

The Intertestamental Period



An Open Seminar
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The Wisdom of Solomon



Chapter 5: Some Nomenclature

- “Salvation” and “immortality” are not the fully-developed concepts found in Christianity, but respite from some of the effects of death, namely persistence of injustice and forgetting.
- Light is associated with righteousness, is a synonym for it.
- “Saints” in verse 5 refers to members of the believing community. This is the same usage we see in the New Testament when describing the followers of Jesus and members of that community.

Whole Armor of God, Wisdom 5

17 The Lord will take his zeal as his whole
armour,
and will arm all creation to repel his enemies;
18 he will put on righteousness as a
breastplate,
and wear impartial justice as a helmet;
19 he will take holiness as an invincible shield,
20 and sharpen stern wrath for a sword,
and creation will join with him to fight against
his frenzied foes.



Armor of God, Ephesians 6:12-17

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Chapter 6: Wisdom and Kingship

- Wisdom is indispensable to sound rulership
- Implicit comparison with Israelite kings, nearly all of whom were failures according to scripture
- Dissonance between the “vanity” of kingship and the gifts of Wisdom



Jewish Politics in Ancient Alexandria

- Jews were in Alexandria as far back as the time of Alexander himself
- Dwelt in most parts of the city
- Had their own local leaders or “Ethnarchs”
- From the days of Augustus they had a council of 71 elders
- Central synagogue said to be a marvelous, beautiful building
- Many Jews acquired citizenship, which was denied to native Egyptians.
- Tensions between Egyptians, Jews, and Greeks led to strife, riots, and eventual creation of a single Jewish enclave in the city.

Sorites: Wisdom 6:17-20

- A type of argument construction
 - an argument consisting of propositions so arranged that the predicate of any one forms the subject of the next and the conclusion unites the subject of the first proposition with the predicate of the last
- 17 The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction, and concern for instruction is love of her,
- 18 and love of her is the keeping of her laws, and giving heed to her laws is assurance of immortality,
- 19 and immortality brings one near to God;
- 20 so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

Sorites in Paul, I Corinthians 15:12-14

'Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our teaching vain, and [if our preaching is vain] your faith is also vain.'

Sorites in *Star Wars*

"Fear leads to anger; anger leads to hatred; hatred leads to conflict; conflict leads to suffering."

Yoda

The Phantom Menace



Chapter 7: Wisdom Gets Real

- Wisdom is overlapped with the idea of science and understanding the nature of the universe
- Understanding creation at the nuts-and-bolts level conveyed additional authority.
- Hellenistic philosophy was not considered antagonistic to Judaism, per se, especially since there were many on both sides who believed that Greek Philosophy originated with the Jews.
- Is Wisdom a separate entity or part of God? Walking this tightrope proved to be a useful exercise for later debates regarding the Trinity, for which this chapter proved critical.