

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF SIRACH

They seek out the wisdom of all the ancients
and are concerned with prophecies;
they preserve the sayings of the famous
and penetrate the subtleties of parables;
they seek out the hidden meanings of proverbs
and are at home with the obscurities of parables.
They serve among the great
and appear before rulers;
they travel in foreign nations
and learn what is good and evil in the human lot.
They set their hearts to rise early
to seek the Lord who made them
and to petition the Most High;
they open their mouths in prayer
and ask pardon for their transgressions.

If the great Lord is willing,
they will be filled with the spirit of understanding;
they will pour forth words of wisdom of their own
and give thanks to the Lord in prayer.
The Lord will direct their counsel and knowledge
as they meditate on his mysteries.
They will show the discipline of their training
and will glory in the law of the Lord's covenant.
Many will praise their understanding;
it will never be blotted out.
Their memory will not disappear,
and their names will live through all generations.
Nations will speak of their wisdom,
and the congregation will proclaim their praise.