의 영향을 크게 받았
음을 보여준다.

검색어

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창세기 1-3장
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