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The Wisdom of Shelomoh

Introduction

The *Wisdom of Shelomoh* (Solomon) urges its readers, especially rulers, to seek wisdom and do what's right. It begins by comparing people who trust God with those who think that life is short and that they should take whatever pleasure and power they can get. The apparent success of wicked people and the suffering of good people don't tell the whole story: the book looks beyond death to God's judgement and the lasting life of those who belong to him.

The middle chapters describe a king's desire for wisdom and his prayer for God's help. Wisdom is pictured as a woman who can be loved and welcomed as a lifelong companion. She is worth more than wealth, power, beauty, or health, and enables people to understand what pleases God.

The final part looks back over the experiences of Yisrael (Israel), especially the escape from slavery in Mitsrayim (Egypt). It contrasts God's care for his people with the punishment of their oppressors, considers his patience with wrongdoers, and exposes the foolishness of worshipping created things. The book connects wise living with knowing the Creator and recognising his work in the world.

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

Main components of this document

The lives and destinies of the righteous and the wicked *1:1–5:23*
The search for wisdom and a prayer to receive it *6:1–9:18*
Wisdom's protection of God's people *10:1–11:14*
God's power, patience, and mercy *11:15–12:27*
The foolishness and harm of idol worship *13:1–15:19*
God rescues his people and judges their oppressors *16:1–19:22*

Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Seek God and do what's right

1:1 Love righteousness,
all you who are judges of the earth.
Think of the master[1] with a good mind.
Seek him in singleness of heart,
2 because he's found by those who don't put him to the test,
and is manifested to those who trust him.
3 for crooked thoughts separate from God.
His Power convicts when it's tested,
and exposes the foolish;
4 because wisdom won't enter into a soul that devises evil,
nor live in a body that's enslaved by sin.
5 Because a holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit,
and will depart from thoughts that are without understanding,
and will be ashamed when unrighteousness has come in.
6 Because[2] wisdom is a spirit who loves man,
and she won't hold a[3] blasphemer guiltless for his lips,
because God is witness of his inmost self,
and is a true overseer of his heart,
and a hearer of his tongue.
7 Because the master's spirit has filled[4] the world,
and that which holds all things together knows what's said.
8 Therefore no one who utters unrighteous things will be unseen;
neither will Justice, when it convicts, pass him by.
9 Because in his counsels the ungodly will be searched out,
and the sound of his words will come to the master to bring his lawless activities to conviction;
10 because a jealous ear listens to all things,
and the noise of murmurings isn't hidden.
11 Beware then of unprofitable murmuring,
and keep your tongue from slander;
because no secret utterance will go on its way void,
and a lying mouth destroys a soul.

Don't invite death by doing evil

12 Don't court death in the error of your life.
Don't draw destruction on yourselves by the works of your hands;
13 because God didn't make death,
neither does he delight when the living perish.
14 Because he created all things that they might have being.
The generative powers of the world are wholesome,
and there's no poison of destruction in them,
nor has Haidais[5] royal dominion on earth;
15 for righteousness is immortal,
16 but ungodly men by their hands and their words summon death;
deeming him a friend they[6] pined away.
They made a covenant with him,
because they're worthy to belong with him.

The wicked plan to enjoy life and oppress the innocent

2:1 Because they said[7] within themselves, with unsound reasoning,
"Our life is short and sorrowful.
There's no healing when a man comes to his end,
and no one was ever known who[8] was released from Haidais.
2 Because we were born by mere chance,

1 **RV 1:1 · Note** Grk. in goodness.
2 **RV 1:6 · Note** Some authorities read the spirit of wisdom is loving to man.
3 **RV 1:6 · Note** Or, reviler
4 **RV 1:7 · Note** Grk. the inhabited earth.
5 **RV 1:14 · Note** Or, a royal house
6 **RV 1:16 · Note** Or, were consumed with love of him
7 **RV 2:1 · Note** Or, amongst
8 **RV 2:1 · Note** Or, returned out of Hades

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and in the future we'll be as though we'd never been,
because the breath in our nostrils is smoke,
and reason is a spark kindled by the beating of our heart,
3 which being extinguished, the body will be turned into ashes,
and the spirit will be dispersed as thin air.
4 Our name will be forgotten in time.
No one will remember our works.
Our life will pass away as the traces of a cloud,
and will be scattered as is a mist,
when it's chased by the rays of the sun,
and[9] overcome by its heat.
5 Because our allotted time is the passing of a shadow,
and our end doesn't retreat,
because it's securely sealed, and no one[10] turns it back.
6 "Come therefore and let's enjoy the good things that exist.
Let's use the creation earnestly as in our youth.
7 Let's fill ourselves with costly wine and perfumes,
and let no spring flower pass us by.
8 Let's crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither.
9 Let none of us go without his share in our proud revelry.
Let's leave tokens of mirth everywhere,
because this is our portion, and this is our lot.
10 Let's oppress the righteous poor.
Let's not spare the widow,
nor regard the grey hair of the old man.
11 But let our strength be a law of righteousness;
for that which is weak is proven useless.
12 But let's lie in wait for the righteous man,
because he annoys us,
is contrary to our works,
reproaches us with sins against the law,
and charges us with sins against our training.
13 He professes to have knowledge of God,
and calls himself a child of the master.
14 He became to us a reproof of our thoughts.
15 He's grievous to us even to look at,
because his life is unlike other men's,
and his paths are strange.
16 We were regarded by him as something worthless,
and he abstains from our ways as from uncleanness.
He calls the latter end of the righteous happy.
He boasts that God is his father.
17 Let's see if his words are true.
Let's test what'll happen at the end of his life.
18 Because if the righteous man is God's son, he'll uphold him,
and he'll deliver him out of the hand of his adversaries.
19 Let's test him with insult and torture,
that we may find out how gentle he is,
and test his patience.
20 Let's condemn him to a shameful death,
for he'll be protected, according to his words."

The wicked misunderstand God's purposes

21 Thus they reasoned, and they were led astray;
for their wickedness blinded them,
22 and they didn't know the mysteries of God,
neither did they hope for wages of holiness,
nor did they discern that there's a prize for blameless souls.
23 Because God created man for incorruption,
and made him an image of his own everlastingness;
24 but death entered into the world by the envy of the devil,
and those who belong to him experience it.

The righteous are safe in God's care

3:1 But the souls of the righteous are in God's

9 **RV 2:4 · Note** Grk. weighed down.

10 **RV 2:5 · Note** Or, comes again

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hand,
and no torment will touch them.
2 In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died.
Their departure was considered a disaster,
3 and their travel away from us ruin,
but they're in peace.
4 Because even if in the sight of men they're punished,
their hope is full of immortality.
5 Having borne a little chastening, they'll receive great good;
because God tested them, and found them worthy of himself.
6 He tested them like gold in the furnace,
and he accepted them as a whole burnt offering.
7 In the time of their visitation they'll shine.
They'll run back and forth like sparks among stubble.
8 They'll judge nations and have dominion over peoples.
The master will reign over them forever.
9 Those who trust him will understand truth.
The faithful will live with him in love,
because grace and mercy are with his chosen ones.

Goodness matters more than having children

10 But the ungodly will be punished even as their reasoning deserves,
those who neglected righteousness and revolted from the master;
11 for he who despises wisdom and discipline is miserable.
Their hope is void and their toils unprofitable.
Their works are useless.
12 Their wives are foolish and their children are wicked.
13 Their descendants are cursed.
Because the barren woman who's undefiled is happy,
she who hasn't conceived in transgression.
She'll have fruit when God examines souls.
14 So is the eunuch which has done no lawless deed with his hands,
nor imagined wicked things against the master;
for a precious gift will be given to him for his faithfulness,
and a delightful inheritance in the master's sanctuary.
15 Because good labours have fruit of great renown.
The root of understanding can't fail.
16 But children of adulterers won't come to maturity.
The seed of an unlawful union will vanish away.
17 Because if they live long, they won't be esteemed,
and in the end, their old age will be without honour.
18 If they die young, they'll have no hope,
nor consolation in the day of judgement.
19 Because the end of an unrighteous generation is always grievous.
4:1 It's better to be childless with virtue,
for immortality is in the memory of virtue,
because it's recognised both before God and before men.
2 When it's present, people imitate it.
They long after it when it's departed.
Throughout all time it marches, crowned in triumph,
victorious in the competition for the prizes that are undefiled.
3 But the multiplying brood of the ungodly will be of no profit,
and their illegitimate offshoots won't take deep root,
nor will they establish a sure hold.
4 Because even if they grow branches and flourish for a season,
standing unsure, they'll be shaken by the wind.
They'll be uprooted by the violence of winds.
5 Their branches will be broken off before they come to maturity.
Their fruit will be useless,
never ripe to eat, and fit for nothing.
6 Because unlawfully conceived children are

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witnesses of wickedness
against parents when they're investigated.

A good life matters more than a long life

7 But a righteous man,
even if he dies before his time, will be at rest.
8 Because honourable old age isn't that which stands in length of time,
nor is its measure given by number of years,
9 but understanding is grey hair to men,
and an unspotted life is ripe old age.
10 Being found well-pleasing to God, someone was loved.
While living among sinners he was transported.
11 He was caught away, so that evil wouldn't change his understanding,
or guile deceive his soul.
12 Because the fascination of wickedness obscures the things which are good,
and the whirl of desire perverts an innocent mind.
13 Being made perfect quickly,
he filled a long time;
14 for his soul was pleasing to the master.
Therefore he hurried away from wickedness.
15 But the peoples saw and didn't understand,
not considering this, that grace and mercy are with his chosen,
and that he visits his holy ones;
16 but a righteous man who's dead will condemn the ungodly who are living,
and youth who's quickly perfected will condemn the many years of an unrighteous man's old age.
17 Because the ungodly will see a wise man's end,
and won't understand what the master planned for him,
and why he safely kept him.
18 They'll see, and they'll despise;
but the master will laugh them to scorn.
After this, they'll become a dishonoured carcass
and a reproach among the dead forever;
19 because he'll dash them speechless to the ground,
and will shake them from the foundations.
They'll lie utterly waste.
They'll be in anguish
and their memory will perish.
20 They'll come with coward fear when their sins are counted.
Their lawless activities will convict them to their face.

The wicked regret rejecting the righteous

5:1 Then the righteous man will stand in great boldness
before the face of those who afflicted him,
and those who make his labours of no account.
2 When they see him, they'll be troubled with terrible fear,
and will be amazed at the marvel of salvation.
3 They'll speak among themselves repenting,
and for distress of spirit they'll groan,
"This was he whom we used to hold in derision,
as a parable of reproach.
4 We fools considered his life madness,
and his end without honour.
5 How was he counted among sons of God?
How is his lot among saints?
6 Truly we went astray from the way of truth.
The light of righteousness didn't shine for us.
The sun didn't rise for us.
7 We[11] took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction.
We travelled through trackless deserts,
but we didn't know the master's way.
8 What did our arrogance profit us?
What good have riches and boasting brought us?
9 Those things all passed away as a shadow,
like a rumour that runs by,
10 like a ship passing through the billowy water,
which, when it's gone by, there's no trace to

11 RV 5:7 · Note See Proverbs 14:14.

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be found,
no pathway of its keel in the waves.
11 Or it's like when a bird flies through the air,
no evidence of its passage is found,
but the light wind, lashed with the stroke of its pinions,
and torn apart with the violent rush of the moving wings, is passed through.
Afterwards no sign of its coming remains.
12 Or it's like when an arrow is shot at a mark,
the air it divided closes up again immediately,
so that men don't know where it passed through.
13 So we also, as soon as we were born, ceased to be;
and we had no sign of virtue to show,
but we were utterly consumed in our wickedness."
14 Because the hope of the ungodly man is like chaff carried by the wind,
and[12] as[13] foam vanishing before a tempest;
and is scattered like smoke by the wind,
and passes by as the remembrance of a guest who stays just a day.

God rewards the righteous and judges the world

15 But the righteous live forever.
Their reward is in the master,
and the care for them with the Most High.
16 Therefore they'll receive the crown of royal dignity
and the diadem of beauty from the master's hand,
because he'll cover them with his right hand,
and he'll shield them with his arm.
17 He'll take his zeal as complete armour,
and will make the whole creation his weapons to punish his enemies:
18 He'll put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and will wear impartial judgement as a helmet.
19 He'll take holiness as an invincible shield.
20 He'll sharpen stern anger for a sword.
The universe will go with him to fight against his frenzied foes.
21 Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim.
They'll leap to the mark from the clouds, as from a well-drawn bow.
22 Hailstones full of anger will be hurled as from a catapult.
The water of the sea will be angered against them.
Rivers will sternly overwhelm them.
23 A mighty wind will encounter them.
It'll winnow them away like a tempest.
So lawlessness will make all the land desolate.
Their evil-doing will overturn the thrones of princes.

Rulers must answer to God

6:1 Hear therefore, you kings, and understand.
Learn, you judges of the ends of the earth.
2 Give ear, you rulers who have dominion over many people,
and make your boast[14] in multitudes of nations,
3 because your dominion was given to you from the master,
and your sovereignty from the Most High.
He'll search out your works,
and will enquire about your plans,
4 because being officers of his kingdom, you didn't judge rightly,
nor did you keep the law,
nor did you walk according to God's counsel.
5 He'll come on you awfully and swiftly,
because a stern judgement comes on those who are in high places.
6 Because the man of low estate may be pardoned in mercy,
but mighty men will be mightily tested.
7 Because the Sovereign master of all won't be impressed with anyone,
neither will he show deference to greatness;
because it's he who made both small and great,

12 RV 5:14 · Note Grk. like foam chased to thinness: or, as thin foam chased.

13 RV 5:14 · Note Most Greek authorities read hoar frost: some authorities, perhaps rightly, a spider's web.

14 RV 6:2 · Note Or, in the multitudes of your nations

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and cares about them all;
8 but the scrutiny that comes on the powerful is strict.
9 Therefore, my words are to you, Oh princes,
that you may learn wisdom and not fall away.
10 Because those who've kept the things that are holy in holiness will be made holy.
Those who've been taught them will find what to say in defence.
11 Therefore set your desire on my words.
Long for them, and you princes will be instructed.

Wisdom welcomes those who seek her

12 Wisdom is radiant and doesn't fade away;
and is easily seen by those who love her,
and found by those who seek her.
13 She anticipates those who desire her, making herself known.
14 He who rises up early to seek her won't have difficulty,
for he'll find her sitting at his gates.
15 Because to think on her is perfection of understanding,
and he who watches for her will quickly be free from care;
16 because she herself goes around, seeking those who are worthy of her,
and in their paths she appears to them graciously,
and in every purpose she meets them.
17 Because her true beginning is desire for instruction;
and desire for instruction is love.
18 And love is observance of her laws.
To give heed to her laws confirms immortality.
19 Immortality brings closeness to God.
20 So then desire for wisdom promotes to a kingdom.
21 If therefore you delight in thrones and sceptres, you princes of peoples,
honour wisdom, that you may reign forever.
22 But what wisdom is, and how she came into being, I'll declare.
I won't hide mysteries from you;
but I'll explore from her first beginning,
bring the knowledge of her into clear light,
and I won't pass by the truth.
23 Indeed, I won't travel with consuming envy,
because envy will have no fellowship with wisdom.
24 But a multitude of wise men is salvation to the world,
and an understanding king is stability for his people.
25 Therefore be instructed by my words, and you'll profit.

A king's search for wisdom

7:1 I myself am also[15] mortal, like everyone else,
and am a descendant of one formed first and born of the earth.
2 I moulded into flesh in the time of ten months in my mother's womb,
being compacted in blood from the seed of man and pleasure of marriage.
3 I also, when I was born, drew in the common air,
and fell onto the kindred earth,
uttering, like all, for my first voice, the same cry.
4 I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes.
5 Because no king had a different beginning,
6 but all men have one entrance into life, and a common departure.
7 Because this cause I prayed, and understanding was given to me.
I asked, and a spirit of wisdom came to me.
8 I preferred her before sceptres and thrones.
I considered riches nothing in comparison to her.
9 Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem,
because all gold in her presence is a little sand,
and silver will be considered as clay before her.
10 I loved her more than health and beauty,
and I chose to have her rather than light,
because her bright shining is never laid to

15 **RV 7:1 · Note** Many authorities read a mortal man.

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sleep.
11 All good things came to me with her,
and innumerable riches are in her hands.
12 And I rejoiced over them all because wisdom leads them;
although I didn't know that she was their mother.
13 As I learnt without guile, I impart without grudging.
I don't hide her riches.
14 Because she's a treasure for men that doesn't fail,
and those who use it obtain friendship with God,
commended by the gifts which they present through discipline.

Wisdom's knowledge and power

15 But may God grant that I may speak his judgement,
and to conceive thoughts worthy of what's been given me;
because he's one who guides even wisdom and who corrects the wise.
16 Because both we and our words are in his hand,
with all understanding and skill in various crafts.
17 Because he himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that are,
to know the structure of the universe and the operation of the elements;
18 the beginning, end, and middle of times;
the alternations of the solstices and the changes of seasons;
19 the circuits of years and the positions of stars;
20 the natures of living creatures and the raging of wild animals;
the violence of[16] winds and the thoughts of men;
the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots.
21 All things that are either secret or manifest I learnt,
22 for wisdom, that's the architect of all things, taught me.
Because there's in her a spirit that's quick to understand, holy,
unique, manifold, subtle, freely moving, clear in utterance, unpolluted,
distinct, invulnerable, loving what's good, keen, unhindered,
23 beneficent, loving towards man, steadfast, sure, free from care, all-powerful, all-surveying,
and penetrating through all spirits that are quick to understand, pure, most subtle.
24 Because wisdom is more mobile than any motion.
Yes, she pervades and penetrates all things because of her purity.
25 Because she's a breath of God's power,
and a pure emanation of the Almighty's glory.
Therefore nothing defiled can find entrance into her.
26 Because she's a reflection of eternal light,
an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.
27 Although she's one, she has power to do all things.
Remaining in herself, she renews all things.
Throughout the generations passing into holy souls,
she makes friends of God and prophets.
28 Because God loves nothing as much as one who lives with wisdom.
29 Because she's fairer than the sun,
and above all the constellations of the stars.
She's better than light.
30 Because daylight yields to night,
but evil doesn't prevail against wisdom.
8:1 But she reaches from one end to the other with full strength,
and orders all things well.

Choosing wisdom as a lifelong companion

2 I loved her and wanted her from my youth.
I tried to take her for my bride.
I became enamoured by her beauty.

16 RV 7:20 · Note Or, spirits

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3 She glorifies her noble birth by living with God.
The Sovereign master of all loves her.
4 Because she's initiated into the knowledge of God,
and she chooses his works.
5 But if riches are a desired possession in life,
what's richer than wisdom, which makes all things?
6 And if understanding is effective,
who more than[17] wisdom is an architect of the things that exist?
7 If a man loves righteousness,
the fruits of wisdom's labour[18] are virtues,
for she teaches soberness, understanding, righteousness, and courage.
There's nothing in life more profitable for people than these.
8 And if anyone longs for wide experience,
she knows the things of old, and infers the things to come.
She understands subtleties of speeches and interpretations of dark sayings.
She foresees signs and wonders, and the issues of seasons and times.
9 Therefore I determined to take her to live with me,
knowing that she's one who'd give me good counsel,
and encourage me in cares and grief.
10 Because of her, I'll have glory among multitudes,
and honour in the sight of elders, though I'm young.
11 I'll be found keen when I give judgement.
I'll be admired in the presence of rulers.
12 When I'm silent, they'll wait for me.
When I open my lips, they'll heed what I say.
If I continue speaking, they'll put their hands on their mouths.
13 Because of her, I'll have immortality,
and leave behind an eternal memory to those who come after me.
14 I'll govern peoples.
Nations will be subjected to me.
15 Dreaded monarchs will fear me when they hear of me.
Among the people, I'll show myself to be good, and courageous in war.
16 When I come into my house, I'll find rest with her.
Because conversation with her has no bitterness,
and living with her has no pain, but gladness and joy.
17 When I considered these things in myself,
and thought in my heart how immortality is in kinship to wisdom,
18 and in her friendship is good delight,
and in the labours of her hands is wealth that doesn't fail,
and understanding is in her companionship,
and great renown in having fellowship with her words,
I went about seeking how to take her to myself.
19 Now I was a clever child, and received a good soul.
20 Or rather, being good, I came into an undefiled body.
21 But perceiving that I couldn't otherwise possess wisdom unless God gave her to me—
yes, and to know and understand by whom the grace is given—
I pleaded with the master and implored him, and with my whole heart I said:

A prayer for wisdom

9:1 "O God of my ancestors and master of mercy,
who made all things by your word;
2 and by your wisdom you formed man,
that he should have dominion over the creatures that were made by you,
3 and rule the world in holiness and righteousness,
and execute judgement in uprightness of soul,
4 give me wisdom, her who sits by you on your thrones.

17 **RV 8:6 · Note** Grk. she.
18 **RV 8:7 · Note** Grk. her labours

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Don't reject me from among your[19] servants,
5 because I'm your servant and the son of your handmaid,
a weak and short-lived man,
with little power to understand judgement and laws.
6 Because even if a man is perfect among the sons of men,
if the wisdom that comes from you isn't with him, he'll count for nothing.
7 You chose me to be king of your people,
and a judge for your sons and daughters.
8 You gave a command to build a sanctuary on your holy mountain,
and[20] an altar in the city where you live,
a copy of the holy tent which you prepared from the beginning.
9 Wisdom is with you and knows your works,
and was present when you were making the world,
and understands what's pleasing in your eyes,
and what's right according to your commandments.
10 Send her from the holy heavens,
and ask her to come from the throne of your glory,
that being present with me she may work,
and I may learn what pleases you well.
11 Because she knows all things and understands,
and she'll guide me prudently in my actions.
She'll guard me in her glory.
12 So my works will be acceptable.
I'll judge your people righteously,
and I'll be worthy of my father's[21] throne.
13 Because what man will know God's counsel?
Or who'll conceive what the master wills?
14 Because the thoughts of mortals are unstable,
and our plans are prone to fail.
15 Because a corruptible body weighs down the soul.
The earthy tent burdens a mind that's full of cares.
16 We can hardly guess the things that are on earth,
and we find the things that are close at hand with labour;
but who's traced out the things that are in the heavens?
17 Who gained knowledge of your counsel, unless you gave wisdom,
and sent your holy spirit from on high?
18 It was thus that the ways of those who are on earth were corrected,
and men were taught the things that are pleasing to you.
They were saved through wisdom."

Wisdom protects and rescues the faithful

10:1 Wisdom[22] guarded to the end the first formed father of the world, who was created alone,
and delivered him out of his own transgression,
2 and gave him strength to rule over all things.
3 But when an unrighteous man fell away from her in his anger,
he perished himself in the rage with which he killed his brother.
4 When for his cause the earth was drowning with a flood,
wisdom again saved it,
guiding the righteous man's course by a paltry piece of wood.
5 Moreover, when nations consenting together in wickedness had been confounded,
wisdom[23] knew the righteous man, and preserved him blameless to God,
and kept him strong when his heart yearned

19 **RV 9:4 · Note** Or, children
20 **RV 9:8 · Note** Or, a place of sacrifice
21 **RV 9:12 · Note** Grk. thrones.
22 **RV 10:1 · Note** Grk. She.
23 **RV 10:5 · Note** Grk. she

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towards his child.
6 While the ungodly were perishing, wisdom[24] delivered a righteous man,
when he fled from the fire that descended out of heaven on the five cities.
7 To whose wickedness a smoking waste still witnesses,
and plants bearing fair fruit that doesn't ripen,
a disbelieving soul has a memorial: a standing pillar of salt.
8 Because having passed wisdom by,
not only were they disabled from recognising the things which are good,
but they also left behind them for their life a monument of their folly,
to the end that where they stumbled, they might fail even to be unseen;
9 but wisdom delivered those who waited on her out of troubles.
10 When a righteous man was a fugitive from a brother's anger,[25] wisdom guided him in straight paths.
She showed him God's kingdom, and gave him knowledge of holy things.
She prospered him in his toils, and multiplied the fruits of his labour.
11 When in their covetousness men dealt harshly with him,
she stood by him and made him rich.
12 She guarded him from enemies,
and she kept him safe from those who lay in wait.
Over his severe conflict, she watched as judge,
that he might know that godliness is more powerful than every one.
13 When a righteous man was sold,[26] wisdom didn't forsake him,
but she delivered him from sin.
She went down with him into a dungeon,
14 and in bonds she didn't depart from him,
until she brought him the sceptre of a kingdom,
and authority over those that dealt like a tyrant with him.
She also showed those who'd mockingly accused him to be false,
and gave him eternal glory.

Wisdom leads God's people out of slavery

15 Wisdom[27] delivered a holy people and a blameless seed from a nation of oppressors.
16 She entered into the soul of a servant of the master,
and withstood terrible kings in wonders and signs.
17 She rendered to holy men a reward of their toils.
She guided them along a marvellous way,
and became to them a covering in the day-time,
and a starry flame through the night.
18 She brought them over the Red sea,
and led them through much water;
19 but she drowned their enemies,
and she threw them up from the bottom of the deep.
20 Therefore the righteous plundered the ungodly,
and they sang praise to your holy name, Oh master,
and extolled with one accord your hand that fought for them,
21 because wisdom opened the mouth of the mute,
and made the tongues of babes to speak clearly.
11:1 Wisdom prospered their works in the hand of a holy prophet.
2 They travelled through a desert without inhabitant,
and they pitched their tents in trackless regions.

24 **RV 10:6 · Note** Grk. she
25 **RV 10:10 · Note** Grk. she.
26 **RV 10:13 · Note** Grk. she.
27 **RV 10:15 · Note** Grk. she.

Readers' Version

3 They withstood enemies and repelled foes.

Water for God's people and punishment for their enemies

4 They thirsted, and they called on you,
and water was given to them out of the[28] flinty rock,
and healing of their thirst out of the hard stone.[29]
5 Because by what things their foes were punished,
by these they in their need were benefitted.
6 When enemies were troubled with clotted blood
instead of a river's ever-flowing fountain,[30]
7 to rebuke the decree for the slaying of babies,[31]
you gave them abundant water beyond all hope,
8 having shown by the thirst which they'd suffered
how you punished the adversaries.
9 Because when they were tried, although chastened in mercy,
they learnt how the ungodly were tormented, being judged with anger.
10 Because you tested these as a father admonishing them;
but you searched out those as a stern king condemning them.
11 Yes and whether they were far off or near,
they were equally distressed;
12 for a double grief seized them,
and a groaning at the memory of things past.
13 Because when they heard that through their own punishments the others benefitted,
they recognised the master.
14 Because him who long before was thrown out and exposed they stopped mocking.
In the end of what happened, they marvelled,
having thirsted in another manner than the righteous.

God's power and patience

15 But in return for the senseless imaginings of their unrighteousness,
wherein they were led astray to worship irrational reptiles and wretched vermin,
you sent on them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them,
16 that they might learn that by what things a man sins, by these he's punished.
17 Because your all-powerful hand
that created the world out of formless matter
didn't lack means to send on them a multitude of bears, fierce lions,
18 or newly-created and unknown wild animals, full of rage,
either breathing out a blast of fiery breath,
or belching out smoke,
or flashing dreadful sparks from their eyes;
19 which had power not only to consume them by their violence,
but to destroy them even by the terror of their sight.
20 Yes and without these they might have fallen by a single breath,
being pursued by Justice, and scattered abroad by the breath of your power;
but you arranged all things by measure, number, and weight.
21 Because to be greatly strong is yours at all times.
Who could withstand the might of your arm?
22 Because the whole world before you is as a grain in a balance,
and as a drop of dew that comes down on the earth in the morning.
23 But you have mercy on all men, because you have power to do all things,
and you overlook the sins of men to the end that they may repent.

28 **RV 11:4 · Note** See Deuteronomy 8:15; Psalms 114:8.

29 **RV 11:4 · Cross-ref.** Exo 17:1-6; Num 20:7-11.

30 **RV 11:6 · Cross-ref.** Exo 7:19-21.

31 **RV 11:7 · Cross-ref.** Exo 1:22.

Readers' Version

24 Because you love all things that are,
and abhor none of the things which you made;
Because you never would have formed anything if you hated it.
25 How would anything have endured unless you'd willed it?
Or that which wasn't called by you, how would it have been preserved?
26 But you spare all things, because they're yours,
Oh Sovereign master, you who love the living.
12:1 Because your incorruptible spirit is in all things.
2 Therefore you convict little by little those who fall from the right way,
and, putting them in remembrance by the things wherein they sin, you admonish them,
that escaping from their wickedness they may believe in you, Oh master.

God gives the wicked time to change

3 Because truly the old inhabitants of your holy land,
4 hating them because they practised detestable works of enchantments and unholy rites—
5 merciless slaughters of children
and sacrificial banquets of men's flesh and of blood—
6 allies in an impious fellowship,
and murderers of their own helpless babes,
it was your counsel to destroy by the hands of our fathers;
7 that the land which in your sight is most precious of all
might receive a worthy colony of God's servants.[32]
8 Nevertheless you even spared these as men,
and you sent hornets[33] as forerunners of your army,
to cause them to perish little by little.
9 Not that you were unable to subdue the ungodly under the hand of the righteous in battle,
or by terrible wild animals or by a stern word to make away with them at once,
10 but judging them little by little you gave them a chance to repent,
not being ignorant that their nature by birth was evil,
their wickedness inborn,
and that their manner of thought would never be changed.
11 Because they were a cursed seed from the beginning.
It wasn't through fear of any that you left them unpunished for their sins.
12 Because who'll say, "What have you done?"
Or "Who'll withstand your judgement?"
Who'll accuse you for the perishing of nations which you caused?
Or who'll come and stand before you as an avenger for unrighteous men?
13 Because there isn't any God beside you that cares for all,
that you might show that you didn't judge unrighteously.
14 No king or prince will be able to confront you
about those whom you've punished.
15 But being righteous, you rule all things righteously,
deeming it a thing alien from your power
to condemn one who doesn't deserve to be punished.
16 Because your strength is the source of righteousness,
and your sovereignty over all makes you to forbear all.
17 Because when men don't believe that you're perfect in power, you show your strength,
and in dealing with those who think this, you confuse their boldness.
18 But you, being sovereign in strength, judge in gentleness,
and with great forbearance you govern us;
for the power is yours whenever you desire

32 **RV 12:7 · Note** Or, children
33 **RV 12:8 · Note** Or, wasps

it.

Learning kindness from God's mercy

19 But you taught your people by such works as these,
how the righteous must be kind.
You made your sons to have good hope,
because you give repentance when men have sinned.
20 Because if on those who were enemies of your servants[34] and deserving of death,
you took vengeance with so great deliberation and indulgence,
giving them times and opportunities when they might escape from their wickedness,
21 with how great care you judged your sons,
to whose fathers you gave oaths and covenants of good promises!
22 Therefore while you chasten us, you scourge our enemies ten thousand times more,
to the intent that we may ponder your goodness when we judge,
and when we're judged may look for mercy.
23 Therefore also the unrighteous that lived in a life of folly,
you tormented through their own abominations.
24 Because truly they went astray very far in the ways of error,
Taking as gods those animals[35] which even among their enemies were held in dishonour,
deceived like foolish babes.
25 Therefore, as to unreasoning children, you sent your judgement to mock them.
26 But those who wouldn't be admonished by mild correction
will experience the deserved judgement of God.
27 Because through the sufferings they were indignant of,
being punished in these creatures which they supposed to be gods,
they saw and recognised as the true God him whom they previously refused to know.

Therefore also the result of extreme condemnation came on them.

Recognising the Creator through creation

13:1 Because truly all men who had no perception of God were foolish by nature,
and didn't gain power to know him who exists from the good things that are seen.
They didn't recognise the architect from his works.
2 But they thought that either fire, or wind, or swift air,
or circling stars, or raging water, or luminaries of heaven
were gods that rule the world.
3 If it was through delight in their beauty that they took them to be gods,
let them know how much better their Sovereign master is than these,
for the first author of beauty created them.
4 But if it was through astonishment at their power and influence,
then let them understand from them how much more powerful he who formed them is.
5 Because from the greatness of the beauty of created things,
mankind forms the corresponding perception of their Maker.[36]
6 But yet for these men there's but small blame,
for they too perhaps go astray
while they're seeking God and desiring to find him.
7 Because they diligently search while living among his works,
and they trust their sight that the things that they look at are beautiful.
8 But again even they aren't to be excused.
9 Because if they had power to know so much,
that they should be able to explore the world,
how is it that they didn't find the Sovereign master sooner?

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34 **RV 12:20 · Note** Or, children

35 **RV 12:24 · Note** Grk. living creatures: and so elsewhere in this book.

36 **RV 13:5 · Note** Grk. is the first maker of them seen.

Readers' Version

The foolishness of worshipping idols

10 But they were miserable, and their hopes
were in dead things,
who called them gods which are works of men's hands,
gold and silver, skilfully made, and likenesses of animals,
or a useless stone, the work of an ancient hand.
11 Yes and some[37] woodcutter might saw down a tree that's easily moved,
skilfully strip away all its bark,
and fashion it in attractive form, make a useful vessel to serve his life's needs.
12 Burning the scraps from his handiwork to cook his food,
he eats his fill.
13 Taking a discarded scrap which served no purpose,
a crooked piece of wood and full of knots,
he carves it with the diligence of his idleness,
and shapes it by the skill of his idleness.
He shapes it in the image of a man,
14 or makes it like some worthless animal,
smearing it with something red, painting it red,
and smearing over every stain in it.
15 Having made a worthy chamber for it,
he sets it in a wall, securing it with iron.
16 He plans for it that it may not fall down,
knowing that it's unable to help itself
(for truly it's an image, and needs help).
17 When he makes his prayer about goods and his marriage and children,
he isn't ashamed to speak to that which has no life.
18 Yes, for health, he calls on that which is weak.
Because life, he implores that which is dead.
Because aid, he supplicates that which has no experience.
Because a good journey, he asks that which can't so much as move a step.
19 And for profit in business and good success of his hands,
he asks ability from that which has hands with no ability.
14:1 Again, one preparing to sail, and about to journey over raging waves,
calls on a piece of wood more fragile than the vessel that carries him.
2 Because the hunger for profit planned it,
and wisdom was the craftsman who built it.
3 Your providence, Oh Father, guides it along,
because even in the sea you gave a way,
and in the waves a sure path,
4 showing that you can save out of every danger,
that even a man without skill may put to sea.
5 It's your will that the works of your wisdom shouldn't be ineffective.
Therefore men also entrust their lives to a little piece of wood,
and passing through the surge on a raft come safely to land.
6 Because[38] in the old time also, when proud giants were perishing,
the hope of the world, taking refuge on a raft,
your hand guided the seed of generations of the race of men.
7 Because blessed is wood through which comes righteousness;
8 but the idol made with hands is accursed, itself and he that made it;
because his was the working, and the corruptible thing was called a god.
9 Because both the ungodly and his ungodliness are alike hateful to God;
10 for truly the deed will be punished together with him who committed it.
11 Therefore also there'll be a visitation among the idols of the nation,
because, though formed of things which God created, they were made an abomination,
stumbling blocks to men's souls,

37 **RV 13:11 · Note** Grk. carpenter who is a woodcutter.

38 **RV 14:6 · Note** The Greek text here may be corrupt.

Readers' Version

and a snare to the feet of the foolish.

The origin and harm of idol worship

12 Because the devising of idols was the beginning of fornication,
and the invention of them the corruption of life.
13 Because they didn't exist from the beginning, and they won't exist forever.
14 Because by the boastfulness of men they entered into the world,
and therefore a speedy end was planned for them.
15 Because a father worn with untimely grief,
making an image of the child quickly taken away,
now honoured him as a god which was then a dead human being,
and delivered to those that were under him mysteries and solemn rites.
16 Afterward the ungodly custom, in process of time grown strong, was kept as a law,
and the engraved images received worship by the commandments of princes.
17 And when men couldn't honour them in presence because they lived far off,
imagining the likeness from afar,
they made a visible image of the king whom they honoured,
that by their zeal they might flatter the absent as if present.
18 But worship was raised to a yet higher pitch, even by those who didn't know him,
urged forward by the ambition of the architect;
19 for he, wishing perhaps to please his ruler,
used his art to force the likeness towards a greater beauty.
20 So the multitude, allured because of the grace of his handiwork,
now consider an object of devotion him that a little before was honoured as a man.
21 And this became an ambush,
because men, in bondage either to calamity or to tyranny,
invested stones and stocks with the Name that shouldn't be shared.
22 Afterward it wasn't enough for them to go astray about the knowledge of God,
but also, while they live in a great war of ignorance, they call a multitude of evils peace.
23 Because either slaughtering children in solemn rites, or celebrating secret mysteries,
or holding frenzied revels of strange customs,
24 no longer do they guard either life or purity of marriage,
but one brings on another either death by treachery, or anguish by adultery.
25 And all things confusedly are filled with blood and murder, theft and deceit,
corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury,
26 confusion about what's good, forgetfulness of favours,
ingratitude for benefits,
defiling of souls, confusion of sex,
disorder in marriage, adultery and wantonness.
27 Because the worship of idols that may not be named[39]
is a beginning and cause and end of every evil.
28 Because their worshippers either make merry to madness, or prophesy lies,
or live unrighteously, or lightly commit perjury.
29 Because putting their trust in lifeless idols,
when they've sworn a wicked oath, they expect not to suffer harm.
30 But on both counts, the just doom will pursue them,
because they had evil thoughts of God by giving heed to idols,
and swore unrighteously in deceit through contempt for holiness.
31 Because it isn't the power of things by which men swear,
but it's the just penalty for those who sin
that always visits the transgression of the unrighteous.

39 **RV 14:27 · Cross-ref.** Exo 23:13; Psa 16:4; Hos 2:17; Wis 14:21.

Readers' Version

Knowing the true God

15:1 But you, our god,
are gracious and true,
patient, and in mercy ordering all things.
2 Because even if we sin, we're yours, knowing your dominion;
but we won't sin, knowing that we've been accounted yours.
3 Because to be acquainted with you is[40] perfect righteousness,
and to know your dominion is the root of immortality.
4 Because we weren't led astray by any evil plan of men's,
nor yet by painters' fruitless labour,
a form stained with varied colours,
5 the sight of which leads fools into[41] lust.
Their desire is for the breathless form of a dead image.
6 Lovers of evil things, and worthy of such hopes,
are those who make, desire, and worship them.

The potter who makes a god

7 Because a potter,
kneading soft earth,
laboriously moulds each article for our service.
He fashions out of the same clay
both the vessels that minister to clean uses, and those of a contrary sort,
all in the same way.
What'll be the use of each article of either sort,
the potter is the judge.
8 Also, labouring to an evil end, he moulds a vain god out of the same clay,
he who, having but a little before been made of earth,
after a short space goes his way to the earth
out of which he was taken,
when he's required to render back the[42] soul which was lent him.
9 However he has anxious care,
not because his powers must fail,
nor because his span of life is short;
But he compares himself with goldsmiths and silversmiths,
and he imitates moulders in[43] brass,
and considers it great that he moulds counterfeit gods.
10 His heart is ashes.
His hope is of less value than earth.
His life is of less honour than clay,
11 because he was ignorant of him who moulded him,
and of him that inspired into him[44] an active[45] soul,
and breathed into him a vital spirit.
12 But[46] he accounted our life to be a game,
and our[47] lifetime a festival for profit;
for, he says, one must get gain however one can, even if it's by evil.
13 Because this man, beyond all others, knows that he sins,
out of earthy matter making brittle vessels and engraved images.
14 But most foolish and more miserable than a baby,
are your people's enemies, who oppressed them;
15 because they even considered all the idols of the nations to be gods,
which have neither the use of eyes for seeing,
nor nostrils for drawing breath,
nor ears to hear,
nor fingers for handling,

40 **RV 15:3 · Note** Grk. entire.
41 **RV 15:5 · Note** Some authorities read reproach.
42 **RV 15:8 · Note** Or, life
43 **RV 15:9 · Note** Or, copper
44 **RV 15:11 · Note** Grk. a soul that moves to activity.
45 **RV 15:11 · Note** Or, life
46 **RV 15:12 · Note** Some authorities read they accounted.
47 **RV 15:12 · Note** Or, way of life

Readers' Version

and their feet are helpless for walking.
16 Because a man made them,
and one whose own spirit is borrowed moulded them;
for no one has power as a man to mould a god like himself.
17 But, being mortal, he makes a dead thing by the work of lawless hands;
for he's better than the objects of his worship,
since he indeed had life, but they never did.
18 Yes, and they worship the creatures that are most hateful,
for, being compared as to lack of sense, these are worse than all others;
19 Neither, as seen beside other creatures, are they beautiful, so that one should desire them,
but they've escaped both the praise of God and his blessing.

Animals bring punishment and rescue

16:1 Because this cause, they were deservedly punished through creatures like those which they worship,
and tormented through a multitude of vermin.
2 Instead of this punishment, you, giving benefits to your people,
prepared quails for food,
a delicacy to satisfy the desire of their appetite,
3 to the end that your enemies, desiring food,
might for the hideousness of the creatures sent among them,
loathe even the necessary appetite;
but these, your people, having for a short time suffered lack,
might even partake of delicacies.
4 Because it was necessary that inescapable lack should come on those oppressors,
but that to these it should only be showed how their enemies were tormented.
5 Because even when terrible raging of wild animals came on your people,
and they were perishing by the bites of crooked serpents,
your anger didn't continue to the uttermost;
6 but for admonition were they troubled for a short time,
having a token of salvation
to put them in remembrance of the commandment of your law;
7 for he who turned towards it wasn't saved because of that which was seen,
but because of you, the Saviour of all.
8 Yes, and in this you persuaded our enemies
that you're he who delivers out of every evil.
9 Because the bites of locusts and flies truly killed them.
No healing for their life was found,
because they were worthy to be punished by such things.
10 But your children weren't overcome by the very fangs of venomous dragons,
for your mercy passed by where they were and healed them.
11 Because they were bitten to put them in remembrance of your oracles,
and were quickly saved, so that they wouldn't fall into deep forgetfulness
and become unable to respond to your kindness.
12 Because truly it was neither herb nor poultice that cured them,
but your word, Oh master, which heals all people.
13 Because you have authority over life and death,
and you lead down to Haidais' gates, and lead up again.
14 But though a man kills by his wickedness,
he can't retrieve the spirit that's departed
or release the imprisoned soul.

Hail for Mitsrayim and food for God's people

15 But it isn't possible to escape your hand;
16 for ungodly men, refusing to know you, were scourged in the strength of your arm,
pursued with strange rains and hails and relentless storms,
and utterly consumed with fire.
17 Because, what was most marvellous,
in the water which quenches all things, the fire burnt hotter;

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for the world fights for the righteous.
18 Because at one time the flame was restrained,
that it might not burn up the creatures sent against the ungodly,
but that these themselves as they looked might see that they were chased by God's judgement.
19 At another time even surrounded by water it burns more intensely than fire,
that it may destroy the produce of an unrighteous land.
20 Instead of these things, you gave your people angels' food to eat,
and you provided ready-to-eat bread for them from heaven without toil,
having the virtue of every pleasant flavour,
and agreeable to every taste.
21 Because your nature showed your sweetness towards your children,
while that bread, serving the desire of the eater,
changed itself according to every man's choice.
22 But snow and ice endured fire, and didn't melt,
that people might know that fire was destroying the fruits of the enemies,
burning in the hail and flashing in the rains;
23 and that this fire, again, so that righteous people may be nourished,
has even forgotten its own power.
24 Because the creation, ministering to you, its maker,
strains its force against the unrighteous for punishment
and in kindness, slackens it on behalf of those who trust in you.
25 Therefore at that time also, converting itself into all forms,
it ministered to your all-nourishing bounty,
according to the desire of those who had need,
26 that your children, whom you loved, Oh master, might learn
that it isn't the growth of crops that nourishes a man,
but that your word preserves those who trust you.
27 Because that which wasn't destroyed by fire,
melted away when it was simply warmed by a faint sunbeam,
28 that it might be known that we must rise before the sun to give you thanks,
and must pray to you at the dawning of the light;
29 for the hope of the unthankful will melt as the winter's hoar frost,
and will flow away as water that has no use.

Mitsrayim's darkness and fear

17:1 Because your judgements are great, and hard to interpret;
therefore undisciplined souls went astray.
2 Because when lawless men had supposed that they held a holy nation in their power,
they, prisoners of darkness, and bound in the fetters of a long night,
kept close beneath their roofs,
lay exiled from the eternal providence.
3 Because while they thought that they were unseen in their secret sins,
they were divided from one another by a dark curtain of forgetfulness,
stricken with terrible awe, and very troubled by apparitions.
4 Because neither did the dark recesses that held them guard them from fears,
but terrifying sounds rang around them,
and dismal phantoms appeared with unsmiling faces.
5 And no power of fire prevailed to give light,
neither were the brightest flames of the stars strong enough to illuminate that gloomy night;
6 but only the glimmering of a self-kindled fire appeared to them, full of fear.
In terror, they considered the things which they saw
to be worse than that sight, on which they couldn't gaze.
7 The mockeries of their magic arts were powerless, now,
and a shameful rebuke of their boasted un-

Readers' Version

derstanding:
8 Because those who promised to drive away terrors and disorders from a sick soul,
these were sick with a ludicrous fearfulness.
9 Because even if no troubling thing frighted them,
yet, scared with the creeping of vermin and hissing of serpents,
10 they perished trembling in fear,
refusing even to look at the air, which couldn't be escaped on any side.
11 Because wickedness, condemned by a witness within, is a coward thing,
and, being pressed hard by conscience, always has added forecasts of the worst.
12 Because fear is nothing else but a surrender of the help which reason offers;
13 and from within, the expectation of being less
prefers ignorance of the cause that brings the torment.
14 But they, all through the night which was powerless indeed,
and which came on them out of the recesses of powerless Haidais,
sleeping the same sleep,
15 now were haunted by monstrous apparitions,
and now were paralysed by their soul's surrendering;
for sudden and unexpected fear came on them.
16 So then whoever it might be, sinking down in his place,
was kept captive, shut up in that prison which wasn't barred with iron;
17 for whether he was a farmer, or a shepherd,
or a labourer whose toils were in the wilderness,
he was overtaken, and endured that inescapable sentence;
for they were all bound with one chain of darkness.
18 Whether there was a whistling wind,
or a melodious sound of birds among the spreading branches,
or a measured fall of water running violently,
19 or a harsh crashing of rocks hurled down,
or the swift course of animals bounding along unseen,
or the voice of wild animals harshly roaring,
or an echo rebounding from the hollows of the mountains,
all these things paralysed them with terror.
20 Because the whole world was illuminated with clear light,
and was occupied with unhindered works,
21 while over them alone was spread a heavy night,
an image of the darkness that should afterward receive them;
but to themselves, they were heavier than darkness.

Light for God's people

18:1 But for your holy ones there was great light.
Their enemies, hearing their voice but not seeing their form,
counted it a happy thing that they too had suffered,
2 yet for that they don't hurt them, though wronged by them before, they're thankful;
and because they'd been at variance with them, they begged for pardon.
3 Therefore you provided a burning pillar of fire,
to be a guide for your people's unknown journey,
and a harmless sun for their glorious exile.
4 Because the Mitsrim (Egyptians) well deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned by darkness,
they who'd imprisoned your children,
through whom the incorruptible light of the law was to be given to the race of men.

The death of Mitsrayim's firstborn

5 After they'd taken counsel to kill the babes of the holy ones,
and when a single child had been abandoned and saved to convict them of their sin,
you took away from them their multitude of children,
and destroyed all their army together in a

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mighty flood.
6 Our fathers were made aware of that night beforehand,
that, having sure knowledge, they might be cheered by the oaths which they'd trusted.
7 Salvation of the righteous and destruction of the enemies was expected by your people.
8 Because as you took vengeance on the adversaries,
by the same means, calling us to yourself, you glorified us.
9 Because holy children of good men offered sacrifice in secret,
and with one consent they agreed to the covenant of the divine law,
that they'd partake alike in the same good things and the same perils,
the fathers already leading the sacred songs of praise.
10 But the discordant cry of the enemies echoed back,
and a pitiful voice of lamentation for children was spread abroad.
11 Both servant and master were punished with the same just doom,
and the commoner suffering the same as king;
12 Yes, they all together, under one form of death,
had corpses without number.
Because the living weren't sufficient even to bury them,
Since at a single stroke, their most cherished offspring was consumed.
13 Because while they were disbelieving all things because of the enchantments,
on the destruction of the firstborn they confessed the people to be God's children.
14 Because while peaceful silence wrapped all things,
and night in her own swiftness was half spent,
15 your all-powerful word leapt from heaven, from the royal throne,
a stern warrior, into the middle of the doomed land,
16 bearing as a sharp sword your authentic commandment,
and standing, it filled all things with death,
and while it touched the heaven it stood on the earth.
17 Then immediately apparitions in dreams terribly troubled them,
and unexpected fears came on them.
18 And each, one thrown here half dead, another there,
made known why he was dying;
19 for the dreams, disturbing them, forewarned them of this,
that they might not perish without knowing why they were afflicted.

A priest pleads for the people

20 The experience of death also touched the righteous,
and a multitude were destroyed in the wilderness,
but the anger didn't last long.
21 Because a blameless man hurried to be their champion,
bringing the weapon of his own ministry,
prayer, and the atoning sacrifice of incense.
He withstood the indignation and set an end to the calamity,
showing that he was your servant.
22 And he overcame the anger,
not by strength of body, not by force of weapons,
but by his word, he subdued the avenger
by bringing to remembrance oaths and covenants made with the fathers.
23 Because when the dead had already fallen in heaps one on another,
he intervened and stopped the anger,
and cut off its way to the living.
24 Because the whole world was pictured on his long robe,
and the glories of the fathers were on the engraving of the four rows of precious stones,
and your majesty was on the diadem on his head.
25 The destroyer yielded to these, and they feared;
for it was enough only to test the anger.

Readers' Version

The sea destroys the pursuing army

19:1 But indignation without mercy came on the ungodly to the end;
for God also foreknew their future,
2 how, having changed their minds to let your people go,
and having sped them eagerly on their way,
they'd change their minds and pursue them.
3 Because while they were still mourning,
and lamenting at the graves of the dead,
they made another foolish decision,
and pursued as fugitives those whom they'd begged to leave and driven out.
4 Because the doom which they deserved was drawing them to this end,
and it made them forget the things that'd happened to them,
that they might fill up the punishment which was yet lacking from their torments,
5 and that your people might journey on by a marvellous road,
but they themselves might find a strange death.

Creation serves God's people

6 Because the whole creation, each part in its diverse kind, was made new again,
complying with your commandments,
that your servants might be kept unharmed.
7 Then the cloud that overshadowed the camp was seen,
and dry land rising up out of what had been water,
out of the Red sea an unhindered highway,
and a grassy plain out of the violent surge,
8 by which they passed over with all their army,
these who were covered with your hand,
having seen strange marvels.
9 Because like horses they roamed at large,
and they skipped about like lambs,
praising you, Oh master, who was their deliverer.
10 Because they still remembered the things that happened in the time of their sojourning,
how instead of bearing cattle, the land brought forth lice,
and instead of fish, the river spewed out a multitude of frogs.
11 But afterwards, they also saw a new kind of birds,
when, led on by desire, they asked for luxurious dainties;
12 for, to comfort them, quails came up for them from the sea.

Punishment for mistreating strangers

13 Punishments came on the sinners,
not without the signs that were given beforehand by the violence of the thunder,
for they justly suffered through their own wickednesses,
for the hatred which they practised towards guests was grievous indeed.
14 Because while the others didn't receive the strangers when they came to them,
the Mitsrim (Egyptians) made slaves of guests who were their benefactors.
15 And not only so, but while punishment of some sort will come on the former,
since they received as enemies those who were aliens;
16 because these first welcomed with feastings,
and then afflicted with dreadful toils,
those who'd already shared with them in the same rights.
17 And moreover they were stricken with loss of sight
(even as were those others at the righteous man's doors),
when, being surrounded with yawning darkness,
they each looked for the passage through his own door.
18 Because as the notes of a lute vary the character of the rhythm,
even so the elements, changing their order one with another,
continuing always in its sound,
as may clearly be conjectured from the sight of the things that have happened.
19 Because creatures of the dry land were turned into creatures of the waters,
and creatures that swim moved on the land.

Readers' Version

20 Fire kept the mastery of its own power in water,
and water forgot its quenching nature.
21 On the contrary, flames didn't consume flesh of perishable creatures that walked among them,
neither did they melt the crystalline grains of ambrosial food that were melted easily.
22 Because in all things, Oh master, you magnified your people,
and you glorified them and didn't lightly regard them,
standing by their side in every time and place.

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