

## The Wisdom of Solomon

The *Wisdom of Solomon* is recognised as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox Churches.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> Love righteousness, all you who are judges of the earth.

Think of the Lord<sup>†</sup> with a good mind.

Seek him in singleness of heart,

<sup>2</sup> because he is found by those who don't put him to the test,

and is manifested to those who trust him.

<sup>3</sup> for crooked thoughts separate from God.

His Power convicts when it is tested,  
and exposes the foolish;

<sup>4</sup> because wisdom will not enter into a soul that devises evil,

nor dwell in a body that is enslaved by sin.

<sup>5</sup> For a holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit,  
and will depart from thoughts that are without understanding,

and will be ashamed when unrighteousness has come in.

<sup>6</sup> For<sup>‡</sup> wisdom is a spirit who loves man,

and she will not hold a<sup>§</sup> blasphemer guiltless  
for his lips,

because God is witness of his inmost self,  
and is a true overseer of his heart,

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<sup>†</sup> **1:1:** Gr. *in goodness*.    <sup>‡</sup> **1:6:** Some authorities read *the spirit of wisdom is loving to man*.    <sup>§</sup> **1:6:** Or, *reviler*

and a hearer of his tongue.

7 Because the spirit of the Lord has filled† the world,  
and that which holds all things together  
knows what is said.

8 Therefore no one who utters unrighteous things  
will be unseen;  
neither will Justice, when it convicts, pass him  
by.

9 For in his counsels the ungodly will be searched  
out,  
and the sound of his words will come to the  
Lord to bring his lawless deeds to conviction;

10 because a jealous ear listens to all things,  
and the noise of murmurings is not hidden.

11 Beware then of unprofitable murmuring,  
and keep your tongue from slander;  
because no secret utterance will go on its way  
void,  
and a lying mouth destroys a soul.

12 Don't court death in the error of your life.  
Don't draw destruction upon yourselves by  
the works of your hands;

13 because God didn't make death,  
neither does he delight when the living perish.

14 For he created all things that they might have  
being.

The generative powers of the world are  
wholesome,  
and there is no poison of destruction in them,

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† 1:7: Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

nor has Hades‡ royal dominion upon earth;  
15 for righteousness is immortal,  
16 but ungodly men by their hands and their  
words summon death;  
deeming him a friend they§ pined away.  
They made a covenant with him,  
because they are worthy to belong with him.

## 2

- 1 For they said† within themselves, with unsound reasoning,  
“Our life is short and sorrowful.  
There is no healing when a man comes to his end,  
and no one was ever known who‡ was released from Hades.  
2 Because we were born by mere chance,  
and hereafter we will be as though we had never been,  
because the breath in our nostrils is smoke,  
and reason is a spark kindled by the beating of our heart,  
3 which being extinguished, the body will be turned into ashes,  
and the spirit will be dispersed as thin air.  
4 Our name will be forgotten in time.  
No one will remember our works.  
Our life will pass away as the traces of a cloud,  
and will be scattered as is a mist,  
when it is chased by the rays of the sun,

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‡ 1:14: Or, *a royal house*    § 1:16: Or, *were consumed with love of him*    † 2:1: Or, *amongst*    ‡ 2:1: Or, *returned out of Hades*

- and § overcome by its heat.
- 5 For our allotted time is the passing of a shadow,  
and our end doesn't retreat,  
because it is securely sealed, and no one<sup>†</sup>  
turns it back.
- 6 "Come therefore and let's enjoy the good things  
that exist.  
Let's use the creation earnestly as in our  
youth.
- 7 Let's fill ourselves with costly wine and per-  
fumes,  
and let no spring flower pass us by.
- 8 Let's crown ourselves with rosebuds before they  
wither.
- 9 Let none of us go without his share in our proud  
revelry.  
Let's leave tokens of mirth everywhere,  
because this is our portion, and this is our lot.
- 10 Let's oppress the righteous poor.  
Let's not spare the widow,  
nor regard the grey hair of the old man.
- 11 But let our strength be a law of righteousness;  
for that which is weak is proven useless.
- 12 But let's lie in wait for the righteous man,  
because he annoys us,  
is contrary to our works,  
reproaches us with sins against the law,  
and charges us with sins against our training.
- 13 He professes to have knowledge of God,  
and calls himself a child of the Lord.
- 14 He became to us a reproof of our thoughts.

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§ 2:4: Gr. *weighed down*.    † 2:5: Or, *comes again*

- 15 He is grievous to us even to look at,  
because his life is unlike other men's,  
and his paths are strange.
- 16 We were regarded by him as something worthless,  
and he abstains from our ways as from uncleanness.  
He calls the latter end of the righteous happy.  
He boasts that God is his father.
- 17 Let's see if his words are true.  
Let's test what will happen at the end of his life.
- 18 For if the righteous man is God's son, he will uphold him,  
and he will deliver him out of the hand of his adversaries.
- 19 Let's test him with insult and torture,  
that we may find out how gentle he is,  
and test his patience.
- 20 Let's condemn him to a shameful death,  
for he will be protected, according to his words."
- 21 Thus they reasoned, and they were led astray;  
for their wickedness blinded them,
- 22 and they didn't know the mysteries of God,  
neither did they hope for wages of holiness,  
nor did they discern that there is a prize for blameless souls.
- 23 Because God created man for incorruption,  
and made him an image of his own everlastingness;
- 24 but death entered into the world by the envy of the devil,

and those who belong to him experience it.

### 3

- <sup>1</sup> But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of  
God,  
and no torment will touch them.
- <sup>2</sup> In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have  
died.  
Their departure was considered a disaster,  
<sup>3</sup> and their travel away from us ruin,  
but they are in peace.
- <sup>4</sup> For even if in the sight of men they are punished,  
their hope is full of immortality.
- <sup>5</sup> Having borne a little chastening, they will re-  
ceive great good;  
because God tested them, and found them  
worthy of himself.
- <sup>6</sup> He tested them like gold in the furnace,  
and he accepted them as a whole burnt offer-  
ing.
- <sup>7</sup> In the time of their visitation they will shine.  
They will run back and forth like sparks  
amongst stubble.
- <sup>8</sup> They will judge nations and have dominion over  
peoples.  
The Lord will reign over them forever.
- <sup>9</sup> Those who trust him will understand truth.  
The faithful will live with him in love,  
because grace and mercy are with his chosen  
ones.
- <sup>10</sup> But the ungodly will be punished even as their  
reasoning deserves,

- those who neglected righteousness and revolted from the Lord;  
11 for he who despises wisdom and discipline is miserable.  
Their hope is void and their toils unprofitable.  
Their works are useless.  
12 Their wives are foolish and their children are wicked.  
13 Their descendants are cursed.  
For the barren woman who is undefiled is happy, she who has not conceived in transgression.  
She will have fruit when God examines souls.  
14 So is the eunuch which has done no lawless deed with his hands,  
nor imagined wicked things against the Lord;  
for a precious gift will be given to him for his faithfulness,  
and a delightful inheritance in the Lord's sanctuary.  
15 For good labours have fruit of great renown.  
The root of understanding can't fail.  
16 But children of adulterers will not come to maturity.  
The seed of an unlawful union will vanish away.  
17 For if they live long, they will not be esteemed, and in the end, their old age will be without honour.  
18 If they die young, they will have no hope, nor consolation in the day of judgement.  
19 For the end of an unrighteous generation is always grievous.

## 4

- 1 It is better to be childless with virtue,

for immortality is in the memory of virtue,  
because it is recognised both before God and  
before men.

<sup>2</sup> When it is present, people imitate it.

They long after it when it has departed.

Throughout all time it marches, crowned in triumph,

victorious in the competition for the prizes  
that are undefiled.

<sup>3</sup> But the multiplying brood of the ungodly will be  
of no profit,

and their illegitimate offshoots won't take  
deep root,

nor will they establish a sure hold.

<sup>4</sup> For even if they grow branches and flourish for  
a season,

standing unsure, they will be shaken by the  
wind.

They will be uprooted by the violence of  
winds.

<sup>5</sup> Their branches will be broken off before they  
come to maturity.

Their fruit will be useless,  
never ripe to eat, and fit for nothing.

<sup>6</sup> For unlawfully conceived children are witnesses  
of wickedness

against parents when they are investigated.

<sup>7</sup> But a righteous man, even if he dies before his  
time, will be at rest.

<sup>8</sup> For honourable old age is not that which stands  
in length of time,

nor is its measure given by number of years,

<sup>9</sup> but understanding is grey hair to men,



and an unspotted life is ripe old age.

<sup>10</sup> Being found well-pleasing to God, someone was loved.

While living amongst sinners he was transported.

<sup>11</sup> He was caught away, lest evil should change his understanding,  
or guile deceive his soul.

<sup>12</sup> For the fascination of wickedness obscures the things which are good,  
and the whirl of desire perverts an innocent mind.

<sup>13</sup> Being made perfect quickly,  
he filled a long time;

<sup>14</sup> for his soul was pleasing to the Lord.

Therefore he hurried out of the midst of wickedness.

<sup>15</sup> But the peoples saw and didn't understand,  
not considering this, that grace and mercy are with his chosen,  
and that he visits his holy ones;

<sup>16</sup> but a righteous man who is dead will condemn the ungodly who are living,  
and youth who is quickly perfected will condemn the many years of an unrighteous man's old age.

<sup>17</sup> For the ungodly will see a wise man's end,  
and won't understand what the Lord planned for him,  
and why he safely kept him.

<sup>18</sup> They will see, and they will despise;  
but the Lord will laugh them to scorn.

After this, they will become a dishonoured carcass

- and a reproach amongst the dead forever;  
19 because he will dash them speechless to the  
ground,  
and will shake them from the foundations.  
They will lie utterly waste.  
They will be in anguish  
and their memory will perish.
- 20 They will come with coward fear when their  
sins are counted.  
Their lawless deeds will convict them to their  
face.

## 5

- 1 Then the righteous man will stand in great bold-  
ness  
before the face of those who afflicted him,  
and those who make his labours of no ac-  
count.
- 2 When they see him, they will be troubled with  
terrible fear,  
and will be amazed at the marvel of salvation.
- 3 They will speak amongst themselves repenting,  
and for distress of spirit they will groan,  
“This was he whom we used to hold in deri-  
sion,  
as a parable of reproach.
- 4 We fools considered his life madness,  
and his end without honour.
- 5 How was he counted amongst sons of God?  
How is his lot amongst saints?
- 6 Truly we went astray from the way of truth.  
The light of righteousness didn’t shine for us.  
The sun didn’t rise for us.

- 7 We† took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and  
destruction.  
We travelled through trackless deserts,  
but we didn't know the Lord's way.
- 8 What did our arrogance profit us?  
What good have riches and boasting brought  
us?
- 9 Those things all passed away as a shadow,  
like a rumour that runs by,  
10 like a ship passing through the billowy wa-  
ter,  
which, when it has gone by, there is no trace  
to be found,  
no pathway of its keel in the waves.
- 11 Or it is like when a bird flies through the air,  
no evidence of its passage is found,  
but the light wind, lashed with the stroke of its  
pinions,  
and torn apart with the violent rush of the  
moving wings, is passed through.  
Afterwards no sign of its coming remains.
- 12 Or it is like when an arrow is shot at a mark,  
the air it divided closes up again immediately,  
so that men don't know where it passed  
through.
- 13 So we also, as soon as we were born, ceased to  
be;  
and we had no sign of virtue to show,  
but we were utterly consumed in our wicked-  
ness."
- 14 Because the hope of the ungodly man is like  
chaff carried by the wind,

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† 5:7: See Proverbs 14:14.

and<sup>‡</sup> as<sup>§</sup> foam vanishing before a tempest;  
and is scattered like smoke by the wind,  
and passes by as the remembrance of a guest  
who stays just a day.

- 15 But the righteous live forever.  
Their reward is in the Lord,  
and the care for them with the Most High.
- 16 Therefore they will receive the crown of royal  
dignity  
and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's  
hand,  
because he will cover them with his right hand,  
and he will shield them with his arm.
- 17 He will take his zeal as complete armour,  
and will make the whole creation his  
weapons to punish his enemies:
- 18 He will put on righteousness as a breastplate,  
and will wear impartial judgement as a hel-  
met.
- 19 He will take holiness as an invincible shield.  
20 He will sharpen stern wrath for a sword.  
The universe will go with him to fight against  
his frenzied foes.
- 21 Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim.  
They will leap to the mark from the clouds, as  
from a well-drawn bow.
- 22 Hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a  
catapult.  
The water of the sea will be angered against  
them.

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<sup>‡</sup> 5:14: Gr. *like foam chased to thinness*: or, *as thin foam chased*.

<sup>§</sup> 5:14: Most Greek authorities read *hoar frost*: some authorities, perhaps rightly, *a spider's web*.

Rivers will sternly overwhelm them.

<sup>23</sup> A mighty wind will encounter them.

It will winnow them away like a tempest.

So lawlessness will make all the land desolate.

Their evil-doing will overturn the thrones of  
princes.

## 6

<sup>1</sup> Hear therefore, you kings, and understand.

Learn, you judges of the ends of the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Give ear, you rulers who have dominion  
over many people,

and make your boast<sup>†</sup> in multitudes of na-  
tions,

<sup>3</sup> because your dominion was given to you from  
the Lord,

and your sovereignty from the Most High.

He will search out your works,

and will enquire about your plans,

<sup>4</sup> because being officers of his kingdom, you didn't  
judge rightly,

nor did you keep the law,

nor did you walk according to God's counsel.

<sup>5</sup> He will come upon you awfully and swiftly,

because a stern judgement comes on those  
who are in high places.

<sup>6</sup> For the man of low estate may be pardoned in  
mercy,

but mighty men will be mightily tested.

<sup>7</sup> For the Sovereign Lord of all will not be im-  
pressed with anyone,

neither will he show deference to greatness;

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<sup>†</sup> 6:2: Or, *in the multitudes of your nations*

- because it is he who made both small and great,  
and cares about them all;  
8 but the scrutiny that comes upon the powerful is strict.  
9 Therefore, my words are to you, O princes,  
that you may learn wisdom and not fall away.  
10 For those who have kept the things that are holy  
in holiness will be made holy.  
Those who have been taught them will find  
what to say in defence.  
11 Therefore set your desire on my words.  
Long for them, and you princes will be instructed.  
12 Wisdom is radiant and doesn't fade away;  
and is easily seen by those who love her,  
and found by those who seek her.  
13 She anticipates those who desire her, making  
herself known.  
14 He who rises up early to seek her won't have  
difficulty,  
for he will find her sitting at his gates.  
15 For to think upon her is perfection of understanding,  
and he who watches for her will quickly be  
free from care;  
16 because she herself goes around, seeking those  
who are worthy of her,  
and in their paths she appears to them graciously,  
and in every purpose she meets them.  
17 For her true beginning is desire for instruction;  
and desire for instruction is love.

- 18 And love is observance of her laws.  
To give heed to her laws confirms immortality.
- 19 Immortality brings closeness to God.  
20 So then desire for wisdom promotes to a kingdom.
- 21 If therefore you delight in thrones and sceptres,  
you princes of peoples,  
honour wisdom, that you may reign forever.
- 22 But what wisdom is, and how she came into being, I will declare.  
I won't hide mysteries from you;  
but I will explore from her first beginning,  
bring the knowledge of her into clear light,  
and I will not pass by the truth.
- 23 Indeed, I won't travel with consuming envy,  
because envy will have no fellowship with wisdom.
- 24 But a multitude of wise men is salvation to the world,  
and an understanding king is stability for his people.
- 25 Therefore be instructed by my words, and you will profit.

## 7

- 1 I myself am also<sup>†</sup> mortal, like everyone else,  
and am a descendant of one formed first and born of the earth.
- 2 I moulded into flesh in the time of ten months in my mother's womb,

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<sup>†</sup> 7:1: Many authorities read *a mortal man*.

being compacted in blood from the seed of  
man and pleasure of marriage.

<sup>3</sup> I also, when I was born, drew in the common air,  
and fell upon the kindred earth,  
uttering, like all, for my first voice, the same cry.

<sup>4</sup> I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes.

<sup>5</sup> For no king had a different beginning,

<sup>6</sup> but all men have one entrance into life, and  
a common departure.

<sup>7</sup> For this cause I prayed, and understanding was  
given to me.

I asked, and a spirit of wisdom came to me.

<sup>8</sup> I preferred her before sceptres and thrones.

I considered riches nothing in comparison to  
her.

<sup>9</sup> Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem,  
because all gold in her presence is a little  
sand,

and silver will be considered as clay before  
her.

<sup>10</sup> I loved her more than health and beauty,  
and I chose to have her rather than light,  
because her bright shining is never laid to  
sleep.

<sup>11</sup> All good things came to me with her,  
and innumerable riches are in her hands.

<sup>12</sup> And I rejoiced over them all because wisdom  
leads them;  
although I didn't know that she was their  
mother.

<sup>13</sup> As I learnt without guile, I impart without  
grudging.

I don't hide her riches.



- 14 For she is a treasure for men that doesn't fail,  
and those who use it obtain friendship with  
God,  
commended by the gifts which they present  
through discipline.
- 15 But may God grant that I may speak his judge-  
ment,  
and to conceive thoughts worthy of what has  
been given me;  
because he is one who guides even wisdom  
and who corrects the wise.
- 16 For both we and our words are in his hand,  
with all understanding and skill in various  
crafts.
- 17 For he himself gave me an unerring knowledge  
of the things that are,  
to know the structure of the universe and the  
operation of the elements;
- 18 the beginning, end, and middle of times;  
the alternations of the solstices and the  
changes of seasons;
- 19 the circuits of years and the positions of  
stars;
- 20 the natures of living creatures and the rag-  
ing of wild beasts;  
the violence of † winds and the thoughts of  
men;  
the diversities of plants and the virtues of  
roots.
- 21 All things that are either secret or manifest I  
learnt,
- 22 for wisdom, that is the architect of all  
things, taught me.

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† 7:20: Or, *spirits*

For there is in her a spirit that is quick to understand, holy,  
unique, manifold, subtle, freely moving, clear  
in utterance, unpolluted,  
distinct, invulnerable, loving what is good,  
keen, unhindered,

<sup>23</sup> beneficent, loving towards man, steadfast, sure, free from care, all-powerful, all-surveying,

and penetrating through all spirits that are quick to understand, pure, most subtle.

<sup>24</sup> For wisdom is more mobile than any motion.

Yes, she pervades and penetrates all things by reason of her purity.

<sup>25</sup> For she is a breath of the power of God,

and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty.

Therefore nothing defiled can find entrance into her.

<sup>26</sup> For she is a reflection of everlasting light,

an unspotted mirror of the working of God,  
and an image of his goodness.

<sup>27</sup> Although she is one, she has power to do all things.

Remaining in herself, she renews all things.

From generation to generation passing into holy souls,

she makes friends of God and prophets.

<sup>28</sup> For God loves nothing as much as one who dwells with wisdom.

<sup>29</sup> For she is fairer than the sun,

and above all the constellations of the stars.  
She is better than light.

<sup>30</sup> For daylight yields to night,  
but evil does not prevail against wisdom.

## 8

<sup>1</sup> But she reaches from one end to the other with  
full strength,  
and orders all things well.

<sup>2</sup> I loved her and sought her from my youth.  
I sought to take her for my bride.  
I became enamoured by her beauty.

<sup>3</sup> She glorifies her noble birth by living with God.  
The Sovereign Lord of all loves her.

<sup>4</sup> For she is initiated into the knowledge of God,  
and she chooses his works.

<sup>5</sup> But if riches are a desired possession in life,  
what is richer than wisdom, which makes all  
things?

<sup>6</sup> And if understanding is effective,  
who more than† wisdom is an architect of the  
things that exist?

<sup>7</sup> If a man loves righteousness,  
the fruits of wisdom's labour‡ are virtues,  
for she teaches soberness, understanding,  
righteousness, and courage.  
There is nothing in life more profitable for  
people than these.

<sup>8</sup> And if anyone longs for wide experience,  
she knows the things of old, and infers the  
things to come.  
She understands subtleties of speeches and  
interpretations of dark sayings.

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† 8:6: Gr. *she*.    ‡ 8:7: Gr. *her labours*

She foresees signs and wonders, and the issues of seasons and times.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore I determined to take her to live with me,  
knowing that she is one who would give me good counsel,  
and encourage me in cares and grief.

<sup>10</sup> Because of her, I will have glory amongst multitudes,  
and honour in the sight of elders, though I am young.

<sup>11</sup> I will be found keen when I give judgement.  
I will be admired in the presence of rulers.

<sup>12</sup> When I am silent, they will wait for me.  
When I open my lips, they will heed what I say.  
If I continue speaking, they will put their hands on their mouths.

<sup>13</sup> Because of her, I will have immortality,  
and leave behind an eternal memory to those who come after me.

<sup>14</sup> I will govern peoples.  
Nations will be subjected to me.

<sup>15</sup> Dreaded monarchs will fear me when they hear of me.  
Amongst the people, I will show myself to be good, and courageous in war.

<sup>16</sup> When I come into my house, I will find rest with her.  
For conversation with her has no bitterness,  
and living with her has no pain, but gladness and joy.

<sup>17</sup> When I considered these things in myself,

- and thought in my heart how immortality is  
in kinship to wisdom,
- 18 and in her friendship is good delight,  
and in the labours of her hands is wealth that  
doesn't fail,  
and understanding is in her companionship,  
and great renown in having fellowship with  
her words,  
I went about seeking how to take her to my-  
self.
- 19 Now I was a clever child, and received a good  
soul.
- 20 Or rather, being good, I came into an unde-  
filed body.
- 21 But perceiving that I could not otherwise pos-  
sess wisdom unless God gave her to me—  
yes, and to know and understand by whom  
the grace is given—  
I pleaded with the Lord and implored him,  
and with my whole heart I said:

## 9

- 1 "O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy,  
who made all things by your word;
- 2 and by your wisdom you formed man,  
that he should have dominion over the crea-  
tures that were made by you,
- 3 and rule the world in holiness and righteous-  
ness,  
and execute judgement in uprightness of  
soul,
- 4 give me wisdom, her who sits by you on your  
thrones.

- Don't reject me from amongst your<sup>†</sup> servants,  
5 because I am your servant and the son of  
your handmaid,  
a weak and short-lived man,  
with little power to understand judgement  
and laws.
- 6 For even if a man is perfect amongst the sons of  
men,  
if the wisdom that comes from you is not with  
him, he will count for nothing.
- 7 You chose me to be king of your people,  
and a judge for your sons and daughters.
- 8 You gave a command to build a sanctuary on  
your holy mountain,  
and<sup>‡</sup> an altar in the city where you live,  
a copy of the holy tent which you prepared  
from the beginning.
- 9 Wisdom is with you and knows your works,  
and was present when you were making the  
world,  
and understands what is pleasing in your  
eyes,  
and what is right according to your com-  
mandments.
- 10 Send her from the holy heavens,  
and ask her to come from the throne of your  
glory,  
that being present with me she may work,  
and I may learn what pleases you well.
- 11 For she knows all things and understands,  
and she will guide me prudently in my ac-  
tions.

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<sup>†</sup> 9:4: Or, *children*    <sup>‡</sup> 9:8: Or, *a place of sacrifice*

- She will guard me in her glory.  
12 So my works will be acceptable.  
I will judge your people righteously,  
and I will be worthy of my father's§ throne.  
13 For what man will know the counsel of God?  
Or who will conceive what the Lord wills?  
14 For the thoughts of mortals are unstable,  
and our plans are prone to fail.  
15 For a corruptible body weighs down the soul.  
The earthy tent burdens a mind that is full of  
cares.  
16 We can hardly guess the things that are on earth,  
and we find the things that are close at hand  
with labour;  
but who has traced out the things that are in  
the heavens?  
17 Who gained knowledge of your counsel, unless  
you gave wisdom,  
and sent your holy spirit from on high?  
18 It was thus that the ways of those who are on  
earth were corrected,  
and men were taught the things that are  
pleasing to you.  
They were saved through wisdom."

## 10

- 1 Wisdom† guarded to the end the first formed  
father of the world, who was created alone,  
and delivered him out of his own transgres-  
sion,  
2 and gave him strength to rule over all things.

---

§ 9:12: Gr. *thrones*.    † 10:1: Gr. *She*.

<sup>3</sup> But when an unrighteous man fell away from her in his anger,  
he perished himself in the rage with which he killed his brother.

<sup>4</sup> When for his cause the earth was drowning with a flood,  
wisdom again saved it,  
guiding the righteous man's course by a paltry piece of wood.

<sup>5</sup> Moreover, when nations consenting together in wickedness had been confounded,  
wisdom<sup>‡</sup> knew the righteous man, and preserved him blameless to God,  
and kept him strong when his heart yearned towards his child.

<sup>6</sup> While the ungodly were perishing, wisdom<sup>§</sup> delivered a righteous man,  
when he fled from the fire that descended out of heaven on the five cities.

<sup>7</sup> To whose wickedness a smoking waste still witnesses,  
and plants bearing fair fruit that doesn't ripen,  
a disbelieving soul has a memorial: a standing pillar of salt.

<sup>8</sup> For having passed wisdom by,  
not only were they disabled from recognising the things which are good,  
but they also left behind them for their life a monument of their folly,

---

<sup>‡</sup> 10:5: Gr. *she*    <sup>§</sup> 10:6: Gr. *she*



to the end that where they stumbled, they  
might fail even to be unseen;  
9 but wisdom delivered those who waited on her  
out of troubles.

10 When a righteous man was a fugitive from a  
brother's wrath,<sup>†</sup> wisdom guided him in  
straight paths.

She showed him God's kingdom, and gave  
him knowledge of holy things.

She prospered him in his toils, and multiplied  
the fruits of his labour.

11 When in their covetousness men dealt harshly  
with him,  
she stood by him and made him rich.

12 She guarded him from enemies,  
and she kept him safe from those who lay in  
wait.

Over his severe conflict, she watched as judge,  
that he might know that godliness is more  
powerful than every one.

13 When a righteous man was sold,<sup>‡</sup> wisdom didn't  
forsake him,

but she delivered him from sin.  
She went down with him into a dungeon,

14 and in bonds she didn't depart from him,  
until she brought him the sceptre of a king-  
dom,  
and authority over those that dealt like a  
tyrant with him.

She also showed those who had mockingly  
accused him to be false,

---

<sup>†</sup> 10:10: Gr. *she*.    <sup>‡</sup> 10:13: Gr. *she*.

and gave him eternal glory.

<sup>15</sup> Wisdom<sup>§</sup> delivered a holy people and a blameless seed from a nation of oppressors.

<sup>16</sup> She entered into the soul of a servant of the Lord,  
and withstood terrible kings in wonders and signs.

<sup>17</sup> She rendered to holy men a reward of their toils.  
She guided them along a marvellous way,  
and became to them a covering in the day-time,  
and a starry flame through the night.

<sup>18</sup> She brought them over the Red sea,  
and led them through much water;

<sup>19</sup> but she drowned their enemies,  
and she cast them up from the bottom of the deep.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore the righteous plundered the ungodly,  
and they sang praise to your holy name, O Lord,  
and extolled with one accord your hand that fought for them,

<sup>21</sup> because wisdom opened the mouth of the mute,  
and made the tongues of babes to speak clearly.

## 11

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom prospered their works in the hand of a holy prophet.

<sup>2</sup> They travelled through a desert without inhabitant,

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§ 10:15: Gr. *she*.

- and they pitched their tents in trackless regions.
- <sup>3</sup> They withstood enemies and repelled foes.
- <sup>4</sup> They thirsted, and they called upon you,  
and water was given to them out of the<sup>†</sup> flinty rock,  
and healing of their thirst out of the hard stone.
- <sup>5</sup> For by what things their foes were punished,  
by these they in their need were benefitted.
- <sup>6</sup> When enemies were troubled with clotted blood  
instead of a river's ever-flowing fountain,
- <sup>7</sup> to rebuke the decree for the slaying of babies,  
you gave them abundant water beyond all hope,
- <sup>8</sup> having shown by the thirst which they had suffered  
how you punished the adversaries.
- <sup>9</sup> For when they were tried, although chastened in mercy,  
they learnt how the ungodly were tormented,  
being judged with wrath.
- <sup>10</sup> For you tested these as a father admonishing them;  
but you searched out those as a stern king condemning them.
- <sup>11</sup> Yes and whether they were far off or near,  
they were equally distressed;
- <sup>12</sup> for a double grief seized them,  
and a groaning at the memory of things past.
- <sup>13</sup> For when they heard that through their own punishments the others benefitted,

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<sup>†</sup> **11:4:** See Deuteronomy 8:15; Psalms 114:8.

they recognised the Lord.

14 For him who long before was thrown out and exposed they stopped mocking.

In the end of what happened, they marvelled, having thirsted in another manner than the righteous.

15 But in return for the senseless imaginings of their unrighteousness, wherein they were led astray to worship irrational reptiles and wretched vermin, you sent upon them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them,

16 that they might learn that by what things a man sins, by these he is punished.

17 For your all-powerful hand that created the world out of formless matter didn't lack means to send upon them a multitude of bears, fierce lions,

18 or newly-created and unknown wild beasts, full of rage,

either breathing out a blast of fiery breath,

or belching out smoke,

or flashing dreadful sparks from their eyes;

19 which had power not only to consume them by their violence,

but to destroy them even by the terror of their sight.

20 Yes and without these they might have fallen by a single breath,

being pursued by Justice, and scattered abroad by the breath of your power;

but you arranged all things by measure, number, and weight.

- <sup>21</sup> For to be greatly strong is yours at all times.  
Who could withstand the might of your arm?
- <sup>22</sup> Because the whole world before you is as a grain in a balance,  
and as a drop of dew that comes down upon the earth in the morning.
- <sup>23</sup> But you have mercy on all men, because you have power to do all things,  
and you overlook the sins of men to the end that they may repent.
- <sup>24</sup> For you love all things that are,  
and abhor none of the things which you made;  
For you never would have formed anything if you hated it.
- <sup>25</sup> How would anything have endured unless you had willed it?  
Or that which was not called by you, how would it have been preserved?
- <sup>26</sup> But you spare all things, because they are yours,  
O Sovereign Lord, you who love the living.

## 12

- <sup>1</sup> For your incorruptible spirit is in all things.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore you convict little by little those who fall from the right way,  
and, putting them in remembrance by the things wherein they sin, you admonish them,

that escaping from their wickedness they may believe in you, O Lord.

- <sup>3</sup> For truly the old inhabitants of your holy land,  
<sup>4</sup> hating them because they practised detestable works of enchantments and unholy rites—  
<sup>5</sup> merciless slaughters of children and sacrificial banquets of men's flesh and of blood—  
<sup>6</sup> allies in an impious fellowship, and murderers of their own helpless babes, it was your counsel to destroy by the hands of our fathers;  
<sup>7</sup> that the land which in your sight is most precious of all might receive a worthy colony of God's servants.<sup>†</sup>
- <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless you even spared these as men, and you sent hornets<sup>‡</sup> as forerunners of your army, to cause them to perish little by little.
- <sup>9</sup> Not that you were unable to subdue the ungodly under the hand of the righteous in battle, or by terrible beasts or by a stern word to make away with them at once,
- <sup>10</sup> but judging them little by little you gave them a chance to repent, not being ignorant that their nature by birth was evil, their wickedness inborn,

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<sup>†</sup> 12:7: Or, *children*    <sup>‡</sup> 12:8: Or, *wasps*

and that their manner of thought would never be changed.

11 For they were a cursed seed from the beginning.  
It wasn't through fear of any that you left them unpunished for their sins.

12 For who will say, "What have you done?"  
Or "Who will withstand your judgement?"  
Who will accuse you for the perishing of nations which you caused?  
Or who will come and stand before you as an avenger for unrighteous men?

13 For there isn't any God beside you that cares for all,  
that you might show that you didn't judge unrighteously.

14 No king or prince will be able to confront you about those whom you have punished.

15 But being righteous, you rule all things righteously,  
deeming it a thing alien from your power to condemn one who doesn't deserve to be punished.

16 For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all makes you to forbear all.

17 For when men don't believe that you are perfect in power, you show your strength, and in dealing with those who think this, you confuse their boldness.

18 But you, being sovereign in strength, judge in gentleness,  
and with great forbearance you govern us;

for the power is yours whenever you desire it.

19 But you taught your people by such works as these,  
how the righteous must be kind.

You made your sons to have good hope,  
because you give repentance when men have sinned.

20 For if on those who were enemies of your servants§ and deserving of death,  
you took vengeance with so great deliberation and indulgence,  
giving them times and opportunities when they might escape from their wickedness,

21 with how great care you judged your sons,  
to whose fathers you gave oaths and covenants of good promises!

22 Therefore while you chasten us, you scourge our enemies ten thousand times more,  
to the intent that we may ponder your goodness when we judge,  
and when we are judged may look for mercy.

23 Therefore also the unrighteous that lived in a life of folly,  
you tormented through their own abominations.

24 For truly they went astray very far in the ways of error,

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§ 12:20: Or, *children*



Taking as gods those animals<sup>†</sup> which even  
amongst their enemies were held in dis-  
honour,  
deceived like foolish babes.

25 Therefore, as to unreasoning children, you sent  
your judgement to mock them.

26 But those who would not be admonished by  
mild correction  
will experience the deserved judgement of  
God.

27 For through the sufferings they were indignant  
of,  
being punished in these creatures which they  
supposed to be gods,  
they saw and recognised as the true God him  
whom they previously refused to know.  
Therefore also the result of extreme condem-  
nation came upon them.

## 13

1 For truly all men who had no perception of God  
were foolish by nature,  
and didn't gain power to know him who exists  
from the good things that are seen.  
They didn't recognise the architect from his  
works.

2 But they thought that either fire, or wind, or swift  
air,  
or circling stars, or raging water, or luminar-  
ies of heaven  
were gods that rule the world.

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<sup>†</sup> 12:24: Gr. *living creatures*: and so elsewhere in this book.

- <sup>3</sup> If it was through delight in their beauty that they took them to be gods,  
let them know how much better their Sovereign Lord is than these,  
for the first author of beauty created them.
- <sup>4</sup> But if it was through astonishment at their power and influence,  
then let them understand from them how much more powerful he who formed them is.
- <sup>5</sup> For from the greatness of the beauty of created things,  
mankind forms the corresponding perception of their Maker.<sup>†</sup>
- <sup>6</sup> But yet for these men there is but small blame,  
for they too perhaps go astray  
while they are seeking God and desiring to find him.
- <sup>7</sup> For they diligently search while living amongst his works,  
and they trust their sight that the things that they look at are beautiful.
- <sup>8</sup> But again even they are not to be excused.
- <sup>9</sup> For if they had power to know so much,  
that they should be able to explore the world,  
how is it that they didn't find the Sovereign Lord sooner?
- <sup>10</sup> But they were miserable, and their hopes were in dead things,  
who called them gods which are works of men's hands,

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<sup>†</sup> **13:5:** Gr. *is the first maker of them seen.*

- gold and silver, skilfully made, and likenesses  
of animals,  
or a useless stone, the work of an ancient  
hand.
- 11 Yes and some<sup>‡</sup> woodcutter might saw down a  
tree that is easily moved,  
skilfully strip away all its bark,  
and fashion it in attractive form, make a use-  
ful vessel to serve his life's needs.
- 12 Burning the scraps from his handiwork to cook  
his food,  
he eats his fill.
- 13 Taking a discarded scrap which served no pur-  
pose,  
a crooked piece of wood and full of knots,  
he carves it with the diligence of his idleness,  
and shapes it by the skill of his idleness.  
He shapes it in the image of a man,  
14 or makes it like some worthless animal,  
smearing it with something red, painting it  
red,  
and smearing over every stain in it.
- 15 Having made a worthy chamber for it,  
he sets it in a wall, securing it with iron.
- 16 He plans for it that it may not fall down,  
knowing that it is unable to help itself  
(for truly it is an image, and needs help).
- 17 When he makes his prayer concerning goods  
and his marriage and children,  
he is not ashamed to speak to that which has  
no life.
- 18 Yes, for health, he calls upon that which is weak.

---

<sup>‡</sup> 13:11: Gr. *carpenter who is a woodcutter*.

For life, he implores that which is dead.  
For aid, he supplicates that which has no  
experience.

For a good journey, he asks that which can't so  
much as move a step.

- <sup>19</sup> And for profit in business and good success of  
his hands,  
he asks ability from that which has hands  
with no ability.

## 14

- <sup>1</sup> Again, one preparing to sail, and about to journey over raging waves,  
calls upon a piece of wood more fragile than  
the vessel that carries him.
- <sup>2</sup> For the hunger for profit planned it,  
and wisdom was the craftsman who built it.
- <sup>3</sup> Your providence, O Father, guides it along,  
because even in the sea you gave a way,  
and in the waves a sure path,
- <sup>4</sup> showing that you can save out of every danger,  
that even a man without skill may put to sea.
- <sup>5</sup> It is your will that the works of your wisdom  
should not be ineffective.  
Therefore men also entrust their lives to a  
little piece of wood,  
and passing through the surge on a raft come  
safely to land.
- <sup>6</sup> For<sup>†</sup> in the old time also, when proud giants were  
perishing,  
the hope of the world, taking refuge on a raft,

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<sup>†</sup> **14:6:** The Greek text here may be corrupt.

your hand guided the seed of generations of the race of men.

<sup>7</sup> For blessed is wood through which comes righteousness;

<sup>8</sup> but the idol made with hands is accursed, itself and he that made it; because his was the working, and the corruptible thing was called a god.

<sup>9</sup> For both the ungodly and his ungodliness are alike hateful to God;

<sup>10</sup> for truly the deed will be punished together with him who committed it.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore also there will be a visitation amongst the idols of the nation, because, though formed of things which God created, they were made an abomination, stumbling blocks to the souls of men, and a snare to the feet of the foolish.

<sup>12</sup> For the devising of idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them the corruption of life.

<sup>13</sup> For they didn't exist from the beginning, and they won't exist forever.

<sup>14</sup> For by the boastfulness of men they entered into the world, and therefore a speedy end was planned for them.

<sup>15</sup> For a father worn with untimely grief, making an image of the child quickly taken away, now honoured him as a god which was then a dead human being,

and delivered to those that were under him  
mysteries and solemn rites.

16 Afterward the ungodly custom, in process of  
time grown strong, was kept as a law,  
and the engraved images received worship by  
the commandments of princes.

17 And when men could not honour them in pres-  
ence because they lived far off,  
imagining the likeness from afar,  
they made a visible image of the king whom  
they honoured,  
that by their zeal they might flatter the absent  
as if present.

18 But worship was raised to a yet higher pitch,  
even by those who didn't know him,  
urged forward by the ambition of the archi-  
tect;

19 for he, wishing perhaps to please his ruler,  
used his art to force the likeness towards a  
greater beauty.

20 So the multitude, allured by reason of the grace  
of his handiwork,  
now consider an object of devotion him that a  
little before was honoured as a man.

21 And this became an ambush,  
because men, in bondage either to calamity or  
to tyranny,  
invested stones and stocks with the Name that  
shouldn't be shared.

22 Afterward it was not enough for them to go  
astray concerning the knowledge of God,

- but also, while they live in a great war of ignorance, they call a multitude of evils peace.
- 23 For either slaughtering children in solemn rites, or celebrating secret mysteries, or holding frenzied revels of strange customs,
- 24 no longer do they guard either life or purity of marriage, but one brings upon another either death by treachery, or anguish by adultery.
- 25 And all things confusedly are filled with blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury,
- 26 confusion about what is good, forgetfulness of favours, ingratitude for benefits, defiling of souls, confusion of sex, disorder in marriage, adultery and wantonness.
- 27 For the worship of idols that may not be named<sup>\*</sup> is a beginning and cause and end of every evil.
- 28 For their worshippers either make merry to madness, or prophesy lies, or live unrighteously, or lightly commit perjury.
- 29 For putting their trust in lifeless idols, when they have sworn a wicked oath, they expect not to suffer harm.
- 30 But on both counts, the just doom will pursue them,

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<sup>\*</sup> 14:27: Exodus 23:13; Psalms 16:4; Hosea 2:17; Wisdom 14:21

because they had evil thoughts of God by giving heed to idols, and swore unrighteously in deceit through contempt for holiness.

- <sup>31</sup> For it is not the power of things by which men swear, but it is the just penalty for those who sin that always visits the transgression of the unrighteous.

## 15

- <sup>1</sup> But you, our God, are gracious and true, patient, and in mercy ordering all things.  
<sup>2</sup> For even if we sin, we are yours, knowing your dominion; but we will not sin, knowing that we have been accounted yours.  
<sup>3</sup> For to be acquainted with you is<sup>†</sup> perfect righteousness, and to know your dominion is the root of immortality.  
<sup>4</sup> For we weren't led astray by any evil plan of men's, nor yet by painters' fruitless labour, a form stained with varied colours,  
<sup>5</sup> the sight of which leads fools into<sup>‡</sup> lust. Their desire is for the breathless form of a dead image.  
<sup>6</sup> Lovers of evil things, and worthy of such hopes, are those who make, desire, and worship them.

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<sup>†</sup> 15:3: Gr. *entire*.    <sup>‡</sup> 15:5: Some authorities read *reproach*.



<sup>7</sup> For a potter, kneading soft earth,  
laboriously moulds each article for our service.

He fashions out of the same clay  
both the vessels that minister to clean uses,  
and those of a contrary sort,  
all in like manner.

What shall be the use of each article of either sort,  
the potter is the judge.

<sup>8</sup> Also, labouring to an evil end, he moulds a vain  
god out of the same clay,  
he who, having but a little before been made  
of earth,  
after a short space goes his way to the earth  
out of which he was taken,  
when he is required to give back the<sup>§</sup> soul  
which was lent him.

<sup>9</sup> However he has anxious care,  
not because his powers must fail,  
nor because his span of life is short;

But he compares himself with goldsmiths and  
silversmiths,  
and he imitates molders in<sup>†</sup> brass,  
and considers it great that he moulds counter-  
feit gods.

<sup>10</sup> His heart is ashes.  
His hope is of less value than earth.  
His life is of less honour than clay,

<sup>11</sup> because he was ignorant of him who moulded  
him,

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<sup>§</sup> 15:8: Or, *life*    <sup>†</sup> 15:9: Or, *copper*

- and of him that inspired into him‡ an active§  
soul,  
and breathed into him a vital spirit.
- 12 But† he accounted our life to be a game,  
and our‡ lifetime a festival for profit;  
for, he says, one must get gain however one can,  
even if it is by evil.
- 13 For this man, beyond all others, knows that he  
sins,  
out of earthy matter making brittle vessels  
and engraved images.
- 14 But most foolish and more miserable than a  
baby,  
are the enemies of your people, who op-  
pressed them;
- 15 because they even considered all the idols of the  
nations to be gods,  
which have neither the use of eyes for seeing,  
nor nostrils for drawing breath,  
nor ears to hear,  
nor fingers for handling,  
and their feet are helpless for walking.
- 16 For a man made them,  
and one whose own spirit is borrowed  
moulded them;  
for no one has power as a man to mould a god  
like himself.
- 17 But, being mortal, he makes a dead thing by the  
work of lawless hands;  
for he is better than the objects of his worship,  
since he indeed had life, but they never did.

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‡ 15:11: Gr. *a soul that moves to activity.*

§ 15:11: Or, *life*

† 15:12: Some authorities read *they accounted.*

*of life*

‡ 15:12: Or, *way*

- 18 Yes, and they worship the creatures that are most hateful,  
for, being compared as to lack of sense, these are worse than all others;
- 19 Neither, as seen beside other creatures, are they beautiful, so that one should desire them, but they have escaped both the praise of God and his blessing.

## 16

- 1 For this cause, they were deservedly punished through creatures like those which they worship,  
and tormented through a multitude of vermin.
- 2 Instead of this punishment, you, giving benefits to your people,  
prepared quails for food,  
a delicacy to satisfy the desire of their appetite,
- 3 to the end that your enemies, desiring food,  
might for the hideousness of the creatures sent amongst them,  
loathe even the necessary appetite;  
but these, your people, having for a short time suffered lack,  
might even partake of delicacies.
- 4 For it was necessary that inescapable lack should come upon those oppressors,  
but that to these it should only be showed how their enemies were tormented.
- 5 For even when terrible raging of wild beasts came upon your people,

- and they were perishing by the bites of  
crooked serpents,  
your wrath didn't continue to the uttermost;  
6 but for admonition were they troubled for a  
short time,  
having a token of salvation  
to put them in remembrance of the com-  
mandment of your law;
- 7 for he who turned towards it was not saved  
because of that which was seen,  
but because of you, the Saviour of all.
- 8 Yes, and in this you persuaded our enemies  
that you are he who delivers out of every evil.
- 9 For the bites of locusts and flies truly killed them.  
No healing for their life was found,  
because they were worthy to be punished by  
such things.
- 10 But your children weren't overcome by the very  
fangs of venomous dragons,  
for your mercy passed by where they were  
and healed them.
- 11 For they were bitten to put them in remem-  
brance of your oracles,  
and were quickly saved, lest, falling into deep  
forgetfulness,  
they should become unable to respond to  
your kindness.
- 12 For truly it was neither herb nor poultice that  
cured them,  
but your word, O Lord, which heals all people.
- 13 For you have authority over life and death,

and you lead down to the gates of Hades, and lead up again.

- 14 But though a man kills by his wickedness,  
he can't retrieve the spirit that has departed  
or release the imprisoned soul.
- 15 But it is not possible to escape your hand;
- 16 for ungodly men, refusing to know you, were  
scourged in the strength of your arm,  
pursued with strange rains and hails and re-  
lentless storms,  
and utterly consumed with fire.
- 17 For, what was most marvellous,  
in the water which quenches all things, the  
fire burnt hotter;  
for the world fights for the righteous.
- 18 For at one time the flame was restrained,  
that it might not burn up the creatures sent  
against the ungodly,  
but that these themselves as they looked  
might see that they were chased by the  
judgement of God.
- 19 At another time even in the midst of water it  
burns more intensely than fire,  
that it may destroy the produce of an unrighteous land.
- 20 Instead of these things, you gave your people  
angels' food to eat,  
and you provided ready-to-eat bread for them  
from heaven without toil,  
having the virtue of every pleasant flavour,  
and agreeable to every taste.

- 21 For your nature showed your sweetness towards your children,  
while that bread, serving the desire of the eater,  
changed itself according to every man's choice.
- 22 But snow and ice endured fire, and didn't melt,  
that people might know that fire was destroying the fruits of the enemies,  
burning in the hail and flashing in the rains;
- 23 and that this fire, again, in order that righteous people may be nourished,  
has even forgotten its own power.
- 24 For the creation, ministering to you, its maker,  
strains its force against the unrighteous for punishment  
and in kindness, slackens it on behalf of those who trust in you.
- 25 Therefore at that time also, converting itself into all forms,  
it ministered to your all-nourishing bounty,  
according to the desire of those who had need,
- 26 that your children, whom you loved, O Lord, might learn  
that it is not the growth of crops that nourishes a man,  
but that your word preserves those who trust you.
- 27 For that which was not destroyed by fire,  
melted away when it was simply warmed by a faint sunbeam,
- 28 that it might be known that we must rise before the sun to give you thanks,

and must pray to you at the dawning of the light;

- <sup>29</sup> for the hope of the unthankful will melt as the winter's hoar frost,  
and will flow away as water that has no use.

## 17

- <sup>1</sup> For your judgements are great, and hard to interpret;  
therefore undisciplined souls went astray.
- <sup>2</sup> For when lawless men had supposed that they held a holy nation in their power,  
they, prisoners of darkness, and bound in the fetters of a long night,  
kept close beneath their roofs,  
lay exiled from the eternal providence.
- <sup>3</sup> For while they thought that they were unseen in their secret sins,  
they were divided from one another by a dark curtain of forgetfulness,  
stricken with terrible awe, and very troubled by apparitions.
- <sup>4</sup> For neither did the dark recesses that held them guard them from fears,  
but terrifying sounds rang around them,  
and dismal phantoms appeared with unsmiling faces.
- <sup>5</sup> And no power of fire prevailed to give light,  
neither were the brightest flames of the stars strong enough to illuminate that gloomy night;

- 6 but only the glimmering of a self-kindled fire  
appeared to them, full of fear.  
In terror, they considered the things which  
they saw  
to be worse than that sight, on which they  
could not gaze.
- 7 The mockeries of their magic arts were power-  
less, now,  
and a shameful rebuke of their boasted un-  
derstanding:
- 8 For those who promised to drive away terrors  
and disorders from a sick soul,  
these were sick with a ludicrous fearfulness.
- 9 For even if no troubling thing frightened them,  
yet, scared with the creeping of vermin and  
hissing of serpents,
- 10 they perished trembling in fear,  
refusing even to look at the air, which could  
not be escaped on any side.
- 11 For wickedness, condemned by a witness  
within, is a coward thing,  
and, being pressed hard by conscience, al-  
ways has added forecasts of the worst.
- 12 For fear is nothing else but a surrender of  
the help which reason offers;
- 13 and from within, the expectation of being  
less  
prefers ignorance of the cause that brings the  
torment.
- 14 But they, all through the night which was pow-  
erless indeed,  
and which came upon them out of the re-  
cesses of powerless Hades,  
sleeping the same sleep,



- 15 now were haunted by monstrous apparitions,  
and now were paralysed by their soul's surrendering;  
for sudden and unexpected fear came upon them.
- 16 So then whoever it might be, sinking down in his place,  
was kept captive, shut up in that prison which was not barred with iron;
- 17 for whether he was a farmer, or a shepherd,  
or a labourer whose toils were in the wilderness,  
he was overtaken, and endured that inescapable sentence;  
for they were all bound with one chain of darkness.
- 18 Whether there was a whistling wind,  
or a melodious sound of birds amongst the spreading branches,  
or a measured fall of water running violently,  
19 or a harsh crashing of rocks hurled down,  
or the swift course of animals bounding along unseen,  
or the voice of wild beasts harshly roaring,  
or an echo rebounding from the hollows of the mountains,  
all these things paralysed them with terror.
- 20 For the whole world was illuminated with clear light,  
and was occupied with unhindered works,  
21 while over them alone was spread a heavy night,

an image of the darkness that should afterward receive them;  
but to themselves, they were heavier than darkness.

## 18

- <sup>1</sup> But for your holy ones there was great light.  
Their enemies, hearing their voice but not seeing their form,  
counted it a happy thing that they too had suffered,
- <sup>2</sup> yet for that they do not hurt them, though wronged by them before, they are thankful;  
and because they had been at variance with them, they begged for pardon.
- <sup>3</sup> Therefore you provided a burning pillar of fire,  
to be a guide for your people's unknown journey,  
and a harmless sun for their glorious exile.
- <sup>4</sup> For the Egyptians well deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned by darkness,  
they who had imprisoned your children,  
through whom the incorruptible light of the law was to be given to the race of men.
- <sup>5</sup> After they had taken counsel to kill the babes of the holy ones,  
and when a single child had been abandoned and saved to convict them of their sin,  
you took away from them their multitude of children,  
and destroyed all their army together in a mighty flood.

- <sup>6</sup> Our fathers were made aware of that night beforehand,  
that, having sure knowledge, they might  
be cheered by the oaths which they had  
trusted.
- <sup>7</sup> Salvation of the righteous and destruction of the  
enemies was expected by your people.
- <sup>8</sup> For as you took vengeance on the adversaries,  
by the same means, calling us to yourself, you  
glorified us.
- <sup>9</sup> For holy children of good men offered sacrifice  
in secret,  
and with one consent they agreed to the  
covenant of the divine law,  
that they would partake alike in the same  
good things and the same perils,  
the fathers already leading the sacred songs  
of praise.
- <sup>10</sup> But the discordant cry of the enemies echoed  
back,  
and a pitiful voice of lamentation for children  
was spread abroad.
- <sup>11</sup> Both servant and master were punished with  
the same just doom,  
and the commoner suffering the same as  
king;
- <sup>12</sup> Yes, they all together, under one form of death,  
had corpses without number.  
For the living were not sufficient even to bury  
them,  
Since at a single stroke, their most cherished  
offspring was consumed.

- 13 For while they were disbelieving all things by  
reason of the enchantments,  
upon the destruction of the firstborn they  
confessed the people to be God's children.
- 14 For while peaceful silence wrapped all things,  
and night in her own swiftness was half spent,
- 15 your all-powerful word leapt from heaven,  
from the royal throne,  
a stern warrior, into the midst of the doomed  
land,
- 16 bearing as a sharp sword your authentic com-  
mandment,  
and standing, it filled all things with death,  
and while it touched the sky it stood upon the  
earth.
- 17 Then immediately apparitions in dreams terri-  
bly troubled them,  
and unexpected fears came upon them.
- 18 And each, one thrown here half dead, another  
there,  
made known why he was dying;
- 19 for the dreams, disturbing them, forewarned  
them of this,  
that they might not perish without knowing  
why they were afflicted.
- 20 The experience of death also touched the righ-  
teous,  
and a multitude were destroyed in the wilder-  
ness,  
but the wrath didn't last long.
- 21 For a blameless man hurried to be their cham-  
pion,  
bringing the weapon of his own ministry,

prayer, and the atoning sacrifice of incense.  
He withstood the indignation and set an end to the  
calamity,

showing that he was your servant.

22 And he overcame the anger,  
not by strength of body, not by force of  
weapons,  
but by his word, he subdued the avenger  
by bringing to remembrance oaths and  
covenants made with the fathers.

23 For when the dead had already fallen in heaps  
one upon another,  
he intervened and stopped the wrath,  
and cut off its way to the living.

24 For the whole world was pictured on his long  
robe,  
and the glories of the fathers were upon  
the engraving of the four rows of precious  
stones,  
and your majesty was upon the diadem on his  
head.

25 The destroyer yielded to these, and they feared;  
for it was enough only to test the wrath.

## 19

1 But indignation without mercy came upon the  
ungodly to the end;

for God also foreknew their future,

2 how, having changed their minds to let your  
people go,  
and having sped them eagerly on their way,  
they would change their minds and pursue  
them.

- <sup>3</sup> For while they were yet in the midst of their mourning,  
and lamenting at the graves of the dead,  
they made another foolish decision,  
and pursued as fugitives those whom they  
had begged to leave and driven out.
- <sup>4</sup> For the doom which they deserved was drawing  
them to this end,  
and it made them forget the things that had  
happened to them,  
that they might fill up the punishment which  
was yet lacking from their torments,
- <sup>5</sup> and that your people might journey on by a  
marvellous road,  
but they themselves might find a strange  
death.
- <sup>6</sup> For the whole creation, each part in its diverse  
kind, was made new again,  
complying with your commandments,  
that your servants might be kept unharmed.
- <sup>7</sup> Then the cloud that overshadowed the camp was  
seen,  
and dry land rising up out of what had been  
water,  
out of the Red sea an unhindered highway,  
and a grassy plain out of the violent surge,
- <sup>8</sup> by which they passed over with all their  
army,  
these who were covered with your hand,  
having seen strange marvels.
- <sup>9</sup> For like horses they roamed at large,  
and they skipped about like lambs,  
praising you, O Lord, who was their deliverer.

- 10 For they still remembered the things that happened in the time of their sojourning,  
how instead of bearing cattle, the land brought forth lice,  
and instead of fish, the river spewed out a multitude of frogs.
- 11 But afterwards, they also saw a new kind of birds,  
when, led on by desire, they asked for luxurious dainties;
- 12 for, to comfort them, quails came up for them from the sea.
- 13 Punishments came upon the sinners,  
not without the signs that were given beforehand by the violence of the thunder,  
for they justly suffered through their own wickednesses,  
for the hatred which they practised towards guests was grievous indeed.
- 14 For while the others didn't receive the strangers when they came to them,  
the Egyptians made slaves of guests who were their benefactors.
- 15 And not only so, but while punishment of some sort will come upon the former,  
since they received as enemies those who were aliens;
- 16 because these first welcomed with feasting,  
and then afflicted with dreadful toils,  
those who had already shared with them in the same rights.

- 17 And moreover they were stricken with loss of sight  
(even as were those others at the righteous man's doors),  
when, being surrounded with yawning darkness,  
they each looked for the passage through his own door.
- 18 For as the notes of a lute vary the character of the rhythm,  
even so the elements, changing their order one with another,  
continuing always in its sound,  
as may clearly be conjectured from the sight of the things that have happened.
- 19 For creatures of the dry land were turned into creatures of the waters,  
and creatures that swim moved upon the land.
- 20 Fire kept the mastery of its own power in water,  
and water forgot its quenching nature.
- 21 On the contrary, flames didn't consume flesh of perishable creatures that walked amongst them,  
neither did they melt the crystalline grains of ambrosial food that were melted easily.
- 22 For in all things, O Lord, you magnified your people,  
and you glorified them and didn't lightly regard them,  
standing by their side in every time and place.



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