

WISDOM OF SALOMON

TO THE READER

EDITION OF THE GREEK TEXT

The NETS translation of the Wisdom of Solomon (WisSal) is based on the edition of Joseph Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum XII.1, 2* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962 (durchgesehene Auflage, 1962)]). This fully-fledged critical edition is based primarily on the evidence of the major Greek witnesses, Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (S), which Ziegler believed to be related, and Codex Alexandrinus (A), but it also draws on the evidence of all the other Greek witnesses and of the versions, particularly the Old Latin. This (the Old Latin) dates from the second half of the second century and is of particular importance because it is based on Greek manuscripts earlier than any still extant. In addition to Ziegler's edition, I have consulted the manual edition of the Septuagint edited by Alfred Rahlfs (*Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes, 2 vols.* [Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935]), which was used as the basis of the NRSV of the Wisdom of Solomon (Solomon).

I have diverged from the critical text established by Ziegler in only six cases. In two of these, Ziegler adopted into his text readings based on the evidence of the Old Latin: in 2.9 I read ἡμῶν, which is attested by most of the Greek witnesses, and not λειμῶν (= *pratium* of the Old Latin), and in 18.23 I read τὴν ὀργήν, attested by all the Greek witnesses, and not τὴν ὀρμήν (= Old Latin *impetum*). In 12.5 I follow an old conjecture and read φονάς in place of φονέας. In 7.1 I read θνητός with B*-S, not θνητός ἄνθρωπος, and in 15.14 I read οἱ καταδυναστεύσαντες, which is attested by many Greek manuscripts and seems to be required by the sense, not καταδυναστεύσαντες. Finally, in 15.17 I read ἀνθ' ὧν with S and other Greek witnesses, not ὧν. In all six cases the reading I have adopted corresponds to that followed by the NRSV.

CHARACTER OF THE GREEK

There is widespread recognition that the WisSal was composed in Greek, and the few suggestions that have been made for composition in Hebrew or Aramaic and for translation into Greek have found little support. The book is an example of a protreptic work (προτρεπτικός λόγος), an exhortation to adopt a particular philosophy, and it deploys literary genres familiar from Hellenistic rhetorical texts including the diatribe (1.1–6.11 + 6.17–20; 11.15–15.19), the “problem” genre (6.12–16 + 6.21–10.21), and the comparison (σύγκρισις, 11.1–14 + 16.1–19.22). Correspondingly, as Reese in his important study of the literary style and vocabulary of WisSal has shown,¹ the book is written in a good Greek style and shows none of the characteristics of translation Greek. The author does adapt his style to the point that he makes use of *parallelismus membrorum*, which is a characteristic feature of Hebrew verse, but he also employs “the features of florid Greek rhetorical prose.”² The author uses a full range of Hellenistic stylistic devices, and this is evident particularly in his very frequent use of hyperbaton, both hyperbaton involving the separation of the article from its substantive and hyperbaton not linked to an article. A common type of the latter in Wisdom is the placing of a verb form between a noun and its modifier, e.g., παροῦσά τε μίμουνται αὐτήν (4.2).³

The very frequent use of hyperbaton is obvious on even a casual reading of the Greek of the WisSal. But the rhetorical character of the Greek is likewise evident in the frequent occurrence of different types of wordplay, such as assonance and alliteration.⁴ The author also employs various figures of speech that are typical of Hellenistic Greek, of which the sorites of 6.17–20 is merely the best known example.

¹ J. M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (Analecta Biblica 41; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970) 3–31. The comments in the present section are heavily indebted to the treatment of the subject by Reese.

² Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 25–26.

³ Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 26–27.

⁴ Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 27–28.

The vocabulary of the WisSal is quite distinctive within the context of the Septuagint and reflects the Hellenistic milieu in which the book was composed, as Reese has demonstrated.⁵ On the one hand, the author uses a number of words familiar from the Septuagint but with their normal meaning in Greek. For example, the word ἀνάγκη occurs in 17.17 and 19.4 in the sense familiar from Greek of “necessity, fate,” but when it is used in the Septuagint in books translated from Hebrew, it always has the meaning “distress, anguish” (e.g., Ps 106[107].6). On the other hand, the author uses 335 words (out of a total vocabulary of 1734 different words) that do not occur in any other canonical book of the Septuagint, and Reese has shown that many of these are characteristic of Hellenistic religious, philosophical, ethical, and psychological vocabulary. The use of Hellenistic religious vocabulary in the WisSal is pervasive and includes such words⁶ as ἀπαύγασμα (“reflection,” 7.26) and πάρεδρος (“sitting by,” hence “throne-partner,” 9.4, cf. 6.14), both used to describe wisdom, or ἀνόνημα (“nameless,” 14.27) and ἄψυχος (“lifeless,” 13.17; 14.29), both used in the description of idols, or στεφανηφορούσα (“wearing a crown,” 4.2), used of the virtuous but childless believer. The use of Hellenistic philosophical vocabulary within the WisSal is illustrated by some of the terms applied to wisdom in 7.22–24, such as ἀκώλυτος (“unhindered”) and εὐεργετικός (“beneficent”), or by the words that describe Salomon’s relationship with wisdom, νύμφη (“bride,” 8.2) and ἐραστής (“enamored,” 8.2), which are not used in a metaphorical sense in the Septuagint. Examples of Hellenistic ethical vocabulary are to be found in the terms used for virtues and vices in WisSal, such as ἀνεξικακία (“longsuffering, forbearance,” 2.19) or ἐπιπορκία (“perjury,” 14.25, one of a whole list of vices in 14.25–26), and examples of psychological vocabulary are to be found in the terms used to describe the fear that gripped the lawless Egyptians (17.3–19), such as ἰνδάλματα⁷ (“apparitions,” 17.3) or δέγματα (“terrors,” 17.8), or in such terms as ἀπότομος (“stern, severe,” 5.20; 6.5; 11.10; 12.9; 18.15).

Finally it may be observed that the author quotes from the Septuagint in a number of places (cf. e.g., 2.12 and Esa 3.10; 11.22 and Esa 40.15; 16.22 and Ex 9.24).

THE NETS TRANSLATION OF THE WISDOM OF SALOMON

The translation for NETS of a book composed in Greek is manifestly a different kind of enterprise from the translation of a book composed in Hebrew and translated into Greek. The NRSV already provides a translation of the Greek text of WisSal and is based on a Greek text that differs to only a limited extent from the one used for the present translation. That there should, nonetheless, be a need for a NETS translation of WisSal different from that of the NRSV derives from the different aims of the two translations and from the different needs of the audiences at which they are directed. Thus whereas the NRSV “is intended for use in public reading and congregational worship, as well as in private study, instruction, and meditation,”⁸ NETS “is aimed primarily at . . . a biblically well-educated audience”⁹ and is intended in the first instance as an aid to scholarly study. With this in mind, I have tried to keep to the following principles for the translation of WisSal for NETS: (1) the general principle “as literal as possible, as free as necessary;” (2) consistency in English translation equivalents so far as is compatible with the meaning of the sentence being translated; (3) in the light of these two principles, the NRSV as the default translation. In addition, my aim has been to provide as clear a translation as possible and to err on the side of literalness, rather than to try to reproduce in English the rhetorical character of the Greek.

With regard to details, I have used gender-inclusive language except in passages where the cultural context seemed to require otherwise (e.g., 14.1, 8). In most such passages, the NRSV gives a similar translation but not in the case of the passage concerning the potter (15.7–13). I have usually translated ἄνθρωπος by “human being” or “mortal,” occasionally by other words, and have only translated it by “man” in the one passage (9.5) where the context required it.

EDITORIAL DETAIL

The chapter and verse divisions follow those given by Ziegler in the Göttingen edition of WisSal and correspond almost without exception to those given in the NRSV. But in one or two cases (e.g., 4.14–15) there are minor differences from the NRSV affecting the verse division.

⁵ The examples that follow are taken from Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 3–25.

⁶ Except where otherwise indicated, none of the following words occurs elsewhere in the Septuagint.

⁷ ἰνδάλματα also occurs in 1er 27(50).39 with the meaning “phantoms.”

⁸ See the preface in the NRSV by B. M. Metzger addressed “To the Reader.”

⁹ See the preface by A. Pietersma and B. Wright addressed “To the Reader of NETS” in A. Pietersma, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: The Psalms* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) viii.

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The division of the text into paragraphs also follows Ziegler's edition of WisSal, but differs in some respects from the arrangement of the text in the NRSV. However, I have not felt it necessary in all cases to follow Ziegler's punctuation of the Greek text.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In addition to the NRSV and to standard grammars, lexica and concordances, I have consulted the translations by David Winston (*The Wisdom of Solomon* [AB 43; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979]) and by S. Holmes ("The Wisdom of Solomon," in Charles I.518-568). I have also found it helpful on occasions to consult the Revised Version (the revision of the Apocrypha appeared in 1895) and the German translation by Johannes Fichtner (*Weisheit Salomos* [Handbuch zum Alten Testament: II.6; Tübingen J. C. B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1938]), which includes some brief notes on the Greek text.

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| <p>1 Love righteousness, you who judge the earth;
think about the Lord in goodness,
and seek him with sincerity of heart;
2 because he is found by those who do not
test him,
he reveals himself to those who do not
distrust him.
3 For crooked thoughts separate from God,
and his power, when it is tested, convicts the
foolish,
4 because wisdom will not enter a soul that
plots evil
or reside in a body involved in sin.
5 For a holy and disciplined spirit will flee
from deceit
and depart from senseless thoughts
and be ashamed when unrighteousness
approaches.</p> <p>6 For wisdom is a kindly spirit,
but it will not hold blasphemers free of the
guilt of their words,
because God is a witness of their inner
feelings
and a true overseer of their hearts and a
hearer of their tongues.
7 Because the spirit of the Lord fills the
world
and that which holds all things together has
knowledge of what is said,
8 therefore those who utter unrighteous things
will not escape detection,
and justice, when it convicts, will not pass
them by.
9 For there will be an inquiry into the
intrigues of the impious,
and a report of their words will come to the
Lord
to convict them of their lawless deeds,
10 because a zealous ear hears all things
and the noise of grumbling is not hidden.
11 Beware then unprofitable grumbling,
and keep your tongue from slander,</p> | <p>because no word uttered in secret will go
without effect,
and a mouth uttering falsehood destroys the
soul.</p> <p>12 Do not zealously seek death by the error of
your life
or bring destruction ^aon yourselves^a by the
deeds of your hands,
13 because God did not make death
nor does he delight in the destruction of the
living.
14 For he created all things that they might
exist,
and the generative forces of the world are
wholesome,
and there is no destructive poison in them,
nor is the kingdom^b of Hades on earth.
15 For righteousness is immortal.</p> <p>16 But the impious by their deeds and words
summoned it^c;
considering it to be a friend, they wasted
away
and made a covenant with it,
because they are worthy to belong to its
party.</p> <p>2 For they did not reason rightly and said
among themselves:
"Short and sorrowful is our life,
and there is no remedy ^dwhen a human
being dies^d,
and no one is known who has returned^e
from Hades.
2 Because we ^fcame into being^f by chance
and hereafter we shall be as though we had
never existed,
because the breath in our nostrils is smoke
and reason is a spark within the beating of
our hearts,
3 when it is extinguished, the body will turn
to ashes,</p> |
|---|--|

^aLacking in Gk ^bOr *palace* ^cI.e. *death* ^dOr *at the end of a human being* ^eOr *been set free* ^fOr *were born*

and the spirit will be dispersed as thin air.
 4 And our name will be forgotten in time,
 and no one will remember our deeds;
 our life will pass away as the traces of a
 cloud
 and will be scattered as mist
 that is chased by the rays of the sun
 and weighed down by its heat.
 5 For our allotted time is the passing of a
 shadow,
 and there is no putting back of our death^a,
 because it has been sealed and no one turns
 it^b back.
 6 "Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good
 things that exist,
 and let us make good use of the creation as
 in youth;
 7 let us take our fill of costly wine and
 perfumes,
 and let no flower of spring pass us by.
 8 Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before
 they are withered.
 9 Let no^cne of us^c be without share in our
 revelry;
 everywhere let us leave signs of enjoyment,
 because this is our portion and this our lot.
 10 Let us oppress the righteous poor man;
 let us not spare the widow
 nor have any regard for the hairs, gray with
 long years, of the old man.
 11 But let our strength be the standard of what
 righteousness is,
 for what is weak is proved to be useless.
 12 "Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
 because he is inconvenient to us,
 and he opposes our actions
 and reproaches us for sins against the law
 and ascribes to us sins against our training.
 13 He professes to have divine knowledge
 and calls himself a child^d of the Lord;
 14 he has become a reproof to us of our
 thoughts;
 (15) he is a burden to us even to see,
 15 because his life is unlike that of others
 and his behavior is different.
 16 We are considered by him to be base,
 and he keeps distant from our ways as from
 uncleanness.
 He calls the last end of the righteous happy
 and boasts that God is his father.
 17 Let us see if his words are true,
 and let us test what will happen at the end
 of his life;
 18 for if the righteous man is a divine son, he
 will help him
 and will rescue him from the hand of those
 who oppose him.
 19 Let us afflict^e him with insult and torture,
 that we may learn how reasonable he is
 and may put his forbearance to the test.

20 Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
 for, according to his words, he will be
 watched over."
 21 Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,
 for their wickedness blinded them,
 22 and they did not know divine mysteries
 nor hoped for the wages of holiness
 nor recognized the reward for blameless
 souls.
 23 Because God created human beings for
 incorruption
 and made them the image of his own
 nature,
 24 but through the envy of the devil death
 entered the world,
 and those who belong to his party
 experience it.
 3 But the souls of the righteous are in the hand
 of God,
 and no torment will ever touch them.
 2 In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to
 have died,
 and their departure was considered to be
 suffering,
 3 and their going from us to be destruction,
 but they are at peace.
 4 For even if in the sight of human beings
 they were punished,
 their hope is full of immortality,
 5 and having been disciplined a little, they
 will be greatly benefited,
 because God tested them and found them
 worthy of himself;
 6 as gold in the furnace, he tested them,
 and as a sacrificial whole burnt offering, he
 accepted them.
 7 And in the time of their visitation they will
 shine out,
 and as sparks through the stubble, they will
 run about.
 8 They will judge nations and rule over
 peoples,
 and the Lord will be king over them for ever.
 9 Those who trust in him will understand
 truth,
 and the faithful will remain with him in
 love,
 because grace and mercy are upon his holy
 ones,
 and he watches over his chosen ones.
 10 But the impious will receive punishment in
 accordance with the way they
 reasoned,
 those who neglected the righteous person
 and revolted from the Lord—
 11 for the one who disdains wisdom and
 instruction is wretched—
 and their hope is vain, and their labors are
 unprofitable,

^aOr *end* ^bLacking in Gk ^cmeadow = Zi ^dOr *servant* ^eOr *test*

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- and their deeds useless;
 12 their wives are foolish, and their children
 evil;
 (13) their offspring accursed.
 13 Because blessed is the barren woman who is
 undefiled,
 she who has not known^a intercourse that
 involved transgression,
 for she will have fruit at the visitation of
 souls.
 14 And ^bblessed is^b the eunuch who has done
 no lawless deed with his hands
 nor thought evil things against the Lord,
 for special favor will be given^c him for his
 faithfulness,
 and a very delightful lot in the shrine of the
 Lord.
 15 For the fruit of good labors is renowned,
 and the root of understanding does not fail.
 16 But the children of adulterers will not reach
 maturity,
 and the offspring of unlawful intercourse
 will perish.
 17 Even if they live long, they will be held of
 no account,
 and finally their old age will be without
 honor;
 18 if they die early, they will have no hope
 nor comfort on the day of decision,
 19 for the end of an unrighteous generation is
 grievous.

- 4** Better is childlessness with virtue,
 for in the memory of it^d is immortality,
 because it is recognized both by God and by
 human beings.
 2 When it is present, they imitate it,
 and they long for it when it has gone,
 and through all time it marches wearing the
 crown,
 having won the victory in the contest for the
 prizes that are undefiled.
 3 But the prolific brood of the impious will be
 of no use,
 and illegitimate seedlings from them will
 not strike deep root
 or take firm hold;
 4 for even if for a time they sprout ^eand
 produce^e branches,
 growing unstable, they will be shaken by the
 wind,
 and by the force of the winds uprooted.
 5 The branches will be broken off before they
 come to maturity,
 and their fruit will be useless,
 too unripe to eat and fit for nothing.
 6 For children born of unlawful intercourse
 are witness of evil against their parents
^fwhen they are examined^f.
 7 But the righteous, even if they die
 prematurely, will be at rest.

- 8 For an honored old age does not consist in
 length of time,
 nor is it measured by number of years,
 9 but understanding is gray hair for human
 beings,
 and a spotless life is ripe old age.
 10 One who became well-pleasing to God was
 beloved,
 and, while living amongst sinners, was
 taken;
 11 he was seized in order that wickedness
 should not affect his understanding
 or guile deceive his soul.
 12 For the fascination of wickedness^g obscures
 the things that are good,
 and roving desire undermines an innocent
 mind.
 13 But being perfected in a short time, he
 fulfilled long years;
 14 for his soul was pleasing to the Lord,
 therefore he hastened^h from the midst of
 evil.
 (15) But the peoples saw and did not understand
 nor take such a thing to heart,
 15 [that grace and mercy are upon his chosen
 ones
 and he watches over his holy ones.]
 16 But the righteous who are dead will
 condemn the impious who are
 living,
 and youth that is quickly made perfect, the
 prolonged old age of the
 unrighteous,
 17 for they will see the endⁱ of the wise
 and will not understand what the Lord
 planned for them
 and for what he kept them safe.
 18 They will see and will be contemptuous,
 but the Lord will laugh them to scorn.
 19 And after this they will become dishonored
 corpses
 and an object of outrage amongst the dead
 for ever,
 (19) because he will dash them speechless to the
 ground
 and shake them from the foundations,
 and they will be left utterly dry and barren
 and will be in anguish,
 and the memory of them will perish.
 20 And they will come with dread at the
 reckoning of their sins,
 and their lawless deeds will convict them to
 their face.
5 Then the righteous will stand with great
 confidence
 in the presence of those who have afflicted
 them

^aOr had ^bLacking in Gk ^cOr shown ^di.e. virtue ^eOr with ^fOr at their examination ^gOr worthlessness ^hOr
 hastened him ⁱOr death

and those who make light of their labors.
 2 When they see them^a, they will be troubled
 with terrible fear
 and will be amazed at the unexpected
 salvation ^aof the righteous^a.
 3 Repenting, they will say amongst
 themselves
 (and through distress of spirit will groan):
 4 "These are they whom we once held in
 derision
 and as a byword of reproach—we fools!
 We thought their life to be folly
 and their end^b to be without honor.
 5 How have they been counted amongst
 divine sons,
 and how^a is their lot amongst the holy
 ones?
 6 Surely we strayed from the way of truth,
 and the light of righteousness did not shine
 on us,
 and the sun did not rise on us.
 7 We were entangled in the thorns of
 lawlessness and destruction
 and journeyed through trackless wastes,
 but the way of the Lord we did not know.
 8 What has our arrogance profited us?
 And what good has our boasted wealth
 brought us?
 9 "All those things have passed away like a
 shadow
 and like a rumor that runs by,
 10 like a ship that passes through the billowy
 water,
 of which, when it is has gone by, no trace
 can be found,
 no track of its keel in the billows,
 11 or, as when a bird flies through the air,
 no evidence of its passage is found,
 but the light air, lashed by the beat of its
 pinions
 and pierced by its violent rush,
 is traversed ^cby the movement of its wings^c,
 and afterwards no sign of its coming is
 found there,
 12 or as, when an arrow is shot at a target,
 the air, thus cut through, immediately
 comes together
 so that no one knows its pathway,
 13 so we, as soon as we were born, ceased to be,
 and we had no sign of virtue to show
 but were consumed in our wickedness."
 14 Because the hope of the impious is as dust^d
 that is carried by the wind
 and as light frost that is driven away by a
 hurricane,
 and it is scattered like smoke by the wind
 and passes like the remembrance of a guest
 who stays for only one day.
 15 But the righteous live for ever,
 and in the Lord is their reward,

and the care of them with the Most High.
 16 Therefore they will receive a glorious crown
 and a beautiful diadem from the hand of
 the Lord,
 because with his right hand he will protect
 them
 and with his arm he will shield them.
 17 He will take his zeal as his whole armor
 and make creation his weapons ^efor
 vengeance on^e his^a enemies;
 18 he will put on righteousness as a
 breastplate
 and wear impartial justice as a helmet;
 19 he will take holiness as an invincible shield
 20 and will sharpen stern anger for a sword,
 and creation will fight with him against
 those without sense.
 21 Well-aimed shafts of lightning will fly out
 and from the clouds, as from a well-drawn
 bow, will leap to the target,
 22 and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled
 as from a catapult;
 the water of the sea will rage against them,
 and rivers will overwhelm them relentlessly;
 23 a mighty wind will rise against them
 and like a hurricane will winnow them
 away.
 And lawlessness will make the whole earth a
 desert,
 and evil-doing will overturn the thrones of
 rulers.
 6 Hear therefore, you kings, and understand;
 learn, you judges of the ends of the earth;
 2 give ear, you that have dominion over
 multitudes
 and boast of many nations,
 3 because your dominion was given you from
 the Lord
 and your dominance from the Most High.
 He will examine your deeds and inquire
 into your counsels,
 4 because, being servants of his kingdom, you
 did not judge rightly
 or keep the law
 or walk according to the counsel of God.
 5 Terribly and swiftly he will come upon
 you,
 because a severe judgment falls on those in
 high places.
 6 For the least may be pardoned in mercy,
 but the mighty will be mightily tested,
 7 for the Sovereign Lord of all will not give
 way to anyone
 or have regard for greatness,
 because he himself made small and great
 and takes thought for all alike,
 8 but a strict inquiry awaits^f the powerful.
 9 To you therefore, you princes, my words ^aare
 addressed^a,
 that you may learn wisdom and not fall into
 error.

^aLacking in Gk ^bOr death ^cOr as its wings move ^dOr chaff or thistledown ^eOr to repel ^fOr will come upon

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- 10 For those who have observed holy things in holiness will be made holy, and those who have been taught them will find a defense.
- 11 Set your desire therefore on my words; long for them, and you will be instructed.
- 12 Wisdom is radiant and unfading and is easily discerned by those who love her and found by those who seek her; she anticipates those who set their desire on her to make herself known in advance.
- 14 Those who rise early for her will not have to labor, for they will find her sitting at their gates.
- 15 For to fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding, and those who lie awake on her account will quickly be free from care,
- 16 because she goes about seeking those worthy of her and graciously appears to them in their paths and meets them in every thought.
- 17 For ^aher true beginning is the desire for instruction^a,
- 18 and concern for instruction is love ^bof her^b,
- (18) and love ^bof her^b is keeping her laws, and paying attention to her^b laws is confirmation of incorruption,
- 19 and incorruption brings one near to God;
- 20 so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.
- 21 If therefore you take delight in thrones and scepters, you princes of peoples, honor wisdom that you may reign for ever.
- 22 What wisdom is and how she came into being I will declare, and I will hide no mysteries from you, but I will trace ^bher^b out ^cfrom her first beginning^c and bring knowledge of her into the open, and I shall not pass by the truth.
- 23 Nor indeed will I travel in the company of consumptive envy, because this can have no fellowship with wisdom.
- 24 A multitude of wise people is the salvation of the world, and a sensible king is the stability of a people.
- 25 Therefore be instructed by my words, and you will profit.
- 7 I myself also am mortal^d like everyone, and a descendant of the first-formed individual born on earth, and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh,
- 2 within the period of ten months being compacted of blood, from the seed of man and the pleasure that accompanies intercourse.
- 3 And I myself, when I was born, drew in the common air and fell upon the kindred earth, with the same first sound crying like everyone.
- 4 In swaddling clothes I was nursed, and with care.
- 5 For no king has had a different beginning of existence,
- 6 but there is for all one entrance into life and the same way out.
- 7 Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given to me; I called ^bon God^b, and a spirit of wisdom came to me.
- 8 I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and wealth I considered nothing in comparison with her.
- 9 Neither did I compare any priceless gem to her, because all gold in her sight is a little sand, and silver will be counted as clay before her.
- 10 I loved her more than health and beauty and chose to have her rather than light, because the radiance from her never rests.
- 11 But all good things came to me together with her and in her hands uncounted wealth.
- 12 I rejoiced in them all because wisdom leads them, but I did not know that she was their mother.
- 13 I learned without guile, and I impart without grudging; I do not hide her wealth,
- 14 for it is an unfailling treasure for human beings; those who get it obtain friendship with God, commended for the gifts that come from instruction.
- 15 May God grant to me to speak with judgment and to think thoughts worthy of what has been given ^bto me^b, because he himself is the guide even of wisdom and the corrector of the wise.
- 16 For both we and our words are in his hand, both all understanding and skill in crafts.
- 17 For he himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that exist, to know the constitution of the world and the activity of the elements,

^aOr *her beginning is the true desire for instruction* ^bLacking in Gk ^cOr *from the beginning of creation*
^da mortal man = Zi

18 the beginning and end and middle of times,
the alterations of the solstices and the
changes of the seasons,
19 the cycles of the year and the constellations
of the stars,
20 the natures of animals and the tempers of
wild animals,
the violent forces of spirits^a and the
thoughts of human beings,
the varieties of plants and the powers of
roots,
21 and all things, both what is secret and what
is manifest, I learned,
22 for she that is the fashioner of all things
taught me, namely^b wisdom.

For there is in her a spirit that is intelligent,
holy,
unique, of many parts, subtle,
free-moving, lucid, unpolluted,
distinct, invulnerable, loving the good,
sharp,
23 unhindered, beneficent, loving towards
humanity,
firm, unfailing, free from care,
all-powerful, all-surveying
and penetrating all spirits
that are intelligent, pure, most subtle.
24 For wisdom moves more freely than any
movement;
she pervades and penetrates all things
because of her pureness.
25 For she is a breath of the power of God
and an emanation of the pure glory of the
Almighty;
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into
her.
26 For she is a reflection of eternal light
and a spotless mirror of the activity of God
and an image of his goodness.
27 Although she is one, she can do all things,
and while remaining in herself, she renews
all things,
and in every generation she passes into holy
souls
and makes them^b friends of God and
prophets;
28 for God loves nothing except the person
who lives with wisdom,
29 for she is more beautiful than the sun
and above every constellation of stars.
Compared with the light, she is found to be
more radiant;
30 for this is succeeded by the night,
but against wisdom wickedness does not
prevail.

8 She reaches with might from one end ^bof the
world^b to the other
and orders all things well.
2 Her I loved and sought out from my youth,
and I sought to take her as my bride,

and I became enamored of her beauty.
3 She glorifies her^b noble birth by having a
shared life with God,
and the Sovereign Lord of all loves her,
4 for she is an initiate in the knowledge of
God
and chooses his works.
5 If riches are a desirable possession in life,
what is richer than wisdom which makes all
things?
6 And if understanding is productive,
who more than she is the fashioner of the
things that exist?
7 And if anyone loves righteousness,
the fruits of her labors are virtues,
for she teaches self-control and
understanding,
righteousness and courage;
nothing is more useful in life than these for
human beings.
8 And if anyone longs for wide experience,
she knows the things of old and infers the
things to come;
she understands the subtleties of speech and
the solutions of riddles;
she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders
and the outcomes of seasons and times.
9 I determined then to take her to live with
me,
knowing that she would be a good
counselor for me
and a comfort in cares and grief.
10 Because of her, I will have glory among the
multitudes
and honor in the presence of elders,
although I am young.
11 I will be found quick in judgment
and in the sight of rulers will be admired.
12 When I am silent, they will wait,
and when I speak, they will pay attention,
and if I talk at greater length,
they will place a hand on their mouth.
13 Because of her, I will have immortality
and will leave behind an everlasting
memorial for those who come after
me.
14 I will govern peoples,
and nations will be subject to me;
15 dread princes will fear me when they hear
of me^b;
among the multitude I will show myself
noble, and in war courageous.
16 When I enter my house, I will find rest with
her;
for companionship with her has no
bitterness,
and living with her no grief, rather gladness
and joy.
17 When I considered these things in myself
and pondered in my heart
that in kinship with wisdom is immortality
and in friendship with her pure delight

^aOr winds ^bLacking in Gk

WISDOM OF SALOMON 8-10

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and in the labors of her hands unfailing
wealth
and in training in intimate companionship
with her understanding
and great renown in ^aconversing with her^a,
I went about seeking how I might take her
to myself.

19 I was a naturally clever child,
and I obtained a good soul as my lot,
20 or rather, being good, I entered an undefiled
body.

21 But knowing that I would not otherwise
gain possession ^bof her^b unless God
gave her^b to me—
and it was a mark of understanding to know
in whose gift it was—
I made supplication to the Lord and
besought him,
and with my whole heart I said,

9 “God of the fathers and Lord of mercy,
who made all things by your word
2 and by your wisdom formed human
beings
to rule over the creatures that were made by
you
3 and to manage the world in holiness and
righteousness
and to pronounce judgment in uprightness
of soul,
4 give me wisdom that sits by you on your
throne,
and do not reject me from amongst your
children^c,

5 because I am your servant and the son of
your handmaid,
a weak and short-lived man,
with limited understanding of judgment
and laws;
6 for even if someone is perfect amongst
human beings,
if the wisdom that comes from you is
absent, they will be considered to
be nothing.

7 You preferred me as king of your people
and judge of your sons and daughters;
8 you said that I should build a shrine on
your holy mountain,
an altar in the city of your encamping,
a copy of the holy tent that you prepared
beforehand from the beginning.

9 With you is wisdom, which knows your
works
and was present when you made the world
and understands what is pleasing in your
eyes
and what is right according to your
commandments.

10 Send her out from the holy heavens,
and from your glorious throne send her,
that, being present with me, she may labor
^bwith me^b

and that I may learn what is well-pleasing
before you,
11 for she knows all things and understands
them^b
and will guide me prudently in my actions
and guard me with her glory.

12 Then my deeds will be acceptable,
and I will judge your people justly
and be worthy of the throne of my father.

13 For what human being can learn divine
counsel?
Or who can conceive what the Lord wills?
14 For the thoughts of mortals are worthless,
and our inventions liable to fail.

15 For a corruptible body burdens the soul,
and the earthly tent weighs down a mind
full of cares^d.

16 With difficulty we make inferences about
what is on earth,
and what is at hand we find with labor,
but who has traced out what is in the
heavens?

17 Who has learned your counsel
unless you gave wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from on high?
18 And thus the ways of those on earth were set
right,
and human beings were taught what is
pleasing to you
and were saved by wisdom.”

10 She carefully guarded the first-formed
father of the world, when he alone
was created,
and delivered him from his own
transgression;
2 she gave him strength to rule over all things.

3 But when an unrighteous man departed
from her in his anger,
he perished through his^b fratricidal rage.

4 When because of him the earth was flooded,
wisdom again saved it,
piloting the righteous man by a worthless
piece of wood.

5 She also, when nations, collaborating
together in wickedness, were put to
confusion,
recognized the righteous man and preserved
him blameless with God
and kept him strong in the face of
compassion for his child.

6 She rescued a righteous man, when the
impious were perishing,
as he fled from the fire descending on the
Five Cities.

7 As testimony of their evil
a smoking waste still remains,
and plants bearing fruit ^ethat does not ripen^e,
and^b a stele of salt standing as a monument
to an unbelieving soul.

^aOr sharing her words ^bLacking in Gk ^cOr servants ^dOr thoughts ^eOr before it is ripe

8 For, having passed wisdom by,
they not only were hindered from
recognizing the things that are
good,
but also left behind for human life a
reminder of their folly
in order that in the things in which they
failed they would not be able to
escape detection.

9 But wisdom rescued from troubles those
who served her.

10 When a righteous man fled from his
brother's anger,
she guided him on straight paths;
she showed him a divine kingdom
and gave him knowledge of holy things;
she prospered him in his toils
and increased the fruits of his labor.

11 When in their greed men were trying to
prevail over him,
she stood by him and made him rich;
12 she carefully guarded him from his enemies,
and from those who lay in wait for him she
kept him safe;
and in his arduous contest she decided in
his favor,
that he might learn that piety is more
powerful than everything.

13 She did not abandon a righteous man who
had been sold
but rescued him from sin;
14 she went down with him into the dungeon,
(14) and when he was in chains, she did not
leave him
until she had brought him the scepter of a
kingdom
and authority over those who ruled over
him.
Those who had found fault with him she
showed to be false
and gave him everlasting glory.

15 A holy people and a blameless race
she rescued from a nation of oppressors;
16 she entered into the soul of the Lord's
attendant
and withstood terrible kings with wonders
and signs.

17 She paid to holy people a reward for their
labors;
she guided them on a marvelous way
and became a covering for them by day
and a blaze of stars by night.

18 She led them across the Red Sea
and brought them through deep water,
19 but their enemies she drowned,
and from the bottom of the deep she cast
them up.

20 Therefore the righteous spoiled the
impious;
they sang hymns, O Lord, to your holy
name

and praised with one accord your hand that
vindicated them,
21 because wisdom opened the mouth of the
dumb
and made the tongues of infants articulate.

11 She prospered their actions by the hand of a
holy prophet.

2 They journeyed through an uninhabited
wilderness
and in trackless places pitched their tents;
3 they withstood their adversaries and
defended themselves against their
enemies.

4 They thirsted and called upon you,
and water was given them out of flinty rock,
and a remedy for their thirst out of hard
stone.

5 For through the very things by which their
enemies were punished,
they themselves were benefited in their
need.

6 Instead of the perennial spring of a river,
stirred up with defiled blood
7 in rebuke for the decree to kill the infants,
you unexpectedly gave them abundant water,
8 having shown by their thirst at that time
how you punished their opponents.

9 For when they were tested, although they
were being disciplined in mercy,
they learned how the impious, being judged
in anger, were tormented.

10 For these you put to the test like a father
giving a warning,
but the others you examined like a stern
king passing sentence.

11 Whether far away or near, they were alike
distressed,
12 for a double grief took hold of them,
and a groaning at the memory of what had
occurred.

13 For when they heard that through their own
punishments
the others were being benefited, they took
notice of the Lord.

14 For they mockingly disowned the one who
long before had been cast out and
exposed,
but at the end of events they marveled at
him,
having thirsted in a way not like the
righteous.

15 In return for their senseless and wicked
thoughts
through which they were led astray to
worship irrational reptiles and
worthless vermin,
you sent on them a multitude of irrational
creatures to take vengeance
16 in order that they might learn that a person
is punished by the very things by
which the person sins.

17 For your all-powerful hand,

WISDOM OF SALOMON 11-12

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which created the world out of formless matter,
 was not at a loss to send out on them a multitude of bears or bold lions
 18 or newly-created unknown monsters, full of fury,
 either breathing out blasts of fiery breath or belching forth smoke
 or flashing terrible sparks from their eyes,
 19 which were able not only to wipe them out by the harm they did
 but even to destroy them by their terrifying appearance alone.
 20 Even without these they could have fallen by a single breath,
 being pursued by justice and scattered by the breath of your power,
 but by measure and number and weight you ordered all things.

21 For it is always in your power to show great strength,
 and who can withstand the might of your arm?
 22 Because the whole world before you is like a speck that tips the scales
 and like a drop of dew that falls on the ground in the morning.
 23 You have mercy on all, because you can do all things,
 and you overlook the sins of human beings that they may repent.
 24 For you love all things that exist and detest none of the things that you have made,
 for you would not have formed anything if you had hated it.
 25 How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?
 Or how would anything not called ^ainto existence^a by you have been preserved?
 26 You spare all things, because they are yours,
 O Sovereign Lord, you who love human beings.

12 For your incorruptible spirit is in all things.

2 Therefore you reprove little by little those who fall into error,
 and by reminding them of the things through which they sin you warn them
 in order that, being freed from wickedness, they may believe in you, O Lord.

3 For even the ancient inhabitants of your holy land,
 4 because you hated them for practicing the most detestable things—
 deeds of sorcery and unholy rites,
 5 merciless slaughters^b of children,

sacrificial feasting on human flesh and blood—
 those^a initiates from the midst of a pagan^a ceremony
 6 and parents who murder helpless lives, you willed to destroy by the hands of our fathers
 7 in order that the land that is the most precious of all before you
 might receive a worthy colony of servants^c of God.
 8 But even these you spared as being human beings,
 and you sent wasps as forerunners of your army
 in order to destroy them little by little.
 9 It was not that you were unable to give the impious into the hands of the righteous in battle
 or to wipe them out at a stroke by terrible beasts or by your stern word,
 10 but judging them little by little you gave them an opportunity to repent,
 though you were not unaware that their origin was evil
 and their wickedness inborn
 and that their way of thinking would never change.
 11 For they were an accursed race from the beginning,
 and it was not through fear of anyone that you granted them pardon for the things in which they sinned.

12 For who will say, "What have you done?"
 Or who will withstand your judgment?
 Who will accuse you for the destruction of nations that you made?
 Or who will come before you to plead as an advocate for unrighteous human beings?
 13 For neither is there any god beside you,
 whose care is for all,
 to whom you must prove that you did not act unjustly,
 14 nor can any king or prince look you in the face concerning those whom you have punished.
 15 But being righteous, you manage all things righteously,
 considering it alien to your power to condemn anyone who does not deserve to be punished.
 16 For your strength is the beginning of righteousness,
 and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all.
 17 For you show your strength when people doubt the completeness of your power,
 and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it.

^aLacking in Gk ^bslaughterers = Zi ^cOr children

- 18 Although you are sovereign in strength, you
judge with fairness,
and with great forbearance you govern us,
for you have the power to prevail whenever
you choose.
- 19 You taught your people by such acts as these
that the righteous ought to be loving
towards human beings,
and you have made your sons hopeful,
because you give repentance for sins.
- 20 For if you punished with such great care and
indulgence
the enemies of your servants^a and those
deserving of death,
giving them time and opportunity in which
to free themselves from their
wickedness,
- 21 with how great carefulness have you judged
your sons
to whose fathers you gave oaths and
covenants of good promises!
- 22 While therefore you chastise us, you scourge
our enemies ten thousand times
more
in order that, when we judge, we may think
about your goodness
and, when we are judged, we may look for
mercy.
- 23 Hence those who lived unrighteously in a
life of folly
you tormented through their own
abominations.
- 24 For they went far astray on the paths of
error,
taking as gods the most despised and
loathsome of animals^b
being deceived like foolish infants.
- 25 Therefore, as though to unreasoning
children,
you sent your judgment as a mockery.
- 26 But they, not taking warning from a playful
rebuke,
will experience the deserved divine
judgment.
- 27 For ^cthrough those animals^c at which in
their suffering they became
incensed,
which they had thought to be gods, being
punished by means of them,
they saw and recognized as the true God the
one whom before they denied
knowing;
therefore the utmost condemnation came
upon them.
- nor, though paying attention to his works,
did they recognize the craftsman,
but either fire or wind or swift air
or the circle of the stars or turbulent water
or ^dthe luminaries of heaven they thought
to be gods that rule the world^d.
- 2 If it was through delight in their beauty that
they took these things to be gods,
let them know how much better than these
is their Sovereign Lord,
for the first author of beauty created them.
- 3 And if they^e were amazed at their power and
working,
let them perceive from them
how much more powerful is the one who
formed them.
- 4 For from the greatness and beauty of created
things
is their Creator correspondingly discerned.
- 5 But nevertheless little blame attaches to
these,
for perhaps they go astray
while seeking God and wishing to find him.
- 6 For being conversant with his works, they
make their search
and are persuaded by the sight, because the
things that are seen are beautiful.
- 7 But again, not even they are to be pardoned;
for if they had the power to know so much
that they could investigate the world,
how is it that they did not more quickly
find the Sovereign Lord of these
things.
- 8 But wretched, with their hopes set on dead
things,
are those who designated as gods the work
of human hands,
gold and silver fashioned with skill,
and representations of animals^f
or useless stone, the work of an ancient
hand.
- 9 If some carpenter saws down a tree that is
easy to handle,
skillfully strips off all its bark
and, working it in an attractive way,
forms a useful vessel that serves life's needs
and uses up the cast-off pieces of his work
for the preparation of his food and has his
fill
- 10 and, taking a cast-off piece of wood from
them,
a stick crooked and full of knots,
carves it with care in his idle moments
and shapes it with skill gained in leisure,
it is this he forms into the image of a
human being
- 11 or makes like some worthless animal^f,
smearing it with vermilion and coloring it
red with paint
and smearing over every blemish in it,
- 12
- 13
- 14

^aOr children ^bOr living creatures ^cLacking in Gk ^dOr the luminaries of heaven, rulers of the world, they thought to be gods ^eI.e. people ^fOr living creatures

WISDOM OF SALOMON 13-14

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- 15 and having made for it a niche worthy of it,
he sets it in a wall and secures it with iron.
- 16 Thus he takes thought for it that it may not
fall down,
knowing that it is unable to help itself,
for it is an image and has need of help.
- 17 But when he prays about his possessions,
his marriage and his children,
he is not ashamed to address a lifeless
object,
- (18) and for health he calls upon that which is
weak;
for life he prays to that which is dead;
for aid he supplicates that which is utterly
inexperienced;
for a good^a journey that which cannot take
a step;
- 19 for means of livelihood and work and
success with his hands,
he asks strength of that which has no
strength at all in its hands.
- 14** Again, one preparing for a voyage and
about to travel over raging waves
calls upon a piece of wood more fragile
than the ship that carries him.
- 2 For it was longing for gain that planned it^b,
and wisdom the craftsman that built it,
but it is your providence, Father, that pilots it,
because you have made a way in the sea
and a safe path in the waves,
- 4 showing that you can save from everything
so that even a person who lacks skill may
put to sea.
- 5 It is your will that the works of your wisdom
should not be without effect;
therefore human beings trust their lives even
to the smallest piece of wood
and passing through the billows on a raft
come safely through.
- 6 For even in the beginning, when arrogant
giants were perishing,
the hope of the world fled for refuge on a
raft
and, piloted by your hand, left to the world
the seed of a new^a generation.
- 7 For blessed is the wood through which
righteousness comes,
- 8 but the handmade idol^a is accursed, and the
one who made it,
because he worked it, and the corruptible
thing was named a god.
- 9 For equally hateful to God are the impious
and their impiety,
10 for what was done will be punished together
with the one who did it.
- 11 Therefore there will be a visitation also
upon the idols of the nations,
because, though part of the divine creation,
they have become an
abomination,
- a stumbling-block for the lives of human
beings
and a trap for the feet of the foolish.
- 12 For the invention of idols was the beginning
of fornication,
and the discovery of them the corruption of
life.
- 13 For they did not exist from the beginning,
nor will they last forever.
- 14 For through human conceit they entered the
world,
and because of this a speedy end was
planned for them.
- 15 For a father, tormented by untimely grief,
having made an image of the child who had
been quickly taken away,
now honored as a god what was once a
dead human being
and handed on to his dependants mysteries
and sacred rites.
- 16 Then, when the impious custom had grown
strong with time, it was kept as a
law,
and at the command of princes carved
images were worshipped.
- 17 When people could not honor them^c in
their presence because they lived far
off,
they imagined their appearance from afar
and made a visible image of the king whom
they honored,
that through diligence they might flatter the
absent one as though present.
- 18 But the ambition of the craftsman impelled
even those who did not know ^athe king^a to
a higher pitch of worship.
- 19 For he, perhaps wishing to please his ruler,
skillfully forced the likeness into a more
beautiful form,
- 20 but the multitude, drawn by the charm of
his work,
now counted as an object of worship the
one whom a little before had been
honored as a human being.
- 21 And this became a trap for human life,
because people, enslaved either by
misfortune or tyranny,
bestowed on ^aobjects of^a stone and wood
the incommunicable name.
- 22 Then it was not enough to go astray
concerning the knowledge of God,
but though living in great strife through
ignorance,
they call such great evils peace.
- 23 For whether performing ritual murders of
children or secret mysteries
or frenzied revels connected with strange
laws,

^aLacking in Gk ^bi.e. the ship ^ci.e. princes

24 they no longer keep either their lives or their marriages pure,
but they either kill one another by treachery
or grieve one another by adultery.

25 And all things are an overwhelming
confusion of blood and murder,
theft and deceit, corruption,
unfaithfulness, tumult, perjury,

26 turmoil of those who are good, forgetfulness
of favors,
defilement of souls, sexual perversion,
disorder in marriages, adultery and
debauchery.

27 For the worship of idols that may not be
named
is the beginning and cause and end of every
evil.

28 For they either rave in a state of euphoria or
prophecy lies
or live unrighteously or readily commit
perjury,

29 for because they trust in lifeless idols,
when they swear wicked oaths, they expect
to suffer no harm.

30 But on both accounts justice will pursue
them:
because they thought wrongly about God
through devoting themselves to
idols
and in deceit swore unrighteously through
despising holiness.

31 For it is not the power of those by whom
they swear,
but justice for those who sin
that always pursues the transgression of the
unrighteous.

15 But you, our God, are kind and true,
longsuffering and ordering all things with
mercy.

2 For even if we sin, we are yours, knowing
your might,
but knowing we are considered yours, we
will not sin;

3 for to know you is perfect righteousness,
and to recognize your might is the root of
immortality.

4 For neither has the artful inventiveness of
human beings led us astray,
nor the fruitless toil of painters,
a figure stained with varied colors,
whose appearance arouses yearning in fools
so that they long for the unbreathing form
of a dead image.

6 Lovers of evil things and worthy of such
objects of hope
are those who make or long for or worship
them^a.

7 For a potter, laboriously kneading soft earth,
molds each single article for our service,
but out of the same clay he fashions

both the vessels that serve clean uses
and the contrary ones, all alike,
but what shall be the use of each of them of
either sort^a
the worker in clay decides.

8 And, toiling perversely, he molds a futile
god out of the same clay,
he who a little before came into being out
of the earth
and after a short while returns whence he
was taken,
when the soul, which was lent him is
demanded back.

9 But his concern is not that his health is
likely to fail
or that his life is brief,
but he sets himself up against goldsmiths
and silversmiths
and imitates molders of bronze
and considers it a glorious thing that he
molds counterfeits.

10 His heart is ashes, his hope cheaper than
earth,
his life more ignoble than clay,
because he did not know the one who
molded him
and infused him with an active soul
and breathed into him a life-giving^b spirit,
but he considered our life to be a game,
and our existence a festival held for profit,
for, he says, one must make money
wherever one can, even by evil.

13 For this man more than any knows that he
sins
when, from earthly material, he makes
fragile vessels and carved images.

14 But most foolish, and with lives more
miserable than that of an infant,
are all the enemies of your people who^c
oppressed them,

15 because they even thought all the idols of
the nations were gods,
although they have neither the use of eyes
for seeing
nor nostrils for drawing breath
nor ears to hear
nor fingers for feeling,
and their feet are of no use for walking.

16 For a human being made them,
and one whose spirit is borrowed molded
them;
for no human has the power to mold a god
like himself,

17 but, being mortal, he makes a dead thing
with lawless hands,
for he is better than the objects of his
worship
^din that^d he had life, but they never.

18 And they worship the most detestable
animals^e;

^aLacking in Gk ^bOr *living* ^cOm = Zi ^dof which or of whom = Zi ^eOr *living creatures*

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for, when compared for lack of intelligence,
they are worse than all others,
19 nor, viewed as animals^a, are they beautiful
so that one would desire them,
but they have escaped both the approval of
God and his blessing.

16 Therefore they were deservedly punished
through similar creatures^b
and were tormented by swarms of vermin.
2 Instead of which punishment you benefited
your people
and prepared quails for food,
a delicacy to satisfy the desire of appetite,
3 in order that those people^b, when they
desired food,
might reject even the demands of appetite
because of the hideousness of the creatures
sent among them,
but these, ^byour people^b, having suffered
want for a short time,
might partake of delicacies.
4 For it was necessary that upon those who
ruled as tyrants inescapable want
should come
and that to these it should only be shown
how their enemies were tormented.

5 For even when the terrible rage of wild
animals came upon them
and they were perishing through the bites of
twisted snakes,
your anger did not continue to the end;
6 for a short while they were troubled as a
warning,
possessing a symbol of salvation to remind
them of the command of your law.

7 For the one who turned was not saved
because of what was beheld,
but because of you, the savior of all.
8 And in this also you convinced our enemies
that you are the one who rescues from every
evil.

9 For the bites of grasshoppers and flies killed
them,
and no remedy was found for their life,
because they deserved to be punished by
such animals^b,

10 but not even the teeth of venomous dragons
conquered your sons,
for your mercy came to their help and
healed them.

11 For they were stung to remind them of your
oracles
and were quickly delivered
in order that they might not fall into deep
forgetfulness
and might not be distracted from your
kindness.

12 For it was neither herb nor poultice that
cured them,

but your word, O Lord, that heals all things.
13 For you have authority over life and death
and you lead down to the gates of Hades
and bring back up again.

14 A person kills in his wickedness
but cannot bring back the departed spirit
or set free the soul that has been taken.

15 To escape from your hand is impossible;
16 for the impious, denying that they knew you,
were scourged by the strength of your arm,
pursued by unusual rains and hail and
relentless storms,
and utterly consumed by fire.

17 For, what was most unexpected, in water
that quenches all things
the fire had still greater effect,
for the world fights on behalf of the
righteous;

18 for at one time the flame was restrained,
that it might not consume the creatures sent
against the impious,
but that seeing this^b they might know
that they were being pursued by divine
judgment;

19 at another time, even in the midst of water,
it burned beyond the power of fire,
that it might destroy the produce of an
unrighteous land.

20 Instead of which you fed your people with
the food of angels
and untiringly supplied them from heaven
with bread ready ^bto eat^b,
able to meet every pleasure and suited to
every task.

21 For your sustenance manifested your
sweetness towards your children
and, serving the desire of the one who
took it,

^cwas transformed^c to what anyone wished.
22 But snow and ice survived the fire and did
not melt,

that they might know that fire destroyed the
fruits of their enemies,
blazing in the hail
and flashing in the rains,

23 and again this fire^b, in order that the
righteous might be fed,
forgot even its own power.

24 For creation, serving you who made it,
strains itself for punishment against the
unrighteous
and relaxes in kindness on behalf of those
who trust in you.

25 Therefore at that time also, changed into all
forms^b,
it served your all-nourishing bounty
according to the wish of those who ^dwere in
need^d

26 in order that your sons, whom you loved,
O Lord, might learn

^aOr living creatures ^bLacking in Gk ^cOr transformed itself ^dOr made supplication

that it is not the varieties^a of fruits that
nourish human beings,
but your word preserves those who trust in
you.
27 For what was not destroyed by fire
melted away when simply warmed by a faint
ray of the sun
28 in order that it might be known that one
must rise before the sun to give you
thanks
and make petition to you at the dawning of
the light;
29 for the hope of an ungrateful person will
melt away like the winter's frost
and will flow away like waste water.

17 For great are your judgments and hard to
explain^b;
therefore uninstructed souls have gone
astray.
2 For when lawless people thought to oppress
a holy nation,
they themselves lay as captives of darkness
and prisoners of long night,
shut in under their roofs, fugitives from
eternal providence.
3 For thinking that in their secret sins they
were unobserved
behind a dark veil of forgetfulness,
they were scattered, terribly alarmed
and greatly troubled by apparitions.
4 For not even the deep recess that held them
protected them from fear,
but sounds rushing down crashed all
around them,
and dismal phantoms with gloomy faces
appeared.
5 And no fire had force enough to give light,
nor did the brilliant flames of the stars
avail to illumine that horrible night.
6 Only a terrifying self-kindled burning mass
glowed through to them,
and becoming terrified, they considered the
things that were seen
to be worse than that sight that was not
visible.
7 The delusions of their magic art were
ineffective,
a contemptuous rebuke of their boasted
intelligence.
8 For those who promised to drive away
terrors and troubles from a sick soul
were sick themselves with ridiculous fear.
9 For even if nothing disturbing frightened
them,
yet scared by the passing of vermin and the
hissing of reptiles
10 they perished in trembling fear,
refusing to look even at the dark haze,
which nowhere could be avoided.
11 For wickedness, ^ccondemning itself^c, testifies
to its innate cowardice,

and when afflicted by conscience, it always
exaggerates the difficulties.
12 For fear is nothing but a giving up of the
help that comes from reason,
13 and inner expectation, being weaker,
prefers ignorance of what causes the
torment.
14 But they, throughout the night that was in
reality powerless
and came upon them from the recesses of
powerless Hades,
sleeping the same sleep,
15 now were plagued by monstrous phantoms,
now were paralyzed by their souls'
surrender,
for sudden and unexpected fear poured over
them.
16 So then whoever was there fell down
and was held bound, shut up in a prison
without bars;
17 for whether they were farmers or shepherds
or workers whose toils were in the
wilderness,
they were overtaken and awaited the
inescapable fate;
18 for with one chain of darkness they were all
bound.
(18) Whether it was a whistling wind
or the melodious sound of birds in wide-
spreading branches
or the rhythmic movement of violently
rushing water
19 or the harsh crash of rocks hurled down
or the unseen running of leaping animals
or the sound of the most savage roaring
beasts
or an echo reverberating from a hollow of
the mountains,
it paralyzed them with terror.
20 For the whole world shone with brilliant
light
and went about its work unhindered;
21 only over them heavy night was spread,
an image of the darkness that was destined
to receive them,
but still heavier than darkness were they to
themselves.

18 But for your holy ones there was very great
light.
They^d, hearing their voices but not seeing
their form,
counted them happy, because they had not
suffered,
2 and were thankful that they did not harm
them^e though having previously
been wronged,
and they begged their forgiveness for having
been at variance with them.
3 In contrast you provided a burning pillar of
fire
as a guide for an unknown journey,

^aOr production ^bOr describe ^cOr being condemned ^dI.e. their enemies ^eLacking in Gk

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- a harmless sun for a glorious residence abroad.
- 4 But those deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned in darkness who had kept your sons shut up, through whom the incorruptible light of the law was to be given to the world.
- 5 When they had resolved to kill the infants of the holy ones and one child had been exposed and saved, in punishment you took away a multitude of their children and destroyed them all together by a mighty flood.
- 6 That night was made known in advance to our fathers in order that, having sure knowledge, they might rejoice in the oaths in which they had trusted.
- 7 The salvation of the righteous and the destruction of their enemies were expected by your people;
- 8 for by the same means by which you punished our opponents you called us to yourself and glorified us.
- 9 For in secret holy children of good people offered sacrifices and with one accord established the divine law that the holy ones should share alike the same blessings and dangers, while already singing the praises of the fathers.
- 10 But the discordant cry of their enemies echoed back, and the pitiable sound of lamentation for their children was spread abroad.
- 11 Slave with master were together punished with the same penalty, and commoner suffered the same as king, and together, from the same form of death, they all had corpses too many too count. For the living were not sufficient even to bury them, since in a single moment their most precious offspring had been destroyed.
- 13 For although they disbelieved everything because of their magical practices, at the destruction of their firstborn, they acknowledged your people to be a divine son.
- 14 For while peaceful silence enveloped all things and night was in the middle of its own swift course,
- 15 from heaven, from the royal throne, your all-powerful word leapt as a stern warrior into the midst of the land marked for destruction,
- 16 bearing your irrevocable command as a sharp rapier; standing, it filled all things with death, and while it touched heaven, it stood on the earth.
- 17 Then at once apparitions in terrible dreams greatly troubled them, and unexpected fears came upon them, and one here and another there, hurled down half-dead, revealed why they were dying;
- 19 for the dreams that disturbed them forewarned them of this, that they might not perish without knowing why they suffered terribly.
- 20 But the experience of death touched the righteous also, and a plague came upon the multitude in the wilderness, but the divine^a anger did not long continue.
- 21 For a blameless man hastened to act as their champion, bringing the weapon of his own ministry, prayer and propitiation by incense; he withstood the wrath and set an end to the disaster, showing that he was your attendant.
- 22 He overcame the bitter anger, not by bodily strength, nor by force of arms, but by his^a word he subdued the chastiser, calling to mind the oaths and covenants given to the fathers.
- 23 For when the dead had already fallen on one another in heaps, he intervened, held back the anger^b and cut off its way to the living.
- 24 For on his full-length robe the whole world was depicted^a, and the glories of the fathers were engraved on the four rows of stones, and your majesty^a was represented^a on the diadem on his head.
- 25 From these the destroyer withdrew; these he feared, for merely the experience of anger was enough.
- 19 But merciless wrath assailed the impious until the end; for he knew in advance what was to happen in respect of them,
- 2 how, having given permission to be away and having eagerly sent them on their way, they would change their minds and pursue them.
- 3 For while they were still engaged in mourning and were lamenting at the graves of the dead, they adopted another foolish plan

^aLacking in Gk ^bbattack or onrush = Zi

- and pursued as fugitives those whom, with
urgent request, they had driven out.
- 4 For the fate they deserved drew them on to
this end
and made them forget the things that had
happened
in order that they might fill up the
punishment that their torments still
lacked
- 5 and that your people might experience an
incredible journey,
but they themselves might find a strange
death.
- 6 For the whole creation was fashioned again
in its original nature,
serving your commands
in order that your children^a might be kept
unharméd.
- 7 The cloud was seen overshadowing the
camp,
and dry land emerging out of what before
was water,
and an unhindered way out of the Red Sea,
and a grassy plain out of the violent surge,
- 8 through which those protected by your
hand passed as one nation,
after gazing on marvelous wonders.
- 9 For like horses they grazed ^{bat} large^b,
and like lambs they skipped about,
praising you, O Lord, who rescued them.
- 10 For they still remembered the events of their
sojourn in a foreign land,
how instead of producing animals^c the earth
brought forth gnats,
and instead of fish the river vomited up a
mass of frogs.
- 11 But later they also saw a new kind^d of birds,
when, driven by desire, they asked for
luxurious delicacies,
- 12 for, to comfort them, quails came up from
the sea for them.
- 13 But the punishments did not come upon
the sinners
without signs being given beforehand in the
violence of the thunders,
- for they suffered justly for their wicked acts,
for they practiced a more bitter hatred of
strangers.
- 14 For others^e refused to welcome those who
did not know them^b when they
visited,
but these made slaves of guests who were
their benefactors.
- 15 And not only so—but while there will be a
visitation of some sort on the
former,
since they received foreigners with hostility,
the latter afflicted with terrible hard labor
those whom they had received with feasting
and who had already shared the same rights.
- 17 They were stricken also with loss of sight—
just as were those at the doors of the
righteous man—
when, surrounded by thick darkness,
each tried to find the way through their own
doors.
- 18 For as on a harp the notes vary the nature of
the rhythm,
while ^{beach} note^b always keeps to its sound,
so the elements changed places with one
another,
as may be accurately inferred from the sight
of the things that happened.
- 19 For land animals were transformed into
watery creatures,
and creatures that swim moved over to the
land;
- 20 fire even in water retained its normal
power,
and water forgot its fire-quenching nature;
- 21 flames, on the contrary, did not consume
the flesh of perishable creatures that walked
among them,
nor did they melt the ice-like kind of
heavenly food that melted easily.
- 22 For in all things, O Lord, you magnified
your people and glorified them
and did not disregard them, standing by
them in every time and place.

^aOr *servants* ^bLacking in Gk ^cOr *living creatures* ^dOr *production* ^eI.e. *the Sodomites*

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