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THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 10

The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence. The Jews claim that it is a work of Philo; it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed. This is the Prologue Jerome put before the Book of Wisdom; he shows firstly the origin of this book saying: 'The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style, that is, its language is so elegant that it 'has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence', that is, its taste is more Greek than Hebrew. The Greeks are more eloquent and deeper in their statements than the Hebrews. So, since this book has a most elegant style with the deepest teachings, it is clear that it was written in Greek rather than in Hebrew. Secondly, Jerome names its author when he says: 'The Jews claim that it', namely, the Book of Wisdom 'is a work of Philo' as its compiler but that Solomon was the person who discovered it. While Philo was a Jew he was highly skilled in the Greek language. Jerome says of him in the book *De viris illustribus* that 'he was a Jew of Alexandria of the class of priests'. Thirdly, he gives the reason for the title when he says: 'it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed'. The translation is based on the Douay Rheims version of the Bible.

**THE COMMENTARY ON THE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF WISDOM
ARE THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SERAPHIC DOCTOR SAINT BONAVENTURE, OFM**

Chapter 10

She preserved him that was first formed by God the father of the world, when he was created alone. In the preceding sections he instructed rectors especially to acquire wisdom, and this for reasons taken from the danger of the office of those he is instructing, namely, in chapter six; secondly, in chapters seven, eight and nine, by reasons taken from the example of the one who is instructing. Here he encourages them to this same purpose with reasons taken from the many effects and benefits of the wisdom in which he is instructing them. Wisdom is beneficial by promoting the wise, namely his friends, and by punishing its foolish adversaries. So, firstly, in this chapter he deals with benefits pertaining to the promotion of the friends of God; secondly, with benefits pertaining mainly to the punishment of its adversaries, namely, in chapter eleven and further.

(Verse 21). *For wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of infants eloquent, as if to say:*

they *sang* and *praised* rightly for wisdom, by delivering them, *opened*, namely, to praise the divine name, *the mouth of the dumb*, dumb previously due to fear;

Exodus 14:10: 'The children of Israel saw the Egyptians behind them and they feared exceedingly'. *And made the tongues of infants*, that is, of those unable to speak, fluent, that is, eloquent; perhaps this should be understood in a literal sense as the tongues of the children of the Hebrews, according to Psalm 8:3: 'Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings you have perfected praise'.

Or: *infants*, that is, unskilled people who only know to speak like infants, according to Jeremiah 1:6: 'I cannot speak for I am a child';

Luke 21:15: 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay';

Exodus 4:11: 'Who made the mouth of mortals? 'The human mind can neither think of anything nor worthily speak of it without the wisdom of God. Therefore, wisdom and eloquence must be asked for from God'.

END OF WISDOM 10

(Verse 19). *But their enemies*, namely, the Egyptians, *she drowned in the sea*; Exodus 15:4: 'Pharaoh's chariots and his army the Lord has cast into the sea'; also Exodus 15:10: 'They sank as lead in the mighty waters'.

And from the height, that is, *the depth*, of hell, that is, 'of unspeakable afflictions', *she brought them out*, that is, the children of Israel, and she did this by handing over or casting into that place the very enemies who had wanted to kill them by driving them into that place;

Sirach 51:7: 'From the depth of the belly of hell, and from an unclean tongue, and from lying lips'. *Therefore, the just*, namely, because wisdom was with them; *the just*, that is, the children of Israel, *took the spoils of the wicked*; 'Vessels of gold and silver belonging to the Egyptians', as is clear in Exodus 12:35;

Proverbs 13:22: 'The substance of the sinner is kept for the just'. Note, he does not say they took, because they acted in this way on the command of a superior, namely, of God; and so they did not steal or plunder, at least those who did this not from greed but from an intention of obeying God.

(Verse 20). *And they sang*, that is, devoutly sang after the crossing of the Red Sea; *to your holy name, O Lord*; Exodus 15:1-3: 'Let us sing to the Lord who is gloriously magnified, who threw the horse and the rider into the sea. The Lord is a warrior, Almighty is his name'; they *sang* in this way because of their deliverance. *And they praised with one accord*, that is, together because of the overthrowing of their enemies, *your victorious hand*, that is, your power; so Exodus 15:6: 'Your right hand, O Lord, is magnified in strength'.

Thirdly, he exhorts the acquiring of wisdom with reasons taken from its effects and, firstly, from the benefits pertaining to the promotion of the friends of God

In the first part he determines, firstly, the benefits received by individuals; secondly, the benefits shown to one person: *She delivered the just people, and blameless seed from the nations that oppressed them*.

Firstly, on the benefits received by six individuals

In the first part he shows the benefits of wisdom in six individuals among the ancient Patriarchs: firstly, in the person of Adam when he says: *She preserved him that was first formed by God*; secondly, in the person of Noah: *But when the unjust went away from her in his anger*; thirdly, in the person of Abraham: *Moreover when the nations had conspired together to consent to pride*; fourthly, in the person of Lot: *She delivered the just man who fled from the wicked that were perishing*; fifthly, in the person of Jacob: *She, however, conducted the just, when he fled from his brother's wrath*; sixthly, in the person of Joseph: *She forsook not the just when he was sold, but delivered him from sinners*.

In the first part on Adam he shows the benefit, firstly, of grace and secondly, of nature: *And she brought him out of his sin, and gave him power to govern all things*.

(Verse 1). *She preserved him*. I have said well, that *by wisdom they were healed*, as is clear in the examples. *She*, namely, wisdom, *preserved him*, namely, Adam, who was the first of all people *formed by God*, immediately; Job 10:8: 'Your hands have made me, and fashioned me wholly round about'. *The father of the world*, that is, of the whole future human race; Malachi 2:10: 'Have we not all one father?' *When he was created alone*, namely, before the formation of woman; Genesis 2:18: 'It is not good for man to be alone'. Note that it is said to be formed with reference to the body; so Genesis 2:7 says: 'The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth'; and it says created with reference to the soul; Genesis 1:27: 'God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them'. I say, *she preserved him, that was first formed*, namely, from sin in the earthly paradise in the state of innocence. 'The Lord God put him in the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it', Genesis 2:15.

(Verse 2). *And she brought him*, after the creation of the woman, when he became disobedient, *out of his sin*, by imposing penance and remitting sin. And note that here the penance of Adam is spoken of more explicitly than in other places. *And she brought him out of the slime of the earth*, namely, with reference to the body; Sirach 17:1: 'God created human beings of the earth'. *And gave him power*, that is, the capacity, to govern all things, by ruling all things and having dominion over all, and this with reference to the soul, namely, by reason, according to Genesis 1:28: 'And rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth'; also in Psalm 8:8: 'You have subjected all things under his feet'.

But when the unjust went away from her in his anger, the brotherhood perished by the fury wherewith he murdered. Here he shows the benefit of wisdom especially prepared for Noah himself and for those with him in the ark when she delivered him from the flood and destroyed the evil ones. And he treats, firstly, of the first cause of the destruction of the evil one; secondly, the first cause of the deliverance of the good, as in: *For which cause, when water destroyed the earth, wisdom healed it again, directing the course of the just by contemptible wood*.

(Verse 3). Therefore, he says, *for which cause*, namely, wisdom, *when the unjust went away from her*; Proverbs 1:7: 'Fools despise wisdom and instruction'; for, by going away from wisdom, one goes away from God, as above in Wisdom 1:3: *For perverse thoughts separate from God; the unjust*, namely Cain, who is said to be unjust by antonomasia, because he was the first and the exemplar of the unjust; *in his anger*, in which he was angered against his brother Abel; Genesis 4:6: 'Why are you angry and why is your countenance fallen?' *In his anger*, that is, the anger that was spiritual fratricide, according to 1 John 3:15: 'Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer, or in a transitive form with the meaning: *In his anger wherewith he murdered his brother*, that is, which was the cause of the bodily fratricide; so Genesis 4:8: 'Cain rose up against his brother Abel and slew him'. *The brotherhood perished*, that is, the company of brothers, by killing Abel physically and Cain spiritually.

(Verse 17). *And she rendered to the just*; 'The people of Israel'; *the wages of their labours*; 'The promised land', that she had earlier promised them; Genesis 12:7: 'To your seed I will give this land'.

And conducted them, namely, to the land foretold, *in a wonderful way*; as noted in'; Psalm 62:3: 'In a desert land where there is no way and no water'.

This way was indeed *wonderful*, because in no way was it accessible to so large an army without many miracles.

And she was to them for a covering by day, that is, of daily heat, namely, 'by a pillar of cloud'; *and in the light of stars by night*, that is, in place of the light of the stars, and this by 'a pillar of cloud', Exodus 13:22:

'There never failed the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night'; also Isaiah 4:5: 'And the Lord will create upon every place of mount Zion, and where he is called upon, a cloud by day and a smoke and the brightness of a flaming fire in the night, for over all the glory shall be a protection'.

(Verse 18). *And she brought them*, namely, in the exodus from Egypt, *through the Red Sea*; Exodus 14:21-22:

'The water was divided, and the children of Israel went in through the midst of the sea dried up'. It is called a red sea because of its colour drawn from the adjoining red earth. *And carried them over through a great water*, namely, of the sea itself whose waters were a wall for them on the right and on the left. And note that it says *through the Red Sea*, to indicate its quality, and *through a great water* to indicate its quantity.

A triple treatment of the benefits given to one people

She delivered the just people. After showing the benefits of wisdom given to individuals, here he shows the benefit given to one people; and, firstly, he treats of a general benefit, secondly, of a special benefit: *She entered into the soul of the servant of God*, and, thirdly, thanksgiving for both: *Therefore the just took the spoils of the wicked. And they sang to your holy name, O Lord, and they praised with one accord your victorious hand.*

(Verse 15). *She*, namely, wisdom, *delivered the just people*, 'namely, the Israelite people', justified by faith, according to Romans 5:1: 'Being justified therefore by faith'; or: *the just people*, from doing good; and *blessed seed*, namely, by shunning evil; *seed*, namely, of the Patriarchs, and also in Tobit 2:18: 'For we are the children of Saints'; *She delivered the just people, and blameless seed from the nations that oppressed them.* He sets out the double cause of this deliverance, namely, the goodness of the people, when he says: *the just people*; secondly, the holiness of the Fathers, when he says: *and blameless seed from the nations that oppressed them*, 'that is, from the Egyptians', who remained in the stain of their birth. *That oppressed them*, that is, troubled, 'namely, in clay and brick' and straw, as is clear in Exodus 1:14. And note that by this oppression or annoyance the annoying of the devil can be understood; the devil annoys his servants in acts of the clay of lust and in the bricks of greed and the straws of pride; Exodus 3:7: 'I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of the rigour of them that are over the works'.

She entered into the soul of the servant of God, and stood against dreadful kings in wonders and signs. Here he treats of spiritual benefits, firstly, those given in Egypt; secondly, after the exodus from Egypt: *And she rendered to the just the wages of their labours*; thirdly, in the exodus itself: *And she brought them through the Red Sea.*

(Verse 16). *She entered*, that is, wisdom itself, *into the soul of the servant of God*; 'That is, Moses', as above in Wisdom 7:27: *through nations conveys herself into holy souls*; also Exodus 4:12: 'I will be in your mouth and I will teach you what you shall speak'. *And stood*, namely, firmly; so Exodus 9:10: 'Moses stood before Pharaoh'; *stood*, I say, *against dreadful kings*; 'Pharaoh and the other princes'; *in wonders*, that is, in great miracles, *and the lesser signs* 'she worked in Egypt'; so Exodus 7:3: 'I shall multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt'; Sirach 45:3: 'God glorified him in the sight of kings'; above in Wisdom 8:15: *Terrible kings hearing shall be afraid of me.*

(Verse 4). *For which cause* namely, sin, *when water destroyed the earth, wisdom healed it again*; for that sin was the first cause of the corruption of the descendents of Cain, from which sin the corruption flowed on to a large proportion of the descendents of Seth; and there was fulfilled what Genesis 6:12 says: 'All flesh had corrupted its way'. *When water destroyed the earth*, by wiping out people from the surface of the earth; Genesis 6:7: 'I will destroy the human beings whom I have created from the face of the earth'. For all those perished who are written in the earth, namely, the evil doers, of whom Jeremiah 17:13 says: 'They that depart from you shall be written in the earth'; also by destroying all flesh living on earth, according to Genesis 7:21: 'All flesh was destroyed that moved on earth'. *Wisdom healed it again*, namely, the world, just as previously it had healed Adam; *healed*, I say, the world, namely, by purging evil people out of it; *by contemptible wood*, 'that is, by the ark', contemptible in material and despised by those who believed it was being built in vain. *The just*, 'namely, Noah', of whom Genesis 6:9 says: 'Noah was a just and perfect man in his generations, he walked with God'; *directing*, namely, from delivering him from sinking into the deluges of water; 2 Peter 2:5: 'Noah, the eighth person, the preacher of justice, bringing in the flood upon the world'. That wood represents the cross, because while it is contemptible to unbelievers, it is venerable to believers; so 1 Corinthians 1:18: 'For the word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness'; also in the same passage, verse 23: 'But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness'.

Moreover when the nations had been stirred together to consent to wickedness, she knew the just, and preserved him without blame to God, and kept him strong against the compassion for his son. Here he considers the benefit given to Abraham, firstly, in himself; secondly, in his descendants: *And in the sons* etc.

(Verse 5). He says, therefore: *She*, namely, wisdom, and also with him *the nations together*, that is, people of that time still living in the defect of birth, *had been stirred*, that is, taken with excessive joy of heart and effort in work, against what is said in Psalm 130:1: 'Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lofty'. *To consent to pride*, namely, coming from pride by this consent or by this pride, they wanted to build a tower reaching to heaven and to celebrate their name, both of which came from pride, Genesis 11:4. I say, *when the nations had been stirred together*; *she*, namely, wisdom, *knew*, by approving, choosing and separating from the wicked; 2 Timothy 2:19: 'The Lord knows who are his'; it is said in Matthew 7:23 against the wicked: 'I never knew you'; *the just*, namely, Abraham who is called just by antonomasia. *And preserved him without blame to God*, 'in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation', which was difficult; Luke 1:6: 'And they were both without blame'. *And in the sons*, that is, in the descendents, *guarded strong mercy*, namely, by multiplying them out of mercy, strongly defending them against their adversaries and, finally, by giving them the promised land, as had been promised in Genesis 13:14ff., 15:18 and 17:8.

She delivered the just man who fled from the wicked that were perishing. Here he shows the benefit of the wisdom given to the person of Lot when he was delivered from the destruction of Sodom, and, firstly, he treats of the deliverance of Lot; secondly, the punishment of the others: *when the fire came down upon Pentapolis*; thirdly, the equity of the punishment: *For regarding not wisdom, they did not only slip in this, that they were ignorant of good things.*

(Verse 6). *She*, namely, wisdom, *the just man*, 'namely, Lot': 2 Peter 2:8 says of him: 'In sight and hearing he was just'; *from the wicked that were perishing*, namely, from association with the wicked who were perishing, that is, of the people of Sodom; *She delivered the just man who fled*, also from association with sin, according to 2 Peter 2:7: '*And delivered just Lot, oppressed by the injustice and lewd conduct of the wicked*' and from association with punishment; Genesis 19:14ff. speaks of both deliverances. *When the fire came down*, sent from heaven not from earth; Genesis 19:24: 'The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven'; *upon Pentapolis*, 'That is, in the region of the five towns', namely, Sodom, Gomorrah, Bela, Zeboiim and Admah.

(Verse 7). To whom, namely, to those perishing, *for a testimony of their wickedness*, their ardent and fetid lust, that *smokes*, by putting out smoke from itself; so in Psalm 17:9: 'There went up a smoke in his wrath'; *whose land is desolate*, namely, of plants and trees; Job 28:5: 'The land, out of which bread grew in its place, has been burnt by fire'; also Psalm 106:34: 'A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein'. *And at a certain*, namely, determined, *time trees bearing fruit* of no value, as is said, because in that place fruits are produced that are externally beautiful but within are burnt up like ashes; 'They illustrate that without the fruit of penitence souls will burn in hell for eternity'. *And a pillar*, that is, a statue of *salt*, so that all who hear and see are seasoned with the salt of wisdom against the corruption of carnal concupiscence or foolishness; I say, a *pillar* standing as a *monument*, that is, a record; Luke 17:32: 'Remember Lot's wife'; *a monument*, I say, *of an incredulous soul*, that is, of the disbelief of Lot's wife who looked back, being unwilling to believe the Angel who forbade this, as is clear in Genesis 19:17 and 26.

Note here that *the desolate land* is a witness to them of the worthlessness of their good works; *smoke*, of their blindness from carnal concupiscence; *fruits that ripen not*, of their evil way of life; *the pillar of salt*, of their outpouring of carnal concupiscence and their corruptive rottenness.

(Verse 14). *And in the bands*, of prison, *she left him not*, because by a wise interpretation of dreams she delivered him from the bands, Genesis 1:1ff. *Till she brought him the sceptre of the kingdom*, that is, the first place after Pharaoh in the whole of Egypt; so in Genesis 41:40: 'You shall be over my house and the commandment of your mouth all the people shall obey, only in the kingly throne will I be above you'; *and power*, namely to judge or protect himself, *against those that oppressed him*, that is, against his brothers who had oppressed him, and on whom he struck great terror, as is clear in Genesis 42:6ff. and showed them to be liars that had accused him, namely, by the accusation of disgrace by the wife of Potiphar and her servants; Job 13:4: 'Having first shown that you are forgers of lies and maintainers of perverse opinions'. For by his divine exaltation it was shown and believed that it was all a lie and perhaps later even the woman herself acknowledged this. Of this accusation of disgrace, Sirach 47:22: says: 'You have stained your glory'. *And gave him everlasting glory*, namely, unending fame, according to Psalm 111:7: 'The just shall be in everlasting remembrance'; in eternal glory when she led Christ with the other Fathers out of hell into glory. 'You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive'.

Note that in the six persons listed above, there are shown six ways in which wisdom delivers the Saints, according to the text of Job 5:19: 'In six troubles God will deliver you, and in the seventh, evil shall not touch you'. For she delivers from the temptation of the enemy as in Adam; from the temptation of the corruption of passion, as in Noah when the others perished from the corruption of the flesh; also, from the temptation of pride and inner exaltation, as in Abraham from imitating the pride of giants or from an imitation of pride; also, from external temptation, namely, of bad example and debased conduct, as in Lot; also, from the temptation of human deceit and fraud, as in Jacob; also, from the temptation of worldly hardship, as in Joseph.

Note also we have three enemies, namely, the devil, the flesh and the world represented by the three enemies of Solomon spoken of in 1 Kings 11:14, 23 and 26.

Temptation by the devil is of two kinds, namely, external and visible, internal and invisible. Deliverance from the first is represented in the deliverance of Adam, from the second, in the deliverance of Abraham. Temptation by the world is of two kinds, namely, by deceit and violence. Deliverance from the first is represented in the deliverance of Jacob; from the second, in the deliverance of Joseph.

(Verse 12). *She kept him safe from his enemies*, namely, from Laban and his sons persecuting and wanting to rob him; Genesis 31:42: 'Unless the God of my father Abraham had stood by me, perhaps you would have sent me away naked'. *And she defended him from seducers*, namely, from Esau and his family who perhaps intended to capture him when they came to meet him. But the Lord changed the heart of Esau by the offering of the gifts Jacob had sent ahead to him, as is clear in Genesis 32:3ff. *And gave him a strong conflict*; explains this about the struggle against Laban and his sons, Genesis 31:22ff., or against Esau; or more accurately it can be understood of the conflict when he struggled with the Angel, Genesis 32:24ff.; I say with the Angel who was stronger than he. For if an evil Angel is so strong that 'there is no power upon earth that can be compared with it', as found in Job 41:24; how much more a good Angel? *That he might overcome*, namely, that conflict; Hosea 12:3-4: 'By his strength he had success with an Angel and he prevailed over the Angel and was strengthened'. I say, *that he might overcome and know*, namely, by obtaining a victory specifically by wisdom, because *wisdom is mightier than all*, since it is able to free one from any evil person; so Genesis 32:28: 'If you have been strong against God, how much more shall you prevail over human beings?'

She forsook not the just when he was sold. Here he shows the benefit of wisdom worked in the person of Jacob, and, firstly, in his deliverance; secondly, in the exaltation of the freed person: *Till she brought him the scepter of the kingdom*.

(Verse 13). *She*, namely, wisdom, *the just*, 'that is, Joseph'; out of justice he accused to his father the crimes of his brothers; Genesis 37:2: 'he accused his brothers to his father of a most wicked crime'; *when he was sold*, 'namely, by his brothers', who, 'sold him to Ishmaelite's who were passing', Genesis 37:28; *forsook not*, namely, by abandoning him; Psalm 36:28: 'The Lord will not forsake his Saints for ever'. *But delivered him from sinners*, from the wife of Potiphar and her servants, 'when he was accused of adultery', Genesis 39:13ff. *She went down with him into the pit*; 'of a prison'; for he was cast into the prison in which 'the king's prisoners were kept', to where wisdom went down with him, as was clear because she 'gave him favour in the sight of the chief keeper of the prison, Genesis 39:20ff.

(Verse 8). *For wisdom*, as if to say: and they are rightly punished in this way; *for regarding not wisdom*, that is, The people of Sodom rejecting it and so they are unhappy; so above in Wisdom 3:11: *For those who reject wisdom, and discipline, are unhappy*; so they perished in accord with Baruch 3:28: 'Because they had not wisdom, they perished through their folly'; not only did they perish because they bypassed wisdom, *but they left also unto all a memorial of their folly*. And this is what follows: *they did not only slip in this, that they were ignorant of good things*. I say, *for regarding not wisdom, they did not only slip in this, that they were ignorant*, an ignorance of which 1 Corinthians 14:38 says: 'But a person who knows not, shall not be known'; *good things*, namely, what pertains to life and one's own salvation. *But of their folly*, because 'they are compared to senseless beasts and have become like to them'; *they left also unto all a memorial of their folly*, in an evil reputation, *so that in the things in which they sinned*, that is, in the sins they committed, *they could not so much as lie hid*, but they sinned publicly; Isaiah 3:9: 'They proclaimed abroad their sin as Sodom, and they have not hid it'. So the Lord wanted their sins to be made public to the whole world by their public punishment.

Sin lies hidden by the cunning of the sinner; 2 Samuel 12:12: 'You did this secretly, but I will do this thing in the sight of all Israel'. By a pretense of holiness; Matthew 23:27: 'You are like to whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead bones, and off all filthiness'. By the authority of a dignity or a prelate's office.

No one does more harm in the Church than one who acts perversely while having the name and rank of sanctity. When this person transgresses, no one presumes to take to task; and from the example the offence spreads forcibly, when out of reverence to his rank the sinner is honoured.

(Verse 9). *Wisdom however*, as if to say: just as these unjust people were punished on account of their contempt for wisdom; *however*, for but; in heart, mouth and deed *upon her*, namely, wisdom; from the sorrow of eternal punishments, of which Isaiah 50:11 says: 'You shall sleep in sorrows'; also Psalm 114:3: 'The sorrows of death have compassed me'.

She conducted the just, when he fled from his brother's wrath, through the right ways, and showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him the knowledge of the holy things, made him honourable in his labours, and accomplished his labours. Here he treats of the multiple benefits wrought in the person of Jacob, of which the first was his promotion in good; the second, his preservation from evil: *In the deceit of them that overreached him*; the third, his help in triumph: *and gave him a strong conflict*.

(Verse 10). *She*, namely, wisdom, *when he fled from his brother's wrath*, that is, fleeing and getting away from the anger of his brother or from his angry brother; Genesis 27:42-43: 'Behold Esau your brother threatens to kill you. Now therefore, my son, hear my voice: arise and flee to Laban my brother in Haran'. *The just*, namely, Jacob, according to Genesis 30:33: 'My justice shall answer for me tomorrow'; *conducted through the right ways*; 'Through Mesopotamia'; Deuteronomy 33:12: 'The Lord alone was his leader'. *Right*, he says, because 'the way of the just is right', as seen in Isaiah 26:7. *And showed him*, namely, through a vision in the imagination while on the way, *the kingdom of God*, because 'he saw a ladder standing upon the earth and the top thereof touching heaven' Genesis 28:12. But the devil showed the kingdom of the world; so Matthew 4:8: 'The devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world'. *And gave him the knowledge of the holy things*, that is an understanding of sacred things, because 'there is need of understanding in a vision', as found in Daniel 10:1; I say, [wisdom] gave him an understanding of the sacred things he saw so that he might understand what the ladder which he saw represents, as also for the ascent and descent of Angels. For the ladder is obedience by which the Angels ascend to assist God and descend to minister to us; Daniel 7:10: 'Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before the Ancient of days'. *Made him honourable*; That is, enriched him", according to Sirach 11:23: 'For it is easy in the eyes of God on a sudden to make the poor man rich'; this is a human way of speaking, namely, to think that the rich are upright people. *In his labours*, that is, on account of his labours, not from injustice and theft, as many enrich themselves. But such riches make one neither upright nor blessed, as do one's own labours or wealth gained from just labour; Psalm 127:3: 'For you shall eat the labours of your hands, blessed are you, and it shall be well with you'. *And accomplished*, that is, brought him to the desired goal, namely, by bringing him back to his father in the land of Canaan; *his labours* 'Which he endured in caring for the flocks', of which Genesis 31:40 says: 'Day and night was I parched with heat and with frost'.

She conducted the just, when he fled from his brother's wrath.

From these words down to:

In the deceit of them that overreached him, the multiple benefits that the Lord does for his Saints are considered, and the first of these is justification in the beginning of conversion; Romans 8:30: 'And those God called, them God also justified'; and he is referring to this when he says: *the just*.

The second leads to an advance in conduct: *She conducted ... through the right ways*; Psalm 142:10: 'Your good Spirit shall lead me into the right land'.

The third is the showing of the kingdom in grace or in the privacy of contemplation: *He showed*; Exodus 33:19: 'I will show you all good'.

The fourth is instruction in acknowledging the divine will: *And gave him the knowledge of the holy things*; Baruch 4:4: 'We are happy, O Israel, because the things that are pleasing to God are made known to us'.

The fifth is honour, that is, wealth in an abundance of merit and virtue: *Made him honourable in his labours*; Job 5:26: 'You shall enter into the grave in abundance, as a heap of wheat is brought in its season'.

The sixth is achievement in reward: *And accomplished his labours*; above in Wisdom 4:13: *Being made perfect in a short space, they fulfilled a long time, for their souls pleased God*; also above in Wisdom 3:15: *For the fruit of good labours is glorious*.

(Verse 11). *In the deceit of them that overreached him*, that is, to overreach, what 'Laban and his sons' wanted; *she stood by him*, to protect him, lest he be deceived and injured; Genesis 31:7: 'Your father also has overreached me, and has changed my wages ten times'. *And*, the Lord, *made him honourable*, that is, rich; Genesis 31:1 'Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and being enriched by his substance is become great'.