WISDOM OF SOLOMON

CHAPTER 1

1 Love righteousness, all of you who judge the land;
set your mind on the Lord in goodness,
and seek him in sincerity of heart;
2 because he is found by those who do not try him,
but he manifests himself to those who do not distrust him.
3 For perverse counsels separate *a man* from God;
but when *God's* power is put to the proof, it rebukes the senseless *men*;
4 because wisdom does not enter into a soul which plots evil,
nor does she dwell in a body under a debt of a sin.
5 For a holy spirit of discipline flees deceit
and withdraws from senseless reasonings;
and when unrighteousness approaches, it is convicted.[1]
6 For wisdom is a humane spirit,
and she does not acquit a reviler of his guilty lips;
because God is a testifier of his inmost self[2]
and the sure overseer of his heart
and the listener of his tongue.
7 Because a spirit of *the* Lord fills the inhabited *earth*,
and the one who embraces everything, possesses knowledge of *every* voice.
8 No one who utters unrighteous-things can go unnoticed,
nor will the rightful-punishment, when it convicts, pass him by.
9 For *the* counsels of an impious *man* shall be scrutinized,
but the sound of his words shall reach *the* Lord,
to convict him of his lawless-deeds;
10 because a jealous ear[3] listens to everything,
and discordant grumblings are not kept hidden.
11 For this very reason, guard against profitless grumbling,
and withhold your tongues from calumny;
because a stealthy vocalization does not go unpunished,
but a mouth which speaks falsehood does away with a soul.
12 Do not zealously-pursue death by *having* an erring *way of* life,
nor draw to yourselves destruction by *the* works of *your* hands.
13 Because God did not make death,
nor does he rejoice in *the* perdition of *the* living.
14 For he fashioned all *thing*s that they might have being;
and the births of the world *are* wholesome,
and there is not a destructive drug among them
nor does *the* Netherworld have any domain on earth.
For righteousness is immortal.
But the gain of unrighteousness is death.[4]

CHAPTER 2

1.15 But it was impious *men* who, with their hands and their words, summoned *death*,
and considering it a friend, were consumed by it;
and they made a covenant with it,
because they deserve to be *part of* his portion.

2.1 For not thinking correctly, they said among themselves:

"Brief and troublous is our lifetime;
and there is no remedy for a human's end,
and no one is known to have been released from *the* Netherworld.
2 Because we were born by mere chance,
and in *the* future we shall be as though we had never been;
because the breath in our nostrils is smoke
and our rationalization is a spark *kindled* at the beating of *our* heart.
3 When *this heart* is quenched, the body will be ashes
and the spirit will be dissolved like unresisting air.
4 Even our name will be forgotten in time,
and no one will recall our deeds.
So our lifetime will pass away like *the* traces of a cloud,
and will be dispersed like a mist
pursued by *the* sun's rays
and overpowered by its heat.
5 For our season[5] is the passing of a shadow;
and there is no return *after* our end
because it is fixed with a seal; and no one returns.
6 Therefore, come, let us enjoy the good-things that are real,
and use the freshness of creation avidly.[6]
7 Let us have our fill of very-expensive wine and perfumes,
and let no spring*time* blossom[7] pass us by;
8 let us wreathe ourselves with rosebuds before they wither.
9 Let none of us be *left* without a share in our wantonness;[8]
everywhere let us leave tokens of our gladness,
because this is our portion, and this our lot.
10 Let us oppress the righteous poor man;
let us neither spare the widow nor respect the elderly-man
for his hair *has* grown gray with time.
11 But let our strength be our law of righteousness;
for what is weak proves itself to be useless.
12 Let us beset[9] the righteous-one, because he is obnoxious to us;
and he sets himself against our doings,
and reproaches us for sinful-actions against *the* law,
and charges us with sinful-actions against our discipline.
13 He professes to have knowledge of God
and styles himself a boy of *the* Lord.
14 To us he is a censure of our thoughts;
merely to look at him is a hardship for us,
15 because his lifestyle is not like other *men's*,
and his ways are different.
16 He judges us counterfeit;
and he holds aloof from our paths as from an uncleanness.
He considered the destiny of righteous *men* to be happy
and boasts that God is his Father.
17 Let us see whether his accounts are true;
and let us test what will happen to him.
18 For if the righteous-one is the Son of God,
he will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his opponents.
19 Let us examine him with wanton-violence and torture,
in order that we might know his gentleness and may prove his patience.
20 Let us sentence him to a shameful death;
for according to his own accounts, he will be overseen *by God*."

21 These were their thoughts, and they erred;
for their malice blinded them,
22 and they did not know *the* hidden counsels of God;
neither did they believe that there was a recompense of sacredness
nor discern the reward for blameless souls.
23 Because God formed the human to be imperishable;
and made him in the image of his own eternity.[10]
24 But by *the* envy of a slanderer, death entered the world,
but those who are in his possession experience it.

CHAPTER 3

1 But the souls of righteous *men* are in the hand of God,
and no torture shall touch them.
2 In the eyes of senseless *men*, they seemed to have died;
and their departure *from this life* was thought *to be* an affliction
3 and their going forth from us to be their utter destruction.
But they are in peace.
4 For even if they are punished in the sight of humans
their hope is still full of immortality.
5 So disciplined a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them and found them worthy of himself.
6 Like gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and like a sacrificial holocaust, he accepted them with himself.
7 And in *the* season of their visitation they shall shine,
and shall dart about as sparks through stubble;
8 they shall judge nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord shall be their King throughout the ages.
9 Those who trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love:
because favor and mercy are with his holy ones,
and his mercy is with his elect-ones.[11]
10 But the impious-ones shall receive a punishment to match their thoughts,

[1] may also be translated "reproved/rebuked"
[2] literally "of his kidneys"
[3] literally "an ear of jealousy"
[4] [1:14] some Lat / Gk, most Lat omit "But the gain…death." (but the text requires something of this nature)
[5] [2:5] LXX(SA), Latin / LXX(B*) "life"
[6] may also be translated "let us use the creation avidly as in youth"
[7] [2:7] LXX(A), Lat, others / other LXX "blossom of air"
[8] [2:9] most Lat also add a similar verse here "Let no meadow be free from our wantonness"
[9] [2:12] Barnabas "bind" / Hegesippus "take away"
[10] [2:23] LXX(248, 253), most fathers / LXX(SAB) "nature"
[11] [3:9] LXX(S) / LXX(A), Syr "and his mercy is with his sacred-ones" / LXX(B), Lat omit altogether

since they neglected righteousness and forsook the Lord.
11 For he who despises wisdom and discipline is disdained.
Vain is their hope, and fruitless are their labors,
and worthless are their works.
12 Their women are senseless, and their children wicked;
even more accursed is their birth.
13 Because happy is *the woman* who, barren *and* undefiled,
did not know a trespass of the marriage-bed;
she shall bear fruit at *the* visitation of souls.
14 And *blessed is* the eunuch whose hand wrought no lawless-deed,
who held no wicked thoughts against the Lord—
for he shall be given faithfulness' choice reward
and a more gratifying heritage in the Lord's inner-sanctum.
15 For the fruit of noble struggles is a glorious one;
and unfailing is the root of sensibleness.
16 But children of adulterers will remain without issue,
and the seed of an unlawful bed will be eliminated.
17 For should they be long-lived, they will be held in no esteem,
and their old age will be dishonored at last;
18 if they may come-to-their-end abruptly, they will have no hope,
nor comfort in a day of scrutiny;
19 for dire is the end of an unrighteous generation.

CHAPTER 4
1 Better is childlessness with excellence;
for immortal is its memory:[1]
because it is acknowledged both by God and by humans.
2 When it is present, *men* imitate[2] it,
and they yearn for it when it is gone;
and throughout the age it marches crowned in triumph,
victorious in a contest for unsullied prizes.

3 But a prolific multitude of impious *men* shall be of no avail;
and none of their illegitimate offshoots will strike deep root
nor take a firm hold.
4 For even though their branches flourish for a season,
they are unsteady *and* shall be rocked by *the* wind
and, by the violence of *the* winds, uprooted;
5 their twigs shall be broken off untimely,
and their fruit shall be useless, unripe for eating,
and fit for nothing.
6 For children born of lawless unions,
when they are examined,[3] are testifiers of *the* wickedness of their parents.

7 But a righteous *man*, though he came-to-his-end early,
will be in rest.
8 For the age which is honorable comes not with the passing of time,
nor can it be measured in terms of years.
9 But sensibleness is the gray hair for humans,
and an unsullied lifestyle, the attainment of old age.

10 He who pleased God was loved;
and he who lived among sinners was taken up—
11 snatched away, lest malice pervert his mind
or deceit delude his soul;
12 for the fascination of malice obscures what is beautiful,
and the whirl of yearning transforms the innocent mind.
13 Having become perfect in a short while,
he reached the fullness of his long career;
14 for his soul was pleasing to the Lord,
therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness.
15 But the peoples[4] saw and did not understand,
nor did they take this into account,
that favor and mercy are with his elect *ones*,
and *that* he cares for his sacred *ones*.
16 Now a righteous *man* who has died condemns impious *men* who are alive,
and youth being swiftly finished *condemns the* many years of an unrighteous *man* grown old.
17 For they see a wise *man*'s end
and do not understand what the Lord purposed for him,
or why he made him secure.

[1] [4:1] Latin "Oh, how fair is the chaste generation in its glory!"
[2] [4:1] others "honor"
[3] literally "at their examination"
[4] [4:15] LXX(SB), Lat / LXX(A) "others"

18 They see, and hold him in contempt;
but the Lord laughs them to scorn.
19 And afterward they shall become dishonored carcasses,
and an outrage among the corpses throughout the age.
Because he shall strike them down speechless,
and prostrate and rock them to their foundations;
and they shall be utterly laid waste
and shall be in grief
and their memory shall perish.
20 When their sinful-actions are counted up, they shall come with terror,
and their lawless-deeds shall convict them to their face.

CHAPTER 5
1 Then the righteous-one, with great outspokeness,
shall stand before the face of those who put him under tribulation,
and *those* who make light of his labors.
2 Seeing this, they shall be troubled with a terrible fear,
and they shall be amazed at his unexpected salvation.
3 They will say among themselves, while changing *their* mind,
and they will groan through a constrained spirit:[5]

"This is *the man* whom once we held as a laughingstock
and as an illustration of mockery; **4** we were the senseless *ones*!
We accounted his lifestyle as madness,
and his end dishonored.
5 See how he is numbered among *the* sons of God;
and how his lot is with *the* holy ones!
6 Yes, we have strayed from *the* way of truth,
and the light of righteousness did not shine upon us,
and the sun did not arise for us.
7 We had our fill of the paths of lawlessness and *of* perdition;
and we journeyed through impassable deserts,
but the way of *the* Lord we did not know.
8 What did our arrogance profit us?
And what has wealth along with its false-pretension afforded us?
9 All of them passed like a shadow
and like a message which escapes unnoticed;
10 like a ship traversing the surging water,
of which, when it has passed, no trace can be found,
nor a pathway of its keel in *the* surges.
11 Or like a bird flying through *the* air;
no evidence of its course is to be found—
but *the* fluid current,[6] lashed by its beating pinions,
and cleft by the whizzing force
of speeding wings, is traversed:
and afterward no sign of its advance can be found in it.
12 Or as, when a missile has been shot at a target,
the parted air flows together again at once,
so that no one perceives the passage which it took—
13 and even so, we, once born, abruptly came to nothing
and, indeed, held no sign of manliness to display,
but were entirely-consumed in our evil."
Such things were said in the Netherworld by those who have sinned.[7]

14 Yes,[8] *the* hope of impious *men* is like thistledown[9] borne on a wind,
and like a fine, tempest-driven hoarfrost;[10]
and like a smoke dispersed by a wind,
and like *the* passing memory of a nomad camping for a single day.
15 But righteous *men* live *even* into the age,
and their recompense is in *the* Lord,
and the concern for them is with *the* Most High.
16 So then, they shall receive the splendid kingdom,[11]
and the beautiful diadem,[12] from *the* hand of *the* Lord—
because he shall shelter them with his right hand,
and shield them with his arm.
17 He shall take his zeal for his full suit of armor,
and he shall turn the creation into weapons to ward off *his* enemies;
18 He shall don righteousness for a breastplate
and shall wear impartial judgment for a helmet;

[5] literally "a constraint of a spirit"
[6] literally "spirit"
[7] [5:13] Lat adds
[8] literally "Because"
[9] [5:14] others, Latin "dust"
[10] [5:14] LXX(SAB) / LXX(23, 106) "spider's web" / some LXX, Syr, Lat "foam"
[11] literally "the kingdom of the splendor"
[12] literally "the diadem of the beauty"

19 He shall take invincible sacredness for a round-shield,
20 but sharpen *his* severe anger for a long-sword,
but the world shall join him to fight against the deranged.
21 Well-aimed projectiles of lightnings shall go forth,
and *they* shall leap from the masses-of-clouds to a target as from a well-drawn bow;
22 and hailstones full of wrath shall be hurled as from a rock-thrower.
The water of *the* sea shall be indignant against them,
but the streams shall relentlessly overflow.
23 A powerful spirit shall confront them
and *like* a tempest *it* shall winnow them out.
And lawlessness shall lay the whole earth waste,
and the evildoing shall overturn thrones of masters.

CHAPTER 6
1 Therefore, listen, *O* kings, and understand;
learn, you judges of *the* ends of *the* earth!
2 Give ear, you who rule over a multitude
and exult over crowds of nations!
3 Because the dominion was given to you by *the* Lord
and the sovereignty by *the* Most High,
who shall probe your works and scrutinize your counsels!
4 Because, though you were servants of his kingdom,
you did not discern rightly, nor keep *the* law,
nor walk according to the council of God.
5 Horribly and swiftly shall he come against you,
because severe condemnation befalls those who are above *others*.
6 For the lowly *man* may be pardoned out of mercy
but a powerful *man* shall be powerfully put to the test.
7 For the Master of all takes no regard of any *man's* countenance,
nor does he respect greatness,
because he himself made the great as well as the small;
he also foresees everyone alike;
8 but rigorous scrutiny is impending for those in power.
9 Therefore, O tyrants, my discourses are addressed to you,
so that you may learn wisdom and not fall-away.
10 For those who keep the sacred precepts sacred shall be found sacred,
and those taught in them will have found a defense.
11 Therefore, desire my discourses;
long for them and you will be disciplined.
12 Wisdom is radiant and unwithering,
and she is easily perceived by those who love her,
and found by those who seek her.[1]
13 She hastens to make herself known in anticipation of *men's* desire;
14 he who watches for her at dawn shall not grow weary,
for he shall find her sitting by his gates.
15 For taking thought of her is *the* completion of sensibleness,
and he who, after he lay awake for her sake, will quickly be free from care;
16 because she makes her own rounds, seeking those worthy of her,
and she graciously appears to them in their paths,
and meets them in every thought.
17 For *the* beginning of *wisdom* is a very true desire for discipline;
but concern for discipline is love;
18 but love means *the* keeping of her laws;
but to observe her laws is a confirmation of incorruptibility;
19 but incorruptibility makes one close to God;
20 in this way, the desire for wisdom leads up to a kingdom.
21 Therefore, you tyrants *over the* peoples, if you find pleasure in throne and scepter,
honor wisdom, so that you may reign into the age.

22 Now I shall bring a message to you *about* what wisdom is, and how she came to be;
and I shall hide no mysteries from you,
instead, I shall search her out from *the* beginning of *her* birth,
and bring the knowledge of her to light,
and I shall not pass by the truth.
23 Nor shall I travel in the company of consuming envy,
because *envy* has no communion with wisdom.
24 Now a multitude of wise *men* is *the* salvation of *the* world,
and a sensible king, *the* stability of *the* populace;
25 so be disciplined by my words, and *you* will profit.

[1] [6:12] LXX(SB[a]A), Lat / LXX(B*) omits "and found by those who seek her"

CHAPTER 7
1 I, indeed, am a mortal human, *the* same as all *the* rest,
and a descendant of the first-formed *man* born on earth.
And in my mother's stomach I was molded into flesh—
2 in a period of ten months, compacted with blood,
from the seed of a man and the pleasure which accompanies marriage.[2]
3 But I, also, when born, inhaled the common air,
and fell upon the kindred earth;
wailing, I uttered that first sound shared by all.
4 I was nurtured in swaddling-clothes,
and with *constant* concerns.
5 For no king has any different beginning of birth,
6 but as there is one entrance into a lifetime for every*one*,
there is also one *common* departure.
7 For this reason, I prayed, and sensibleness was given to me;
I pleaded and a spirit of wisdom came to me.
8 I preferred her to scepter and throne,
and considered riches to be nothing in comparison with her,
9 nor did I liken her to any priceless stone;
because all the gold, in view of her, is but a little sand,
and before her, silver is to be accounted as mire.
10 Beyond health and a lovely-form I loved her,
and I chose to have her rather than light,
because her splendor never sleeps.
11 Now everything that is good came to me together in her *company*,
and countless riches at her hands;
12 but I rejoiced in them all, because wisdom leads them,
but I did not know that she was their mother.[3]
13 I also learned about her without guile, I also share ungrudgingly—
her riches I do not hide away;
14 for she is an unfailing treasure to humans;
those who gain *this treasure* win a friendship with God,
commended *to him* for *the* gifts which they have received from discipline.
15 Now may God grant that I speak with knowledge,
and to worthily reflect on what has been given to *me*,[4]
because he is a guide even of this wisdom
and the reformer of the wise.
16 For both we and our accounts are in his hand,
as well as all sensibleness and experience of crafts.
17 For he gave me falseless knowledge of existing-things,
that I might know *the* constitution of *the* world and *the* operation of its elements,
18 *the* beginning and *the* end and *the* midpoint of times,
changes of *the sun's* course, and variations of seasons.
19 cycles of years, and positions of stars,
20 natures of animals,[5] and furies of beasts,
forces of spirits,[6] and rationalizations of humans,
diversities of plants and powers of roots—
21 I learned both what is hidden and what is plain;
for wisdom, the artisan of all, taught me.
22 For in her is a spirit[7] which is intellectual, holy, unique,
manifold, subtle, easily-mobile, clear, undefiled, certain,
unharmable, loving-*the*-good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, humane,
23 firm, immoveable, carefree, all-powerful, all-overseeing,
and pervading all spirits,
though they be intellectual, clean *and* subtle.
24 For wisdom is mobile beyond all motion,
but she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her cleanness.
25 For she is a vapor of the power of God
and a pristine effusion of the glory of the Almighty;
for this reason, nothing which is stained gains entrance into her.
26 For she is a refulgence of everlasting light,
and a clear mirror of the energy of God,
and an image of his goodness.
27 But she, who is one, can do all things,
and renews everything while herself perduring;
and passing into sacred souls from generation to generation,
she furnishes friends of God and prophets.

[2] literally "sleep" (but is metaphorical referring to the pleasure of sexual intercourse, an implication which is lost in a literal translation)
[3] [7:12] LXX(SB) "origin"
[4] [7:15] LXX(B, 248) / Lat, Copt, Eth "what is being given to *me*" / LXX(SA), Syr, others "what *I* say"
[5] more literally "living-creatures"
[6] [7:20] Greek / Latin interprets "forces of winds" (though it may be referring to entities such as demons – see Josephus)
[7] [7:22] SB, Lat / A "For she is a spirit"

28 For there is nothing God loves so much,
as the one who dwells with this wisdom.
29 For she is more attractive than *the* sun
and surpasses every position of *the* stars.
Compared to light, she takes precedence;
30 For, indeed, night supplants *the light*,
but evil does not prevail over wisdom.

CHAPTER 8

1 Now she reaches mightily from end to end
and administers all things well.
2 I loved her and sought after her from my youth;
and I sought to take her for my bride,
and was a passionate-desirer of her beauty.
3 To her nobility-of-birth, she adds *the* glory of a companionship with God;
even the Master of all loves her.
4 For she is an initiate in the experience of God,
and a selector of his works.
5 Now if riches are a desirable possession in *one's* lifetime,
what is richer than wisdom, who produces all things?
6 Now if sensibleness is productive,
who among what exists is a better craftsman than she?
7 And if *a man* loves righteousness,
the fruits of her labors are excellences;
for she teaches sound-mindedness and sensibleness, righteousness and manliness,
nor is there anything in *one's* lifetime more useful for humans than these *things*.
8 But also, if one yearns for much-experience,
she knows things from the beginning, and infers those yet to come.
She is versed in *the* turnings of discourses and *the* solutions of riddles;
she has foreknowledge of signs and portents,
and of the outcome of seasons and times.
9 Moreover, I determined to take her to live with me,
knowing that she would be my counselor while all was good,[1]
and my advice in concerns and *in* grief.
10 For her sake I should have glory among crowds,
and honor from elders, though I am but a youth.
11 I should become keen in judgment,
and should be marveled at in *the* sight of powerful *men*.
12 They would abide my silence and attend my utterance;
and as I uttered *words* at greater length,
they would place their hands upon their mouths.
13 For her sake I should have immortality
and leave a perpetual memory to those who come after me.
14 I should administer peoples, and nations would be subject to me—
15 horrible tyrants, hearing of me, would fear me;
in the multitude I should appear good, and in war manly.
16 Within my house, I should sleep beside her;
for this companionship with her involves no bitterness,
nor does living with her *involve* any pain, *but* instead gladness and joy.
17 When I took account of these things within myself,
and reflected them in my heart,
that there is immortality in kinship with wisdom,
18 and good pleasure in her friendship,
and unfailing riches in *the* toils of her hands,
and that there is sensibleness in *the* frequenting of her company,
and good-renown in communing with her accounts,
I went about seeking how to take her for my own.
19 Now, I was a well-favored boy, *and* was also allotted a good soul;
20 but rather, being good, I attained an unstained body.
21 But knowing that I could not otherwise possess her[2] unless God gave her—
now this, too, was sensibleness, to know whose favor she was—
I appealed to the Lord and beseeched him,
and said with my whole heart:

CHAPTER 9

1 God of my fathers, Lord of the mercy,
you who have made all *things* by your rationalization,
2 and in your wisdom have furnished a human
to be master over the creatures made by you,
3 and to manage the world in sacredness and righteousness,
and to render judgment in integrity of soul:
4 give me wisdom, the one sitting beside your throne,
and do not reject me from among your boys;
5 because I am your slave, a son of your servant-girl,
a human weak and short-lived
and lacking in intelligence of judgment and of laws.
6 For even if one is perfect among *the* sons of humans,
yet without wisdom, who comes from you,
he shall be accounted as nothing.
7 You have chosen me to be a king over your people
and a judge for your sons and daughters.
8 You say *that I should* build an inner-sanctum on your holy mountain
and a sacrificial-altar in *the* city that is your nest,
a copy of the holy dwelling-place which you established from *the* beginning.
9 And with you is wisdom, who knows your works
and was present when you were making the world;
and who understands what is pleasing in your eyes
and what is conformable with your instructions.
10 Send her forth from your holy heavens
and dispatch her from your throne of glory,
that she may be with me, working with me,
and that I may know what is pleasing to you.
11 For she knows and understands all things,
and will guide me with a sound-mind in my affairs
and keep guard over me by her glory;
12 And *then* my works will be acceptable,
and I shall judge your people rightly,
and be worthy of my father's throne.
13 For what human knows God's counsel,
or who can conceive what the Lord intends?
14 For the rationalizations of mortals are anxious,
and our plans are unsure.
15 For a corruptible body burdens a soul,
and this earth-like tent-like-structure weighs down a mind which has many concerns.
16 And we can scarcely guess the things on earth,
and what is within our hands we find with toil;
but when things are in *the* heavens, who can search them out?
17 But who ever knew your counsel, except when you had given wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from *the* highest *places*?
18 And this was how the paths of those on earth were made straight,
and humans were taught what was pleasing to you,
and were saved by wisdom.

CHAPTER 10

1 She guarded the first-formed father of *the* world
when he alone had been created;
and she raised him up from his trespass,
2 *and* also gave him strength to rule all things.

3 But when an unrighteous *man* withdrew from her in his anger,
he perished together with his fratricidal fury.

4 When *the* earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it,
piloting the righteous *man* on the most worthless wood.

5 When the nations were commingled in harmonious wickedness,[3]
she also knew[4] the righteous *man*, and kept him blameless before God,
and kept him strong although he had feelings[5] for his child.

6 She rescued a righteous *man* from among impious *men* who were utterly-perishing,
after he fled a fire descending upon Pentapolis.[6]
7 There, a testimony of the wickedness still remains:[7]
a smoking dry-and-barren-land,
and plants[8] bearing-fruit which never ripens,[9]
and a monument of salt, having been made-to-stand as a memorial of a soul having-no-faith.
8 For first *of all*, those who forsook wisdom were
bereft of the knowledge of what is beautiful,

[1] may also be translated "would give me good *thoughts* as a counselor"
[2] [8:21] Latin "otherwise be continent"

[3] literally "in harmony of wickedness"
[4] [10:5] LXX(SAC), Lat, Syr / LXX(B) "found"
[5] literally "strong in his feelings" (but the literal translation does not properly portray the sense)
[6] literally "a descending fire of Pentapolis"
[7] literally "still has been appointed"
[8] literally "growing-thing"
[9] literally "fruit for endless hours"

instead, they even left to their lifetime a remembrance of their senselessness—
so that they could not *even* be hidden in their fall.
9 But wisdom delivered from troubles
those who served her.

10 When a righteous *man* fled from his brother's anger,
she guided him on straight paths,
showed him *the* kingdom of God
and gave him knowledge of holy *things*;
she prospered him in his labors
and multiplied the fruit of his toils,
11 stood by him against *the* greed of those who were prevailing over him,
and enriched him;
12 she preserved him from enemies,
and secured him from those who laid in ambush,
and she gave him a prize for his strong struggle
that he might know that piety is more powerful than everything else.

13 When a righteous *man* was sold, she did not abandon him,
instead, *she* delivered him from a sin.
14 She went down with him into a pit,
and did not leave him in his bonds,
until she brought him a scepter of a kingdom,
and authority over those who tyrannized him,
both showed those who had defamed him false,
and gave him perpetual glory.

15 A sacred people and blameless seed—
it was she who rescued *them* out of a nation who was putting them under tribulation.
16 She entered into a soul of an attendant of *the* Lord,
and she withstood fearsome kings in portents and signs;
17 she repaid *the* sacred-ones a reward of their labors.
She guided them in a marvelous road,
and she became a shelter for them by day
and a flame of stars by the night.
She took them across *the* Sea of Reeds[1]
and led them through much water—
19 but she flooded their enemies,
and cast them up from *the* depth of an abyss.
20 Due to this, righteous *men* despoiled impious *men*;
and they hymned, O Lord, the name, the holy *name*,
also harmoniously praising your defending hand,
21 because the wisdom opened *the* mouths of deaf *men*,
and made tongues of infants *speak* clearly.

CHAPTER 11
1 She made their works prosper in a hand of a holy prophet.
2 They journeyed through the uninhabited desert,
and pitched their tents in impassable *places*;
3 they withstood foes and repelled *their* enemies.
4 And when they thirsted, they called upon you,
and water was given to them from a sheer rock,
and a remedy for their thirst from a hard stone.
5 For by the things through which their enemies were chastised,
they themselves were benefited in their need.
6 Indeed, rather than running-water, when an ever-flowing river was troubled with defiled blood[2]
7 as a rebuke to an infant-slaying command,
you unexpectedly gave *the sacred-ones* abundant water,
8 once you had shown, by the thirst they had at that time,
how you chastised their opponents.
9 For when *the sacred-ones* had been tried, though only disciplined in mercy,
they recognized how impious *men*, condemned in anger, were being examined by torture.
10 For indeed, you proved *the sacred-ones*, admonishing them as a father;
but you probed *the others*, rightly-punishing *them* as a severe king.
11 But even those afar off and those close by were harmoniously afflicted:
12 for a twofold grief took hold of them
and a groaning at *the* memory of the ones who had departed.
13 For when they heard that the cause of their own chastisements
was a benefit to these others, they recognized the Lord.

[1] Hebrew equivalent / Greek "the Red Sea"
[2] [11:6] LXX(SA) / LXX(BC), Lat "Indeed, when *the enemies* were troubled with defiled blood rather than an ever-flowing river"

14 For though they had indeed mockingly rejected
him who of old had been cast out in exposure,[3]
in the end of the events, they marveled at him,
since the thirst they felt was not like that of *the* righteous-ones.
15 But in return for their unintelligent *and* unrighteous rationalizations,
which led them astray into worshipping irrational creepers and worthless insects,
you sent upon them a multitude of irrational animals[4] for a rightful-punishment;
16 that they might recognize that a *man* is chastised
by the very things through which he sins.
17 For your all-powerful hand, which[5] had created the world from formless material,
was not without means to send upon them a multitude of bears or bold lions,
18 or newly-created, unknown beasts, full of fury,
either blowing *out* a fire-breathing breath,
or a belch of winnowing smoke,
or flashing terrible sparks from their eyes*.
19 Not only could the harm they would do completely wipe them out,
instead, even the *mere* sight of them, causing fear, could slay them.
20 But even without these, they could have fallen by a single spirit,
pursued by the rightful-punishment and winnowed out by your powerful spirit;
instead, you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.
21 For great strength always abides with you;
and who can oppose *the* might of your arm?
22 Because before you the whole world is like a grain that tips the scales,[6]
and like a drop of morning dew which falls down upon *the* earth.
23 But you have mercy upon all, because you can do all things;
and you overlook *the* sinful-actions of humans so that they may have a change-of-mind.
24 For you love everything that exists and do not loathe anything which you have made;
for what you hated, you would not have furnished.
25 But how could a thing remain, unless you willed it;
or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you?
26 But you spare all *things*, because they are yours,
O Master, lover-of-souls;
12.1 for your incorruptible spirit is in all *things*!

CHAPTER 12
2 For this reason, you rebuke those who fall-away little by little, warn them,
and remind them of *the* things through which they sin,
that they may abandon their evil *and* put their faith in you, O Lord!
3 For even the ancient inhabitants of your holy land,
4 you hated for their hostile practices—
works of sorceries[7] and unsacred rites;
5 *they are* also merciless murderers of children,
and *partakers* of a sacrificial-cannibal feast of human flesh and blood,
initiates from *the* midst of a*n impious* company,
6 and parents who took helpless souls with their own hands.
These you wished to perish by *the* hands of our fathers,
7 that *the* land, which above all is held in honor by you,
might receive a worthy colony of God's boys.
8 Instead, even these, as they were humans, you spared,
also sending wasps as forerunners of your army
that they might exterminate them by degrees.
9 Not that you were without power to have impious *men* vanquished in a pitched-battle by righteous *men*,
or crushed at once by terrible beasts, or by a single stern word;
10 but condemning them bit by bit,
you gave them space for a change-of-mind.
You were not ignorant that their birth was wicked
and their evil ingrained,
and that their rationalizations would not change *even* to the age;
11 for they were a seed cursed from *the* beginning.
But neither was it because you were wary of anyone
that you granted amnesty when they were sinning.
12 For who can say to you, "What have you done?"

[3] [11:14] LXX(B) / LXX(SAC) "enmity"
[4] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[5] [11:17] Lat, Syr, Arm, Copt / LXX(S*BAC) "even"(kai) / LXX(S[a]) "which even"(kai)
[6] literally "a grain of a balance"
[7] may also be translated to "druggings"

or who can oppose your verdict?
But when nations perish, who can challenge you, their maker;
or who can come into your presence to maintain the rights of unrighteous humans?
13 For neither is there any god besides you, whose care is for everyone,
that you need to prove that you have not unrighteously judged;
14 nor can any king or tyrant confront you
on behalf of those whom you have chastised.
15 But as you are righteous, you manage all things righteously;
you hold it as foreign to your power to chastise one who does not deserve to be rightfully-punished.
16 For your strength is *the* beginning of righteousness;
and your mastery over all *things* makes you lenient to all.
17 For you show your strength when faith is not put in *the* perfection of your power,
and you rebuke any audacity among those who do not[1] know you.
18 But though you are a master of strength, you judge with gentleness,
and you administer us with much lenience;
for whenever you will, the power attends you.
19 But by these works you taught your people,
that those who are righteous must be humane;
and you filled your sons with a good hope,
because you would permit them to have a change-of-mind from *their* sinful-actions.
20 For these were enemies of your boys, and doomed to death;
yet, while you brought retribution upon them with such solicitude and indulgence,[2]
granting a time and place to abandon their evil,
21 with what exactitude you judged your sons,
to whose fathers you gave oaths and covenants of good promises!
22 Therefore, you discipline us, *and* scourge our enemies with ten thousand *blows*,
that we may meditate upon your goodness when we judge,
but, when being judged, we may expect mercy.
23 And unrighteous *men* who lived a life of senselessness,
you examined by torture through their own abominations.
24 For even they went far astray on the paths of error,
taking even for gods the disgraceful *and* dishonored among animals,[3]
deceived like senseless infants.
25 For this reason, as though upon irrational boys,
you sent your judgment upon them as a mockery;
26 but those who did not heed the censure, which was but child's-play,
were to experience a judgment worthy of God.
27 For in the things through which they suffered distress,
since they were chastised by the very things they deemed gods,
28 they saw *and* recognized the true God whom they had before refused to know;
and with this, their final rightful-punishment came upon them.

CHAPTER 13

1 For indeed, all humans who had ignorance of God were futile by nature;
and from the good-things which are seen, they were not strong enough to know Him-Who-Is,
nor did they discern the artisan while studying his works;
2 instead, either a fire, or a spirit, or a swift *current of* air, or a circuit of stars, or forcible water,
or luminaries of heaven,[4] *the* supreme-presidents of *the* world, they considered gods.
3 Indeed, if through delight in their beauty they assumed them to be gods,
let them know how far more excellent is the Master than these;
for the original source of beauty fashioned them.
4 But if they were struck *with astonishment* at *the* power and energy of these,
let these things bring them realization of how much more powerful is he who furnished them.
5 For from *the* greatness and[5] beauty of created things
their original author, by analogy, is seen.
6 Instead, for these *men the* blame is less;
for perhaps they even have gone astray,
though they are seeking God and wishing to find him.
7 For they search busily among his works,
and are distracted by what they are looking at,
because the things seen are beautiful.
8 But again, not *even* these are pardonable.
9 For if they had the strength to know so much that they could speculate about the age,
how did they not more quickly find the Master of these things?
10 But they are doomed, and their hopes are in dead things,
those who give the name 'gods' to *the* works of human hands:[6]
gold and silver, a product of art, and likenesses of animals,[7]
or useless stone, a work of an ancient hand.

11 Now an artisan may even saw out a suitable tree,
skillfully scrape off all its bark,
and deftly plying his art,
furnish a useful implement to serve life,
12 but use up the refuse from his work
in preparing his food, *and* have his fill.
13 But the good-for-nothing[8] refuse from these remnants,
timber, crooked and full of knots,
he takes, carving it to occupy his spare time.[9]
This *timber* he models with listless[10] experience,
and patterns it on an image of a human,
14 or makes it resemble some worthless animal.[11]
He daubs it with red and crimsons its surface with a red stain,
and daubs over every blemish in it;
15 and he makes a fitting room for it, putting it on a wall,
fastening it with a nail.
16 Therefore, indeed lest it fall down, he provides for it,
because he knows that it cannot help itself;
for it is even an image and is in need of help.
17 But when he prays about his possessions and marriage and children,
he is not ashamed to address the thing without a soul.
And indeed for vigor he invokes what is impotent;
18 but for life he entreats the dead;
but for aid he beseeches the wholly incompetent,
but about travel, something that cannot even walk.
19 But for a means-of-*monetary*-gain and work and success with his hands,
he asks facility of a thing with hands completely inert.

CHAPTER 14

1 Again, one preparing for a voyage and about to traverse surges,
cries out to *a* piece of wood more unsound than a boat which carries him.
2 For indeed it was a craving for a means-of-gain which devised that *vessel*,
but wisdom was an artisan who[12] furnished it.
3 But your foresight, O Father, pilots it through,
because you have furnished a way *for it* even in *the* sea,
and a secure path *even* in surges,
4 showing that you can save from any danger,
so that even one without a craft[13] may embark.
5 But it is your will that the works of your wisdom should not be inactive;
so humans entrust their souls even to a frailest *piece of* wood,
and have been safe crossing waves *even* on a raft.
6 For even at *the* beginning, when arrogant giants were perishing,
the hope of the world, who took refuge on a raft,
left to *the* age a seed of a *new* birth, under the piloting of your hand.
7 For blest is a *piece of* wood through which righteousness comes about;
8 but the handmade *idol* is accursed,
and its maker as well: indeed, he for having produced it,
but it, because though perishable, it was named a god.
9 For equally hateful to God are those who act impiously and their impiety.
10 for even the thing made shall be chastised together with its contriver.
11 For this reason, a visitation shall come even upon idols of *the* nations,
because they have become *made* into an abomination amid God's creation,
and into impediments for souls of humans
and into a trap for feet of senseless *men*.
12 For *the* beginning of sexual-immorality is a devising of idols;
but their invention was a corruption of life.
13 For they were not in *the* beginning, nor shall they continue to the age;

[1] [12:17] LXX(B), Lat, Syr / LXX(A) adds
[2] [12:20] LXX(S) / LXX(B) "and entreaty" / LXX(A), Lat omit altogether
[3] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[4] [13:2] Latin "or the sun and moon"
[5] [13:5] LXX(S[a], 248), Athanasius, other fathers, Arm, Syro-Hexaplar, Eth, Copt / LXX(SBA) "of"
[6] literally "works of hands of humans"
[7] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[8] literally "nothing of-good-use"
[9] [13:13] LXX(SB) / LXX(A) "his work"
[10] [13:13] LXX(S*AB) / LXX(S[a]), Lat "intelligent"
[11] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[12] [14:2] LXX(SBA) / Lat, Syr "but an artisan by his wisdom"
[13] literally "art"

14 for by vanity of humans they came into the world,
and for this reason a sudden end is devised for them.
15 For a father, afflicted with untimely mourning,
made an image of *the* child so quickly taken from him;
and *this father* now honored as a god what was formerly a dead human,
and handed down to his subjects mysteries and rites.
16 Then, in time, the impious custom gained strength *and* was observed as a law,
and carved *things* were religiously-observed by commandments of tyrants.
17 Humans, who lived so far away that they could not honor him in appearance,
copied the appearance of the distant king
making a visible image of him whom they wished to honor,
out of earnestness to flatter him when absent, as though present.
18 But the artisan's love-of-honor provided a stimulus
to promote this religious-observance among those to whom it was strange.
19 For he, indeed perhaps wishing to please a ruler,
compelled his art to give the likeness a more beautiful *form*,
20 but the multitude, drawn by the charm of the work,
soon rationalized he should now be an object of worship,
who shortly before was honored as a human.
21 And this became an ambush for their lifestyles,
that humans, enslaved to either a misfortune or tyranny,
conferred the incommunicable Name on stones and *pieces* of wood.
22 Then it was not enough for them to err in their knowledge of God;
instead, even though they live in a great war of ignorance,
they call such many evils peace.
23 For while they celebrate either child-murdering rites or clandestine mysteries,
or frenzied revellings in unheard-of ordinances,
24 they no longer safeguard either their lifestyles or clean marriages;
but each either does away with *one another* in ambuscades,
or pains *one another* by adulterating *him*.
25 But all is confusion—blood and murder, theft and deceit,
corruption, faithlessness, turmoil, perjury,
26 disturbance of good *men*, forgetfulness of favor,
staining of souls, perversion of birth,
disorder of marriage, adultery, and licentiousness.
27 For the worship of infamous idols is a beginning
and cause and extremity of all evil.
28 For they are either driven mad with enjoyment, or prophesy lies,
or live unrighteously or readily commit perjury.
29 For as their trust is in soulless idols,
they expect *to suffer* nothing unrighteous when they have sworn evilly.
30 But on both *accounts* righteous-punishments shall overtake them:
because they were evilly minded toward God, devoting themselves to idols,
and because they swore unrighteous *oaths* in deceit, despising sacredness.
31 For it is not the power of the things by which *men* swear,
instead, it is the rightful-punishment for the sinners which always pursues the transgression of the unrighteous.

CHAPTER 15

1 But you, our God, are kind and true, longsuffering,
and administering everything with mercy.
2 For even if we sin, we are yours, seeing your might;
but we will not sin, seeing that we are accounted as yours.
3 For to know you well is complete righteousness,
and to see your might is a root of immortality.
4 For we were neither led astray by the evil-creation of humans' inventiveness,
nor the fruitless toil of painters,
an appearance stained with varied colors,
5 whose countenance arouses craving[1] in senseless *men*,
till they also long for the inanimate appearance of a dead image.
6 Lovers of evil *things*, also worthy of such hopes,
are even those who make them and long for them and revere them.

7 For even a potter, laboriously kneading soft earth,
molds each *article* for our service:
yet,[2] out of the same clay, he fashions,
both the vessels which are slaves for clean purposes
and their opposites, all alike;
but as to what shall be the use of either sort *of vessels*,
the worker in clay is the judge.
8 And with misspent toil he molds a vain god from the selfsame clay;
though he himself was made from earth a short time before,
and after a little while, is to return from where he was taken,
when the soul which was lent to him is demanded back.
9 Instead, he has no concerns that he is destined to die,
nor that his lifetime is brief;
instead, he vies with goldsmiths and silversmiths
also emulates bronze-workers,
and considers it a glory to mold counterfeits.
10 His heart is ashes! And his hope is more worthless than earth,
also his lifetime is more dishonorable than clay;
11 because he failed to know the One who formed him,
and *who* breathed into him an active soul,
and blew *into him* a living spirit.
12 Instead, he accounted our lifetime child's-play,
and our life a holiday for gain;
"For one must," declares he,
"make profit every way, be it even out of evil."
13 For this man more than any sees that he is sinning,
when out of earth-like material he creates fragile vessels and carved *images* alike.

14 But all quite senseless, and worse than infantile in soul,
are the enemies of your people who exercised power over them.
15 Because they even accounted all the idols of the nations gods,
which have no use of eyes* for vision,
nor nostrils to inhale air,
nor ears to hear,
nor fingers on *their* hands for feeling;
even their feet are useless[3] to walk with.
16 For a human made them;
and *they were* fashioned by one whose own spirit has been borrowed.
For no human is strong enough to mold a god like himself;
17 but being mortal, he makes a dead thing with his lawless hands.
For he is better than the things he worships;
of the two,[4] he indeed has life, but never they.
18 And besides, they revere the most hostile animals—[5]
for those, when compared in regards to mindlessness, are worse than all others,
19 nor are these animals *so* beautiful in sight that *men* might desire them,
but they have even escaped the approval of God and his blessing *about them*.

CHAPTER 16

1 For this reason, *those impious men* deserved to be chastised by similar *animals*,
and were examined by torture by a swarm[6] of insects.
2 Rather than this chastisement, you benefited your people with a rare taste,
you satisfied the craving of *their* appetite, by providing quail for *their* food;
3 in order that those *impious* others, when they craved food,
should be turned from even the appetite of necessities,
since the creatures sent to plague them were so hideous;
while *your people*, after a brief period of privation,
even partook of a rare taste.
4 For inexorable want had to come upon those who were tyrannizing;
but these only needed to be shown how their enemies were being examined by torture.
5 For even when *the* terrible fury of beasts came upon them,
also, *when* they were being utterly-destroyed from bites of crooked serpents,
your anger did not endure to the end.
6 But as a warning, they were troubled for *only* a short time,
though they had a sign[7] of salvation,
to put them into a reminiscence of an instruction of your law.
7 For he who turned toward it was saved,

[1] [15:5] LXX(SAC), Lat, Syr / LXX(B, 68) "reproach"

[2] literally "instead"
[3] literally "inactive/un-working"
[4] [15:17] LXX(S, 157, 253) / most others "of which"
[5] more literally "living-*creatures*" (also in verse 19)
[6] literally "multitude"
[7] [16:6] LXX(SA) "counselor"

not by what he saw,
but instead by you, the savior of all.
8 But by this you even convinced our enemies,
that you are he who delivers from every evil.
9 For indeed the bites of locusts and of flies killed them off,
and no remedy was found to save their soul,
because they deserved to be chastised by such means.
10 But not even teeth of poisonous dragons were victorious over your sons,
for your mercy brought the antidote and healed them.
11 For as a reminder of your oracles, they were stung,
and swiftly they were saved,
lest they should fall into deep forgetfulness
becoming unresponsive to your beneficence.
12 For even neither plant nor emollient treated them,
instead, *it was* your all-healing discourse, O Lord!
13 For you have authority over life and death;
and you lead down to *the* gates of *the* Netherworld, and lead back.
14 But a human indeed kills-off in his evil,
but when a spirit has departed, it does not return,
nor can he release a soul *once* it is confined.
15 But it is impossible to escape from your hand.
16 For impious *men* who refused to know you
were scourged by *the* strength of your arm,
pursued by rare heavy-rains and hailstorms
and unremitting *rain*showers, and consumed by fire.
17 For, against *all* expectation, in water which quenches everything,
the fire grew more active;
for the world fights on behalf of righteous *men*.
18 For indeed at one time *the* flame was tempered,
so that *the* animals,[1] which were sent upon the impious-ones, might not be incinerated,
but instead that these *men*, while looking at this, might know that they were driven-forward by a judgment of God.
19 But again, even in water, the fire blazed beyond its strength
so as to utterly-destroy *the* produce of an unrighteous land.
20 Rather than this, you nourished your people with[2] food of messengers,
and furnished them with bread from heaven, ready *to eat*, untoiled-for,
endowed with all delights and conforming to every taste.
21 For indeed, this substance of yours revealed your sweetness toward your children;
but serving the craving of him who received it,
it was transformed into whatever *flavor* each one wished.
22 But snow and ice withstood fire and did not melt,
so that they might know that the fruits of their enemies
were utterly-destroyed by a fire which blazed in the hailstorm,
and flashed like lightning in the heavy-rains.
23 But this *element*, in order that righteous *men* might be nourished,
forgot even its *own* unique power;
24 for your creation, serving you, its maker,
grows tense to bring a chastisement upon the unrighteous-ones,
and, in a good-work, is relaxed on behalf of those who put their faith in you.
25 For this reason, at that very time also, it, transformed in all sorts of ways,
was serving your all-nourishing bounty
in accordance with the will of the needy *men*.
26 so that your sons whom you loved might learn, O Lord,
that it is not the various births of fruits which nourish a human,
but instead, that it is your word which preserves those who put their faith in you!
27 For what was not destroyed by *the* fire was melted,
when merely warmed by a momentary ray of *the* sun;
28 *so* that *men* might know that one must rise before the sun to give you thanks,
and appeal to you at *the* rising of *the* light.
29 For *the* hope of an unthankful *man* melts like a wintry frost
and runs off like useless water.

CHAPTER 17
1 For great are your judgments, and hard to describe;
for this reason, the undisciplined souls have gone astray.
2 For when lawless *men* thought to exercise power over *the* holy nation,
they *themselves*, enchained with darkness, and fettered by a long night,
lay shut up beneath their own roofs, exiles from the perpetual foresight.
3 For supposing that their secret sinful-actions
were hid under a dark curtain of oblivion;
they were dispersed,[3] being terribly astounded,
and perturbed by specters.
4 For not even the recess *which was* retaining them was carefully-keeping *them* fearless,
but crashing sounds on all sides perturbed them,[4]
and mute phantoms[5] with downcast faces were appearing.
5 And indeed no vigor, *even* of a fire, was able to be illuminating,
nor were *the* brilliant flames of stars enduring
in lighting up that gloomy night.
6 But *all that* was showing through to them,
was an intermittent self-kindled fire, full of fear;
while being greatly-terrified, they were deeming that perceiving these *things* was worse than the times when that sight was no longer to be looked at.
7 But mockeries of *their* magic art were in readiness,[6]
and a jeering reproof of *the false*-pretension of *their so-called* sensibleness.
8 For those who undertook to banish anxieties and disorders from a sick soul
were themselves sickened with a ridiculous timidity.
9 For even though no monstrous thing caused them to fear,
they were scared by *the* passings of insects and hissings of creepers,
10 and trembling, they perished,
reluctant to face *even the* air, which they could nowhere escape.
11 For wickedness, anxious in its nature, is rightfully-judged by its own testimony,
but because of a distressed conscience, *it* always increases[7] misfortunes.
12 For fear is nothing but a surrender of the helps which come from rationalization;
13 but the more one's expectation is of itself uncertain,
the more one rationalizes *that it is better* to have ignorance of the cause which is bringing torture.
14 Now they, throughout that night, powerless though it was,
and which came upon them from *the* recesses of a powerless Netherworld,
while *all* sleeping the same slumber,
15 were, indeed partly beaten by portents of phantasms,
and partly paralyzed by their souls' surrender;
for fear came upon them, sudden and unexpected.
16 Then, in this manner, whoever was there fell down,
confined in that enclosure not made of iron.
17 For whether one was a farmer, or a shepherd,
or a worker at tasks in a desert,
taken unawares, he served out the inescapable sentence;
for all were bound by one chain of darkness.
18 Whether it was only a whistling spirit,
or a melodious song of birds in the wide-spreading branches,
or a steady rhythm of rushing water,
or a harsh crash of overthrown rocks,
19 or an unseen gallop of bounding animals,[8]
or a sound of beasts harshly howling,
or an echo resounding from a hollow of *the* mountains,
these *sounds*, instilling fear, paralyzed them.
20 For the whole world shone with a brilliant light
and continued its works without interruption;
21 but an oppressive night spread over these *impious men* alone,
an image of *the* darkness which should next come upon them;
but they were more burdensome to themselves than *the* darkness.

CHAPTER 18
1 But your sacred-ones had a very great light;
indeed, *the impious-ones* heard their voices but did not see their forms,
indeed, they even considered them to be happy for not[9] having suffered as they did.
2 But because the *sacred* ones, who had formerly been treated unrighteously, did not harm them,
they thanked them, and begged their pardon,
for having been at variance with them.
3 Rather than this, you furnished *your sacred-ones with* a flaming pillar
(indeed, it was a guide on the unknown journey),
but a harmless sun for an honorable[1] migration.

[1] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[2] [16:20] LXX(AC[vid]), Lat, Syr / LXX(B) "you sent your people"
[3] [17:3] others "hid, they were darkened behind a dark curtain of oblivion"
[4] [17:4] LXX(B*) / LXX(B[ab]AC), Lat "sides dashed them down" / LXX(S) "sides troubled them"
[5] [17:4] emendation / text "phenomena"
[6] [17:7] LXX(SB), Latin / LXX(AC, 248) are plural
[7] [17:11] LXX(SABC) / LXX(S[a]), Lat, Arm, Copt "anticipates"
[8] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[9] [18:1] LXX(A), Lat / LXX(SB) "happy, therefore"

4 For indeed, *their enemies* deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned by darkness,
who had kept your sons confined,
through whom the imperishable light of the law was to be given to the age.

5 Now when *the impious-ones* had taken counsel to kill-off the infants of the sacred-ones,
and when a single child had been cast forth and saved,
as a reproof you carried off a multitude of *their* children,
and made them perish all at once in a vehement water.
6 That night was known beforehand to our fathers,
so that, surely knowing the oaths in which they put their faith,
they might rejoice.
7 Your people indeed awaited a salvation of righteous *men*,
but a perdition of *their* enemies.
8 For by the same means by which you wreak vengeance on our opponents,
in this you glorified us whom you had summoned.
9 For in secret the sacred boys of the good *people* were offering sacrifice,
and in harmony were putting the divinity[2] of the law into effect,
so that your holy-ones should share alike the same good-things and dangers,
previously singing the praises of the fathers.[3]
10 But a discordant cry from *their* enemies sung in answer,
and a piteous sound of singing-a-dirge for boys was borne to them.
11 But a slave was chastised with the same rightful-punishment as a master;
even a commoner suffered the same as a king.
12 But all alike, by a single death, had countless corpses;
for the living were not *even* adequate for the *chance* to entomb them,
since at one instant their more-honored generation[4] had been utterly-destroyed.
13 For though they had disbelieved at every turn on account of sorceries,[5]
at the destruction of the first-born
they confessed that *your* people was a son of God.
14 For when a calm silence encompassed everything
and night in its swift course was half spent,
15 your all-powerful rationalization bounded from *the* heaven's royal throne,
a stern warrior, into the doomed land,
bearing a sharp short-sword[6] of your inexorable commandment.
16 And as he alighted, he filled every place with death;
and, indeed he still touched *the* heaven, while he stood on *the* earth.
17 Then immediately, indeed, imaginations in terrifying dream-visions[7] perturbed them
but unexpected fears assailed them;
18 and one here, another there, hurled down half-dead,
each revealing *the* reason why he was dying.
19 For the dream-visions which disturbed them had proclaimed this beforehand,
lest they perish ignorant of why they suffered ill.
20 But at one time, a trial of death touched even righteous *men*,
and in *the* desert a plague struck a multitude;
instead, the anger did not last long.
21 For a blameless man hastened to fight as their champion,
bearing a weapon of his special duty,
prayer and propitiation of incense;
he withstood the fury and put an end to the calamity,
showing that he was your servant.
22 But he overcame the crowd,[8]
not by bodily strength, not by operation of weapons;
instead, by a discourse he overcame the chastiser,
recalling oaths and covenants sworn with *their* fathers.
23 For when corpses had already fallen one upon another in heaps,
he stood in the midst, driving back the anger,
and cut off the way to the living.
24 For on his full-length robe[9] was the whole world,
and the glories of *the* fathers were on a carving of four rows of stones,
and your greatness was on a diadem upon his head.
25 To these names the destroyer yielded, but these he[10] feared;
for the mere trial of the anger was enough.

CHAPTER 19

1 But the impious-ones were assailed until the end by a merciless fury,
for *God* knew beforehand what they were yet to do:
2 That, though they themselves had agreed[11] to the departure
and had eagerly sent them on their way,
they would regret it *and* pursue them.
3 For while their hands were still engaged in mourning,
and were bewailing at burials of corpses,
they adopted another mindless rationalization;
and those whom they had entreated to depart,
they pursued as fugitives.
4 For the doom which they deserved drew them on to this end,
and struck them with forgetfulness of what had befallen them,
so that they might fill up the tortures of their chastisement,
5 and that, indeed your people might experience[12] a glorious journey
while these *impious-ones* met a rare *type of* death.
6 For the whole creation, in its several kinds,
was being made over anew, assisting your commandments,
in order that your boys might be preserved unharmed.
7 The cloud was overshadowing their camp;
but dry land was seen emerging
out of what had previously been water;
an unimpeded road *emerged* out of *the* Sea of Reeds,[13]
and a grassy plain out of a forcible wave.
8 After they beheld marvelous portents,
the whole nation, sheltered by your hand, passed through.
9 For they ranged about like horses,
and bounded about like lambs,
praising you, O Lord, *the one* who delivered them!
10 For they still remembered what had happened in their sojourn:
how, indeed, rather than a generation[14] of animals,[15] the land brought forth gnats,
but, rather than fishes, the river swarmed with a multitude of frogs.
11 But later they also saw a new generation of bird when,
prompted by craving, they asked for luxurious meats;[16]
12 for, to relieve them, quail came to them from *the* sea.
13 And the retributions did not come upon the sinners
without signs given beforehand[17] from the vigor of the thunderbolts.
For they rightly suffered for their own wicked-deeds,
for they even treated their guests with the more grievous hatred.
14 For indeed, those others did not receive unknown visitors,
but these enslaved guests who were *their* benefactors.
15 And not that only; *but* instead what visitation was to be theirs
since they received the foreigners with enmity!
16 But these, after receiving them with festivities,
oppressed with terrible toils,
those who now shared with them the same rights.
17 But they were struck even with blindness,
like those others had been at the doors of the righteous-one—
when, surrounded by yawning darkness,
each tried to find the passage to his own doors.
18 For the elements, interchanged with one another,
like *the* strings of a harp, *which* produce a new melody,
while the flow of music steadily persists.
And this can be precisely perceived
from a review of what took place.
19 For *creatures on* dry-land were changed into water *creatures*,
and those that swam went over on to land.
20 Fire maintained its own power *even* in water,
and water forgot its quenching nature;
21 flames, by contrast, neither consumed *the* flesh
of perishable animals[18] which walked about in them,
nor melted the icelike, quick-melting kind of immortal food.
22 For in every way, O Lord, you magnified and glorified your people;
and unfailing, you stood by them in every time and place!

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[1] more literally "a love-of-honorly"
[2] [18:9] LXX(BA) / LXX(S), Lat, Syr "sacredness"
[3] [18:9] others "dangers, the fathers previously leading the songs of praise"
[4] translated elsewhere "birth"
[5] may also be translated to "drugs"
[6] more specifically "short, double-edged sword"
[7] [18:17] LXX(SA), Lat, Syr / LXX(B) "imaginations terrifyingly"
[8] [18:22] possible emendation "ire"
[9] literally "dress"
[10] [18:25] LXX(S[a]A, 248), Lat / LXX(S*BC), Syr "they"
[11] [19:2] others "had changed their minds to agree"
[12] [19:5] others "accomplish"
[13] [19:7] Hebrew equivalent / Greek "of *the* Red Sea"
[14] translated elsewhere "birth" (alos in verse 11)
[15] more literally "living-*creatures*"
[16] [19:11] literally "for meats of luxury"
[17] [19:13] LXX(SAC), Lat, Syr / LXX(B) "signs given"
[18] more literally "living-*creatures*"