

# WISDOM PNEUMATOLOGY AND THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

THE BOOK OF WISDOM IN THE  
TRINITARIAN ACT OF CREATION

JEFFREY S. LAMP

*Spiritus* 2.1–2 (2017) 39–56  
<http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/spiritus/>

**Key Words** *Wisdom of Solomon, wisdom, spirit, creation, Christology, pneumatology, Trinity*

## **Abstract**

Recent interest in Trinitarian theology has given rise to consideration of the act of creation as a Trinitarian act. Focus on the Father and the Son in the act of creation is abundantly attested in this scholarship. However, consideration of the place of the Spirit in the creative act is somewhat underdeveloped. This article delves more deeply into the Spirit's role in creation by looking at wisdom and spirit language in the deuterocanonical Wisdom of Solomon. In the early chapters of the book, wisdom is characterized as a kindly spirit that brings life and penetrates all things, human and other-than-human, bringing into being all things and sustaining all things. Wisdom of Solomon is often mined as a background source for New Testament depictions of Christ, both in his creative and salvific roles. This article will argue that Wisdom of Solomon, through the convergence of wisdom and spirit language, provides a significant background

source for reading the creative work of the Holy Spirit in terms frequently employed in viewing the creative work of Christ. This similarity of depiction in creation further confirms that the act of creation is indeed a Trinitarian act.

## Introduction

Early in his career, Jürgen Moltmann noted a lacuna in the burgeoning interest in Trinitarian theology. He lamented that there was a glaring lack of attention paid to the Holy Spirit, a lack evidenced in his own groundbreaking monograph, *Theology of Hope*.<sup>1</sup> He expended extensive effort to address the Spirit in two subsequent volumes, *God in Creation* and *Spirit of Life*.<sup>2</sup> One significant aspect of Moltmann's pneumatology, outlined in these books, is the role of the Spirit in the Trinitarian act of creation.

Genesis 1:2 and Psalm 104:29–30 attest to the role of the Spirit in the original creation and the ongoing sustaining of the cosmos, respectively. However, the Bible more amply attests to the role of God the Father and God the Son in the creation and sustaining of the world. Indeed, it appears that Scripture itself evidences the same lack of emphasis on the Spirit in God's creative work that Moltmann identified in scholarly Trinitarian exploration.

This study will delve more deeply into the Spirit's role in creation by looking at the depiction of wisdom in terms of "spirit language" in the deuterocanonical work *Wisdom of Solomon*. In the early chapters of the book, wisdom is characterized as a kindly spirit that brings life and penetrates all things, human and other-than-human, bringing into being all things and sustaining all things. Moreover, *Wisdom of Solomon* is often mined as a background source for New Testament depictions of Christ, both in his creative and salvific roles. This study will argue that *Wisdom of Solomon*, through its characterization of wisdom as a spirit, might provide a significant background source for reading the creative work of the Holy Spirit in terms frequently employed in viewing the creative work of Christ. This similarity of depiction in creation further confirms that the act of creation is indeed a Trinitarian act.

The study will proceed in two major parts. First, it will examine the depiction of wisdom in Wisdom of Solomon, noting the convergence of wisdom and spirit language in contexts evoking imagery of creation. It will then look to the use of Wisdom of Solomon in Christological discussion, using the motif of wisdom and creation in Wisdom of Solomon to bring Christ and the Spirit together in terms of the creative work of each, suggesting that Wisdom of Solomon functions to depict a wisdom pneumatology that in turn informs a robust Trinitarian account of creation.

## Wisdom and Spirit in Wisdom of Solomon

We will examine three sections of Wisdom of Solomon where the figure of wisdom is depicted with spirit language in creational contexts. These sections are: 1:1–8; 6:1–8:6; and 12:1. As is evident, the second of these sections (6:1–8:6) is somewhat extensive and central to the opening section of the book (chs. 1–9), with 1:1–8 serving as a thematic introduction to this convergence of language, and the final brief mention elaborating on themes raised earlier in the book. Following a brief overview of Wisdom of Solomon, we will examine each of these passages in order.

Wisdom of Solomon, often called the Book of Wisdom and abbreviated simply Wisdom, is widely viewed as a work composed originally in Greek in the Second Temple Period, probably somewhere between 100 BCE and 50 CE, by a Hellenistic Jew in Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> Such a reconstruction, obviously, excludes Solomon from actual authorship, and indeed, the work is regarded as pseudonymous in scholarly circles. The book evidences the shift in Jewish sapiential thinking away from the more practical application in daily life of “how the world works” to a more scriptural locus for the search for wisdom, seeing wisdom as active in the history of Israel and in the lives of holy people.<sup>4</sup> Scholars have frequently identified philosophical influences from Middle Platonism and Stoicism, with the book frequently compared on this head with the writings of Philo of Alexandria.<sup>5</sup> Various structures have been proposed for the book, though a natural division seems to be to divide the book into two sections, chs. 1–9 and 10–19,<sup>6</sup> with the first part more

closely resembling the Old Testament depiction of wisdom<sup>7</sup> and the second part focusing on the participation of the figure of wisdom in Israel's redemptive history in the Exodus. A further advance of Wisdom of Solomon's depiction of wisdom over the Old Testament is in the highly personified figure of the so-called "Lady Wisdom," leading to the frequent literary convention of capitalizing the word "Wisdom" in identification of the feminine personage. This move vividly dramatizes the participation of wisdom in the lives of individuals and in history, doing so while avoiding casting Wisdom as an entity with independent existence apart from God.<sup>8</sup>

### **Wisdom and Spirit in Wisdom of Solomon 1:1–8**

Wisdom of Solomon begins with a call to the rulers of the earth to devote themselves to the Lord with purity of heart, with the promise that the Lord will be found by those who are faithful (1:2–2). Given that the namesake of the book, Solomon, is the exemplar of Israel's wisdom tradition and is the prototype of the wise king, such a call is not surprising. Verses 3 and 4 describe those whose thoughts are perverse and foolish (v. 3), explaining that wisdom "will not enter a deceitful soul, or dwell in a body enslaved to sin" (v. 4).<sup>9</sup> The first occurrence of spirit language in the book is found in v. 5, where it is said that "a holy and disciplined spirit will flee from deceit," establishing a connection that is found throughout the first section of the book.<sup>10</sup> Wisdom dwells with the righteous. Wisdom is then identified as a "kindly spirit" in v. 6. The adjective translated "kindly" is the Greek *φιλόανθρωπον*, suggesting that wisdom is naturally drawn to human beings, but will choose to dwell only with those who do not blaspheme God with their words.

With v. 7, the focus shifts to a description of the "spirit of the Lord" (*πνεῦμα κυρίου*) in terms of that spirit's relationship to the cosmos. First, the spirit of the Lord is said to fill the world. Second, this spirit also "holds all things together." As we will see later, these are qualities predicated of wisdom. This more cosmically-oriented language establishes the grounds for the somewhat more anthropologically-oriented focus of these verses. Because this spirit fills the cosmos and holds all things together, this spirit knows the thoughts that dwell within the

hearts of human beings and all the words that fall from their lips, and therefore is in position to mark those deserving divine justice (vv. 6–8).

In this first brief convergence of wisdom and spirit language, some parameters are established for the more extensive discourse that follows. There is a fluidity of language introduced here. Wisdom and spirit are depicted as rightly spoken of together in contexts that speak of the structure of the cosmos and the actions of human beings within that larger cosmos. Of course, the connection of wisdom and spirit is not fully elaborated here; it has only been introduced. But we also see here something that will come to the fore in subsequent discussions, namely, that wisdom and spirit, on the one hand, may come close to being identified with each other, but on the other hand, may also be clearly distinguished from each other. Hence our choice of the word “convergence” to describe the usage of the language, for implicit within the notion of convergence is also a sense of divergence.<sup>11</sup> In this opening passage of the book, wisdom is mentioned by itself in v. 4. Then in v. 6, wisdom and spirit are brought together in a compact construction, *φιλόανθρωπον πνεῦμα σοφία*. Finally, in vv. 7–8, the “spirit of the Lord” is mentioned by itself. This usage seems to suggest that it is appropriate to speak of each of these concepts separately, but that they also constellate easily and naturally in discussions of how the world is organized and how human beings are to conduct themselves with regard to other human beings and to God.<sup>12</sup>

This opening passage has set some groundwork for the more detailed passage to come in our survey. We turn now to the major discourse in which wisdom and spirit converge with particular respect to the created order, 6:1–8:6.

## **Wisdom and Spirit in Wisdom of Solomon 6:1–8:6**

This large section unfolds as a discourse by the narrator, “Solomon,” to those who would rule as kings in the world. In large measure, the section is a call for kings to pursue the path that Solomon followed to gain wisdom in the Old Testament descriptions of his pursuit of and prayer for wisdom (1 Kgs 3:6–9). The passage begins with an exhortation for all kings to heed his words as he will describe wisdom for them, the description of which is intended to increase their desire for wisdom

and all her benefits (Wisd Sol 6:1–11). Beginning in 6:12, “Solomon” describes wisdom from the perspective of one who is her lover, describing her benefits in lofty terms (6:12–25). Chapter 7 opens with an “autobiographical” account of his own pursuit of wisdom (7:1–14), emphasizing his single-mindedness in pursuing her above all things, and how in the end in obtaining wisdom he was granted “all good things” (v. 11). In 7:15–22a “Solomon” describes some of the scope of understanding granted him by wisdom, particularly in terms of knowledge of natural phenomena. With 7:22b–30, the focus turns to the role of wisdom in the ordering of the cosmos, and here the convergence of wisdom and spirit language functions thematically in the passage. The passage concludes with a reiteration of the call to pursue wisdom on the basis of wisdom’s role in creation (8:1–6). We shall look at each of these sections in some detail.

The first section of the passage, 6:1–11, functions as a call to those who rule, for it is with wisdom that the ability to rule justly and righteously is given by the God. Human rulers are easily given to hubris (v. 2) and in their pride they have not ruled according to the precepts of God (v. 4), and so because of their exalted position in God’s economy, they will be judged with greater scrutiny than the lowly (vv. 5–8). For this reason, the wise king entreats others in similar station to hear his words, to become holy, and find the resources to rule as they should (vv. 9–11).

The author’s praise to wisdom begins in earnest with v. 12. Wisdom is described immediately as radiant and unfading (*λαμπρὰ καὶ ἀμάραντος*), and yet is described as imminently accessible to those who would just seek after her, because in truth, she is seeking for those who would welcome her (vv. 12b–16). The pair of adjectives used here speak to wisdom’s permanence and immortality.<sup>13</sup> In a climactic progression, the beginning of wisdom leads to desire for instruction, and this is said to be love for wisdom. Love for wisdom leads to keeping her laws in pursuit of immortality. This brings one near to God, leading to the conclusion that the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom (vv. 17–20). This progression is an example of the literary technique known as *sorites*, a chaining together of items in a progression that culminates in a surprising climax.<sup>14</sup> Here, the surprise is that the pursuit of wisdom leads to a kingdom. At first glance, this looks like a promise that

pursuing wisdom leads to a terrestrial kingdom over which to rule, but in light of v. 21, where it is said that honoring wisdom enables monarchs to rule forever, and recalling v. 4, where it is said that monarchs are in truth servants of God's kingdom, something more seems implied here. Wisdom is more than simply the accumulation of the knowledge and skill for ruling a kingdom on earth; wisdom is salvific. This seems confirmed as well by the ascription of the qualities of wisdom as radiant and unfading, speaking of wisdom's immortality.<sup>15</sup> "Solomon" tells the kings that he will now reveal the mystery of this figure wisdom, where she came from, what she has been doing from the beginning of creation, and what she can benefit them if they will attend to his words (vv. 22–25). Wisdom's eternal qualities are brought into connection with wisdom's role in creation.

What follows immediately is an "autobiographical" sketch of the wise king's pursuit of wisdom (7:1–14), apparently given as a template for all monarchs to follow in their pursuit of wisdom. The opening section speaks of his rather ordinary birth (vv. 1–6), noting that he entered the world like every other human being ever born. He is eminently human, like those he is addressing, and in so arguing, he scuttles any potential objections that he was specially endowed to attain what he has. At this point, he now reveals how it was that he came to know wisdom and attain his stature as the wise king, providing a summary of Solomon's prayer for wisdom in 1 Kings 3:6–9. In Wisdom of Solomon 7:7, he recalls that he prayed to God for understanding, and what was given him was the "spirit of wisdom" (*πνεῦμα σοφίας*). This collocation of wisdom and spirit language shows that this is more than mere mental acquisition; it has penetrated the depth of his being and is now a part of him. He is now endued with wisdom, and his response is that of a lover. He preferred her to everything that a human being might long to possess in life: power, wealth, gems, gold, silver, health, beauty, and light (vv. 8–10). Of course, as the account in 1 Kings 3:10–14 goes on to say, he was given all these things because of his single-hearted desire for wisdom, and he was grateful, though interestingly, he expresses a sort of innocent ignorance of the fact that it was wisdom who gave him these blessings, signaling once more his singular devotion to wisdom alone (Wisd Sol 7:11–12). Again, in devotion to wisdom, he becomes

a herald for her blessings, indicating that she will indeed grant these blessings to all irrespective of anyone who will pursue her instruction (vv. 13–14).

“Solomon” now asks God for the ability to share what he has received, noting God’s sovereignty even over wisdom (vv. 15–16). Then somewhat surprisingly, as he begins to spell out the substance of what it is that the “spirit of wisdom,” given by God, has imparted to him, he goes not into a discussion of what it is that might help his audience rule wisely, but describes wisdom in terms of the orders of created existence. The words bear repeating in full:

For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists,  
to know the structure of the world and the activity of the  
elements;  
the beginning and end and middle of times,  
the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons,  
the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars,  
the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals,  
the powers of spirits and the thoughts of human beings,  
the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots;  
I learned both what is secret and what is manifest,  
for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me  
(vv. 17–22a).

Two observations are noteworthy here. First, the fluidity of language in this section is instructive. In the final line of the quotation, wisdom is said to have taught him, though he prefaced this litany with the affirmation that it was to God to whom he prayed for this instruction to his audience, and that it was via the spirit of wisdom that this was initially imparted. God, wisdom, spirit—the source of knowledge of all things variously and authoritatively ascribed, yet not rigorously defined. Secondly, the connection of God, wisdom, and spirit with the created order is telling. The total scope of creation—cosmic, animal, vegetable, the realms of the human and other-than-human creation—are all in the purview of wisdom’s activity and presence.<sup>16</sup> This connection forms the foundation for the praise for wisdom that follows.



Verse 21 actually sets the stage for the description of wisdom beginning in 22. Wisdom is called the “fashioner” of all things. The Greek term τεχνίτης carries the sense of “craftsman” and is repeated in 8:6 to close out this passage. Intervening in this *inclusio* is a lofty description of wisdom.

The description of wisdom actually begins with a description of the “spirit” (πνεῦμα) that is in her, and that spirit is described in vv. 22 and 23 with a list of twenty-one adjectives that describe the intelligence, power, purity, and trustworthiness of this spirit.<sup>17</sup> The number twenty-one is not accidental; three groups of seven indicate complete perfection.<sup>18</sup> Again, wisdom and spirit are characterized as distinct, yet are closely connected, the one used to describe the other. Wisdom, the fashioner of all things in creation, does so with a spirit depicted with an extensive *pleonasm* that attributes to this spirit deeply personal qualities. And this spirit is said to penetrate “through all spirits” (διὰ πάντων πνευμάτων) who in turn possess like attributes: intelligent, pure, and subtle (v. 23). With v. 24, the focus turns back to wisdom, who is first described as “more mobile than any motion.” The Greek πάσης κινήσεως κινητικώτερον parallels one of the adjectives just used to describe the spirit characterizing wisdom, εὐκίνητον, and she also pervades (διήκει) and penetrates (χωρεῖ) all things. This latter verb is the one just used to describe the penetration of the spirit within wisdom through the souls of worthy persons. Wisdom is a “breath”<sup>19</sup> (ἀτμίς) of God’s power and a pure “emanation” (ἀπόρροια) of the Almighty’s glory (v. 25), a “reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of [God’s] goodness” (v. 26). Winston notes that the use ἀπόρροια is the earliest use of the term in extant Greek literature to describe wisdom as a direct emanation from God, a bold move for someone writing in the biblical tradition.<sup>20</sup> Together with ἀτμίς, the terms are suggestive of pneumatological overtones, especially in light of the convergence of wisdom and spirit language throughout Wisdom of Solomon. Verses 27–28 then touch on a notion that speaks both to wisdom’s transcendence and immanence. On the one hand, wisdom is a self-subsisting entity capable of all things who, while maintaining her own existence with full integrity, renews all things and takes up residence in the souls of the holy to make them God’s friends and prophets.

Making things new is the provenance of God's Spirit, as Psalm 104:30 affirms. So the renewal of things constitutes a clear convergence of wisdom and Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Wisdom of Solomon 7:29–30 extols the superiority of wisdom's light to the light of the sun and stars, for even those mighty sources of light are followed, from the perspective of earthly existence, with darkness, but evil does not likewise eclipse wisdom. In this section, the author densely enumerates several characteristics of wisdom that effectively bring wisdom and God together in close relation with each other, drawing on Jewish sources (e.g., Prov 8:22–31; Philo) and Greek philosophy (Stoic and Platonic) to reflect that the work of wisdom is indeed the work of God.<sup>22</sup>

The final segment of this large section, 8:1–6, concludes by reiterating "Solomon's" pursuit of wisdom as that which rulers should emulate. As before, the grounds for the exhortation are framed by appeal to wisdom's activity with respect to the created order. Verse 1 states, "[Wisdom] reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well," with v. 5 identifying wisdom as "the active cause of all things" and v. 6 concluding with wisdom's designation as "fashioner of what exists." The point of the section is simple: if this is wisdom's pedigree, then what could possibly be more worthy to pursue?

Wisdom 6:1–8:6 evidences connections between wisdom and spirit that help us tease out implications for a wisdom pneumatology that speaks to our task of viewing the place of the Third Person of the Trinity in the work of creation. But first, one other brief convergence of wisdom and spirit language requires our attention.

## **Wisdom and Spirit in Wisdom of Solomon 12:1**

"For your immortal spirit is in all things."

To call this brief sentence a convergence of wisdom and spirit language looks to be an overstatement. Spirit language is indeed present, but the term "wisdom" is clearly lacking. Moreover, looking at the context here, the referent for the pronoun "your" is clearly God, and not wisdom, as we saw implicit in the previous major section of our discussion. Specifically, this instance of spirit language occurs relatively early in the major section of the book in which the author provides

an interpretation of the Exodus events (chs. 11–19), with particular attention paid to the plague narratives in Exodus.<sup>23</sup> In 11:17–12:2 the focus is on the approach to divine judgment exercised by God toward the Egyptians. Though God did punish the Egyptians severely, it was nevertheless a gradual punishment, occasioned because of God’s love of all that God has created, God’s mercy, and God’s moderation, aimed ultimately at the repentance of the wicked. Here 12:1 provides the rationale for God’s moderation in judgment. Despite the gross wickedness of the Egyptians, nevertheless, God strives for repentance of the wicked because God’s immortal spirit is in all things.<sup>24</sup>

In a real sense, this brief affirmation brings our discussion of wisdom and spirit language in the context of the created order full circle. To this point, we have seen repeatedly that wisdom and spirit converge conceptually precisely at the point of their respective interactions with the created order. Here, it is overtly stated that it is God’s own immortal spirit that pervades all of creation. The verse effectively functions as a conclusion to the preceding argumentation in our discussion. The work of wisdom in creation is the work of God, which is here summed up pneumatologically. The work of wisdom, and the work of the spirit that is found in wisdom, is best viewed as the work of the Spirit of Yahweh, a work firmly anchored, in significant measure, in the presence of God’s Spirit in creation. In short, what we have observed in the Wisdom of Solomon is an unfolding wisdom pneumatology.

## **Christ, Spirit, and Creation in Light of Wisdom of Solomon: Toward a Wisdom Pneumatology**

Elsewhere I have argued that Wisdom of Solomon functions as a background source for New Testament Christology, particularly in terms of the place of wisdom in the biblical doctrine of creation, particularly with respect to Colossians 1:15–17 and Hebrews 1:2–3.<sup>25</sup> A passage we have already examined, Wisdom of Solomon 7:22–8:6, in its depiction of wisdom, has several points of connection with these two New Testament passages. We will look at these connections in each passage.

Beginning with Colossians 1:15–17, we find a connection between Christ the “image of the invisible God” in Colossians 1:15 (εἰκὼν τοῦ

θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου) and wisdom as an “image of [God’s] goodness” (εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ) in Wisdom of Solomon 7:26. Moreover, Colossians 1:16 states that “all things were created in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα), mirroring the notion that wisdom is the “fashioner of all things” (ἡ πάντων τεχνίτις) in Wisdom of Solomon 7:21 (cf. 8:6) and the “active cause of all things” (τῆς τὰ πάντα ἐργαζομένης) in 8:5. Finally, Colossians 1:17 affirms that “in him all things hold together” (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν), a thought echoed in language the speaks of wisdom as that which “pervades and penetrates all things” (διήκει καὶ χωρεῖ διὰ πάντων; Wisd Sol 7:24), “renews all things” (τὰ πάντα καινίζει; 7:27), and “reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other” (διατείνει ἀπὸ πέρατος ἐπὶ πέρασ ἐυρώστωσ καὶ διοικεῖ τὰ πάντα χρηστῶσ; 8:1). Ideas predicated of wisdom map well onto the portrayal of Christ in Colossians 1:15–17.

Several such connections between the language of Wisdom of Solomon 7:22–8:6 and Hebrews 1:2–3 are evident as well. Most significant are the attributions of creative agency to both wisdom as “fashioner of all things” (Wisd Sol 7:22; 8:6) and the Son as the one “through whom [God] also created the worlds” (δι’ οὗ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας) in Hebrews 1:2, and the continuing sustenance of the cosmos to both, where the Son “sustains all things by his powerful word” (φέρων τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεωσ αὐτοῦ) in Hebrews 1:3 is parallel to those references cited above from Wisdom of Solomon 7:24, 27; 8:1. Moreover, wisdom, as noted above, is a “reflection” of the light, works, and goodness of God in Wisdom of Solomon 7:26, while the Son is the “reflection” of God’s glory in Hebrews 1:2. The word for “reflection,” ἀπαύγασμα, provides both a lexical as well as conceptual link between the passages. Finally, the Son is designated as the “exact imprint of [God’s] very being” (χαρακτήρ τῆσ ὑποστάσεωσ αὐτοῦ) in Hebrews 1:3, which advances upon the description of wisdom as the “image of [God’s] goodness” in Wisdom of Solomon 7:26. At several points, wisdom and the Son are depicted in similar terms.

It is clear from this brief sketch that by the time New Testament writers began thinking Christologically, Christ’s agency in God’s creation of the cosmos became a significant component of their thinking. This development is part of a trajectory in conceptualizing God’s

creative work, from the direct ascriptions of God's activity in several Old Testament passages (e.g., Gen 1:1–2:4a; 2:4b–3:24; Isa 45:18; Ps 104:1–9; Job 38–41), through characterizations in Jewish wisdom literature of wisdom as the agent through which God effects creation (e.g., Prov 3:19; 8:22–31; Wisd Sol 7:22–8:6), to what I have called “creational Christology” in several New Testament passages where Christ or the Son is designated as God's agent in creation (e.g., John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2–3; Rev 3:14).<sup>26</sup> Coupling this trajectory with the broader observation that wisdom theology is largely characterized as creation theology<sup>27</sup> suggests that wisdom, creation, and Christ converge conceptually in Wisdom of Solomon 7:22–8:6.

When this understanding is brought into conversation with what we argued earlier, namely, that we see a convergence in Wisdom of Solomon of wisdom and spirit language in the context of the created order, we see how Wisdom of Solomon 7:22–8:6 functions as a locus that brings to mind a whole complex of concepts: wisdom, creation, S/spirit, Christ. The passage functions as a sort of catalyst that encourages bringing them into conversation with each other. The fluidity of language in Wisdom of Solomon with respect to wisdom and spirit in creation is brought together with later New Testament thinking on Christ's connection with creation in terms used to describe wisdom's role in creation in Wisdom of Solomon. The result is a mix that shows wisdom as a key construct in forming an understanding of how S/spirit and Christ relate with each other and the creation of the cosmos.

We noted earlier Moltmann's insistence that the creative act of God is a Trinitarian act. As we also just noted above, there is a significant trajectory of the portrayal of God's creative act spanning both testaments beginning with creation portrayed simply as the act of God, which, under influence of later Jewish thought on wisdom as God's agent in creation, culminates with the New Testament configuration of creation taking place through the agency of Christ. Here we must understand what Moltmann means by the creative process of God. Creation unfolds in three interrelated phases: original creation, ongoing creation, and new creation.<sup>28</sup> In terms of how this pertains to Christ's role in creation, we need look no further than Colossians 1:16–17, where in a series of prepositional phrases, Christ's role in

each of these phases is succinctly explicated. All things (τὰ πάντα) were created (ἐκτίσθη) “through him” (δι’ αὐτοῦ), a phrase indicating instrumentality, “in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ), a phrase indicating ongoing sustenance, and “for him” (εἰς αὐτόν), a phrase indicating eschatological redemption.<sup>29</sup> Our survey of connections between Colossians 1:16–17 and Wisdom of Solomon 7:22b–8:6 clearly evidences both wisdom and Christ in the original and ongoing senses of creation as delineated by Moltmann. New, eschatological, creation is not immediately obvious in this section of Wisdom of Solomon, though the climax of the book with its extended treatment of the Exodus and creation’s and wisdom’s roles in that event may arguably portray a redemptive focus implicit in eschatological new creation, especially in 19:6: *“the whole creation in its nature was fashioned anew.”*

How would the role of the Spirit figure into Moltmann’s three phases of creation? Here, too, we focus on a trajectory of sorts. We begin with Genesis 1:2, where the phrase אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ (“wind/spirit/breath of God”) is brought into connection with the primordial creation just prior to God’s ordering of creation described in terms of the seven days of creation (Gen 1:3–2:3). This רוּחַ “hovers” over the darkness and waters of creation in anticipation of its transformation into order. Here focus is on the Spirit in original creation. Psalm 104:29–30 speaks of the רוּחַ as that which fills creation, giving it life and sustaining all things in existence in ongoing creation. Finally, in terms of new creation, the Spirit is seen in two significant passages where the eschatological new creation is launched when the Spirit is given into the world: the resurrected Jesus breathed the Spirit on his disciples to empower them for their mission in the world (John 20:22) and poured out the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to demarcate the last days (Acts 2:17–21). The Spirit marks the beginning of new creation and empowers the followers of Jesus to prepare all of creation to realize its eschatological destiny to become the dwelling place of God (cf. Rom 8:18–27). Frank Macchia has reconfigured the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism to include not just human beings, but the whole of creation as well, such that Spirit baptism is the imparting of the Spirit into the world by the Son who was raised in and by the power of the Spirit, working to “liberate creation from within history toward new possibilities for free, eschatological existence.”<sup>30</sup>

So here we have two trajectories, one of Christ and one of the Spirit, speaking in terms of their respective roles in creation. Observing these parallel, overlapping trajectories, Moltmann synthesizes them to formulate his Trinitarian conceptualization of the process of creation. This might be framed epigrammatically in the following: God the Father creates through the Son in the Spirit. Christ mediates creation, while the Spirit represents God's *shekinah* presence in creation, holding all things in life by God's pneumatological presence in the world and moving a suffering creation toward eschatological renewal.<sup>31</sup> It is this Trinitarian emphasis on creation that leads Moltmann to see the Spirit as that through which God is in all things and all things exist in God, what Moltmann labels "immanent transcendence," a construct that enables him to see God as distinct but intimately present within creation.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

While the two trajectories described above indeed affirm the roles of both Christ and the Spirit in the process of creation, it seems clear that in both the biblical record and subsequent Christian thought, the role of the Second Person of the Trinity is more fully developed and defended. Still, there is scriptural attestation to the role of the Third Person of the Trinity in the creative work of God, and the necessity of the Spirit's place in creation is affirmed as early as St. Basil the Great, who makes much of the fact that for a word to be spoken, breath is required, thus drawing together the divine Logos, Christ, and the divine breath, the Spirit, in the creative act.<sup>33</sup> What our discussion has sought to do is to find another point of connection that strengthens the notion that creation is a Trinitarian act. The convergence of wisdom and spirit language in the context of creation language in Wisdom of Solomon suggests a pneumatological component in the creation of the cosmos. The observation that Wisdom of Solomon informs the subsequent development of creation as a key component of New Testament Christology, particularly in terms of a common reference to wisdom in creation, suggests that it is appropriate to speak of the Spirit as well in connection with Christ in the creative work of God. We are by no

means arguing for a full-blown wisdom pneumatology or Christology, nor of a fully developed pneumatology or Christology of creation, in the pages of Wisdom of Solomon. We are merely suggesting that Wisdom of Solomon offers a bridge of sorts to bring together pneumatological and Christological implications for a Trinitarian understanding of creation.



**Jeffrey S. Lamp** ([jlamp@oru.edu](mailto:jlamp@oru.edu)) is Professor of New Testament and Adjunct Instructor of Environmental Science at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, OK, USA.

## Notes

1 Ben Dare, “Foundations of ‘Ecological Reformation’: A Critical Study of Jürgen Moltmann’s Contributions towards a ‘New Theological Architecture’ for Environment Care” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cardiff University, 2012), 14, identifies an eight-page discussion on the Spirit in the classical work, Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leach (London: SCM, 1967) 50–58. Cf. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995) 152; Ryan A. Neal, *Theology as Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of Jürgen Moltmann’s Doctrine of Hope* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2008) 73.

2 Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

3 See Michael Kolarcik, *The Book of Wisdom*, New Interpreter’s Bible, 5 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) 438–41. David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, Anchor Bible, 43 (New York: Doubleday, 1979) 20–25, places the date during the reign of Caligula (37–41 CE). Peter Enns, “Wisdom of Solomon and Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period,” in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 213, finds the dating in the time of Caligula persuasive.

4 Enns, “Wisdom of Solomon,” 215.

5 For a helpful summary of the evidence, see James M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and Its Consequences* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970) 156.



6 See Enns, “Wisdom of Solomon,” 223, n4, for references to those with differing division points.

7 Enns, “Wisdom of Solomon,” 213–14, notes the exception of focus on the afterlife in Wisdom of Solomon.

8 Jeffrey S. Lamp, *First Corinthians 1–4 in Light of Jewish Wisdom Traditions: Christ, Wisdom, and Spirituality* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2000), 74–77. The question of whether the depiction of the figure of wisdom has moved beyond personification to hypostatization is hotly contested among scholars, with Karen Jobes and David Winston arguing for the hypostatic depiction of Lady Wisdom as nearly a consort of Yahweh. See Karen Jobes, “Sophia Christology: The Way of Wisdom?” in *The Way of Wisdom*, 233–35; and Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 34–35.

9 Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural translations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

10 Winston translates the first line of the verse, “The holy spirit, that divine tutor, will fly away from cunning stratagem.” This translation virtually identifies wisdom with the divine spirit. See Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 102.

11 Marie Turner, “The Spirit of Wisdom in All Things: The Mutuality of Earth and Humankind,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: SBL, 2008) 114, sees in these verses that wisdom and spirit are “identified” and “equated.”

12 Turner, “The Spirit of Wisdom,” 115, sees a similar convergence in the movement of language: wisdom to Spirit to wisdom as a kindly spirit to Spirit of the Lord.

13 Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 491; Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 153.

14 Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 491.

15 Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 491.

16 This elaborates on the description of Solomon’s scope of wisdom given in 1 Kgs 4:33.

17 The adjectives are: νοερόν (intelligent), ἅγιον (holy), μονογενές (unique), πολυμερές (manifold), λεπτόν (subtle), εὐκίνητον (mobile), τρανόν (clear), ἀμόλυντον (unpolluted), σαφές (distinct), ἀπήμαντον (invulnerable), φιλάγαθον (loving the good), ὄξύ (keen), ἀκώλυτον (irrestible), εὐεργετικόν (beneficent), φιλόανθρωπον (humane), βέβαιον (steadfast), ἀσφαλές (sure), ἀμέριμνον (free from anxiety), παντοδύναμον (all-powerful), πανεπίσκοπον (all-seeing), and χωροῦν (penetrating).

18 Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 503

19 The term here is not the lexically possible πνεῦμα, but ἀτμίς, perhaps out of concern to keep the concepts of wisdom and spirit discreet.

20 Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 184–85.

21 Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 505.

22 Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 503–505. Cf. Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 84–87.

- 23 Jeffrey Lamp, *Reading Green: Tactical Considerations for Reading the Bible Ecologically* (New York: Peter Lang, forthcoming) ch. 5.
- 24 See discussion in Kolarcik, *Book of Wisdom*, 541–42.
- 25 Jeffrey Lamp, “Wisdom in Colossians 1:15–20: Contribution and Significance,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41 (March 1998) 50–51; Lamp, *Greening of Hebrews?*, chs. 2 and 8.
- 26 William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wisdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Lamp, *Reading Green*, ch. 3.
- 27 See Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 118–21; R. J. Clifford, “The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,” *Theological Studies* 46 (1985), 507–23; J. D. Levinson, “Observations on the Creation Theology in Wisdom,” in *Israelite Wisdom*, ed. J. G. Gammie (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) 43–57.
- 28 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, xiv, 97. For a helpful summary, see David T. Beck, *The Holy Spirit and the Renewal of All Things: Pneumatology in Paul and Jürgen Moltmann* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2007) 111–12.
- 29 Lamp, *Reading Green*, ch. 3.
- 30 Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) 89, 97, 109–10. Others have argued for a similar pneumatological framing of eschatology. See A. J. Swoboda, *Tongues and Trees: Toward a Pentecostal Ecological Theology*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Series*, 40 (Blandford Forum: Deo, 2013) 193–204; Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downer’s Grove: IVP, 1996) 48–51; Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997) 271.
- 31 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, xiv, 97.
- 32 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 15–17.
- 33 Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 16:38.