

## THE BOOK OF WISDOM – SHORT VERSION

**Introduction.** The Book of Wisdom is sometimes called the *Wisdom of Solomon* to connect it with the great Wisdom figure of Israel. It was common in the ancient times for writers to credit their writings to well-known and well-respected figures from the past. But in actuality, this book of the Bible was written by an anonymous Greek-speaking person living in Alexandria, Egypt, about 100BC. It was the last book of the Old Testament to be written.

Living in a cosmopolitan city like Alexandria, Jews were confronted with all kinds of pagan beliefs and would have been tempted to abandon the faith of their ancestors for “modern ideas” flowing from Greek culture that seemed to be taking over the world, even their beloved Jerusalem.

It was within this milieu that an anonymous Jew was inspired by God to write this book. He wanted to show the Jewish people that true Wisdom was found in God’s revelation and not in pagan philosophies and religions. The main interest of the author was to reassure the Jewish community in Egypt that it was worthwhile to live in a pagan land despite its hardships. Since this Greek written book is not found in the Hebrew Canon of the Bible, it is one of the seven books of the Old Testament not contained in the Protestant Canon of Scripture.

### Division of Chapters

Most scholars subdivide this book into three parts:

**Part 1 (Chapters 1 to 6:21):** Teaches about the justice and immortality that would come to those who remained faithful to God. By the time this book was written, Israel believed in an afterlife.

**Part 2 (Chapters 6:22 to 11:1):** Places Solomon in the pulpit who praised Wisdom for its unmatched value.

**Part 3 (Chapters 11:2 to 19:22):** A long review of Israel’s history up until the time of the Exodus. It focuses on God’s providential care for the Jews during the Exodus and his punishment of the Egyptians. It was an exhortation to the Jews living in Alexandria that they should not abandon the faith of their ancestors for new fashionable ideas.

### CHAPTER 5: The fate of the just and unjust

This chapter concentrates on the consequences of both evil and just living, the result of the quest for Wisdom. We have a reflection from the wicked (vv 3-13) followed by a description of the just at the time of judgment.

### CHAPTER 7:7-12: In praise of Wisdom

**CHAPTER 9:4-6, 10-12: Solomon’s beautiful prayer for Wisdom**