



The Saint John's Bible: Wisdom Books

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Wisdom Books, the fifth volume of *The Saint John's Bible* to be released, includes some of the Old Testament's literary masterpieces, including Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. Also in this volume is the much-loved book of Job and two Old Testament works including the Wisdom of Solomon, which was originally written in Greek, and Sirach, which comes to us from the Greek tradition. *Wisdom Books* continues the work of earlier volumes, with a script created by calligrapher Donald Jackson specifically for this project. Artists that will be familiar to readers, Thomas Ingmire, Suzanne Moore, Chris Tomlin, and Sally Mae Joseph, are joined by new contributing artist Diane M. von Arx to bring light 'that is, illumination' to the text. And the images are not to be missed. There are over fifteen large illuminations, among them the spectacular frontispiece for Ecclesiastes and another titled Creative Wisdom. Additionally, to recognize the team of calligraphers that have bonded during six years of work and to capitalize on the aphoristic nature of these books, there is a special emphasis on text treatments. As you spend time with *Wisdom Books*, you will find yourself treasuring both the words and the images in your heart.

The Wisdom books exemplify the practical spirituality of the people of Israel. Using story, poetry, and aphorisms, the books collect practical wisdom to help guide people in how to live 'faithful to God, with praise and thankfulness, walking in ways that are upright. The profoundly moving story of Job asks how a good person can suffer if God is just. The Song of Solomon, long read as an allegorical love poem between God and the chosen people of Israel, or as Christ and the church, takes us beyond the commands of the prophets and lessons of history. It steps back from Israel's struggle to be faithful to the Lord and concentrates on the loving relationship between the Lord and the Beloved. Sirach and Proverbs, along with Psalms, are quoted throughout the Rule of St. Benedict. Like the Rule, their pages are filled with wisdom for how to live a godly life. *The Saint John's Bible* volume *Wisdom Books* draws out these themes 'wisdom as a female figure, use of Proverbs in the Rule of St. Benedict, and God's love for us. If we today want to live wisely, we would do well to look to this beautifully illuminated collection of ancient texts.

Donald Jackson is one of the world's leading calligraphers and the artistic director and illuminator of The Saint John's Bible. He is a Senior Illuminator to the Queen of England's Crown Office and is an elected Fellow and past Chairman of the prestigious Society of Scribes and Illuminators. His 30-year retrospective exhibition, Painting with Words, premiered at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in August, 1988 and traveled to 13 museums and galleries.

The launch of a national museum tour of the The Saint John's Bible began at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota in April 2005 where record crowds greeted the inaugural exhibit during its three-month run. The Saint John's Bible will continue its national exhibition tour that includes museums and galleries from throughout the United States and Europe including The Tyler Museum of Art in Tyler, Texas, June 8-September 3, 2006; The Museum of Biblical Art in New York, New York, September 6-November 26; The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., October 6-December 15, 2006; The Naples Museum of Art in Naples, Florida, January 26-April 16, 2007; The Phoenix Art Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, December 21, 2007-March 7, 2008; and The Mobile Museum of Art in Mobile, Alabama, October 10, 2008-April 10, 2009.

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