

The Wisdom of Solomon.

Excerpted from The Latin Testament Project Bible,

Translated by John G. Cunyus.

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Wisdom 1.

You who judge the earth, delight in fairness!
Understand about the Lord in goodness, and seek
Him in the heart's simplicity, for He is found by
those who do not test Him, yet He appears to those
who have faith in Him! For perverse plans separate
from God, but proven power corrects fools.

For wisdom will not enter to a spiteful soul, nor will
she live in a body subdued by sins. For discipline's
holy breath will flee falsehood, and take itself away
from thoughts that are without understanding, and
will be swept out by the oncoming iniquity. For
wisdom's breath is kind, and will not free one
cursing from his lips, because God is witness to his
deepest feeling, and a true examiner of his heart,
and hearer of his tongue. For the Lord's breath has
filled earth's world, and this that contains all has
knowledge of the voice.

Because of this, who speaks iniquity cannot hide,
nor will correcting judgment pass him by, for there
will be an inquiry into the lawless one's plans, but
the hearing of his words will come to the Lord, to

the correcting of his iniquity! For a zealous ear hears all, and the complainers' tumult will not be hidden.

Keep yourselves, then, from griping, which benefits nothing, and spare the tongue from slander, for a hidden answer does not go into a vacuum – but the mouth that lies kills the soul. Don't be eager for death by your life's error, and don't buy destruction by your hands' works, for God has not made death, nor does He rejoice in the living's destruction! For He has created that all may be, and that the nations of the world's lands healthy. There is no remedy for killing among them, nor is the kingdom of the dead on earth – for justice is immortal.

But the lawless have summoned her by hands and words and, thinking her a friend, they've wasted away. And they've set a solemn promise on her – that those who are of her portion are worthy.

Wisdom 2.

For they said, not thinking rightly among themselves, Our life's time is meager and with weariness, and there is no refreshing in the end for men, and there is no one who is known to come back from the dead. For we were born from nothing, and after this we will be as if we were not; for smoke was blown into our nostrils, and a spark's word to moving our heart.

For, put out, the body will be ash, and the breath will be scattered like soft air, and our life will pass away like a cloud's footprint, and as fog is dissolved, which has fled from the sun's rays and been weighed down by its heat. And our name will receive oblivion through time, and no one will have a memory of our works. For our time has passed away as a shadow, and our end has no reversing, for it is sealed, and no one returns.

Come then, and let's enjoy the goods that exist, and let us use the creature as in youth, quickly. Let's fill ourselves with wine and precious ointments, and not let time's flower pass us by. Let's crown ourselves with roses before they wither. Let there be no meadow that our luxury may not pass through, wherever we may leave behind joy's sign – for this is our portion and this is the lot. Let's push down the righteous poor, and let us neither spare the widow nor revere the white hairs of the veteran's many seasons. But let the strength of unrighteousness be our law, for what is weak is found useless.

Let us, therefore, go around the righteous, because he is useless to us, and is against our works, and he blames sin against us by law, and he defames the sin of our discipline against us. He promises himself to have God's knowledge, and he calls himself God's son. He has become for us as the public disgrace of

our schemes. He is heavy for us even to see, because his life is unlike others, and his ways are unchangeable. We are esteemed as fools by him, and he abstains from our ways as if from uncleanness. And he prefers the righteous ones' end, and boasts to have God as his father.

Let's see, then, if his words are true, and let's test what will come to him, and let's know what his end will be. For if he is God's true son, He will sustain him, and will free him from the hand of those opposing. Let's interrogate him with abuses and torture, so we may know his reverence, and we may prove his patience. Let's condemn him to a shameful death, for there will be respect to him because of his words.

They've plotted these, and they've erred, for their harmfulness has blinded them. And they haven't known God's sacraments, or hoped in the reward of righteousness, or judged the honor of holy souls – for God has created man inextinguishable, and made him to His image's likeness. But death entered into earth's world by the devil's envy, yet those who are on his side imitate him.

Wisdom 3.

But the souls of the righteous are in God's hand, and death's torment will not touch them. In fools' eyes they seemed to die, and their end was

considered an affliction and what to us is extermination's journey – but they are in peace. And if they suffer torments before men, their hope is full of immortality. And troubled in a few things, they will be well-disposed in many, for God has tested them and found them worthy of Himself. He has proved them like gold in a furnace, and received them like a burnt offering's sacrifice, and there will be respect for them in time. They will shine also, and will roam like sparks through stubble. They will judge nations, and rule peoples, and their Lord will reign in eternity. Who trust in Him will understand truth, and the faithful will rest in Him in delight, for the gift and peace is to His chosen ones.

But the lawless will have correction according to what they've plotted, who've neglected the righteous and pulled away from the Lord – for who throws aside wisdom and discipline is unhappy, and their hope is vain, and their labors without fruit, and their works are uninhabitable. Their women are senseless, and their sons most worthless. Their offspring are cursed, for the sterile is happy, the unpolluted who hasn't known an erection in sin. She will have fruit in the observation of souls – and the eunuch who has not worked iniquity with his hands, or plotted most worthless acts against God – for the chosen gift of faith is given him, and a most pleasing lot in the Lord's temple – for the fruit of good works is glorious, and wisdom's root is what does not fail.

But adulterers' sons will be incomplete, and the seed of the treacherous erection will be exterminated. And if indeed their lives will be long, they will be considered as nothing, and the end of their old age will be without honor. And if they die quickly, they will have neither hope nor consolation in the day of knowing – for the ends of treacherous nations are cursed.

Wisdom 4.

A generation with clarity is better, for immortality is in their memory – because it is noted both with God and with men. When it is present, they imitate it and long for it – when it leads itself and, crowned forever, it triumphs, winning the prize of the unstained ones' struggle.

But the multitude of the lawless ones' many generations will not be useful, and false shoots will not give deep roots, nor will they establish a stable foundation. And if they spring forth in branches at the season, weakly placed, they will be shaken by the wind, and will be uprooted by excessive winds. The branches, incomplete, will be shattered, and their fruit worthless and bitter for eating, and useful for nothing – for all sons who are born from treacherous acts are witnesses of worthlessness against the parents in their interrogation.

But the righteous, though seized beforehand by death, will be in rest, for respectable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years – yet gray hairs are men's understanding, and old age is a spotless life. Made pleasing to God, beloved and living among sinners, he was carried across. He was taken away, lest harm change his understanding or pretense deceive his soul.

For the fascination of trifling humor obscures good, and lust's inconstancy turns aside a sense without malice. Consummated in brief, he has completed many seasons, for his soul was pleasing to God. Because of this, He hurried to lead him out from among the treacherous. But the people are seeing and not understanding, nor putting such in their vitals – for God's grace and mercy are among His holy ones, and respect among His chosen ones.

But the righteous dead condemns the living lawless and, youth quickly completed, the long life of the unrighteous – for they will see the wise one's end, and will not understand what God planned for him, and why the Lord fortified him. For they will see and condemn, but the Lord will mock them. And after this they will be falling, without honor and in indignity among the dead forever, because He will shatter without a voice those puffed up, and He will shake them from the foundations. And they will be desolate even to the last, and will be moaning, and their memory will perish. They will come, timid, to

the consideration of their sins, and their own iniquities will lead across against them.

Wisdom 5.

Then the righteous will stand in great constancy against those who hemmed them in and who took away their labors. Seeing, they will be troubled by horrible fear, and will marvel at the suddenness of unhopd-for salvation. They will say among themselves, acting out penance and moaning through anguished breaths, ‘These are those we held at times in mockery, and as the likeness of insult. We senseless ones considered their life mad, and their end without honor. How are they counted among God’s sons, and is their portion among the holy ones? Therefore, we’ve wandered from truth’s way, and the light of justice has not shined on us, and the sun has not risen on us. We were exhausted in the way of iniquity and destruction, and we walked in difficult roads – yet we ignored the Lord’s way.

‘What has pride profited us, or what has the boasting of riches brought us? All these have passed away like a shadow, and like a messenger hurrying past – and like a ship that passes through the water’s waves, of which, when it has passed, there is neither footprint nor path to find of its hull in the waves. Or a bird that flies across the air, no evidence is found of its journey except only the

sound of its wings beating the light wind, and tearing by force the way through the air. It has flown across, flapping its wings, and after this no sign is found of its journey. Or like an arrow shot to its destined place, the divided air at once closes itself up, so its path isn't known. So also we, born, at once have ceased to be, and indeed have been able to show no sign of power – yet we are consumed in our harmfulness.'

They've spoken such, and sinned, for the lawless one's hope is like down which is taken away by the wind, and like thin foam which is scattered by the storm, and like smoke which is scattered by the breeze, and like the memory of a guest of one day after his passing. But the righteous will live forever, and their reward is with the Lord, and their consideration is with the Most High. Therefore, they will receive the beautiful kingdom and the lovely crown from the Lord's hand, for His right will cover them, and He will defend them by His arm. That zeal of His will take armament, and He will arm the creature to the avenging of enemies. He will put on righteousness for a breast plate, and take certain judgment for a helmet. He will take up equity, an unconquerable shield.

Yet He will sharpen hardened anger as a lance, and the lands' world will fight with Him against the senseless. And straight discharges of lightning will go, and they will be exterminated, as if from a well-

curved bow of cloud, and they will leap upon the certain place. And hail stones will be thrown from rocky places, full of wrath, and the sea's water will climb up over them, and the floods will run together harshly. Power's breath will stand against them and divide them like a tornado, and iniquity will lead the whole earth to wasteland, and harmfulness will overthrow the thrones of the powerful.

Wisdom 6.

Wisdom is better than strengths, and a prudent man than a mighty one. Listen then, kings, and understand! Learn, judges of the earth's ends! Furnish ears, you who contain multitudes, and please yourselves among the nations' crowds, for authority is given you from the Lord, and power from the Most High, who will question your works and scrutinize your thoughts! For while you were His kingdom's ministers, you haven't judged rightly, nor have you kept the law of righteousness, nor have you walked according to God's will.

He will appear to you dreadfully and quickly, for the hardest judgment will happen among those who rule – for mercy is granted to the small, but the mighty will suffer mighty torments. For the Lord will not exempt anyone's person, nor will He respect anyone's greatness, because He Himself made small and great, and His concern is equally for all. Yet mightier agony pursues the mighty.

These words of mine are to you then, kings, that you may learn wisdom, and you may not fall – for those who keep right matters rightly will be justified, and those who learn these will find what they may answer. Lust then, for my words! Delight in them, and you will have discipline!

Wisdom is clear, and she is what never withers, and she is seen easily by those who delight in her, and is found by those who seek her. She anticipates those who long for her, so she may show herself to them beforehand. Who watches for her from light will not labor, for he will find her sitting by his doors.

Therefore, sense is consummated to consider her, and who watches for her sake will be saved quickly – for she herself goes around seeking those worthy of her, and she shows herself to them cheerfully in the pathways, and meets them in every providence – for her beginning is discipline’s truest longing. Discipline’s concern, therefore, is delight, and delight is the keeping of her laws. But the consummation of keeping the laws is incorruption, and incorruption makes one be a neighbor to God. So wisdom’s desire will lead to an everlasting kingdom. If, then, you delight in thrones and honors, O people’s kings, delight in wisdom, so you may reign forever!

But what is wisdom, and how was she made? I will report and will not hide God's sacraments from you. Yet I will investigate from the birth's beginning, and I will set her knowledge in light, and I will not pass over truth – nor will I have a journey wasting away with envy, for she will not be wisdom's participant. But a multitude of wise ones is health to the lands' world, and a wise king is a people's stability. Therefore, receive discipline through my words, and it will benefit you!

Wisdom 7.

I indeed am a mortal man too, like all of earth's race, of him who was made first, and I was formed in flesh in a mother's womb, congealed in blood ten months' time, from human seed, and coming together by a dream's delight. And once born, I received the common air and, made alike, I fell to the ground. I sent out the first sound like all, wailing. I was nursed in swaddling cloths and with great cares – for no one among kings had another beginning of birth. There is, therefore, one entrance to life for all, and one exit likewise.

For this reason, I preferred, and sense was given me, and I invoked, and wisdom's breath has come to me. And I've set her before kingdoms and thrones, and I've led nothing of riches to be comparable to her – nor have I compared her to a precious stone, for all gold is blowing sand in

comparison to her, and silver is esteemed as clay in her presence. I've delighted in her more than health and beauty, and I've proposed to have her rather than light, for her light is inextinguishable.

Yet all goods have come to me together with her, and uncountable honors by her hand. And I've rejoiced in all, for this wisdom went before, and I didn't know that she is mother of all these – which I've learned without pretense, and I share without envy, and I do not hide her honor, for she is a limitless treasure to men, that those who use are made participants in God's friendship, approved because of discipline's gift.

Yet may God give me to speak from reason, and to presume thoughts worthy of what are given, because He also is wisdom's leader, and the corrector of the wise – for we ourselves, and our words, and all wisdom, and the works of discipline's knowledge are also in His hand. For He Himself has given me true knowledge of those that exist, that I may know the disposition of the lands' world, and the elemental powers – the beginning and ending and midpoint of times, and consideration of all manner of the changes and divisions of times – the course of years, and the dispositions of stars – the natures of animals, and the angers of beasts, the force of winds and the thoughts of men, the different types of trees and the

powers of roots. And I learned of whatever are hidden and unforeseen, for wisdom, the craftsman of all, has taught me.

For understanding's breath is in her: holy, single, multiform, subtle, examined, unstained, certain, smooth, loving the good, sharpened, who nothing hinders to do well – kind, stable, certain, safe, having all power, seeing all, and who may take hold of all breaths – intelligible, pure, subtle. For wisdom is more active than all active things, yet she touches everywhere, and she takes hold because of her purity. For she is the warmth of God's power, and is the certain sincere emanation of God almighty's clarity, and therefore nothing polluted runs toward her. For she is the radiance of eternal light, and the mirror without defect of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness. And while she is one, she is capable of all and, remaining in herself, she renews all. And she transports herself through the nations to holy souls, and appoints them God's friends and prophets – for God delights in no one except him who dwells with wisdom.

For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above the disposition of the stars. Compared to light, she is found first – for night follows this, yet harmfulness cannot overcome wisdom.

Wisdom 8.

For she reaches mightily from end even to end, and orders all smoothly. I loved her and searched for her from my youth, and sought to take her to myself as wife, and I became a lover of her form. She glorifies generosity, having companionship with God, yet even the Lord of all has delighted in her – for she is the teacher of God's discipline, and the chooser of His works.

And if riches are longed for in life, what is richer than wisdom which works all? But if sense may work, who among these that exist is a greater craftsman than she? And if someone delights in justice, her labors have great powers, for she teaches sobriety, and wisdom, and justice, and virtue, than which nothing is more useful in human life. And if someone desires a multitude of knowledge, she knows the past and estimates about the future. She knows the cunning of words, and the dissolutions of arguments. She knows signs and portents before they happen, and the events of times and ages.

I proposed, therefore, to bring her to me to live together, knowing that she will communicate with me about good, and will be the consolation of my thoughts and sorrows. For her sake I will have clarity before crowds, and though young, honor with elders. I will be found acute in judgment, and I will be admirable in the mighty ones' sight, and

princes' faces will marvel at me. They will wait when I am silent, and will look when I am speaking, and when I am talking much, they will place hands over their mouth.

For this reason, I will have immortality through her, and will leave an eternal memory to those who come after me. I will set peoples in order, and nations will be subject to me. Terrifying kings, hearing, will fear me, and I will be seen among the multitude as good and mighty in war. Going into my house, I will rest together with her, for her conversation has no bitterness, nor her intimate grief, yet happiness and joy – considering this in myself, and commemorating it in my heart, for immortality is in wisdom's consideration, and good delight in her friendship – honors without weakness in her hands' works, and wisdom in the contest of her speech, and distinction in communication of her words. I went around seeking, that I might take her to me.

Yet I was a clever boy, and obtained a good soul by lot. And while I was good the more, I came to an unpolluted body. And as I knew that I could not be safe otherwise except that God give it, and this itself was wisdom's – to know whose gift this was– I approached the Lord, and pleaded with Him, and I spoke from all my guts:

Wisdom 9.

God of parents and Lord of Your mercy, who have made all by Your word, and appointed man by Your wisdom that he rule the creature that was made from You – that he may set in order the lands' world in equity and in fairness, and he may judge judgments in the heart's direction – give me wisdom from Your throne as a counselor, and don't reject me before your servants – for I am Your slave, and Your handmaid's son, a weak man and of brief time, and small for understanding judgment and laws! And if someone will be consummated among men's sons, if Your wisdom is absent from him he will be reckoned as nothing.

You have chosen me as king to Your people, and judge of Your sons and daughters. You said to build the temple on Your holy mountain, and an altar in Your habitation's city, a likeness of Your holy tabernacle which You prepared from the beginning. And wisdom, who has known Your works, is with You, who also was present then – when You made the lands' world. And she knew what was pleasing to Your eyes, and what was set in order by Your precepts. Send her from Your holy skies, and send her from the throne of Your greatness, that she may be with me, and may labor with me, and I may know what is acceptable with You – for she knows all, and understands, and will lead me out soberly in my works, and will keep me in her power! And my works will be acceptable, and I will set Your people

in order fairly, and I will be worthy of my father's throne.

For who among men can know God's counsel, or who can consider what the Lord desires? For the thoughts of mortals are timid, and our foresight uncertain. For a body that rots weighs down the soul, and the earthly dwelling presses down the sense considering many. And we reckon with difficulty what are on earth, and we find with labor what are in sight – but who has investigated what are in the skies?

Yet who has known Your sense, unless You give wisdom and send Your holy breath from the highest? And so the paths of those who are on earth are corrected, and men may learn what things please You – and through wisdom they are healed.

Wisdom 10.

She kept him who was made first, the father of the lands' world, when he alone was created. And she led him out from his offense, and gave him power to contain all.

As the unrighteous one pulled away from her in his anger, he died through the anger of a brother's murder.

For his sake, when water destroyed the earth, wisdom healed again, steering the righteous by contemptible wood.

She also, when nations had conferred together in a consensus of worthlessness, knew the righteous one, and preserved him without complaint to God, and kept him mighty in mercy's son.

She freed the righteous one from the dying lawless, fleeing the fire coming down on the Pentapolis, whose land remains smoking desert in testimony of worthlessness, and the trees having fruit at an uncertain season, and a salt figure standing as memorial to an unbelieving soul. For passing wisdom by, they slipped not only in this – that they did not know good – yet they also left men a memorial of their foolishness in those ways that they sinned, nor could they hide. But wisdom freed from sorrows those who kept her.

She led out through right paths a fugitive from a brother's anger, and showed him God's kingdom, and gave him knowledge of the holy ones. She honored him in labors, and completed his labors. She was present as others worked around him in fraud, and she made him respected. She kept him from enemies, and guarded him from seducers, and gave mightily to him for the struggle, that he might overcome – that he might know that wisdom is mightier than all.

She did not abandon a righteous one sold as a slave, yet she freed him from sinners. She went down with him into a pit. And she did not abandon him in chains until she had brought him the kingdom's scepter, and power against those who pushed him down. And she showed those who dishonored him to be liars, and she gave him eternal clarity.

She freed a righteous people and blameless seed from nations that were oppressing him. She went into the soul of the Lord's slave, and stood with wonders and signs against terrifying kings. And she paid the righteous the reward of their labors, and led them by a miraculous road, and was with them as a cover by day, and as the stars' light by night. She took them across the Red Sea, and led them through overwhelming water. Yet she drowned their enemies in the sea, and led them out to the depth of the dead. Therefore, the righteous took the lawless ones' plunder. And they sang Your holy name, Lord, and praised Your victorious hand together – for wisdom opened the mute ones' mouth, and made the infants' tongues speak well.

Wisdom 11.

She guided their works by the hands of holy prophets. They made the journey through deserts that were uninhabited, and fixed huts in hidden places. They stood against enemies, and vindicated

themselves from enemies. They thirsted, and they invoked You, and water was given them from the highest rock, and rest from thirst from hard stone. For through what things their enemies suffered punishments, through these same, when it was lacking to them, it came out well with them. For indeed, in place of an everlasting river, You gave human blood to the unrighteous ones, who were shattered in the public disgrace of the killers of infants.

You gave them abundant, un hoped-for water, showing through the thirst that then was how You exalted Your own, and destroyed their adversaries. For when they were tested, and indeed when receiving the discipline of mercy, they knew how the lawless suffered torments when judged with wrath.

You proved these indeed, warning like a father, yet You condemned those, questioning like a harsh king – for the absent and the present were likewise tormented. For two-fold weariness took them, and moaning, with memory of what had passed – for when they understood their torments to have done well for them, they remembered the Lord. For whom they mocked, thrown out in the exhibition of the perverse, they marveled at in the event's end, not doing likewise to the righteous ones.

But by the senseless thoughts of their iniquities, that indeed, erring, they worshiped mute snakes and vain beasts, You sent in among them a multitude of mute animals as vengeance – that they might know that by what someone sins, by that also he is tormented. For it was not impossible, Your hand which created the lands' world from envied matter being omnipotent, to send in among them a multitude of bears or fierce lions – or even unknown beasts of a new species, full of anger, or breathing a vapor of fire, or bringing out an odor of smoke, or sending out horrifying sparks from the eyes – which could not only exterminate them by wounds, yet even kill by sight through fear.

Yet even without these, they could have been killed by one breath, suffering persecution from their own acts, and scattered by Your power's breath. Yet You disposed all by measure and number and weight – for it overcomes much always to be strong to You alone, and who can resist Your arm's power?

For like a moment in a balance, so is the lands' world before You, and like a drop of dew before daybreak which falls down to the ground. Yet You have mercy on all, for You can do all, and You conceal men's sins for the sake of penance – for You delight in all that exist, and You hated nothing of those that You made, nor have You appointed anything hating.

But how can anything endure unless You will it, or what You haven't called be preserved? But You spare all because they are Yours, Lord – You who love souls.

Wisdom 12.

For Your breath is good in all. Because of that, You correct in parts those who wander away, and You speak of those things by which they sin, warning that, leaving harmfulness, they believe in You, Lord. And, hating those ancient inhabitants of Your holy land, for they did works hateful to You through remedies and unrighteous sacrifices – and were killers without mercy of sons, and eaters of human guts, devouring also blood from the midst of Your sacrament, and parents obliging helpless souls, You wanted to destroy them through our parents' hands – that worthy, they might save as the dwelling place of God's servants the land which is dearer to You than all.

Yet You even spared those men, and You sent as scouts Your army of wasps, that they might destroy them little by little – not that You were impotent to subject the lawless to the righteous by war or by wild beasts, or to destroy at once by a harsh word. Yet judging by portions, You gave place for penance – not ignorant that their nation was worthless, and their harmfulness natural, and that their thought could not be changed forever. For the seed was

cursed from the beginning, nor did You, fearing, give anyone pardon for their sins.

For who will say to You, ‘What have You done’, or who will stand against Your judgment, or who will come into Your sight as an avenger of treacherous men, or who will accuse You if the nations that You’ve made perish – for there is no other God than You, who care about all, so You may show that You have not judged unjustly. Neither king nor tyrant will inquire in Your presence about those whom You’ve destroyed.

When You, then, are just, You set all in order fairly. You esteem it outside Your power also that You condemn him who ought not be punished – for Your power is the beginning of justice, and from this – that You are Lord of all – You work to spare. For You show Your power to those who do not believe You to be complete in power, and You convert those who know boldness.

But You, ruler in power, You judge with tranquility, and You set us in order with great reverence – for it is at hand to You when You wish to act. Yet You’ve taught Your people through such works that he ought to be just and human. And You’ve made Your sons of good hope, because You give place for penance in sins. For if You’ve grieved Your slaves’ enemies and those worthy of death with such attention, and You’ve freed them, giving time and

place by which they can be changed from harmfulness, with how much more diligence have You judged Your sons, to whose parents You've given oaths and assemblies, the promise of good!

While, therefore, You give us discipline, You rebuke our enemies in many different ways, that we may consider Your goodness in judging, and when it is judged about us we may hope for mercy. From this also, You've given the highest torments to those who've lived senselessly and unjustly in their life, through these very things that they've served. For if they've wandered still further in error's way, esteeming these gods that are most empty among animals, living in the manner of senseless infants. For this reason, You've given judgment to mockery, as if to senseless boys.

Yet those who weren't corrected by rebuking's mockery are proven worthy of God's judgment. For they were bringing in annoyingly those things that they were suffering. Suffering in them, they became indignant through those things that they considered gods. When they came to an end in themselves, seeing Him whom they long denied, they knew Him to be the true God. Because of that also, condemnation's end will come to them.

Wisdom 13.

Yet all men are empty in whom is no knowledge of God, and they couldn't understand Him from those good things that are seen, nor have they known who the craftsman might be by paying attention to the works.

Yet they considered either fire, or breath, or moving air, or the circle of stars, or the great water, or sun, or moon, as gods guiding the lands' world, of whom, if they, delighted by beauty, considered them gods, they may know how much more beautiful their ruler is – for the begetter of beauty appointed all these. Or if they marveled at their power and works, let them know from these that the One who appointed these is mightier than they – for from the magnitude of the beauty and of the creation, the creator of these can be seen recognizably.

Yet nevertheless the complaint in these is still minor, for these also perhaps wander from God, seeking and wanting to find – for when they consider about His works, they seek and have persuasion that what are seen are good. Yet again, neither by these ought he be pardoned, for if they could know so much that they could reckon the age, how haven't they found the Lord of these more easily?

Yet they are unhappy, and their hope is among the dead, who have called the works of human hands

gods – gold and silver, arts of invention, likenesses of animals, or useless stone, the work of ancient hands. Or if some skilled carpenter cuts a straight tree from the forest, and by this art he cuts away all the bark, and by use of his art, he carefully fashions a useful vessel in life's activity, but the remains of his work are spent for the preparation of food – and the rest of that, which is useful for nothing, he makes curved wood and full of knots, and he sculpts it carefully in his leisure, and by his art's knowledge, he also makes it like a human image. Or he prepares it like something from animals, smearing with oil, and making its color red by dye, and smoothing over every defect that is in it. And he may make a worthy dwelling for it, setting it on a wall, strengthening it by iron – looking out for it unless perhaps it fall, knowing that it cannot help itself, for it is an image and it needs a helper.

And making a vow, he inquires about his substance, and about his children, and about his marriage. He is not ashamed to speak with that which is without a soul. And indeed he pleads with the weak for health, and he asks the dead for life, and he invokes the useless for help. And he asks for a journey from this that cannot walk, and he asks that which is useless in all about acquiring, and about working, and about the course of all things.

Wisdom 14.

Again another, thinking to sail and beginning to make a journey through wild waves, invokes wood more fragile than the wood carrying him – for by lust he contrived to obtain it, and the craftsman made it by his wisdom. Yet Your providence governs, Father, for You've given a way even in the sea, and a most firm path among the waves, showing that You can save out of all circumstances, even if someone approaches without a boat,

Yet that Your wisdom's works not be empty, for this reason men even trust their souls to meager wood and, crossing the sea by a boat, they are freed. Yet from the beginning, when proud giants perished, the hope of the lands' world sent forward nature's seed to the age, fleeing to a boat which was guided by Your hand – for blessed is the wood by which justice is done. Yet that which is made by hand is cursed, both it and the one who made it, because he indeed made it – yet it, though it was fragile, was called “God.”

But the lawless and his lawlessness are likewise hateful to God, for what was made will suffer torment with him who made it. For this reason also, there will be no respect to the nations' idols, because God's creatures are made into hatred, and into a temptation for human souls, and into a mousetrap for the feet of the foolish – for fornication's beginning is the inquiry about idols,

and their invention is the corruption of life. They neither were from the beginning, nor will they be to eternity – for it came into the lands' world by human vanity, and therefore their end is found quickly.

For a father, suffering bitter grief, making himself an image of the son taken quickly from him, him who then was a dead man, now began to worship it like a god, and appointed consecrations and sacrifices among his slaves. From there, time passing and wicked custom strengthened, this error was kept like a law, and they worshiped figments at the command of tyrants. Those whom men could not honor in the open because they were far away, bringing their figures from far away – the evident image of a king whom they wished to honor – they made it that by their care they could serve him who was far away as if present. But the craftsman's diligent workmanship carried even those who did not know to the worship of these – for he, wanting to please him who had taken him up, elaborated by his art so he could model the likeness in the best way.

Yet the multitude, taken in by the work's beauty, now esteemed him a god who before the time had been honored like a man. And this was the deception of human life, for men, serving either affection or kings, placed the unutterable name on stones and wood. And it was not enough for them

to err concerning knowledge of God, yet living in a great war of ignorance, they call such and so great harms peace – for either sacrificing their sons, or making hidden sacrifices, or having vigils full of madness, already they keep neither life nor marriage pure, yet one kills another through envy, or grieves him, committing adultery. And all are mixed together: blood, murder, theft, and lying; corruption, unfaithfulness, disturbance, and perjury; the troubling of the good; forgetfulness of the Lord, the pollution of souls, the changing of nature, the inconstancy of adultery and sexual impurity in marriages – for the worship of unspeakable idols is the cause, both the beginning and the end of all harm.

For either they are mad while they rejoice, or they prophesy lies, or they live unjustly, or they quickly swear falsely – for while they trust in idols that are without soul, swearing harmfully, they do not expect to harm themselves. Therefore, for both of these they will come worthily to judgment, for they've sensed wrongly about God, attending to idols, and they've sworn unrighteously in deceit, condemning justice. For it is not the power of those by which they swear – yet the punishment of sinners always walks among the transgressions of the unrighteous.

Wisdom 15.

Yet You, our God, are pleasant and true, patient and setting in order mercy to all. For even if we've sinned, we are Yours, knowing Your greatness, and if we haven't sinned, we know that we are counted up with You. For to know You is the consummation of righteousness, and to know Your righteousness and virtue is the root of immortality.

For the conniving of men of harmful art hasn't led us into error, nor has a picture's shadow, a labor without fruit, a sculpted effigy of various colors, whose appearance gives lust to the senseless, and he delights in a dead image, an effigy without a soul – lovers of the harmful, worthy of them, who have hope in such things, and who make, and who love, and who serve them.

Yet a potter, pressing soft dirt laboriously, forms each vessel to our use, and he forms from the same clay vessels that are clean in use, and likewise those that are contrary. But the potter is judge of what the use of these vessels may be. And he forms with labor from the same clay a vain god, he who a little while before was made from earth, and after a bit is himself led back where he was taken from, returning the soul that he had on loan.

Yet his concern is not that he will labor, nor that life is brief to him, yet he competes with goldsmiths and silversmiths and even imitates bronze-smiths – and

he prefers fame because he has formed a vain thing. His heart is ashes, and his hope empty dirt, and his life viler than clay, because he hasn't known who formed him, and who breathed into him a soul which works, and who blew a living breath into him.

Yet they've esteemed our life to be a game, and life's conversation put together for gain, and that it is necessary to acquire from everywhere, even from harm – for he himself knows better than all to fall short, who forms fragile vessels and figures from material dirt. For all Your people's enemies are fools and unhappy beyond measure, proud souls and commanding them, because they've esteemed all the nations' idols as gods, in which he has seen neither eyes to seeing, nor noses to perceiving a breath, nor ears to hearing, nor a hand's fingers for touching – yet even their feet are lazy to walking. For a man made them, and he whose breath is borrowed formed them – for no man like himself can form a god. For while he is mortal, he forms a dead thing by treacherous hands. For he himself is better than those that he worships, because he indeed has lived, while he may be mortal – but these, never.

Yet they serve even the most wretched animals, for these senseless things, compared to others, are worse. Yet not even by appearance can anyone catch sight of good from these animals, yet he flees

God's praise and His blessing.

Wisdom 16.

For this reason, they suffered torments worthily through these same things, and were exterminated through a multitude of beasts. In place of these torments, You ordered Your people well, to whom You gave their delighted desires, a new taste of meat, preparing quail for them, that these indeed, desiring meat, might turn away because of those things that were shown and sent to them even from necessary desires. Yet these, made needy for a short time, tasted new food. For it was necessary indeed for them for destruction to come without excuse over those exercising tyranny, yet to these only to show how their enemies were exterminated. For when the fierce anger of beasts came over them, they were exterminated by the perverse bites of cobras.

Your anger did not remain forever, yet they were troubled in brief to correction, having the sign of security, to the remembrance of Your law's commandment – for one who turned was healed not through this that was seen, yet through You, the securer of all. And in this You showed Your enemies that You are who frees from every harm. For the bites of locusts and flies killed them, and their soul's healing was not found, because they were worthy to be exterminated by such.

Yet not even the teeth of poisonous dragons overcame Your sons, for Your coming mercy healed them. For in the memory of Your words, they were examined and healed, unless, falling into high oblivion, they could not use Your help. For neither herb nor salve healed them, yet Your word, Lord, who heals all. For You have the power of life and death, and You lead out to death's gates, and bring back.

But man indeed kills his soul through malice, and when the breath goes out it does not return, nor will he call back the soul that he received. Yet it is impossible to flee Your hand, for the lawless, denying to know You, were beaten through Your arm's might by new waters, and hail stones, and rains, suffering persecution and consumed through fire – for that was miraculous: in water that extinguishes all, the fire grew stronger, for the world is the vindicator of the righteous.

For a certain time fire was tamed, that the animals that were sent against the lawless not be burned, that they, seeing, might know they suffer persecution by God's judgment. And for a certain time fire burned beyond power in water, that the treacherous of the earth's nations might be exterminated. In place of which You nourished Your people by the angels' food, and You furnished them bread prepared from the sky without labor,

having in itself every delight and the smoothness of every taste. For Your substance showed Your sweetness, that You have in the sons. And serving each one's will, it was turned into what one wanted.

Yet snow and ice endured the fire's force and did not melt, that they might know that fire burning in hail and flashing in rain exterminated the enemies' fruit. Yet this again forgot its own power, that the righteous might be nourished. For the creature, serving You the creator, bursts into flame in torment against the unrighteous, and becomes gentle to doing well for those who trust in You.

For this reason, transformed even then into all, they served by Your grace as nurse of all, to the will of those who were desired by You, that Your sons whom You loved, Lord, might know that the cultivation of crops does not feed men, yet Your word preserves those who believe in You. For that which could not be exterminated by fire withered at once from the passing ray of the sun's heat, that it might be known to all that it is necessary to come to Your blessing before the sun, and to worship You at the light's rising. For the ungrateful's faith will melt like winter's ice, and disappear like empty water.

Wisdom 17.

For Your judgments are great, and Your words untellable. For this reason, undisciplined souls have

erred – for while the treacherous have a persuasion to be able to dominate the holy nation, they lay shackled by shadowy chains, shut in under roof for a long night, perpetual fugitives of providence. And while they thought to hide themselves in faintly-seen sins, they were scattered under the shadowy veil of oblivion, fearing horribly and troubled with overwhelming astonishment – for the cave that contained them didn't keep them without fear, because the sound coming down troubled them, and sad persons appearing furnished them with fear. And indeed no power of fire could furnish them light, nor could the flames of purest stars illumine that night.

But sudden fire, full of fear, appeared to them, and they, struck by fear of that face which was not seen, esteemed what they saw to be worse. And the derision and the rebuke of glorious wisdom were laid down with reproaches, for those who promised to expel fears of disturbances from a sick soul, they themselves languished with derision, full of fear. For even though nothing of monsters was troubling them, they perished, trembling at the passing of animals and the hissing of serpents, and denying to see the air, which one by no reason can avoid. For while worthlessness may be fearful, it gives testimony by condemnation, for a troubled conscience always anticipates fierce happenings – for fear is nothing except the betrayal of presumed helps in the thoughts of helpers. And while from

within the expectation is smaller, he considers knowledge of its cause greater than what gives torment.

But they who, while sleeping truly in powerless night, the same dream coming over them from the depths and the heights of the inferno, at times were troubled by fear of monsters. Sometimes souls faltered by disgrace, for sudden and unexpected fear came over them. Thereafter, if someone from among them had fallen, he was kept closed up in a prison without iron.

For if one who was a farmer or a shepherd or a field worker was taken, he endured an inescapable necessity, for all were bound together by one chain of shadows. Whether a hissing wind, or the sweet sound of birds among thick branches, or the power of water running down overwhelmingly, or the mighty sound of rocks falling headlong, or the unseen course of animals playing, or the voice of mighty beasts bellowing, or a resounding echo from highest mountains – it made them falter for fear. For all the lands' world was illumined by pure light, and it was not contained by hindered works. Yet heavy night was laid over them alone, the image of shadows that was coming over them. Therefore, they were heavier to themselves than the shadows.

Wisdom 18.

Yet light was the greatest to Your saints, and they heard indeed the voice of these, yet they saw no figure. And because they did not suffer through the same trials, they magnified You. And those who had been wounded before gave thanks because they were not wounded, and they asked that there might be a differentiation. Because of that, they had a column of burning fire leading in an unknown path, and You furnished an unoffending sun of good lodging.

Those indeed were worthy to lack light and to suffer a prison of shadows, who kept Your sons shut in – through whom an incorruptible law, the age's light, began to be given. When they plotted to kill the infants of the righteous, and one son had been exposed and freed, You took away a multitude of sons in their betrayal, and You destroyed them together in a mighty water. That night was recognized before by our parents that, knowing truly which oaths they believed, they were of confident minds.

But the righteous ones' well-being was received indeed by Your people, yet destruction by the unrighteous – for as You wounded the adversaries, so, provoking, You magnified us. For the righteous servants of the good were sacrificing secretly, and they ordered together a law of justice in harmony,

the righteous to receive good and harm, singing praises already to the fathers.

But the enemies' voice, dissimilar, resounded, and weeping was heard, the grief of those wailing for infants. Yet the slave was afflicted by a similar punishment with the master, and the common man suffered the same as the king. Therefore, all likewise had innumerable dead by one name of death, and neither did the living suffice to burying, for at one moment what was of nobler birth among them was destroyed.

For of all those not believing because of sorceries, then, when the destruction of the firstborn happened, they pledged themselves to be God's people. For while the quiet of silence contained all, and night had the middle in her journey's course, Your omnipotent word leapt forward from the sky to the royal thrones, a harsh conqueror in the midst of destruction's land, a sharpened sword carrying Your unpretending command. And standing, it filled all by death, and it touched even to the sky, standing on the earth.

Moreover, at once the visions of the evil ones' dreams troubled them, and unexpected fears came over them. And another thrown elsewhere, half-alive, showed the cause of which he died. For these visions which troubled them forewarned them, that

they might not perish not knowing why they suffered harms.

But death's testing then touched the righteous also, and a commotion happened in the desert among the multitude, yet wrath did not endure a long time. For a man without offense, hurrying, fought forth, putting forward the shield of prayer as his service. And laying forth supplication as incense, he stood firm against wrath, and imposed an end of necessity, showing that he is Your servant.

But he conquered the troubles not by the body's strength, nor by powerful arms, yet he subjected the complainers by the word of the parents' oaths, and remembering the testament. For when the dead had already fallen in heaps upon one another, he stood between, and cut off the force, and divided that way which led to the living. For all the lands' world was in the long robe which he had, and the parents' greatness was sculpted in the four rows of stones, and Your magnificence was on his head's crown. But by these the one who was destroying gave way, and he feared these, for wrath's testing alone was sufficient.

Wisdom 19.

But wrath without mercy overcame the lawless even to the end, for He foreknew their future also. For they, when they had turned back so they could be

led out, pursued those they had sent out before with great concern, repenting of the act. For still having grief among the hands, and weeping at the dead ones' tombs, they took up to themselves another unknowing thought. And those they threw out, begging, these they pursued like fugitives. For worthy necessity led them to this end, and they lost the memory of those things that had happened, so they might fill up the punishment, that torment which was lacking, and Your people indeed might cross over miraculously – yet they found a new death.

For every creature was refashioned to its form from the beginning, serving Your commandments, that Your servants might be kept unharmed. For a cloud overshadowed their camps, and dry ground appeared from what before was water, and from the Red Sea a way without impediment, and from overwhelming depth a sprouting field, by which all the nation passed through, which was covered by Your hand – seeing the demonstrated wonders. For they fed like horses, and they exulted like lambs, magnifying You, Lord, who freed them. For they still remembered those wonders that had been done in their time as aliens – how the ground brought out flies in place of the nation's animals, and the river violently discharged a multitude of frogs in place of fish.

But at the end, they saw a new creature of birds, when, abducted by lusts, they asked meat for feasting. For quail came up to them from the sea in the desire's satisfaction, and shocks overcame sinners, not without those proofs that had happened before through force of rivers – for they suffered rightly, according to their worthlessness. For they set up a more detestable inhospitality. Others indeed didn't receive unknown newcomers, but others took good guests into slavery. And not only this, yet another also will be their regard, because the unwilling received foreigners.

Yet those who received them with joy afflicted them with the fiercest sufferings, who were using the same justice. Yet they were struck by blindness like those at the righteous one's gates, when they were covered suddenly by darkness, and each one sought the crossing of his own door.

For while the elements are changed in themselves, as in a pipe the sound's quality is changed, and all keep their own sound, from which it is also to estimate of itself by a certain sight. For the countryside was converted into waters, and whatever was swimming passed onto land. Fire grew strong in water beyond its power, and water forgot its extinguishing nature.

Flames, on the contrary, did not trouble the flesh of corruptible animals walking together, nor did they

dissolve that good food which is easily dissolved like ice – for in all things, Lord, You magnified Your people, and You honored them, and did not despise them, and You are standing by them at every season and in every place.