

# Walk Through The Bible

*St. Barnabas Parish  
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Nassau, New Providence,  
The Bahamas*

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Ecclesiasticus*

## **1. Ecclesiasticus 32:1-24 Leadership, Banquets and Stability.**

- a. 1-2 If one is chosen as the Master of the Feast, he must demonstrate servant-leadership which means that he must look after the guests first, then take his seat. Servant-leadership is considered as excellent leadership.
- b. 3-13 Banquets are made for laughter and music. Inappropriate topics should not be discussed; rather people should be friendly, kind, and modest. The old and the young must learn this lesson. Leave when it is time to leave. They are to enjoy themselves, but make sure that they do not commit sin. Yet in all things they are to bless their Maker.
- c. 14-17 The serious student of wisdom always makes the Lord his first priority and accepts His discipline. He studies the Law which helps him to be productive. In contrast, the hypocrite has divided loyalties, the law is seen as an obstacle, and he hates to be reproved.
- d. 18-24 The right attitude is not to approach life being over-confident. Ben Sirach encourages his students to carefully deliberate before they act. They must seek to do what the scriptures demand and do not be like the insolent and the proud.

## **2. Ecclesiasticus 33:1-33 The Law, Opposites, Fatherhood, and Slaves**

- a. 1-3 Fear the Lord and walk in the ways of the Law. Do not be like the hypocrites who dislike the word of the Lord. The divine oracles refer to the Urim and Thummin which were employed by the priests to discern the will of the Lord (Exodus 28:30 and I Samuel 14:41-42).
- b. 4-6 Never speak without proper preparation and always draw upon what you have learnt. Do not be like a fool whose thoughts go around in a circle - getting no where!!! Indeed the fool is not a true, steadfast friend of the Law.

- c. 7-15 While days and human beings may appear to be alike, remember that it is God who distinguishes which days will receive a greater honour and what persons He will elevate to higher positions.
- d. 16-19 Ben Sirach regarded himself as the last of a great line of teachers of wisdom, like the gleaner who comes to collect the leftovers at the end of the harvest. Yet he has gained so much that he advises his listeners to pay attention to what he is trying to teach them.
- e. 20-24 A father must make sure that he does not give away his property prematurely, otherwise he may have to ask for it back. He must maintain his financial independence rather than suffer the possible disgrace of being dependant on his children.
- f. 25-33 The slave is put into the same category as the other animals. The owner is to exercise strict discipline for the sake of obedience and productivity. Yet at the same time the owner is not to be cruel and unjust. The law set out how slaves were to be treated (Exodus 21:2-6, 20-21; and Deuteronomy 15:12-18).

**3. Ecclesiasticus 34:1-31 Grounds for Hope and Acceptable Worship**

- a. 1-20 The fool often puts his hope in dreams and disappointment usually follows. Unless God sends dreams they are not to build their hope on them. Ben Sirach encourages the educated and matured who have had a broad experience in terms of life to make sure that the Lord becomes the surest grounds of their hope and support.
- b. 21-31 Atonement for sin cannot be won by simply going through ritual sacrifices. The sacrifices and rituals of the ungodly will not be accepted by God. To offer a sacrifice from the plundered property of the poor, or the exploitation of one's neighbour, or the wages owing to a labourer is to commit sin. Religious acts which are performed and do not change the patterns of a person's life ought to be considered a waste of time.

**4. Ecclesiasticus 35:1-26 True Worship**

- a. 1-11 For Ben Sirach, obedience to the law must under-gird every religious act. They are to be considered a response to the mercy of God. Persons must be cheerful and generous in participating in worship.
- b. 12-26 Ben Sirach reminds his students that the God that they serve is just and merciful. God looks out for the poor and the afflicted, the righteous and the humble, the orphans and widows. Be careful!!! Note well how He has dealt with unjust nations because He is capable of doing the same to unjust people!!!

**5. Ecclesiasticus 36:1-31 A Prayer and Exercising Prudence**

- a. 1-22 This is a prayer for deliverance and restoration of God's people and Jerusalem. Ben Sirach pleads for God to act in a new way and deal with their proud enemies. At the same time he prays for God to bring the tribes back together again.

- b. 23-31 Marriage is better than being a bachelor who wanders from place to place. Yet one must be careful in choosing a wife. The best wife is one that is both beautiful and modest and is a helper to her husband. Make sure you choose well.