
Σοφία Σαλωμωνος ▣ THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

INTRODUCTION

To the Jews of the Dispersion, the *Wisdom of Solomon* offered strength and consolation. Theirs was a true wisdom, which surpassed even that of the Greeks. Theirs was immortality (a gift of God to the righteous, not the result of having an immortal or spiritual soul). Their Lord was the author of beauty (13:3); to know him was complete righteousness and to know his power was the root of immortality (15:3), for his immortal spirit was in all things (12:1).

Although this book is attributed to Solomon, his name never actually appears in it (even in 9:8); however, 7:1–14 and 8:17–9:18 deliberately reflect his prayer for wisdom as found in 1K 3:6–9 and 2Ch 1:8–10. The literary genre is generally described as protreptic, a form of didactic exhortation.

The central theme of the book is Wisdom itself: first, in relation to humanity, it is the attainment of knowledge as a gift from God; second, in direct relation to God, Wisdom has been – and will be – with him for all eternity.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The work was composed in Greek by an unknown Hellenistic Jew, probably at Alexandria, the largest Jewish centre in the Diaspora (the ‘dispersion’, the name for the Jewish communities outside the land of Israel). The date is uncertain, probably near the end of the 1st Century BCE. It is clearly a product of Hellenistic culture, as indicated by the mention of the four cardinal virtues in 8:7 and the philosophical treatment of the knowledge of God in 13:1–9. There is also a wide range of Greek vocabulary in the work. At the same time, it is intensely Jewish: the author has borrowed phraseology from the Septuagint, the Greek translation that would have been the Bible of his Jewish compatriots, and it is written in the poetic parallelism characteristic of the Hebrew Bible.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος Ι

- 1 Ἀγαπήσατε δικαιοσύνην, οἱ κρίνοντες τὴν γῆν,
φρονήσατε περὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἐν ἀγαθότητι
καὶ ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας ζητήσατε αὐτόν.
2 ὅτι εὐρίσκεται τοῖς μὴ πειράζουσιν αὐτόν,
ἐμφανίζεται δὲ τοῖς μὴ ἀπιστοῦσιν αὐτῷ.
3 σκολιοὶ γὰρ λογισμοὶ χωρίζουσιν ἀπὸ θεοῦ,
δοκιμαζομένη τε ἡ δύναμις ἐλέγχει τοὺς ἄφρονας.
4 ὅτι εἰς κακότεχνον ψυχὴν οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται σοφία
οὐδὲ κατοικήσει ἐν σώματι κατὰ χρεω ἁμαρτίας.
5 ἅγιον γὰρ πνεῦμα παιδείας φεύγεται δόλον
καὶ ἀπαναστήσεται ἀπὸ λογισμῶν ἀσυνέτων
καὶ ἐλεγχθήσεται ἐπελθούσης ἀδικίας.
6 φιλάνθρωπον γὰρ πνεῦμα σοφία
καὶ οὐκ ἀθρώσει βλάσφημον ἀπὸ χειλέων αὐτοῦ·
ὅτι τῶν νεφρῶν αὐτοῦ μάρτυς ὁ θεὸς
καὶ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ ἐπίσκοπος ἀληθείας
καὶ τῆς γλώσσης ἀκουστής.
7 ὅτι πνεῦμα κυρίου πεπλήρωκεν τὴν οἰκουμένην,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 1

- 1 Love uprightness, you who are rulers on earth;
think of the Lord with a good mind
and seek him in simplicity of heart.
2 For, he is found by those who do not test him,
revealing himself to those who do not mistrust him.
3 Perverse thoughts, however, separate people from God,
and power, when put to the test, confounds the stupid.
4 Wisdom will never enter the soul of a wrongdoer,
nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin.
5 For, the holy spirit of instruction flees deceitfulness,
recoils from unintelligent thoughts
and is ashamed by the onset of vice.
6 Wisdom is a spirit friendly to mankind
and she will not leave unpunished a blasphemer's lips;
for, God observes the very soul
and accurately surveys the heart,
listening to every word.
7 For, the spirit of the Lord fills the world,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 1

- 1 The 1st line follows the same Greek formula as 1Ch 29:17 and Ps 45:7. The literal translation of 'with a good mind' is 'in goodness'.
2 The 2nd line is the same Greek expression as in Is 65:1 and Jr 29:13-14 (LXX 36:13-14)
3 The 'power' is that of God, working in the world, which the author will identify indiscriminately with the Spirit and with Wisdom.
4 The body is not evil in itself but may become the instrument of sin and thus dominate the soul.
5 The word here translated as 'ashamed' (ἐλεγχθήσεται) is obscure; the NJB has 'thwarted'.
6 For the 1st line, some MSS read, "The spirit of wisdom is loving to mankind." Another reading for 'blasphemer' is 'one who reviles'.
7 The term translated as 'that which holds all together' is borrowed from Stoic vocabulary. Literally translated, 'world' is 'inhabited earth'.

καὶ τὸ συνέχον τὰ πάντα γινῶσιν ἔχει φωνῆς.
⁸ διὰ τοῦτο φθεγγόμενος ἄδικα οὐδεὶς μὴ λάθῃ,
οὐδὲ μὴ παροδεύσῃ αὐτὸν ἐλέγχουσα ἡ δίκη.
⁹ ἐν γὰρ διαβουλίῳις ἀσεβοῦς ἐξέτασις ἔσται,
λόγων δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀκοή πρὸς κύριον ἥξει
εἰς ἔλεγχον ἀνομημάτων αὐτοῦ.
¹⁰ ὅτι οὓς ζηλώσεως ἀκροᾶται τὰ πάντα,
καὶ θροῦς γογγυσμῶν οὐκ ἀποκρύπτεται.
¹¹ Φυλάξασθε τοίνυν γογγυσμὸν ἀνωφελῆ
καὶ ἀπὸ καταλαλιᾶς φείσασθε γλώσσης·
ὅτι φθέγμα λαθραῖον κενὸν οὐ πορεύσεται,
στόμα δὲ καταψευδόμενον ἀναιρεῖ ψυχήν.
¹² μὴ ζηλοῦτε θάνατον ἐν πλάνῃ ζωῆς ὑμῶν
μηδὲ ἐπισπᾶσθε ὄλεθρον ἐν ἔργοις χειρῶν ὑμῶν.
¹³ ὅτι ὁ θεὸς θάνατον οὐκ ἐποίησεν
οὐδὲ τέρπεται ἐπ' ἀπωλείᾳ ζώντων.
¹⁴ ἔκτισεν γὰρ εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα,
καὶ σωτήριοι αἱ γενέσεις τοῦ κόσμου,
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐταῖς φάρμακον ὀλέθρου
οὔτε ἄδου βασιλῆιον ἐπὶ γῆς.

and that which holds all together knows what is said.
⁸ No one who speaks evil things will go undetected,
nor will avenging Justice pass by such a one.
⁹ For, the schemes of the godless will be examined,
and a report of his words will reach the Lord,
to convict him of his crimes.
¹⁰ Because a jealous ear overhears everything
and the noise of murmurings is not hidden.
¹¹ So, beware of uttering frivolous complaints
and restrain your tongue from finding fault;
even what is said in secret has repercussions,
and a lying mouth deals death to the soul.
¹² Do not court death by the error of your ways,
nor invite destruction through the work of your hands.
¹³ For God did not make Death,
he takes no pleasure in destroying the living.
¹⁴ To exist – for this he created all things;
the creatures of the world have health in them,
in them is no fatal poison,
and Hades has no royal power over the world:

⁸ In place of 'evil things', the NJB has 'what is wrong'.

⁹ For the last line, the WEBBE has, "to bring his lawless deeds to conviction."

¹⁰ For the 2nd line, here following the WEBBE, the NJB reads, "not even a murmur of complaint escapes it."

¹¹ An alternative reading for the 3rd line is 'because no secret word will go unpunished'.

¹² After 'destruction', the WEBBE adds 'upon yourself'.

¹³ The author is thinking simultaneously of physical and spiritual death, which are interconnected.

¹⁴ For the 2nd line, the NRSV has, "the generative forces of the world are wholesome." The literal translation of 'power' is 'house'.

¹⁵ δικαιοσύνη γὰρ ἀθάνατός ἐστιν.

¹⁶ Ἀσεβεῖς δὲ ταῖς χερσὶν καὶ τοῖς λόγοις
προσεκάλεσαντο αὐτόν,
φίλον ἡγησάμενοι αὐτὸν ἐτάκησαν
καὶ συνθήκην ἔθεντο πρὸς αὐτόν,
ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν τῆς ἐκείνου μερίδος εἶναι.

¹⁵ For, uprightness is immortal.

¹⁶ But the godless, with their deeds and their words,
summon Death.
counting him friend, they pined away
and, with him, they make a pact;
for, they are worthy to belong to him.

¹⁵ Some *Latin MSS* add ‘but vice is the acquisition of death’. This ill-supported addition is not likely to represent the original *Greek* text.

¹⁶ The *Greek* text has ‘him’ in place of ‘Death’. Another reading for ‘pined away’ is ‘were consumed by love’.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 2

- ¹ εἶπον γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς
Ὀλίγος ἐστὶν καὶ λυπηρὸς ὁ βίος ἡμῶν,
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἴασις ἐν τελευτῇ ἀνθρώπου,
καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώσθη ὁ ἀναλύσας ἐξ ᾄδου.
² ὅτι αὐτοσχεδίως ἐγενήθημεν
καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐσόμεθα ὡς οὐχ ὑπάρξαντες·
ὅτι καπνὸς ἡ πνοὴ ἐν ῥῖσιν ἡμῶν,
καὶ ὁ λόγος σπινθήρ ἐν κινήσει καρδίας ἡμῶν,
³ οὗ σβεσθέντος τέφρα ἀποβήσεται τὸ σῶμα
καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα διαχυθήσεται ὡς χαῦνος ἀήρ.
⁴ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἡμῶν ἐπιλησθήσεται ἐν χρόνῳ,
καὶ οὐδεὶς μνημονεύσει τῶν ἔργων ἡμῶν·
καὶ παρελεύσεται ὁ βίος ἡμῶν ὡς ἴχνη νεφέλης
καὶ ὡς ὁμίχλη διασκεδασθήσεται
διωχθεῖσα ὑπὸ ἀκτίνων ἡλίου
καὶ ὑπὸ θερμότητος αὐτοῦ βαρυνθεῖσα.
⁵ σκιᾶς γὰρ πάροδος ὁ καιρὸς ἡμῶν,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 2

- ¹ This is the false argument they use among themselves,
" Our life is short and dreary,
there is no remedy when our end comes,
no one is known to have come back from Hades.
² We came into being by chance
and afterwards shall be as though we had never been.
The breath in our nostrils is a puff of smoke;
reason is a spark from the beating of our hearts.
³ Extinguish this and the body turns to ashes,
and the spirit melts away like the yielding air.
⁴ In time, our name will be forgotten,
nobody will remember what we have done;
our life will pass away like wisps of cloud,
dissolving like the mist
that the sun's rays drive away
and that its heat dispels.
⁵ For, our days are the passing of a shadow,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 2

- ¹ An alternative reading for 'come back' is perhaps 'been released' (as the WEBBE). Another reading for 'among' is 'within'.
² This verse argues that fortuitous agglomeration of elements or of atoms accounts for the origin of each individual, and the agglomeration disperses totally in death. The breath of life is attributed to the phenomenon of the heating and combustion of air, and thought is attributed to a spark generated by 'the beating of the heart'.
³ This argument reinforces Greek theories hostile to the reality of the soul, at the same time countering biblical doctrines.
⁴ In the Bible, this forgetfulness is often regarded as the punishment of the godless (see Dt 9:14, Job 18:17, Ps 9:5-7, Si 44:9 *et cetera*).
⁵ An alternative reading for 'nobody comes back' is 'does not bring back'.

καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναποδισμὸς τῆς τελευτῆς ἡμῶν,
 ὅτι κατεσφραγίσθη καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀναστρέφει.
 6 δεῦτε οὖν καὶ ἀπολαύσωμεν τῶν ὄντων ἀγαθῶν
 καὶ χρησώμεθα τῇ κτίσει ὡς ἐν νεότητι σπουδαίως·
 7 οἴνου πολυτελοῦς καὶ μύρων πλησθῶμεν,
 καὶ μὴ παροδευσάτω ἡμᾶς ἄνθος ἔαρος·
 8 στεψώμεθα ῥόδων κάλυξιν πρὶν ἢ μαρανθῆναι·
 9 μηδεὶς ἡμῶν ἄμοιρος ἔστω τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀγερωχίας,
 πανταχῇ καταλίπωμεν σύμβολα τῆς εὐφροσύνης,
 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ μερὶς ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κλῆρος οὗτος.
 10 καταδυναστεύσωμεν πένητα δίκαιον,
 μὴ φεισώμεθα χήρας
 μηδὲ πρεσβύτου ἐντραπῶμεν πολιὰς πολυχρονίους·
 11 ἔστω δὲ ἡμῶν ἡ ἰσχὺς νόμος τῆς δικαιοσύνης,
 τὸ γὰρ ἀσθενὲς ἄχρηστον ἐλέγχεται.
 12 ἐνεδρεύσωμεν τὸν δίκαιον, ὅτι δύσχρηστος ἡμῖν ἔστιν
 καὶ ἐναντιοῦται τοῖς ἔργοις ἡμῶν
 καὶ ὀνειδίζει ἡμῖν ἁμαρτήματα νόμου
 καὶ ἐπιφημίζει ἡμῖν ἁμαρτήματα παιδείας ἡμῶν·

our end is without return,
 the seal is affixed and nobody comes back.
 6 Come then, let us enjoy the good things of today,
 and let us use the creation earnestly as in our youth:
 7 Take our fill of the dearest wines and perfumes,
 on no account forgo the flowers of spring.
 8 Let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither.
 9 Let no meadow be excluded from our orgy;
 let us leave signs of our revelry everywhere;
 since this is our portion, this is our lot!
 10 As for the upright man who is poor, let us oppress him;
 let us not spare the widow,
 nor respect old age, white-haired with many years.
 11 Let our might be the yardstick of right,
 since weakness argues its own futility.
 12 Let us lay traps for the upright man, since he annoys us
 and opposes our way of life,
 reproaches us for our sins against the Law,
 and accuses us of sins against our upbringing.

6 For the 2nd line, here (loosely) following the WEBBE, the NJB has, “and let us use created things with the zest of youth.”

7 ‘Of spring’ follows the LXX, Armenian and Syro-Hexaplar texts; the Textus Receptus and Peshitta have ‘of the air’.

8 Others read ‘rosebuds’ for ‘roses’.

9 ‘No meadow’ is conjectural, following the Vg; the LXX has ‘none of us’.

10 Note the sarcasm: the ‘upright’ is ‘poor’ despite the explicit promises of Scripture (Ps 37:25, 112:3, Pr 3:9–10, 12:21).

11 The ‘old’ are the very people who Scripture teaches should be respected and protected.

12 Note the literary influence of Is 3:10 (LXX), unless the influence is in the opposite direction.

¹³ ἐπαγγέλλεται γινῶσιν ἔχειν θεοῦ
καὶ παῖδα κυρίου ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάζει·
¹⁴ ἐγένετο ἡμῖν εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐννοιῶν ἡμῶν,
βαρὺς ἐστὶν ἡμῖν καὶ βλεπόμενος,
¹⁵ ὅτι ἀνόμοιος τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁ βίος αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ἐξηλλαγμένοι αἱ τρίβοι αὐτοῦ·
¹⁶ εἰς κίβδηλον ἐλογίσθημεν αὐτῷ,
καὶ ἀπέχεται τῶν ὁδῶν ἡμῶν ὡς ἀπὸ ἀκαθαρσιῶν·
μακαρίζει ἔσχατα δικαίων
καὶ ἀλαζονεύεται πατέρα θεόν.
¹⁷ ἴδωμεν εἰ οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ ἀληθεῖς,
καὶ πειράσωμεν τὰ ἐν ἐκβάσει αὐτοῦ·
¹⁸ εἰ γάρ ἐστιν ὁ δίκαιος υἱὸς θεοῦ, ἀντιλήμψεται αὐτοῦ
καὶ ῥύσεται αὐτὸν ἐκ χειρὸς ἀνδραστηκότων.
¹⁹ ὕβρει καὶ βασάνῳ ἐτάσωμεν αὐτόν,
ἵνα γινῶμεν τὴν ἐπιείκειαν αὐτοῦ
καὶ δοκιμάσωμεν τὴν ἀνεξικακίαν αὐτοῦ·
²⁰ θανάτῳ ἀσχήμονι καταδικάσωμεν αὐτόν,
ἔσται γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἐπισκοπὴ ἐκ λόγων αὐτοῦ.

¹³ He claims to have knowledge of God,
and calls himself a child of the Lord.
¹⁴ We see him as a reproof to our way of thinking;
the very sight of him weighs our spirits down.
¹⁵ For his kind of life is not like that of others,
and his ways are quite different.
¹⁶ In his opinion, we are counterfeit;
he avoids our ways as he would filth;
he proclaims the last end of the upright as blessed
and boasts of having God for his father.
¹⁷ Let us see if what he says is true,
and test him to see what sort of end he will have.
¹⁸ For, if the upright man is God's son, God will help him
and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies.
¹⁹ Let us test him with insult and torture,
and thus explore how gentle he is
and put his patience to the test.
²⁰ Let us condemn him to a shameful death
since God will rescue him – or so he claims."

¹³ An alternative translation for 'child' is 'servant'.

¹⁴ The WEBBE includes the 2nd line as part of v. 15.

¹⁵ The godless repeat the accusations levelled against the Jewish people, whose beliefs and practices set them apart from the rest of humanity.

¹⁶ The second line is possibly an allusion to the story of Job (42:12-15) if only temporal retribution is envisaged.

¹⁷ The Vg adds, 'and we shall know what his final lot will be', a second translation of the Greek text.

¹⁸ In the Bible, the expression 'son of God' often means Israel or the Israelites (Ex 4:22-23, Dt 14:1, Is 1:2, Ho 11:1)

¹⁹ The NJB has 'cruelty' in place of 'insult', here following the WEBBE.

²⁰ The literal translation of 'God will save him' is 'there will be a visitation (of God) for him'.

²¹ Ταῦτα ἐλογίσαντο, καὶ ἐπλανήθησαν·
ἀπετύφλωσεν γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἡ κακία αὐτῶν,
²² καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν μυστήρια Θεοῦ
οὐδὲ μισθὸν ἤλπισαν ὁσιότητος
οὐδὲ ἔκριναν γέρας ψυχῶν ἀμώμων.
²³ ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' ἀφθαρσία
καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας αἰδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν·
²⁴ φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον,
πειράζουσιν δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ τῆς ἐκείνου μερίδος ὄντες.

²¹ Thus, they reason but they are misled,
since their malice makes them blind.
²² They do not know the hidden things of God;
they do not hope for the reward of holiness;
they do not believe in a reward for blameless souls.
²³ For, God created human beings to be immortal;
he made them as an image of his own nature.
²⁴ Death came into the world only by the Devil's envy,
as those who belong to him find to their cost.

-
- ²¹ Such false reasoning arises from wickedness and the consequent failure to know God. Human beings were made in the divine image of God for immortality but the 'Devil's envy' (v. 24, cf. 1:16) brought death into the world.
- ²² The 'hidden things' are the secret designs of God as regards the immortal human destiny.
- ²³ The literal translation of 'nature' is 'property', 'eternity' or 'likeness'. The author adapts the theme of the creation of man in the image of God (Gn 1:26) and uses the allusion apparently to emphasise the eternal nature of God.
- ²⁴ 'Devil' in the LXX (διαβόλου) renders the Hebrew 'Satan' (see #Job 1:6).

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 3

- 1 Δικαίων δὲ ψυχαὶ ἐν χειρὶ Θεοῦ,
καὶ οὐ μὴ ἄψηται αὐτῶν βάσανος.
2 ἔδοξαν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀφρόνων τεθνάναι,
καὶ ἐλογίσθη κάκωσις ἢ ἔξοδος αὐτῶν
3 καὶ ἡ ἀφ' ἡμῶν πορεία σύντριμμα,
οἱ δὲ εἰσιν ἐν εἰρήνῃ.
4 καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὅψει ἀνθρώπων ἐὰν κολασθῶσιν,
ἡ ἐλπίς αὐτῶν ἀθανασίας πλήρης·
5 καὶ ὀλίγα παιδευθέντες μεγάλα εὐεργετηθήσονται,
ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἐπείρασεν αὐτοὺς
καὶ εὗρεν αὐτοὺς ἀξίους ἑαυτοῦ·
6 ὥς χρυσὸν ἐν χωνευτηρίῳ ἐδοκίμασεν αὐτοὺς
καὶ ὥς ὀλοκάρπωμα θυσίας προσεδέξατο αὐτούς.
7 καὶ ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς αὐτῶν ἀναλάμψουσιν
καὶ ὥς σπινθήρες ἐν καλάμῃ διαδραμοῦνται·
8 κρινοῦσιν ἔθνη καὶ κρατήσουσιν λαῶν,
καὶ βασιλεύσει αὐτῶν κύριος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 3

- 1 But the souls of the upright are in the hands of God,
and no torment can touch them.
2 To the foolish, they seem to have died;
their departure was thought to be a disaster,
3 their leaving us like an annihilation;
but they are at peace.
4 If, as it seemed to us, they suffered punishment,
their hope was rich with immortality.
5 Slight was their correction, great will be their blessings,
for, God was putting them to the test
and has proved them worthy to be with him.
6 He has tested them like gold in a furnace,
and accepted them as a whole burnt offering.
7 At the time of their visitation, they will shine out;
and, as sparks fly through the stubble, so will they.
8 They will judge nations, rule over peoples,
and the Lord will reign over them forever.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 3

- 1 'In God's hands' means under his protection (cf. Dt 33:3, Is 51:16, Jn 10:28-29) and dependent upon him (cf. Job 12:10).
2 The NJB has 'unenlightened' in place of 'foolish', here following the WEBBE.
3 'Peace' means not only the absence of all evil (Job 3:17-18, Is 57:2) but a state of security under the protection of or in intimacy with God.
4 'Hope' (see #Rm 5:2) has a pre-eminent role in the life of the upright; the object of hope is 'immortality' (ἀθανασίας).
5 'To the test' refers to a touchstone and means of purifying the upright (cf. Gn 22:1, Tb 12:13, Job 1:12, Ps 66:10, 1P 1:6-7).
6 In place of 'whole', the NJB has 'perfect'.
7 The word translated as 'visitation' (ἐπισκοπῆς) here means a favourable intervention by God, possibly coinciding with a judgement.
8 The NJB has 'be their king' in place of 'reign over them', here following the WEBBE.

⁹ οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ' αὐτῷ συνήσουσιν ἀλήθειαν,
καὶ οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῷ·
ὅτι χάρις καὶ ἔλεος τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ.
¹⁰ Οἱ δὲ ἄσεβεῖς καθὰ ἐλογίσαντο
ἔξουσιν ἐπιτιμίαν
οἱ ἀμελήσαντες τοῦ δικαίου
καὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἀποστάντες·
¹¹ σοφίαν γὰρ καὶ παιδείαν ὁ ἐξουθενῶν ταλαίπωρος,
καὶ κενὴ ἡ ἐλπίς αὐτῶν, καὶ οἱ κόποι ἀνόνητοι,
καὶ ἄχρηστα τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν·
¹² αἱ γυναῖκες αὐτῶν ἄφρονες,
καὶ πονηρὰ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν,
ἐπικατάρατος ἡ γένεσις αὐτῶν.
¹³ ὅτι μακαρία στείρα ἡ ἀμίαντος,
ἥτις οὐκ ἔγνω κοίτην ἐν παραπτώματι,
ἔξει καρπὸν ἐν ἐπισκοπῇ ψυχῶν,
¹⁴ καὶ εὐνοῦχος ὁ μὴ ἐργασάμενος ἐν χειρὶ ἀνόμημα
μηδὲ ἐνδυμηθεὶς κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου πονηρά,
δοθήσεται γὰρ αὐτῷ τῆς πίστεως χάρις ἐκλεκτὴ
καὶ κληρὸς ἐν ναῷ κυρίου θυμηρέστερος.

⁹ Those who trust in him will understand the truth;
those who are faithful will live with him in love:
for grace and mercy await his holy ones.
¹⁰ But the godless will be punished
as their reasoning deserves,
those who neglected righteousness
and deserted the Lord.
¹¹ Yes, wretched is he who scorns wisdom and discipline:
their hope is a void and their toil unavailing,
and their achievements unprofitable;
¹² their wives are reckless
and their children depraved,
their descendants accursed.
¹³ Blessed is the barren woman if she is blameless,
and has not known an unlawful bed;
for, she will have fruit at the visitation of souls.
¹⁴ And so is the eunuch whose hand commits no crime,
and who harbours no resentment against the Lord:
a special favour will be granted to him for his loyalty,
a most desirable portion in the Temple of the Lord.

⁹ At the end of this verse, the NJB adds the following line: "and he intervenes on behalf of his chosen."

¹⁰ An alternative translation for 'the righteous' is 'what is right'.

¹¹ The first line is an expression borrowed from Pr 1:7.

¹² The WEBBE includes the last line as part of v. 13.

¹³ In place of 'of souls', many Latin MSS has 'of their souls' or 'of holy souls'; this 'visitation' is probably the same as in v. 7.

¹⁴ The 'Temple of the Lord' here means heaven (cf. Ps 11:4, 18:9, Mi 1:2-3, Rv 3:12, 7:15), where the upright enjoy the presence of God.

¹⁵ ἀγαθῶν γὰρ πόνων καρπὸς εὐκλεής,
καὶ ἀδιάπτωτος ἡ ῥίζα τῆς φρονήσεως.
¹⁶ τέκνα δὲ μοιχῶν ἀτέλεστα ἔσται,
καὶ ἐκ παρανόμου κοίτης σπέρμα ἀφανισθήσεται.
¹⁷ ἐάν τε γὰρ μακρόβιοι γένωνται,
εἰς οὐδὲν λογισθήσονται,
καὶ ἄτιμον ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τὸ γῆρας αὐτῶν.
¹⁸ ἐάν τε ὀξέως τελευτήσωσιν, οὐχ ἔξουσιν ἐλπίδα
οὐδὲ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ διαγνώσεως παραμύδιον.
¹⁹ γενεᾶς γὰρ ἀδίκου χαλεπὰ τὰ τέλη.

¹⁵ For, the fruit of honest labours is glorious,
and the root of understanding does not decay.
¹⁶ But the children of adulterers will not reach maturity;
the offspring of an unlawful bed will disappear.
¹⁷ Even if they live long,
they will count for nothing,
their old age will be without honour at the last.
¹⁸ While, if they die young, they have neither hope
nor comfort on the day of judgement.
¹⁹ For, the end of a race of evildoers is harsh.

-
- ¹⁵ 'Understanding' means the wise discernment of true values conducive to an upright life and assuring conformity to God's will (cf. 4:9, 6:15, 7:7, 8:6, 18, 21). This 'root' is stable (Pr 12:3) and fertile, bearing fruit for eternity (Ws 1:15, 2:23).
- ¹⁶ In biblical usage, the term 'adulterer' is applied to Israel or to Israelites when unfaithful to God (see Is 57:3, Jr 9:1, Ezk 23:37, Ho 3:1). It can therefore also include apostate Jews, or Jews who have contracted marriage with gentile women.
- ¹⁷ Even if they live long and have many children (4:3), the wicked have no justified hope for the future: their children usually die early, are of no account and attest their parents' wickedness.
- ¹⁸ The NJB has 'early' in place of 'young', here following the WEBBE.
- ¹⁹ In this passage (see also v. 12 above) on the wretched lot of a godless lineage, the author repeats ancient biblical themes: the parents are punished in their children and the latter, identified with them in guilt and punishment (see, however, Ezk 18:14–20), will die prematurely or never know honourable old age (see, however, Job 21:7–33). The prospect of severe judgement (v. 18), when God takes a final decision, makes the picture gloomier still (cf. 4:3–5).

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 4

- ¹ κρείσσων ἀτεκνία μετὰ ἀρετῆς·
ἀθανασία γάρ ἐστιν ἐν μνήμῃ αὐτῆς,
ὅτι καὶ παρὰ θεῶν γινώσκεται καὶ παρὰ ἀνθρώποις.
- ² παροῦσάν τε μιμοῦνται αὐτήν
καὶ ποθοῦσιν ἀπελθοῦσαν·
καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι στεφανηφοροῦσα πομπεύει
τὸν τῶν ἀμεινάντων ἄθλων ἀγῶνα νικήσασα.
- ³ πολύγονον δὲ ἀσεβῶν πλήθος οὐ χρησιμεύσει
καὶ ἐκ νόθων μοσχευμάτων οὐ δώσει ῥίζαν εἰς βάθος
οὐδὲ ἀσφαλῆ βάσιν ἐδράσει·
- ⁴ κὰν γὰρ ἐν κλάδοις πρὸς καιρὸν ἀναθάλλῃ,
ἐπισφαλῶς βεβηκότα ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευθήσεται
καὶ ὑπὸ βίας ἀνέμων ἐκριζωθήσεται.
- ⁵ περικλασθήσονται κλῶνες ἀτέλεστοι,
καὶ ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῶν ἄχρηστος, ἄωρος εἰς βρωσιν
καὶ εἰς οὐδὲν ἐπιτήδειος·
- ⁶ ἐκ γὰρ ἀνόμων ὕπνων τέκνα γεννώμενα μάρτυρές
εἰσιν πονηρίας κατὰ γονέων ἐν ἐξετασμῷ αὐτῶν.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 4

- ¹ Better to have no children yet to have virtue,
since immortality perpetuates its memory;
for, God and men both recognise it.
- ² When present, we imitate it
and when absent, we long for it;
crowned, it holds triumph through eternity,
being victorious in fighting for untainted prizes.
- ³ But the vast brood of the godless come to nothing
and their bastard stock will never take deep roots,
never put down firm foundations.
- ⁴ Though they may branch out for a time,
standing unsure, they will be rocked by the wind
and uprooted by the force of the storm.
- ⁵ Their branches, yet unformed, will be snapped off,
their fruit be useless, too unripe to eat
and fit for nothing.
- ⁶ For, children begotten of unlawful beds witness,
when put on trial, to their parents' wickedness.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 4

- ¹ For the first line, most Latin MSS read, "Oh, how beautiful the chaste and radiant race!" (*O quam pulchra est casta generatio, cum claritate!*) This cannot be the original translation but witnesses to a tendency to read the text as a eulogy of chastity.
- ² An alternative translation for 'imitate' is 'honour'; an alternative reading for the last line is 'in a competition of untainted struggles'.
- ³ For the 1st line, the NJB reads, "But the offspring of the godless come to nothing, however prolific."
- ⁴ The NJB lacks the opening 'though' and adds 'but' at the start of the 2nd line.
- ⁵ The NJB & WEBBE divide the lines differently; here, we (try to) follow the arrangement of the Greek text (following Rahlfs' divisions).
- ⁶ The literal translation of 'when put to trial' is 'at their trial', where 'their' can refer either to the children or to the parents.

⁷ Δίκαιος δὲ ἐὰν φθάσῃ τελευτῆσαι,
ἐν ἀναπαύσει ἔσται·
⁸ γῆρας γὰρ τίμιον οὐ τὸ πολυχρόνιον
οὐδὲ ἀριθμῶ ἐτῶν μεμέτρηται,
⁹ πολὺ δὲ ἐστὶν φρόνησις ἀνθρώποις
καὶ ἡλικία γήρως βίος ἀκηλίδωτος.
¹⁰ εὐάρεστος θεῷ γενόμενος ἠγαπήθη
καὶ ζῶν μεταξὺ ἁμαρτωλῶν μετετέθη·
¹¹ ἠρπάγη, μὴ κακία ἀλλάξῃ σύνεσιν αὐτοῦ
ἢ δόλος ἀπατήσῃ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ·
¹² βασκανία γὰρ φαυλότητος ἁμαυροῖ τὰ καλά,
καὶ ῥεμβασμὸς ἐπιθυμίας μεταλλεύει νοῦν ἄκακον.
¹³ τελειοθεῖς ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἐπλήρωσεν χρόνους μακροῦς·
¹⁴ ἀρεστὴ γὰρ ἦν κυρίῳ ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ,
διὰ τοῦτο ἔσπευσεν ἐκ μέσου πονηρίας·
οἱ δὲ λαοὶ ἰδόντες καὶ μὴ νοήσαντες
μηδὲ θέντες ἐπὶ διανοίᾳ τὸ τοιοῦτο,

⁷ The upright, though he dies before his time,
will find rest.
⁸ Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years the true measure of life.
⁹ Understanding, this is grey hairs;
untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
¹⁰ Having won God's favour, he has been loved
and, while living among sinners, has been taken away.
¹¹ He was carried off lest evil may warp his prudence,
or deceitfulness seduce his soul.
¹² For, the fascination of evil obscures good things
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart.
¹³ Having come to perfection so soon, he has lived long.
¹⁴ His soul being pleasing to the Lord,
he has hurried away from the wickedness around him.
Yet, people look on, uncomprehending;
and it does not enter their heads

-
- ⁷ The author is envisaging an extreme case, the death of the upright in youth (see v. 16b) and identifies long life with the inner maturity that attains the true end of human existence and predisposes the soul for blessed immortality.
⁸ For the 2nd line, the WEBBE reads, "nor is its measure given by number of years."
⁹ In place of 'untarnished', the WEBBE has 'unspotted'.
¹⁰ The expression 'taken away' is inspired by the story of the translation of Enoch (Gn 5:24, Si 44:16, Heb 11:5).
¹¹ The NJB & WEBBE have 'understanding' in place of 'prudence'.
¹² For 'obscures good things', the NJB has 'throws good things into the shade'.
¹³ The WEBBE presents this verse as 2 lines.
¹⁴ The literal translation of 'people' is 'the peoples' (or 'others'); this word, taken up later by 'the godless' is slightly surprising; the construction of the sentence is further complicated by an anacoluthon.

¹⁵ ὅτι χάρις καὶ ἔλεος ἐν τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἐπισκοπὴ ἐν τοῖς ὁσίοις αὐτοῦ.
¹⁶ κατακρινεῖ δὲ δίκαιος καμῶν τοὺς ζῶντας ἀσεβεῖς
καὶ νεότης τελεσθεῖσα ταχέως
πολυετὲς γῆρας ἀδίκου·
¹⁷ ὄψονται γὰρ τελευτὴν σοφοῦ
καὶ οὐ νοήσουσιν τί ἐβουλεύσατο περὶ αὐτοῦ
καὶ εἰς τί ἡσφαλίσατο αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος.
¹⁸ ὄψονται καὶ ἐξουθενήσουσιν·
αὐτοὺς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἐκγελάσεται,
¹⁹ καὶ ἔσονται μετὰ τοῦτο εἰς πτώμα ἄτιμον
καὶ εἰς ὕβριν ἐν νεκροῖς δι' αἰῶνος,
ὅτι ῥήξει αὐτοὺς ἀφώνους πρηνεῖς
καὶ σαλεύσει αὐτοὺς ἐκ θεμελίων,
καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου χερσωθήσονται
καὶ ἔσονται ἐν ὀδύνῃ,
καὶ ἡ μνήμη αὐτῶν ἀπολεῖται.
²⁰ ἐλεύσονται ἐν συλλογισμῷ
ἀμαρτημάτων αὐτῶν δειλοί,
καὶ ἐλέγξει αὐτοὺς ἐξ ἐναντίας τὰ ἀνομήματα αὐτῶν.

¹⁵ that grace and mercy await his chosen ones
and that he visits his holy ones.
¹⁶ The upright who dies condemns the godless who live,
and youth quickly perfected
the lengthy old age of the wicked.
¹⁷ These people see the end of the wise
without understanding what the Lord has in store
and why he has taken such a one to safety.
¹⁸ They will look on and sneer,
but the Lord will laugh at them.
¹⁹ Soon, they will be corpses without honour,
objects of horror among the dead forever.
For, he will shatter them
and fling them headlong and dumbfounded,
and shake them from their foundations;
they will be utterly laid waste, a prey to grief,
and their memory will perish.
²⁰ When the count of their sins has been drawn up,
in terror, they will come,
and their crimes, confronting them, will accuse them.

¹⁵ In place of 'visits', the NJB has 'intervenes on behalf of'.

¹⁶ An alternative translation for 'perfected' is 'ended'.

¹⁷ The NJB begins the 3rd line with 'or' in place of 'and', here following the Greek (καί).

¹⁸ In place of 'they', following the Greek text, the NRSV has 'the unrighteous'.

¹⁹ Not having received the honour of burial was considered a frightful punishment (see Is 14:19, Jr 22:19, 36:30, Ezk 29:5).

²⁰ The author is more interested in the state of mind of the sinners, tortured by a guilty conscience (cf. 17:10).

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 5

- ¹ Τότε στήσεται ἐν παρρησίᾳ πολλῇ ὁ δίκαιος
κατὰ πρόσωπον τῶν θλιψάντων αὐτὸν
καὶ τῶν ἀθετούντων τοὺς πόνους αὐτοῦ.
- ² ἰδόντες ταραχθήσονται φόβῳ δεινῷ
καὶ ἐκστήσονται ἐπὶ τῷ παραδόξῳ τῆς σωτηρίας·
- ³ ἐροῦσιν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μετανοοῦντες
καὶ διὰ στενοχωρίαν πνεύματος στενάζονται
καὶ ἐροῦσιν
- ⁴ Οὗτος ἦν, ὃν ἔσχομέν ποτε εἰς γέλωτα
καὶ εἰς παραβολὴν ὀνειδισμοῦ οἱ ἄφρονες·
τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ ἐλογισάμεθα μανίαν
καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον.
- ⁵ πῶς κατελογίσθη ἐν υἱοῖς θεοῦ
καὶ ἐν ἁγίοις ὁ κληρὸς αὐτοῦ ἐστιν;
- ⁶ ἄρα ἐπλανήθημεν ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ ἀληθείας,
καὶ τὸ τῆς δικαιοσύνης φῶς οὐκ ἐπέλαμψεν ἡμῖν,
καὶ ὁ ἥλιος οὐκ ἀνέτειλεν ἡμῖν·

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 5

- ¹ Then the upright will stand up boldly
to face those who had oppressed him
and had thought so little of his sufferings.
- ² Seeing him, they will be seized with fear of doom
and amazed at his unexpected salvation.
- ³ Stricken with remorse,
they will say to one another with groans and
labouring breath,
- ⁴ “This is the one whom we used to mock,
as a parable of reproach, fools that we were!
We thought his life was madness,
and his ending as without honour.
- ⁵ How was he counted among the sons of God
and to have his lot among the holy ones?
- ⁶ Clearly, we have strayed from the way of truth;
the light of justice has not shone for us,
the sun has not risen for us.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 5

- ¹ The term ‘*upright*’ seems to have the same scope as in 2:12ff (see the footnote thereto), though possibly even more generalised.
- ² The NRSV opens the verse with, ‘*When the unrighteous see them*’.
- ³ ‘*With groans*’ follows the *Latin* and *Coptic* texts; the *Greek* text (and NRSV) has ‘*they will groan*’.
- ⁴ The WEBBE includes the 1st 2 lines in v. 3.
- ⁵ ‘*Sons of God*’ and ‘*holy ones*’ can mean the angels; but, on the strength of 2:18, it seems preferable to identify the ‘*sons of God*’ with the elect who enjoy God’s intimacy in heaven and may who equally well be called ‘*holy ones*’ (see Ps 16:3, 34:9, Is 4:3, Dn 7:18,21,22, 8:24).
- ⁶ The WEBBE has ‘*righteousness*’ in place of ‘*justice*’.

⁷ ἀνομίας ἐνεπλήσθημεν τρίβοις καὶ ἀπωλείας
καὶ διωδεύσαμεν ἐρήμους ἀβάτους,
τὴν δὲ ὁδὸν κυρίου οὐκ ἐπέγνωμεν.
⁸ τί ὠφέλησεν ἡμῶς ἡ ὑπερηφανία;
καὶ τί πλοῦτος μετὰ ἀλαζονείας συμβέβληται ἡμῖν;
⁹ παρῆλθεν ἐκεῖνα πάντα ὡς σκιά
καὶ ὡς ἀγγελία παρατρέχουσα·
¹⁰ ὡς ναῦς διερχομένη κυμαινόμενον ὕδωρ,
ἥς διαβάσης οὐκ ἔστιν ἵχνος εὐρεῖν
οὐδὲ ἀτραπὸν τρόπιος αὐτῆς ἐν κύμασιν·
¹¹ ἢ ὡς ὀρνέου διπτάντος ἀέρα
οὐδὲν εὐρίσκεται τεκμήριον πορείας,
πληγῇ δὲ μαστιζόμενον ταρσῶν πνεῦμα κοῦφον
καὶ σχιζόμενον βία ῥοίζου
κινουμένων πτερύγων διωδεύθη,
καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο οὐχ εὐρέθη σημεῖον
ἐπιβάσεως ἐν αὐτῷ·
¹² ἢ ὡς βέλους βληθέντος ἐπὶ σκοπὸν
τμηθεὶς ὁ ἀήρ εὐθέως εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀνελύθη
ὡς ἀγνοῆσαι τὴν δίοδον αὐτοῦ·

⁷ We left no path of lawlessness or ruin unexplored,
and crossed trackless deserts,
but the way of the Lord we did not know.
⁸ What good has arrogance been to us?
What good have riches and boasting brought us?
⁹ All those things have passed like a shadow,
passed like a fleeting rumour.
¹⁰ Like a ship that cuts through heaving waves,
leaving no trace to show where it has passed,
no wake from its keel in the waves.
¹¹ Or like a bird flying through the air,
leaving no proof of its passing;
it whips the light air with the stroke of its pinions,
tears it apart in its whirling rush,
drives its way onward with sweeping wing,
and afterwards no sign of its passage
is to be found.
¹² Or like an arrow shot at a mark,
the pierced air closing so quickly on itself,
there is no knowing which way the arrow has passed.

⁷ Cf. Pr 14:14.

⁸ For the 1st line, the WEBBE reads, "What did our arrogance profit us?"

⁹ For 'fleeting rumour', the WEBBE has 'rumour that runs by'.

¹⁰ The WEBBE has 'path' in place of 'wake'.

¹¹ The translation of the last line is uncertain.

¹² For the last line, the WEBBE reads, "so that men don't know where it passed through."

- ¹³ οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς γεννηθέντες ἐξελίπομεν
καὶ ἀρετῆς μὲν σημεῖον οὐδὲν ἔσχομεν δεῖξαι,
ἐν δὲ τῇ κακίᾳ ἡμῶν κατεδαπανήθημεν.
- ¹⁴ ὅτι ἐλπίς ἀσεβοῦς ὡς φερόμενος χνοῦς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου
καὶ ὡς πάχνη ὑπὸ λαίλαπος διωχθεῖσα λεπτὴ
καὶ ὡς καπνὸς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου διεχύθη
καὶ ὡς μνεῖα καταλύτου μονοήμερου παρώδευσεν.
- ¹⁵ Δίκαιοι δὲ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ζῶσιν,
καὶ ἐν κυρίῳ ὁ μισθὸς αὐτῶν,
καὶ ἡ φροντίς αὐτῶν παρὰ ὑψίστου.
- ¹⁶ διὰ τοῦτο λήμψονται τὸ βασίλειον τῆς εὐπρεπείας
καὶ τὸ διάδημα τοῦ κάλλους ἐκ χειρὸς κυρίου,
ὅτι τῇ δεξιᾷ σκεπάσει αὐτοὺς
καὶ τῷ βραχίονι ὑπερασπιεῖ αὐτῶν.
- ¹⁷ λήμψεται πανοπλίαν τὸν ζῆλον αὐτοῦ
καὶ ὀπλοποιήσῃ τὴν κτίσιν εἰς ἄμυναν ἐχθρῶν·
- ¹⁸ ἐνδύσεται θώρακα δικαιοσύνην
καὶ περιθήσεται κόρυθα κρίσιν ἀνυπόκριτον·
- ¹⁹ λήμψεται ἀσπίδα ἀκαταμάχητον ὁσιότητα,

- ¹³ So also with us: scarcely born, we disappear;
and we have no trace of virtue to show,
we have spent ourselves in our own wickedness!"
- ¹⁴ For, the hope of the godless is like chaff in the wind,
like a fine spray driven by the storm;
it disperses like smoke before the wind,
goes away like the memory of a one-day guest.
- ¹⁵ But the upright live forever,
and their recompense is with the Lord,
and the Most High takes care of them.
- ¹⁶ Therefore, they will receive the glorious crown
and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand;
for, he will shelter them with his right hand
and, with his arm, he will shield them.
- ¹⁷ For armour, he will take his jealous love;
he will arm Creation to punish his enemies.
- ¹⁸ He will put on justice as a breastplate
and, for helmet, wear impartial judgement.
- ¹⁹ He will take holiness as an invincible shield,

¹³ At the end of this verse, most Latin MSS add, "This is what those who have sinned say in hell." (*Talia dixerunt in inferno hi qui peccaverunt*.)

¹⁴ 'Spray' follows the Vg (*spuma*) and Peshitta; the LXX has 'hoarfrost' (πάχνη), except for a few MSS, which have 'spider's web'.

¹⁵ An alternative reading for the 2nd line is 'their recompense is in the Lord'.

¹⁶ For 'glorious crown', here following the NJB, the WEBBE has 'crown of royal dignity'.

¹⁷ The NRSV has 'repel' in place of 'punish'.

¹⁸ The NJB has 'his forthright' in place of 'impartial', here following the WEBBE.

¹⁹ The NJB applied 'invincible' to 'holiness'; here, we follow the WEBBE.

²⁰ ὁξυνεῖ δὲ ἀπότομον ὀργὴν εἰς ῥομφαίαν,
 συνεκπολεμήσει δὲ αὐτῷ
 ὁ κόσμος ἐπὶ τοὺς παράφρονas.
²¹ πορεύονται εὖστοχοι βολίδες ἀστραπῶν
 καὶ ὡς ἀπὸ εὐκύκλου τόξου τῶν νεφῶν
 ἐπὶ σκοπὸν ἀλοῦνται,
²² καὶ ἐκ πετροβόλου θυμοῦ πλήρεις ῥιφήσονται χάλασαι·
 ἀγανακτήσει κατ' αὐτῶν ὕδωρ θαλάσσης,
 ποταμοὶ δὲ συγκλύσουσιν ἀποτόμως·
²³ ἀντιστήσεται αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα δυνάμεως
 καὶ ὡς λαῖλαψ ἐκλικμήσει αὐτούς·
 καὶ ἐρημώσει πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἀνομία,
 καὶ ἡ κακοπραγία περιτρέψει θρόνους δυναστῶν.

²⁰ of his pitiless wrath, he will forge a sword,
 and the world will march with him
 to fight the reckless.
²¹ Bolts truly aimed, the shafts of lightning will leap,
 and from the clouds, as from a full-drawn bow,
 fly to their mark;
²² and the catapult will hurl hailstones charged with fury.
 The waters of the sea will rage against them,
 the rivers engulf them without pity.
²³ A mighty gale will rise against them
 and winnow them like a hurricane.
 This wickedness will lay the whole earth waste
 and evildoing overturn the thrones of the mighty.

²⁰ On the divine 'sword', see Dt 32:41, Is 66:16, Ezk 21. In the Bible, God often uses nature to execute his judgements.

²¹ The storm is the traditional image of divine intervention (see #Ex 19:16). On the 'shafts of lightning', see Ps 18:14, Hab 3:11, Zc 9:14.

²² The 'hailstones' and the raging waters reflect the time of the Exodus (Ex 9:23–25) and of Joshua (Jos 10:11), and the judgements of God foretold by the Prophets (Is 28:17, Ezk 13:13, 38:22, see also Rv 8:7, 11:19, 16:21) – as the Sea of Reeds swallowed the Egyptians (Ex 14:26ff), and as the Kishon washed away the corpses of Sisera's soldiers (Jg 5:21).

²³ The WEBBE has 'princes' in place of 'the mighty', here following the NJB & LXX.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 6

- 1 **Ἀκούσατε οὖν, βασιλεῖς, καὶ σύνετε·**
μάθετε, δικασταὶ περάτων γῆς·
- 2 **ἐνωτίσασθε, οἱ κρατοῦντες πλήθους**
καὶ γεγαυρωμένοι ἐπὶ ὄχλοις ἐθνῶν·
- 3 **ὅτι ἐδόθη παρὰ κυρίου ἡ κράτησις ὑμῶν**
καὶ ἡ δυναστεία παρὰ ὑψίστου,
ὃς ἐξετάσει ὑμῶν τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὰς βουλὰς διερευνήσει·
- 4 **ὅτι ὑπηρέται ὄντες τῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλείας**
οὐκ ἐκρίνατε ὀρθῶς
οὐδὲ ἐφυλάξατε νόμον
οὐδὲ κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπορεύθητε.
- 5 **φρικτῶς καὶ ταχέως ἐπιστήσεται ὑμῖν,**
ὅτι κρίσις ἀπότομος ἐν τοῖς ὑπερέχουσιν γίνεται.
- 6 **ὁ γὰρ ἐλάχιστος συγγνωστός ἐστιν ἐλέους,**
δυνατοὶ δὲ δυνατῶς ἐτασθήσονται·
- 7 **οὐ γὰρ ὑποστελεῖται πρόσωπον ὁ πάντων δεσπότης**
οὐδὲ ἐντραπήσεται μέγεθος,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 6

- 1 Listen then, kings, and understand;
rulers of remotest lands, take warning.
- 2 Hear this, you who govern great populations,
taking pride in the hosts of your nations!
- 3 For sovereignty is given to you by the Lord,
and, power by the Most High,
who will probe your acts and scrutinise your plans.
- 4 If, therefore, as servants of his kingdom,
you have not ruled justly
nor observed the Law,
nor followed the will of God,
he will fall on you swiftly and terribly.
For, on the highly placed, a stern judgement falls.
- 6 The lowly man is pardoned, out of pity,
but the mighty will be mightily tormented.
- 7 For, the Sovereign of all does not cower before anyone;
he does not stand in awe of greatness,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 6

- 1 The Vg begins this chapter with an addition, evidently a title, wherein it is v. 1: "*Wisdom is better than force and a prudent man than a strong one.*" (*Melior est sapientia quam vires, et vir prudens quam fortis.*)
- 2 Another reading for the 2nd line is, "*taking pride in hosts of nations.*"
- 3 The doctrine of the divine origin of power had already been variously asserted in Scripture, notably in 1Ch 29:12, Pr 8:15–16, Si 10:4, Dn 2:37.
- 4 An alternative translation for 'kingdom' is 'sovereignty'.
- 5 The NJB lacks the opening 'For' (ὅτι) in the 2nd line.
- 6 The NJB lacks the word, 'man', here following the WEBBE.
- 7 In place of 'Sovereign', the NJB has 'Lord'.

ὅτι μικρὸν καὶ μέγαν αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν
 ὁμοίως τε προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων,
⁸ τοῖς δὲ κραταιοῖς ἰσχυρὰ ἐφίσταται ἔρευνα.
⁹ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὖν, ὦ τύραννοι, οἱ λόγοι μου,
 ἵνα μάθητε σοφίαν καὶ μὴ παραπέσητε·
¹⁰ οἱ γὰρ φυλάξαντες ὁσίως τὰ ὅσια ὁσιωθήσονται,
 καὶ οἱ διδασκόμενοι αὐτὰ εὐρήσουσιν ἀπολογία.
¹¹ ἐπιθυμήσατε οὖν τῶν λόγων μου,
 ποθήσατε καὶ παιδευθήσεσθε.
¹² Λαμπρὰ καὶ ἀμάραντός ἐστιν ἡ σοφία
 καὶ εὐχερῶς θεωρεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγαπώντων αὐτήν
 καὶ εὐρίσκεται ὑπὸ τῶν ζητούντων αὐτήν,
¹³ φθάνει τοὺς ἐπιθυμοῦντας προγνωσθῆναι.
¹⁴ ὁ ὀρθρίσας πρὸς αὐτήν οὐ κοπιᾷσει·
 πάρεδρον γὰρ εὐρήσει τῶν πυλῶν αὐτοῦ.
¹⁵ τὸ γὰρ ἐνθυμηθῆναι περὶ αὐτῆς φρονήσεως τελειότης,
 καὶ ὁ ἀγρυπνήσας δι' αὐτήν ταχέως ἀμέριμνος ἔσται·

since he himself has made small and great
 and provides for all alike.
⁸ But a searching trial awaits those who wield power,
⁹ So, princes, my words are meant for you,
 so that you may learn wisdom and not fall into error.
¹⁰ Those who keep holy things in holiness will be holy
 and, being taught them, will find defence in them.
¹¹ Set your heart, therefore, on what I have to say,
 listen with a will, and you will be instructed.
¹² Wisdom is brilliant; she never fades.
 And, by those who love her, she is readily seen;
 and, by those who seek her, she is readily found.
¹³ She makes herself known to those who desire her.
¹⁴ He who rises early to seek her will have no trouble
 for, he will find her sitting at the gates.
¹⁵ Meditating on her is understanding in its perfect form,
 and he who watches for her will soon be free of care.

⁸ The WEBBE has 'strict' in place of 'searching'.

⁹ Another reading for 'princes' is 'monarchs'.

¹⁰ The 1st line refers to those who religiously obey the will of God and who will be recognised as 'holy ones' (5:5) at the judgement.

¹¹ The WEBBE adds 'princes' after 'you'.

¹² In the rest of this chapter, the word 'Wisdom' means not only a doctrine (as in v. 9) but divine truth shining through that doctrine and appealing to the human soul (v. 13, but compare, however, Jn 6:44, Ph 2:13, 1Jn 4:19).

¹³ For this verse, the NJB reads, "She anticipates those who desire her by making herself known first."

¹⁴ The NJB has 'door' in place of 'gates'.

¹⁵ In place of 'watches', here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'keeps awake'.

¹⁶ ὅτι τοὺς ἀξίους αὐτῆς αὐτὴ περιέρχεται ζητοῦσα
καὶ ἐν ταῖς τρίβοις φαντάζεται αὐτοῖς εὐμενῶς
καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἐπινοίᾳ ὑπαντᾷ αὐτοῖς.
¹⁷ ἀρχὴ γὰρ αὐτῆς ἡ ἀληθεστάτη παιδείας ἐπιθυμία,
φροντὶς δὲ παιδείας ἀγάπη,
¹⁸ ἀγάπη δὲ τήρησις νόμων αὐτῆς,
προσοχὴ δὲ νόμων βεβαίωσις ἀφθαρσίας,
¹⁹ ἀφθαρσία δὲ ἐγγὺς εἶναι ποιεῖ θεοῦ.
²⁰ ἐπιθυμία ἄρα σοφίας ἀνάγει ἐπὶ βασιλείαν.
²¹ εἰ οὖν ἤδεσθε ἐπὶ θρόνοις καὶ σκήπτροις,
τύραννοι λαῶν,
τιμήσατε σοφίαν, ἵνα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα βασιλεύσητε.
²² τί δέ ἐστιν σοφία καὶ πῶς ἐγένετο, ἀπαγγελῶ
καὶ οὐκ ἀποκρύψω ὑμῖν μυστήρια,
ἀλλὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενέσεως ἐξιχνιάσω
καὶ θήσω εἰς τὸ ἐμφανὲς τὴν γνῶσιν αὐτῆς
καὶ οὐ μὴ παροδεύσω τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

¹⁶ For, she herself looks around for those worthy of her
and graciously appears to them on their ways,
anticipating their every thought.
¹⁷ Her sincere beginning is the desire for instruction:
care for instruction means loving her.
¹⁸ Loving her means keeping her laws,
attention to her laws guarantees incorruptibility:
¹⁹ incorruptibility brings us near to God.
²⁰ The desire for Wisdom thus leads to a kingdom.
²¹ If then, thrones and sceptres delight you,
monarchs of the nations,
honour Wisdom, so that you may reign forever.
²² What Wisdom is and how she was born, I shall explain;
and I shall hide no mysteries from you
but shall follow her steps from the outset of her origin
and set out what we know of her in full light,
without departing from the truth.

¹⁶ An alternative translation for the last line is 'by all sorts of inventions'.

¹⁷ An alternative translation for the 1st line is, "For, Wisdom begins with the sincere desire for instruction."

¹⁸ Here, and in v. 19, the NRSV has 'immortality' in place of 'incorruptibility'.

¹⁹ The word, 'incorruptibility', (ἀφθαρσία) is used here in a legal sense: concentration on observing the laws of Wisdom does not itself confer incorruptibility but rather gives rise to a real and incontestable claim to receive blessed incorruptibility or immortality from God (cf. 2:23, 3:4)

²⁰ The 'kingdom' here is God's eternal kingdom, in which rulers and others who truly desire wisdom participate.

²¹ At the end of this verse, many Latin MSS add, "love the light of Wisdom, all you who are leaders of peoples." (*diligite lumen sapientiae, omnes qui praestis populis.*) This supplementary text (v. 23 in the Vg) is either a gloss or a doublet.

²² The 2nd line alludes to the jealously guarded secrets of mystery religions and doctrines, in which the revelation was given only to initiates.

- ²³ οὔτε μὴν φθόνῳ τετηκότι συνοδεύσω,
ὅτι οὗτος οὐ κοινωνήσει σοφίᾳ.
²⁴ πλῆθος δὲ σοφῶν σωτηρία κόσμου,
καὶ βασιλεὺς φρόνιμος εὐστάθεια δήμου.
²⁵ ὥστε παιδεύεσθε τοῖς ῥήμασίν μου,
καὶ ὠφεληθήσεσθε.

- ²³ Indeed, I will not travel with consuming envy;
for, this has nothing in common with Wisdom.
²⁴ But a multitude of wise men is salvation to the world
and a sagacious king the stability of a people.
²⁵ Learn, therefore, from my words
and you will profit.

²³ For the 1st line, here following the WEBBE, the NJB reads, “*Blighting envy is not the companion for me.*”

²⁴ For the 1st line, here following the WEBBE, the NJB reads, “*In the greatest number of wise men lies the world’s salvation.*”

²⁵ For the 2nd line, the NJB has, “*the gain will be yours.*”

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 7

- ¹ Εἰμὶ μὲν ἀνθρώπος θνητὸς ὅσους ἅπαντες
καὶ γηγενεὺς ἀπόγονος πρωτοπλάστου·
καὶ ἐν κοιλίᾳ μητρὸς ἐγλύφην σὰρξ
² δεκαμηνιαίῳ χρόνῳ παγεῖς ἐν αἵματι
ἐκ σπέρματος ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἡδονῆς ὕπνῳ συνελθούσης.
³ καὶ ἐγὼ δὲ γενόμενος ἔσπασα τὸν κοινὸν ἀέρα
καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ὁμοιοπαθεῖ κατέπεσον γῆν
πρώτην φωνὴν τὴν ὁμοίαν πᾶσιν ἴσα κλαίων·
⁴ ἐν σπαργάνοις ἀνετράφην καὶ φροντίσιν.
⁵ οὐδεὶς γὰρ βασιλέων ἑτέραν ἔσχεν γενέσεως ἀρχήν,
⁶ μία δὲ πάντων εἴσοδος εἰς τὸν βίον ἔξοδος τε ἴση.
⁷ διὰ τοῦτο εὐξάμην, καὶ φρόνησις ἐδόθη μοι·
ἐπεκαλεσάμην, καὶ ἦλθεν μοι πνεῦμα σοφίας.
⁸ προέκρινα αὐτὴν σκήπτρων καὶ θρόνων
καὶ πλοῦτον οὐδὲν ἡγήσάμην ἐν συγκρίσει αὐτῆς·
⁹ οὐδὲ ὁμοίωσα αὐτῇ λίθον ἀτίμητον,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 7

- ¹ I too am a mortal man, like everyone else,
a descendant of the first man formed from the earth.
I was moulded in flesh inside a mother's womb,
² where, for ten months, in blood I acquired substance –
the result of virile seed and pleasure of marriage.
³ I too, when I was born, drew in the common air;
I fell on the same ground that bears us all
and crying was the first sound I made, like all others.
⁴ I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes.
⁵ No king has known any other beginning of existence;
⁶ for, there is only one way into life and one way out.
⁷ So, I prayed and understanding was given to me;
I entreated and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.
⁸ I esteemed her more than sceptres and thrones;
compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
⁹ I reckoned no precious stone to be her equal,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 7

- ¹ The words, 'a mortal man' (θνητὸς ἄνθρωπος), are omitted by *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus*; other MSS have just 'mortal'.
² The period of time here is ten *lunar* months. On the way in which the embryo was thought to develop, see #Job 10:10.
³ The NJB has 'everyone else' in place of 'all others'; the word, 'others' is not in the Greek text but is implied.
⁴ For this verse, the NJB reads, "I was nurtured in swaddling clothes, with every care."
⁵ The WEBBE lacks the words, 'of existence'.
⁶ At the end of this verse, the NJB adds 'of it'.
⁷ The WEBBE does not take 'Wisdom' as a proper noun, reading 'a spirit of wisdom'.
⁸ This elaboration depends on 1K 3:9–10 and on those texts exalting Wisdom as the most precious of things (Job 28:15–19, Pr 3:14–15, 8:10–11, 16).
⁹ The NJB has 'mud' in place of 'clay', here following the WEBBE.

ὅτι ὁ πᾶς χρυσὸς ἐν ὅψει αὐτῆς ψάμμος ὀλίγη,
 καὶ ὡς πηλὸς λογισθήσεται ἄργυρος ἐναντίον αὐτῆς.
¹⁰ ὑπὲρ ὑγίειαν καὶ εὐμορφίαν ἠγάπησα αὐτήν
 καὶ προειλόμην αὐτήν ἀντὶ φωτὸς ἔχειν,
 ὅτι ἀκοίμητον τὸ ἐκ ταύτης φέγγος.
¹¹ ἦλθεν δέ μοι τὰ ἀγαθὰ ὁμοῦ πάντα μετ' αὐτῆς
 καὶ ἀναρίθμητος πλοῦτος ἐν χερσὶν αὐτῆς.
¹² εὐφράνθην δὲ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἠγεῖται σοφία,
 ἠγνούουν δὲ αὐτήν γενέτιν εἶναι τούτων.
¹³ ἀδόλως τε ἔμαθον ἀφρόνως τε μεταδίδωμι,
 τὸν πλοῦτον αὐτῆς οὐκ ἀποκρύπτομαι.
¹⁴ ἀνεκλιπῆς γὰρ θησαυρός ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις,
 ὃν οἱ κτησάμενοι πρὸς θεὸν ἐστεύλαντο φιλίαν
 διὰ τὰς ἐκ παιδείας δωρεὰς συσταθέντες.
¹⁵ Ἔμοι δὲ δώη ὁ θεὸς εἰπεῖν κατὰ γνώμην
 καὶ ἐνθυμηθῆναι ἀξίως τῶν δεδομένων,
 ὅτι αὐτὸς καὶ τῆς σοφίας ὁδηγός ἐστιν
 καὶ τῶν σοφῶν διορθωτής.
¹⁶ ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ οἱ λόγοι ἡμῶν
 πᾶσά τε φρόνησις καὶ ἐργατειῶν ἐπιστήμη.

for, compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand,
 and, beside her, silver ranks as clay.
¹⁰ I loved her more than health or beauty,
 I preferred her to the light,
 since her radiance never sleeps.
¹¹ In her company, all good things came to me,
 and, at her hands, innumerable riches.
¹² All these delighted me, since Wisdom brings them,
 though I did not then realise that she was their mother.
¹³ What I learnt diligently, I shall pass on liberally;
 I shall not conceal how rich she is.
¹⁴ For she is to human beings and inexhaustible treasure,
 and those who acquire this win God's friendship,
 commended to him by the gifts of instruction.
¹⁵ May God grant me to speak as he would wish
 and conceive thoughts worthy of the gifts given to me;
 for, he is both guide to Wisdom
 and the director of the wise.
¹⁶ For, we are in his hand, yes, ourselves and our sayings,
 and all intellectual and all practical knowledge.

¹⁰ The WEBBE has 'bright shining' for 'radiance'.

¹¹ In place of 'innumerable riches', the NJB has 'incalculable wealth'.

¹² In place of 'mother' (here following the Greek text), the Textus Receptus has 'origin'.

¹³ Throughout this section, the feminine pronoun refers to Wisdom personified.

¹⁴ In place of 'acquire this', here following the Greek text, the Textus Receptus has 'use this'.

¹⁵ The NJB has 'I have received' in place of 'given to me'.

¹⁶ For the 1st line, the WEBBE reads, "For, both we and our words are in his hand."

¹⁷ αὐτὸς γάρ μοι ἔδωκεν τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν ἀψευδῆ
 εἰδέναι σύστασιν κόσμου
 καὶ ἐνέργειαν στοιχείων,
¹⁸ ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητα χρόνων,
 τροπῶν ἀλλαγὰς καὶ μεταβολὰς καιρῶν,
¹⁹ ἐνιαυτοῦ κύκλους καὶ ἄστρον θέσεις,
²⁰ φύσεις ζώων καὶ θυμούς θηρίων,
 πνευμάτων βίας καὶ διαλογισμούς ἀνθρώπων,
 διαφορὰς φυτῶν καὶ δυνάμεις ῥιζῶν,
²¹ ὅσα τέ ἐστιν κρυπτὰ καὶ ἐμφανῆ ἔγνων·
 ἡ γὰρ πάντων τεχνίτις ἐδίδαξέν με σοφία.
²² Ἔστιν γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα νοερόν,
 ἅγιον, μονογενές, πολυμερές, λεπτόν,
 εὐκίνητον, τρανόν, ἀμόλυντον,
 σαφές, ἀπῆμαντον, φιλάγαθον, ὀξύ,
²³ ἀκώλυτον, εὐεργετικόν, φιλόανθρωπον,
 βέβαιον, ἀσφαλές, ἀμέριμνον,
 παντοδύναμον, πανεπίσκοπον
 καὶ διὰ πάντων χωροῦν πνευμάτων

¹⁷ He it was who gave me sure knowledge of what exists,
 to know the structure of the world
 and the action of the elements,
¹⁸ the beginning, end, and middle of times,
 the changing of the solstices and the cycle of seasons,
¹⁹ the cycles of the year and the position of the stars,
²⁰ the nature of animals and the instincts of wild beasts,
 the powers of spirits and human mental processes,
 the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots.
²¹ Now I understand everything, hidden or visible;
 for, Wisdom, the designer of all things, has taught me.
²² For within her is a spirit intelligent, holy,
 unique, manifold, subtle,
 mobile, incisive, unsullied,
 lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, shrewd,
²³ irresistible, beneficent, friendly to human beings,
 steadfast, dependable, unperturbed,
 almighty, all surveying,
 penetrating through all spirits,

¹⁷ A more literal translation of ‘action’ is ‘energy’.

¹⁸ The NJB & WEBBE have ‘alternation’ in place of ‘changing’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘year’ (here following the Greek text), the *Textus Receptus* has ‘years’.

²⁰ An alternative rendition for ‘spirits’ is ‘winds’ (as the WEBBE).

²¹ Bringing 1K 5:9–14 up to date, the author endows Solomon with the kind of knowledge prized in the Hellenistic culture of his own day.

²² Here, the author contributes his own original elaboration of earlier personifications of Wisdom (see #Pr 8:22).

²³ The NJB transposes the word, ‘spirits’ (πνευμάτων) to the end of the last line.

νοερῶν καθαρῶν λεπτοτάτων.

- ²⁴ πάσης γὰρ κινήσεως κινητικώτερον σοφία,
διήκει δὲ καὶ χωρεῖ διὰ πάντων διὰ τὴν καθαρότητα·
- ²⁵ ἀτμὶς γάρ ἐστιν τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ δυνάμεως
καὶ ἀπόρροια τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δόξης εἰλικρινής·
διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲν μεμιαμμένον εἰς αὐτὴν παρεμπίπτει.
- ²⁶ ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστιν φωτὸς αἰδίου
καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνεργείας
καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ.
- ²⁷ μία δὲ οὔσα πάντα δύναται
καὶ μένουσα ἐν αὐτῇ τὰ πάντα καινίζει
καὶ κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα
φίλους Θεοῦ καὶ προφῆτας κατασκευάζει·
- ²⁸ οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ ὁ Θεὸς εἰ μὴ τὸν σοφία συνοικοῦντα.
- ²⁹ ἔστιν γὰρ αὕτη εὐπρεπεστέρα ἡλίου
καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἄστρον θέσιν.
φωτὶ συγκρινομένη εὐρίσκεται προτέρα·
- ³⁰ τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ διαδέχεται νύξ,
σοφίας δὲ οὐ κατισχύει κακία.

intelligent, pure, and most subtle.

- ²⁴ For, Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion;
she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things.
- ²⁵ She is a breath of the power of God,
pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty,
so nothing impure can find its way into her.
- ²⁶ For, she is a reflection of the eternal light,
an untarnished mirror of God's active power,
and an image of his goodness.
- ²⁷ Although she is alone, she can do everything;
herself unchanging, she renews the world,
and, passing down generation after generation,
she makes them into God's friends and prophets.
- ²⁸ For, God loves only those who dwell with Wisdom.
- ²⁹ She is indeed more splendid than the sun
and she outshines all the constellations;
compared with light, she takes first place.
- ³⁰ For, light must yield to night
but, against Wisdom, evil cannot prevail.

²⁴ The WEBBE does not take 'Wisdom' as a proper noun.

²⁵ The name, 'the Almighty', translates παντοκράτορος.

²⁶ The 'eternal light' is God.

²⁷ God's 'friends' are the likes of Abraham (2Ch 20:7, Is 41:8, Jm 2:23) and Moses (Ex 33:11).

²⁸ The NRSV reads, "For God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom."

²⁹ The WEBBE has 'fairer' in place of 'more splendid'.

³⁰ An alternative reading for 'cannot' is 'does not'.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 8

- ¹ διατείνει δὲ ἀπὸ πέρας ἐπὶ πέρας εὐρώστως
καὶ διοικεῖ τὰ πάντα χρηστῶς.
- ² Ταύτην ἐφίλησα καὶ ἐξεζήτησα ἐκ νεότητός μου
καὶ ἐζήτησα νύμφην ἀγαγέσθαι ἐμαυτῷ
καὶ ἐραστῆς ἐγενόμην τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῆς.
- ³ εὐγένειαν δοξάζει συμβίωσιν θεοῦ ἔχουσα,
καὶ ὁ πάντων δεσπότης ἠγάπησεν αὐτήν·
- ⁴ μύστις γὰρ ἐστὶν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιστήμης
καὶ αἰρετὶς τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.
- ⁵ εἰ δὲ πλοῦτός ἐστιν ἐπιθυμητὸν κτῆμα ἐν βίῳ,
τί σοφίας πλουσιώτερον τῆς τὰ πάντα ἐργαζομένης;
- ⁶ εἰ δὲ φρόνησις ἐργάζεται,
τίς αὐτῆς τῶν ὄντων μᾶλλον ἐστὶν τεχνίτις;
- ⁷ καὶ εἰ δικαιοσύνην ἀγαπᾷ τις,
οἱ πόνοι ταύτης εἰσὶν ἀρεταί·
σωφροσύνην γὰρ καὶ φρόνησιν ἐκδιδάσκει,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 8

- ¹ She reaches strongly from one end to the other
and she governs the whole world for its good.
- ² I loved and searched for her from my youth;
I resolved to have her as my bride,
I fell in love with her beauty.
- ³ She enhances her noble birth by sharing God's life
and the Master of All has always loved her.
- ⁴ Indeed, she shares the secrets of God's knowledge
and she chooses what he will do.
- ⁵ If, in this life, wealth is a desirable possession,
what is wealthier than Wisdom, who make all things?
- ⁶ Or, if it is the intellect that is at work,
then who, more than she, designs whatever exists.
- ⁷ Or, if it is uprightness you love,
then virtues are the fruit of her labours,
since it is she who teaches temperance and prudence,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 8

- ¹ After 'one end', the NJB adds 'of the world' but these words are not in the Greek text.
- ² In the 1st line, the NJB has 'Wisdom' in place of 'her', here following the Greek text.
- ³ The WEBBE has 'Sovereign Lord' in place of 'Master'.
- ⁴ Wisdom is God's associate in his works and his agent in making all things (Pr 8:22 – 30, see also Jn 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2).
- ⁵ The NJB ends with, "whose work is everywhere."
- ⁶ The WEBBE has 'wisdom' in place of 'she', here following the Greek text.
- ⁷ The author perhaps takes up an allegorical interpretation of Pr 31:10–31, applied to Wisdom (see #Pr 31:30). He then lists the four great virtues of the Greek philosophers, later to become the 'cardinal virtues' of Christian theology. The WEBBE has 'wisdom's labours'; cf. #6.

δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀνδρείαν,
 ὣν χρησιμώτερον οὐδέν ἐστιν ἐν βίῳ ἀνθρώποις.
 8 εἰ δὲ καὶ πολυπειρίαν ποθεῖ τις,
 οἶδεν τὰ ἀρχαῖα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα εἰκάζει,
 ἐπίσταται στροφὰς λόγων καὶ λύσεις αἰνιγμάτων,
 σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα προγινώσκει
 καὶ ἐκβάσεις καιρῶν καὶ χρόνων.
 9 ἔκρινα τοίνυν ταύτην ἀγαγέσθαι πρὸς συμβίωσιν
 εἰδὼς ὅτι ἔσται μοι σύμβουλος ἀγαθῶν
 καὶ παραίνεσις φροντίδων καὶ λύπης.
 10 ἔξω δι' αὐτὴν δόξαν ἐν ὄχλοις
 καὶ τιμὴν παρὰ πρεσβυτέροις ὁ νέος·
 11 ὅξυς εὐρεθήσομαι ἐν κρίσει
 καὶ ἐν ὅψει δυναστῶν θαυμασθήσομαι·
 12 σιγῶντά με περιμενοῦσιν καὶ φθεγγομένῳ προσέξουσιν
 καὶ λαλοῦντος ἐπὶ πλεῖον
 χεῖρα ἐπιθήσουσιν ἐπὶ στόμα αὐτῶν.
 13 ἔξω δι' αὐτὴν ἀθανασίαν
 καὶ μνήμην αἰώνιον τοῖς μετ' ἐμὲ ἀπολείψω.
 14 διοικήσω λαούς, καὶ ἔθνη ὑποταγήσεταιί μοι·

justice and fortitude;
 nothing in life is more useful to human beings.
 8 Or, if you are eager for wide experience,
 she knows the paths, she forecasts the future;
 she knows how to turn maxims and solve riddles;
 she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders,
 and of the unfolding of the ages and the times.
 9 I therefore determined to take her to live with me,
 knowing that she would be my counsellor in prosperity
 and comfort me in cares and sorrow.
 10 Thanks to her, I shall be admired by the masses
 and honoured, though young, by the elders.
 11 I shall be reckoned shrewd as a judge,
 and the great will be amazed at me.
 12 In my silence, they wait for me and listen when I speak;
 if I speak at some length,
 they will lay their hands on their lips.
 13 By means of her, immortality will be mine;
 I shall leave an everlasting memory to my successors.
 14 I will govern peoples and nations will be subject to me.

8 An alternative translation for 'solve' is 'interpret'. 'Maxims' and 'riddles' mean moral reflections expressed in deliberately obscure terms.

9 The NJB has 'share my life' in place of 'live with me', here following the WEBBE.

10 The NJB punctuates this verse as the start of a quotation.

11 For the 1st line, the NRSV reads, "I shall be found keen in judgement."

12 On the laying of hands on the lips, see Pr 30:32, Si 5:12, Job 21:5, 29:9, 40:4, and Mi 7:16.

13 The WEBBE has 'eternal' in place of 'everlasting'.

14 In the WEBBE, this verse is two sentences and the word 'and' is omitted.

¹⁵ φοβηθήσονται με ἀκούσαντες τύραννοι φρικτοί,
 πλήθει φανοῦμαι ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐν πολέμῳ ἀνδρεῖος.
¹⁶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου προσαναπαύσομαι αὐτῇ·
 οὐ γὰρ ἔχει πικρίαν ἢ συναναστροφὴ αὐτῆς
 οὐδὲ ὀδύνην ἢ συμβίωσις αὐτῆς,
 ἀλλὰ εὐφροσύνην καὶ χαράν.
¹⁷ ταῦτα λογισάμενος ἐν ἑμαυτῷ
 καὶ φροντίσας ἐν καρδίᾳ μου
 ὅτι ἀθανασία ἐστὶν ἐν συγγενείᾳ σοφίας
¹⁸ καὶ ἐν φιλίᾳ αὐτῆς τέρεψις ἀγαθῇ
 καὶ ἐν πόνοις χειρῶν αὐτῆς πλοῦτος ἀνεκλιπῆς
 καὶ ἐν συγγυμνασίᾳ ὁμιλίας αὐτῆς φρόνησις
 καὶ εὐκλεία ἐν κοινωνίᾳ λόγων αὐτῆς,
 περιήειν ζητῶν ὅπως λάβω αὐτὴν εἰς ἑμαυτόν.
¹⁹ παῖς δὲ ἦμην εὐφυῆς ψυχῆς τε ἔλαχον ἀγαθῆς,
²⁰ μαῖλλον δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὢν ἤλθον εἰς σῶμα ἀμίαντον.
²¹ γνούς δὲ ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλως ἔσομαι ἐγκρατῆς,
 εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς δῶ –

¹⁵ Fearsome despots will fear the sound of my name;
 I shall show myself kind to people and valiant in war.
¹⁶ When I go home, I shall take my ease with her,
 for nothing is bitter in her company;
 when life is shared with her, there is no pain,
 nothing but pleasure and joy.”
¹⁷ Having meditated on all this,
 and, having come to the conclusion
 that immortality resides in kinship with Wisdom,
¹⁸ noble contentment in her friendship,
 inexhaustible riches in her activities,
 understanding in cultivating her society,
 and renown in conversing with her,
 I went all ways, seeking how to get her.
¹⁹ I was a clever boy and received a good soul;
²⁰ or rather, being good, I had entered an undefiled body.
²¹ But, realising that I could never possess Wisdom
 unless God gave her to me –

¹⁵ The WEBBE has ‘dreaded monarchs’ in place of ‘fearsome despots’.

¹⁶ The NJB punctuates this verse as the continuation of a quotation (cf. #10).

¹⁷ The ‘immortality’ is first of all one of memory (v. 13) but also personal (4:1), since Wisdom communicates what she possesses by nature.

¹⁸ In place of ‘inexhaustible riches’, the WEBBE has ‘wealth that does not fail’.

¹⁹ For this verse, the NJB reads, “I was a boy of happy disposition; I had received a good soul as my lot.”

²⁰ This text does not assert the Platonic idea of the pre-existence of the soul as it might seem to do if isolated from its context; it amends the phrasing of v. 19, which seemed to give pre-eminence to the body, and emphasises the superiority of the soul.

²¹ For the 3rd line, the NJB reads, “a sign of intelligence in itself, to know in whose gift she lay.”

καὶ τοῦτο δ' ἦν φρονήσεως τὸ εἰδέναι τίνος ἡ χάρις, –
ἐνέτυχον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐδεήθην αὐτοῦ
καὶ εἶπον ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας μου

and to know and understand who gives the grace –
I prayed to the Lord and entreated him,
and with all my heart I said:

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 9

- ¹ Θεὲ πατέρων καὶ κύριε τοῦ ἐλέους
ὁ ποιήσας τὰ πάντα ἐν λόγῳ σου
² καὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ σου κατασκευάσας ἄνθρωπον,
ἵνα δεσπόζῃ τῶν ὑπὸ σοῦ γενομένων κτισμάτων
³ καὶ διέπῃ τὸν κόσμον ἐν ὁσιότητι καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ
καὶ ἐν εὐθύτητι ψυχῆς κρίσιν κρίνῃ,
⁴ δός μοι τὴν τῶν σῶν θρόνων πάρεδρον σοφίαν
καὶ μὴ με ἀποδοκιμάσῃς ἐκ παίδων σου.
⁵ ὅτι ἐγὼ δοῦλος σὸς καὶ υἱὸς τῆς παιδείας σου,
ἄνθρωπος ἀσθενὴς καὶ ὀλιγοχρόνιος
καὶ ἐλάσσων ἐν συνέσει κρίσεως καὶ νόμων.
⁶ καὶ γάρ τις ἦ τέλειος ἐν υἱοῖς ἀνθρώπων,
τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ σοφίας ἀπούσης εἰς οὐδὲν λογισθήσεται.
⁷ σύ με προεῖλῳ βασιλέα λαοῦ σου
καὶ δικαστὴν υἱῶν σου καὶ θυγατέρων.
⁸ εἶπας οἰκοδομῆσαι ναὸν ἐν ὄρει ἁγίῳ σου
καὶ ἐν πόλει κατασκηνώσεώς σου θυσιαστήριον,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 9

- ¹ “God of our fathers and Lord of Mercy,
who, by your word, have made the universe,
² and, in your wisdom, have fitted human beings
to rule the creatures that you have made,
³ to govern the world in holiness and righteousness
and in honesty of soul to dispense fair judgement,
⁴ grant me Wisdom, consort of your throne,
and do not reject me from the number of your children.
⁵ For I am your servant, son of your serving maid,
a feeble man, with little time to live,
with small understanding of justice and the laws.
⁶ Indeed, were anyone perfect among the sons of men,
if he lacked your Wisdom, he would count for nothing.
⁷ You have chosen me to be king over your people,
to be judge of your sons and daughters.
⁸ You told me to build a temple on your holy mountain
and an altar in the city where you have camped,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 9

- ¹ ‘Lord of mercy’ follows the Greek MSS; the Textus Receptus has ‘Lord of your mercy’.
² In vv. 1-2, ‘word’ and ‘wisdom’ are synonymous.
³ The NJB has ‘saving justice’ in place of ‘righteousness’.
⁴ Another possible reading for ‘children’ is ‘servants’.
⁵ In place of ‘servant’, the Greek text has ‘slave’.
⁶ For ‘your Wisdom’, the NJB has ‘the Wisdom that comes from you’.
⁷ Solomon was ‘chosen’ in preference to Adonijah and his other brothers (1K 1, 1Ch 28:5-6).
⁸ The word ‘copy’ refers at once to the Temple and the altar (that is, the altar of burnt offering, visible to everyone, 1K 8:22, 54,62-64).

μίμημα σκηνῆς ἁγίας, ἣν προητοίμασας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς.
 9 καὶ μετὰ σοῦ ἡ σοφία ἡ εἰδυῖα τὰ ἔργα σου
 καὶ παροῦσα, ὅτε ἐποίεις τὸν κόσμον,
 καὶ ἐπισταμένη τί ἄρεστόν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου
 καὶ τί εὐθὲς ἐν ἐντολαῖς σου.
 10 ἐξαπόστειλον αὐτήν ἐξ ἁγίων οὐρανῶν
 καὶ ἀπὸ θρόνου δόξης σου πέμψον αὐτήν,
 ἵνα συμπαροῦσά μοι κοπιάσῃ,
 καὶ γνῶ τί εὐάρεστόν ἐστὶν παρὰ σοί.
 11 οἶδε γὰρ ἐκείνη πάντα καὶ συνίει
 καὶ ὁδηγήσει με ἐν ταῖς πράξεσί μου σωφρόνως
 καὶ φυλάξει με ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτῆς.
 12 καὶ ἔσται προσδεκτὰ τὰ ἔργα μου,
 καὶ διακρινῶ τὸν λαόν σου δικαίως
 καὶ ἔσομαι ἄξιος θρόνων πατρός μου.
 13 τίς γὰρ ἄνθρωπος γνώσεται βουλήν Θεοῦ;
 ἢ τίς ἐνδυμηθήσεται τί θέλει ὁ κύριος;
 14 λογισμοὶ γὰρ θνητῶν δειλοί,
 καὶ ἐπισφαλεῖς αἱ ἐπίνοιαί ἡμῶν.

a copy of the holy Tent that you made in the beginning.
 9 With you is Wisdom, she who knows your works,
 she who was present when you made the world;
 she understands what is pleasing in your eyes
 and what agrees with your commandments.
 10 Dispatch her from the holy heavens
 and send her forth from your throne of glory
 to help me and to toil with me
 and teach me what is pleasing to you.
 11 Since she knows and understands everything,
 she will guide me prudently in my actions
 and will protect me with her glory.
 12 Then all I do will be acceptable;
 I shall govern your people justly
 and be worthy of my father's throne.
 13 What man indeed can know the intentions of God?
 Or who can comprehend the will of the Lord?
 14 For, the reasoning of mortals is inadequate,
 our attitudes of mind unstable.

9 Compare 8:3–4 and Pr 8:27–30.

10 In place of 'send her forth', the WEBBE has 'ask her to come forth'.

11 The meaning of the last line is that Wisdom will either 'protect me by her power' (cf. Rm 6:4), or 'guide me by her light' (cf. Is 60:1–3, Ba 5:7,9), or 'envelope me like a protective cloud' (cf. Si 14:27).

12 The Greek text has 'thrones' in place of 'throne'.

13 The NJB has 'human being' in place of 'man'.

14 The WEBBE has 'unstable' in place of 'inadequate'.

¹⁵ φθαρτὸν γὰρ σῶμα βαρύνει ψυχὴν,
καὶ βρίθει τὸ γεῶδες σκῆνος νοῦν πολυφρόντιδα.
¹⁶ καὶ μόλις εἰκάζομεν τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς
καὶ τὰ ἐν χερσὶν εὐρίσκομεν μετὰ πόνου·
τὰ δὲ ἐν οὐρανοῖς τίς ἐξιχνίασεν;
¹⁷ βουλὴν δέ σου τίς ἔγνω, εἰ μὴ σὺ ἔδωκας σοφίαν
καὶ ἔπεμψας τὸ ἅγιόν σου πνεῦμα ἀπὸ ὑψίστων;
¹⁸ καὶ οὕτως διωρθώθησαν αἱ τρίβοι τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς,
καὶ τὰ ἀρεστά σου ἐδιδάχθησαν ἄνθρωποι,
καὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐσώθησαν.

¹⁵ For, a perishable body presses down the soul,
and this tent of clay burdens a mind full of cares.
¹⁶ It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth,
laborious to know what lies close at hand;
who, then, can discover what is in the heavens?
¹⁷ Who would know your will, unless you gave Wisdom
and sent your Holy Spirit from on high?
¹⁸ Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened
and peoples have been taught what pleases you,
and have been saved, by Wisdom."

¹⁵ The phrase 'of clay' (literally, 'of earth') may refer to Gn 2:7 & Job 4:19 (see, in the NT, 2Co 4:7, 5:1–4, 2P 1:13–14, and cf. Rm 7:14–15, Ga 5:17).

¹⁶ In place of 'close at hand', the NJB has 'within our reach'.

¹⁷ Another reading for 'will' is 'counsel'.

¹⁸ Many Latin MSS (including the Vg) add here, "all those, Lord, who have pleased you since the beginning." (¹⁹ *Nam per sapientiam sanati sunt quicumque placuerunt tibi, Domine, a principio.*)

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 10

- 1 Αὕτη πρωτόπλαστον πατέρα κόσμου
μόνον κτισθέντα διεφύλαξεν
καὶ ἐξείλατο αὐτὸν ἐκ παραπτώματος ἰδίου
- 2 ἔδωκέν τε αὐτῷ ἰσχὺν κρατῆσαι πάντων.
- 3 ἀποστάς δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἄδικος ἐν ὀργῇ αὐτοῦ
ἀδελφοκτόνοις συναπώλετο θυμοῖς.
- 4 δι' ὃν κατακλυζομένην γῆν
πάλιν ἔσωσεν σοφία
δι' εὐτελοῦς ξύλου τὸν δίκαιον κυβερνήσασα.
- 5 αὕτη καὶ ἐν ὁμοιοῖα πονηρίας ἐθνῶν συγχυθέντων
ἔγνω τὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἐτήρησεν αὐτὸν ἄμειπτον θεῶ
καὶ ἐπὶ τέκνου σπλάγχνοις ἰσχυρὸν ἐφύλαξεν.
- 6 αὕτη δίκαιον ἐξαπολλυμένων ἀσεβῶν ἐρρύσατο
φυγόντα καταβάσιον πῦρ Πενταπόλεως,
- 7 ἧς ἔτι μαρτύριον τῆς πονηρίας
καπνιζομένη καθεστήκε χέρσος,
καὶ ἀτελέσιν ὥραις καρποφοροῦντα φυτά,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 10

- 1 She protected the first man to be fashioned,
the father of the world, who had been created all alone;
she it was who rescued him from his fall
- 2 and gave him strength to rule over all things.
- 3 But when, in his wrath, a wicked man deserted her,
he perished in his fratricidal fury.
- 4 When, because of him, the earth was drowned,
Wisdom again saved it,
piloting the upright man on valueless timber.
- 5 And, when unity in wickedness confused nations,
she knew the upright and kept him blameless to God
and fortified him against pity for his child.
- 6 While the godless perished, she saved the upright man
as he fled from the fire raging down on the Five Cities,
- 7 To whose wickedness a smoking waste still witnesses
where plants bear fruit that never ripens
and where, monument to an unbelieving soul,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 10

- 1 For the 3rd line, some Latin MSS read, "and she drew him out of the slime of the earth and snatched him from his fault." This reading seems to be an explanatory gloss on 'the first to be fashioned'. The WEBBE opens with 'Wisdom' in place of 'She'.
- 2 The NJB has 'subjugate' in place of 'rule over', here following the WEBBE.
- 3 The 'wicked man' here is Cain (see Gn 4:1-6,8-13).
- 4 The 'upright man' here is Noah (see Gn 5:28-9:29).
- 5 The WEBBE opens the 2nd line with 'wisdom' in place of 'she'.
- 6 The 'upright man' here is Lot (see Gn 19:23-26). The NRSV & WEBBE have 'Wisdom' in place of 'she'.
- 7 The WEBBE opens the 2nd line with 'and' in place of 'where'.

8 ἀπιστοῦσης ψυχῆς μνημεῖον ἑστηκυῖα στήλη ἀλός.
 σοφίαν γὰρ παροδεύσαντες
 οὐ μόνον ἐβλάβησαν τοῦ μὴ γνῶναι τὰ καλά,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀφροσύνης ἀπέλιπον
 τῷ βίῳ μνημόσυνον,
 ἵνα ἐν οἷς ἐσφάλησαν μὴδὲ λαθεῖν δυνηθῶσιν.
 9 σοφία δὲ τοὺς θεραπεύοντας αὐτὴν ἐκ πόνων ἐρρύσατο.
 10 αὕτη φυγάδα ὀργῆς ἀδελφοῦ δίκαιον
 ὠδήγησεν ἐν τρίβοις εὐθείαις·
 ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ βασιλείαν θεοῦ
 καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ γνῶσιν ἁγίων·
 εὐπόρησεν αὐτὸν ἐν μόχθοις
 καὶ ἐπλήθυνεν τοὺς πόνους αὐτοῦ·
 11 ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ κατισχυόντων αὐτὸν παρέστη
 καὶ ἐπλούτισεν αὐτόν·
 12 διεφύλαξεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ ἐχθρῶν
 καὶ ἀπὸ ἐνεδρευόντων ἠσφαλίσατο·
 καὶ ἀγῶνα ἰσχυρὸν ἐβράβευσε αὐτῷ,
 ἵνα γνῶ ὅτι παντὸς δυνατωτέρα ἐστὶν εὐσέβεια.
 13 αὕτη πρᾶξέντα δίκαιον οὐκ ἐγκατέλιπεν,

there stands a pillar of salt.
 8 For, having passed by Wisdom,
 not only did they suffer the loss
 of not knowing the good,
 but they left the world a memorial to their folly,
 so that their offences could not pass unnoticed.
 9 Wisdom delivered her servants from their ordeals.
 10 The upright man, fleeing from the anger of his brother,
 was led by her along straight paths.
 She showed him the kingdom of God
 and taught him the knowledge of holy things.
 She brought him success in his labours
 and gave him full return for all his efforts.
 11 She stood by him against harsh and covetous men
 and she made him rich.
 12 She preserved him from his enemies
 and saved him from the traps they set for him.
 In arduous struggle, she awarded him the prize,
 to teach him that piety is stronger than all.
 13 She did not forsake the upright man when he was sold

8 In place of 'having passed by', the NJB has 'ignoring the path of'.

9 For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "but wisdom delivered those who waited on her out of troubles."

10 The 'upright man' here is Jacob (see Gn 27:41–45, 28:5–6). An alternative translation for 'holy things' is 'holy ones', that is, the angels (Gn 28:12).

11 In place of 'harsh and covetous', the NJB has 'grasping and oppressive'.

12 Jacob, in his 'struggle with God', would seem to have won, not by physical strength, but by force of piety.

13 The 'upright man' here is Joseph (see Gn 37, 39–41). The NRSV & WEBBE have 'Wisdom' in place of 'she'.

ἀλλὰ ἐξ ἁμαρτίας ἐρρύσατο αὐτόν·
¹⁴ συγκατέβη αὐτῷ εἰς λάκκον
 καὶ ἐν δεσμοῖς οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν,
 ἕως ἥνεγκεν αὐτῷ σκῆπτρα βασιλείας
 καὶ ἐξουσίαν τυραννούντων αὐτοῦ·
 ψευδεῖς τε ἔδειξεν τοὺς μωμησαμένους αὐτόν
 καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δόξαν αἰώνιον.
¹⁵ Αὕτη λαὸν ὅσιον καὶ σπέρμα ἄμμεπτον
 ἐρρύσατο ἐξ ἔθνους θλιβόντων·
¹⁶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς ψυχὴν θεράποντος κυρίου
 καὶ ἀντέστη βασιλεῦσιν φοβεροῖς
 ἐν τέρασι καὶ σημείοις.
¹⁷ ἀπέδωκεν ὁσίοις μισθὸν κόπων αὐτῶν,
 ὠδήγησεν αὐτοὺς ἐν ὁδῷ θαυμαστῇ
 καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς εἰς σκέπην ἡμέρας
 καὶ εἰς φλόγα ἄστρων τὴν νύκτα.
¹⁸ διεβίβασεν αὐτοὺς θάλασσαν ἐρυθρὰν
 καὶ διήγαγεν αὐτοὺς δι' ὕδατος πολλοῦ·
¹⁹ τοὺς δὲ ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν κατέκλυσεν
 καὶ ἐκ βάθους ἀβύσσου ἀνέβρασεν αὐτούς.

but snatched him away from sin.

- ¹⁴ She accompanied him down into the pit,
nor did she abandon him in his chains
until she had brought him the sceptre of a kingdom
and authority over his despotic masters,
thus exposing as liars those who had traduced him,
and giving him everlasting honour.
- ¹⁵ It was Wisdom who delivered a holy people,
a blameless race, from a nation of oppressors.
- ¹⁶ She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord,
and withstood fearsome kings
with wonders and signs.
- ¹⁷ To the holy people she gave the wages of their labours;
she guided them by a marvellous road,
herself their shelter by day –
and their starlight through the night.
- ¹⁸ She brought them across the Red Sea,
and led them through an immensity of water,
- ¹⁹ whereas she drowned their enemies,
then spat them out from the bottom of the deep.

¹⁴ The WEBBE has 'eternal glory' in place of 'everlasting honour'.

¹⁵ The people of the Exodus are 'holy' and 'blameless' because of their vocation (Ex 19:6, Lv 19:2) and the religious values that they represent. The Greek text has 'she' in place of 'Wisdom'.

¹⁶ 'Fearsome kings' is a rhetorical exaggeration: the reference is to Pharaoh.

¹⁷ The author here attributes to Wisdom what Exodus says of God, present in the mysterious Cloud.

¹⁸ The term, 'the Red Sea' (θάλασσαν ἐρυθρὰν), is not used in ancient texts; normally, it is called 'the Sea of Reeds', or just 'the Sea' (#Ex 13:18).

¹⁹ The NJB has 'depths of the abyss' in place of 'bottom of the deep', here following the WEBBE.

²⁰ διὰ τοῦτο δίκαιοι ἐσκύλευσαν ἀσεβεῖς
καὶ ὕμνησαν, κύριε, τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιόν σου
τὴν τε ὑπέρμαχόν σου χεῖρα ἤνεσαν ὁμοθυμαδόν·
²¹ ὅτι ἡ σοφία ἤνοιξεν στόμα κωφῶν
καὶ γλώσσας νηπίων ἔδηκεν τρανάς.

²⁰ Therefore, the upright despoiled the godless;
Lord, they extolled your holy name,
and, with one accord, praised your protecting hand.
²¹ For Wisdom opened the mouths of the dumb
and made eloquent the tongues of babes.

²⁰ According to Jewish tradition, the Israelites despoiled the dead Egyptians of their weapons.

²¹ Previously, God had loosened the tongue of Moses, so that he could reason with Pharaoh (Ex 4:10, 6:12,30). Now, he intervenes so that all the Israelites, without exception, can praise him. The author is following a Jewish tradition, later to be elaborated by the rabbis.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος ΙΙ

- 1 Εὐδόωσεν τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἐν χειρὶ προφήτου ἁγίου.
2 διώδυσαν ἔρημον ἀοίκητον
καὶ ἐν ἀβάτοις ἔπηξαν σκηνάς·
3 ἀντέστησαν πολεμίοις καὶ ἐχθροὺς ἠμύναντο.
4 ἐδίψησαν καὶ ἐπεκαλέσαντό σε,
καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐκ πέτρας ἀκροτόμου ὕδωρ
καὶ ἴαμα δίψης ἐκ λίθου σκληροῦ.
5 δι' ὧν γὰρ ἐκολάσθησαν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν,
διὰ τούτων αὐτοὶ ἀποροῦντες εὐεργετήθησαν.
6 ἀντὶ μὲν πηγῆς ἀενάου ποταμοῦ
αἵματι λυθρῶδει ταραχθέντος
7 εἰς ἔλεγχον νηπιοκτόνου διατάγματος
ἔδωκας αὐτοῖς θαψιλὲς ὕδωρ ἀνελπίστως

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 11

- 1 She prospered their works by means of a holy prophet.
2 They traversed an uninhabited desert
and pitched their tents in trackless places.
3 They withstood enemies and repelled foes.
4 On you they called when they were thirsty
and, from the rocky cliff, water was given them,
from hard stone, a remedy for their thirst.
5 Thus, what had served to punish their enemies
became a benefit for them in their need.
6 When enemies were troubled with clotted blood
instead of a river's ever-flowing fountain,
7 to punish them for their decree of infanticide,
you gave them, against all hope, water in abundance,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 11

- 1 The 'holy prophet' here is Moses (see #Nb 12:7 & Dt 18:15). The NRSV has 'Wisdom' in place of 'she'.
2 The NJB has 'journeyed through' in place of 'traversed'.
3 The long march through the desert is evoked in a few phrases to prepare the way for a new development. Wisdom is not mentioned any more, except in 14:2,5, and the author now addresses God in a meditation on the events of the Exodus. The liberties taken with earlier biblical sources make this part of the book similar to Midrash or rabbinical commentary on Scripture.
4 Starting with the miracle of the water in the desert (Dt 8:15), the author elaborates a complex comparison, the basis of which is stated in v. 5. At the same time, he intends to justify the punishments endured by means of a sort of 'divine retaliation' propounded in v. 16. Other antitheses follow (see 16:1,5,15, 17:1, 18:5, 19:1) but opinions are divided on exactly how many there are and on when and where they begin and end.
5 The NJB has 'difficulties' in place of 'need'.
6 For this verse, the NJB reads, "Whereas their enemies had only the ever-flowing source of a river fouled with mingled blood and mud."
7 The pronoun, 'you', in the 2nd line refers to God, in the direct address that continues to 19:22.

8 δείξας διὰ τοῦ τότε δίψους
 πῶς τοὺς ὑπεναντίους ἐκόλασας.
 9 ὅτε γὰρ ἐπειράσθησαν, καίπερ ἐν ἐλέει παιδευόμενοι,
 ἔγνωσαν πῶς μετ' ὀργῆς κρινόμενοι
 ἀσεβεῖς ἐβασανίζοντο·
 10 τούτους μὲν γὰρ ὡς πατὴρ νοουθετῶν ἐδοκίμασας,
 ἐκείνους δὲ ὡς ἀπότομος
 βασιλεὺς καταδικάζων ἐξήτασας.
 11 καὶ ἀπόντες δὲ καὶ παρόντες ὁμοίως ἐτῷχοντο·
 12 διπλῇ γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἔλαβεν λύπη
 καὶ στεναγμὸς μνημῶν τῶν παρελθόντων·
 13 ὅτε γὰρ ἤκουσαν διὰ τῶν ἰδίων κολάσεων
 εὐεργετημένους αὐτούς, ἤσθοντο τοῦ κυρίου.
 14 ὃν γὰρ ἐν ἐκθέσει πάλαι ῥιφέντα
 ἀπεῖπον χλευάζοντες,
 ἐπὶ τέλει τῶν ἐκβάσεων ἐθαύμασαν
 οὐχ ὅμοια δικαίοις διψήσαντες.
 15 ἀντὶ δὲ λογισμῶν ἀσυνέτων ἀδικίας αὐτῶν,
 ἐν οἷς πλανηθέντες ἐθρήσκειον ἄλογα ἐρπετὰ

8 having shown by their thirst
 how you punished their enemies.
 9 From their ordeals, which were merciful discipline,
 they realised how an angry sentence
 was tormenting the godless.
 10 For, you had tested your own as a father admonishes,
 but the others you had punished
 as a pitiless king condemns.
 11 Whether far or near, they were equally afflicted.
 12 For a double sorrow seized on them,
 and a groaning at the memory of the past.
 13 For, when they learned that their punishments
 were helping others, they realised it was the Lord.
 14 For, though they had mockingly rejected him who,
 long before, they had cast out and exposed,
 they felt only admiration when all was done,
 having suffered a thirst different from the upright.
 15 For their foolish and wicked notions
 that led them astray into worshipping mindless reptiles

8 For the 1st line, the NJB reads, "once you had shown, by the thirst they were suffering."

9 Thirst and other sufferings endured by the Israelites in the desert were intended to make them understand how the Egyptians were punished.

10 The NRSV has 'parent' in place of 'father' and 'ungodly' in place of 'others'.

11 The WEBBE splits this verse into 2 lines.

12 'Memory of the past' is a correction following some MSS; the *Textus Receptus* has 'past memories'.

13 At the end of this verse, the Vg adds "admiring the outcome of the events" (*admirantes in finem exitus*), an addition derived from v. 14.

14 This verse refers to Moses, exposed on the waters (Ex 1:22, 2:3) and rebuffed by Pharaoh (Ex 5:2 – 5, 7:13,22).

15 The cult of animals: 'reptiles' (crocodile, snake, lizard, frog) and 'contemptible beetles' (the scarab) enjoyed great esteem in Ptolemaic Egypt.

καὶ κνώδαλα εὐτελῆ,
 ἐπαπέστειλας αὐτοῖς πληθὺς ἀλόγων ζώων
 εἰς ἐκδίκησιν,
 16 ἵνα γνῶσιν ὅτι, δι' ὧν τις ἀμαρτάνει,
 διὰ τούτων κολάζεται.
 17 οὐ γὰρ ἠπόρει ἡ παντοδύναμός σου χεὶρ
 καὶ κτίσασα τὸν κόσμον ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης
 ἐπιπέμψαι αὐτοῖς πληθὺς ἄρκων ἢ θρασεῖς λέοντας
 18 ἢ νεοκτίστους θυμοῦ πλήρεις θήρας ἀγνώστους
 ἢτοι πυρπνόον φυσῶντας ἄσθμα
 ἢ βρόμον λικμωμένους καπνοῦ
 ἢ δεινοὺς ἀπ' ὀμμάτων σπινθήρας ἀστράπτοντας,
 19 ὧν οὐ μόνον ἡ βλάβη ἠδύνατο συνεκτρεῖσθαι αὐτούς,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ὄψις ἐκφοβήσασα διολέσαι.
 20 καὶ χωρὶς δὲ τούτων ἐνὶ πνεύματι πεσεῖν ἐδύνατο
 ὑπὸ τῆς δίκης διωχθέντες
 καὶ λικμηθέντες ὑπὸ πνεύματος δυνάμεώς σου·
 ἀλλὰ πάντα μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ καὶ σταθμῷ διέταξας.
 21 τὸ γὰρ μεγάλως ἰσχύειν σοι πάρεστιν πάντοτε,
 καὶ κράτει βραχίονός σου τίς ἀντιστήσεται;

and contemptible beetles,
 you sent a horde of mindless animals
 to punish them,
 16 so that they would know that the agent of sin
 is the agent of punishment.
 17 For indeed, your all-powerful hand, which created
 the world from formless matter, did not lack means
 to unleash a horde of bears or savage lions on them
 18 or unknown beasts, newly created, full of rage,
 breathing out fire,
 or puffing out stinking smoke,
 or flashing fearful sparks from their eyes,
 19 beasts able not only to destroy them, being so savage,
 but even to destroy them by their terrifying appearance.
 20 And, without these, one breath could have felled them,
 pursued by Justice,
 whirled away by the breaths of your power.
 But you ordered all by measure, number, and weight.
 21 For, your great power is always at your service,
 and who can withstand the might of your arm?

16 See 12:23, 16:1, 18:4 and Gn 9:6, Jg 1:6–7, 1S 15:23, 2M 4:26, 13:8, and Pr 5:22.

17 The 2nd line is a philosophic expression inspired partly by Plato (*Timaeus* 51A) and already current in the author's times to designate the undifferentiated state of matter, thought to be eternal.

18 'Stinking smoke' (the NRSV has 'a thick pall of smoke') follows some ancient MSS – the literal translation is 'a stench of smoke'.

19 The NRSV has 'people' in place of 'them'.

20 The NJB has 'blown them over' in place of 'felled them'.

21 For the 1st line, the WEBBE reads, "For to be greatly strong is yours at all times."

²² ὅτι ὡς ῥοπή ἐκ πλαστίγγων ὅλος ὁ κόσμος
 ἐναντίον σου
 καὶ ὡς ῥανὶς δρόσου ὀρθρινή κατελθοῦσα ἐπὶ γῆν.
²³ ἔλεεις δὲ πάντα, ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι,
 καὶ παρορᾷς ἁμαρτήματα ἀνθρώπων εἰς μετάνοιαν.
²⁴ ἀγαπᾷς γὰρ τὰ ὄντα πάντα
 καὶ οὐδὲν βδελύσσει ὧν ἐποίησας·
 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν μισῶν τι κατεσκεύασας.
²⁵ πῶς δὲ διέμεινεν ἅν τι, εἰ μὴ σὺ ἠθέλησας,
 ἢ τὸ μὴ κληθὲν ὑπὸ σοῦ διετηρηθῆ;
²⁶ φεῖδῃ δὲ πάντων, ὅτι σά ἐστιν, δέσποτα φιλόψυχε·

²² The whole world, for you,
 can no more than tip a balance,
 like a drop of morning dew falling on the ground.
²³ Yet, you are merciful to all, because you are almighty;
 and you overlook people's sins, so they can repent.
²⁴ Yes, you love everything that exists,
 and you abhor nothing that you have made,
 for, you would not have made something you hated.
²⁵ How could a thing endure, had you not willed it,
 or how be preserved, if not called forth by you?
²⁶ No, you spare all, since all is yours, Lord, lover of life!

²² An alternative translation for 'can no more than tip a balance' is 'that does not even tip the scales'.

²³ The thought in vv. 23ff was not new in Israel but never before had the universality of God's compassion for sinners (see Jon 3–4) or had the decisive role of love in the creation and preservation of beings been expressed with such force or in dialectical form.

²⁴ For the 2nd line, the NJB reads, "and nothing that you have made disgusts you."

²⁵ The NJB has 'subsist' in place of 'endure'.

²⁶ The word, 'Lord', here translates δέσποτα.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνοσ 12

- ¹ τὸ γὰρ ἄφθαρτόν σου πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἐν πᾶσιν.
² Διὸ τοὺς παραπίπτοντας κατ' ὀλίγον ἐλέγχεις
καὶ ἐν οἷς ἁμαρτάνουσιν ὑπομιμνήσκων νουθετεῖς,
ἵνα ἀπαλλαγέντες τῆς κακίας πιστεύσωσιν ἐπὶ σέ,
κύριε.
³ καὶ γὰρ τοὺς πάλαι οἰκήτορας τῆς ἀγίας σου γῆς
⁴ μισήσας ἐπὶ τῷ ἔχθιστα πράσσειν,
ἔργα φαρμακειῶν καὶ τελετὰς ἀνοσίους
⁵ τέκνων τε φονὰς ἀνελεήμονας
καὶ σπλαγχνοφάγον ἀνθρωπίνων σαρκῶν θοῖναν
καὶ αἵματος,
ἐκ μέσου μύστας θιάσου
⁶ καὶ αὐθέντας γονεῖς ψυχῶν ἀβοηθήτων,
ἐβουλήθης ἀπολέσαι διὰ χειρῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 12

- ¹ For, your imperishable spirit is in everything!
² Thus, gradually, you correct those who offend
and admonish and remind them of how they sinned,
so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you,
Lord.
³ And the ancient inhabitants of your holy land
⁴ you hated for their detestable practices,
their acts of sorcery and unholy rites.
⁵ Those ruthless murderers of children,
those eaters of entrails at feasts of human flesh
and of blood,
those initiates of secret brotherhoods,
⁶ those murderous parents of defenceless beings,
you determined to destroy at our fathers' hands,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 12

- ¹ The Vg and many other *Latin* MSS translate this verse (wrongly): "Oh, how good and sweet, Lord, your spirit in all beings." (*O quam bonus et suavis est, Domine, spiritus tuus in omnibus!*)
² In place of 'offend', the WEBBE has 'fall from the right way'.
³ A list of the 'ancient inhabitants' is given in Dt 7:1 but the author has principally the Canaanites in mind.
⁴ The NJB has 'loathsome' in place of 'detestable'.
⁵ 'Eaters of entrails' follows the Vg; the *Textus Receptus* has '(banquet) at which entrails are eaten'. 'Initiates of secret brotherhoods' follows several Greek MSS; in the *Textus Receptus*, the expression is corrupt and meaningless (the NRSV has 'initiates of from the midst of a heathen cult'). Evidence of cannibalism has not been found in Canaan, though practised by other peoples in antiquity; the author is borrowing features from the Hellenistic mystery religions and alluding to the ill-reputed rites of some of them.
⁶ The NJB has 'ancestors' in place of 'fathers'.

7 ἵνα ἀξίαν ἀποικίαν δέξηται Θεοῦ παίδων
 ἢ παρὰ σοὶ πασῶν τιμιωτάτῃ γῇ.
 8 ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων ὡς ἀνθρώπων ἐφείσω
 ἀπέστειλάς τε προδρόμους τοῦ στρατοπέδου
 σου σφῆκας,
 ἵνα αὐτοὺς κατὰ βραχὺ ἐξολεθρεύσωσιν.
 9 οὐκ ἀδυνατῶν ἐν παρατάξει ἀσεβεῖς δικαίοις
 ὑποχειρίους δοῦναι
 ἢ θηρίοις δεινοῖς ἢ λόγῳ ἀποτόμῳ ὑφ' ἐν ἐκτροῖψαι,
 10 κρίνων δὲ κατὰ βραχὺ ἐδίδους τόπον μετανοίας
 οὐκ ἀγνοῶν ὅτι πονηρὰ ἡ γένεσις αὐτῶν
 καὶ ἔμφυτος ἡ κακία αὐτῶν
 καὶ ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἀλλαγῇ ὁ λογισμὸς αὐτῶν
 εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.
 11 σπέρμα γὰρ ἦν κατηραμένον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς,
 οὐδὲ εὐλαβούμενός τινα ἐφ'
 οἷς ἡμάρτανον ἄδειαν ἐδίδους.
 12 τίς γὰρ ἐρεῖ Τί ἐποίησας;
 ἢ τίς ἀντιστήσεται τῷ κρίματί σου;
 τίς δὲ ἐγκαλέσει σοὶ κατὰ ἐθνῶν ἀπολωλότων

7 so that this land, dearer to you than any other,
 might receive a worthy colony of God's children.
 8 But, as these were men, you treated them leniently;
 and you sent forth hornets as forerunners
 of your army
 to exterminate them little by little.
 9 Not that you were unable to hand the godless over to
 the upright in pitched battle
 or destroy them at once by monsters or a harsh word.
 10 By judging them gradually, you let them repent,
 although you knew they were inherently evil,
 innately wicked,
 and that their manner of thought would
 never be changed.
 11 For, they were a race accursed from the beginning.
 Nor was it from awe of anyone
 that you let their sins go unpunished.
 12 Who can ask, "What have you done?"
 Or who is there to disagree with your sentence?
 Who will arraign you for destroying nations

7 The NRSV & WEBBE have 'servants' in place of 'children' (the Greek word can mean either).

8 Another possible reading for 'hornets' is 'wasps'.

9 The NJB has 'savage beasts' in place of 'monsters'.

10 The NJB has 'carrying out your sentences' in place of 'judging'.

11 The NJB reads (a version of) the last line of v. 10 in this verse, opening with, "and fixed their cast of mind."

12 The NJB includes the last line of v. 11 in this verse.

ἃ σὺ ἐποίησας;
 ἢ τίς εἰς κατάστασίν σοι ἐλεύσεται ἔκδικος
 κατὰ ἀδίκων ἀνθρώπων;
 13 οὔτε γὰρ θεός ἐστιν πλὴν σοῦ, ὃ μέλει περὶ πάντων,
 ἵνα δείξης ὅτι οὐκ ἀδίκως ἔκρινας,
 14 οὔτε βασιλεὺς ἢ τύραννος ἀντοφθαλμῆσαι δυνήσεται
 σοι περὶ ὧν ἐκόλασας.
 15 δίκαιος δὲ ὢν δικαίως τὰ πάντα διέπεις
 αὐτὸν τὸν μὴ ὀφείλοντα κολασθῆναι καταδικάσαι
 ἀλλότριον ἡγούμενος τῆς σῆς δυνάμεως.
 16 ἢ γὰρ ἰσχύς σου δικαιοσύνης ἀρχή,
 καὶ τὸ πάντων σε δεσπόζειν πάντων
 φείδесθαί σε ποιεῖ.
 17 ἰσχὺν γὰρ ἐνδείκνυσαι ἀπιστούμενος
 ἐπὶ δυνάμεως τελειότητι
 καὶ ἐν τοῖς εἰδόσι τὸ θράσος ἐξελέγχεις·
 18 σὺ δὲ δεσπόζων ἰσχύος ἐν ἐπεικειᾷ κρίνεις
 καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς φειδοῦς διοικεῖς ἡμᾶς·
 πάρεστιν γὰρ σοι, ὅταν θέλῃς, τὸ δύνασθαι.

that you have created?
 Or who will come and stand before you as
 an avenger for unrighteous men?
 13 For, there is no god, besides you, who cares for all,
 to whom you have to prove that you judged well.
 14 No more could any king or despot challenge you
 over those whom you have punished.
 15 For, being upright, you rule the universe uprightly,
 to condemn one who does not deserve to be punished
 is incompatible with your power.
 16 For, your strength is the basis of your saving justice,
 and your sovereignty over all makes you
 lenient to all.
 17 When people will not believe in your absolute power,
 you show your strength
 and you confound insolence in those who think that.
 18 Being sovereign in strength, you judge with mildness,
 and govern us with great forbearance;
 for, your power is there whenever you wish it.

13 An alternative translation of 'all' could be 'everything'.

14 For the 1st line, the WEBBE reads, "No king or prince will be able to confront you."

15 Owing to an early corruption of the verb 'to condemn' (καταδικάσαι) and an unlucky tear, almost all *Latin* MSS read, for the 2nd line, "him too who ought not to be punished, you condemn." (*ipsum quoque qui non debet puniri, condemnare*)

16 Since God possesses absolute power and has no reason for abusing it (cf. by way of contrast 2:11), he dispenses saving justice with complete impartiality and freedom; similarly, his sovereign mastery over all beings allows him to be lenient to all.

17 The meaning of the Greek for the last line is uncertain.

18 The author either identifies himself with mankind at large or is developing (vv. 21–22) the notion of special favour reserved for the Israelites.

¹⁹ Ἐδίδαξας δέ σου τὸν λαὸν διὰ τῶν τοιούτων ἔργων
 ὅτι δεῖ τὸν δίκαιον εἶναι φιλάνθρωπον,
 καὶ εὐέλπιδας ἐποίησας τοὺς υἱούς σου
 ὅτι διδοῖς ἐπὶ ἁμαρτήμασιν μετάνοιαν.
²⁰ εἰ γὰρ ἐχθροὺς παίδων σου
 καὶ ὀφειλομένους θανάτῳ
 μετὰ τοσαύτης ἐτιμωρήσω προσοχῆς
 καὶ διέσεως δοὺς χρόνους καὶ τόπον,
 δι' ὧν ἀπαλλαγῶσι τῆς κακίας,
²¹ μετὰ πόσης ἀκριβείας ἔκρινας τοὺς υἱούς σου,
 ὧν τοῖς πατράσιν ὅρκους καὶ συνθήκας ἔδωκας
 ἀγαθῶν ὑποσχέσεων;
²² Ἡμᾶς οὖν παιδεύων τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν
 ἐν μυριότητι μαστιγοῖς,
 ἵνα σου τὴν ἀγαθότητα μεριμνῶμεν κρίνοντες,
 κρίνομενοι δὲ προσδοκῶμεν ἔλεος.
²³ ὅθεν καὶ τοὺς ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ ζωῆς βιώσαντας ἀδίκως
 διὰ τῶν ἰδίων ἐβασάνισας βδελυγμάτων.
²⁴ καὶ γὰρ τῶν πλάνης ὁδῶν μακρότερον ἐπλανήθησαν
 θεοὺς ὑπολαμβάνοντες τὰ

¹⁹ By acting thus, you have taught your people
 that the upright must be kindly to his fellows,
 and you have given your children the good hope
 that, after sins, you will grant repentance.
²⁰ For if, on the enemies of your children
 and who are deserving of death,
 you took vengeance with such great deliberation,
 and giving them the time and opportunity
 when they might escape from their wickedness,
²¹ with what exact attention have you judged your sons,
 to whose fathers, by oaths and covenants,
 you made such generous promises?
²² Therefore, you instruct us
 when you punish our enemies in abundance,
 so we can reflect on your kindness when we judge,
 but, when we are judged, we may look for mercy.
²³ This is why people leading foolish and wicked lives
 you tormented with their own abominations.
²⁴ For they had strayed too far on the paths of error
 by taking for gods the vilest

¹⁹ Following Wisdom's example (1:6, 7:23), the author here presents an attitude corresponding to the universalism characteristic of wisdom writings and to be given new form and content in the New Testament (see Mt 5:43–48).

²⁰ Some MSS lack 'and indulgence' and the Peshitta has 'and prayer' instead; the NRSV & WEBBE have 'servants' in place of 'children'.

²¹ The NJB has 'ancestors' in place of 'fathers'.

²² In place of 'in abundance' (ἐν μυριότητι), the NJB has the conjectural, 'in moderation' (ἐν μετριότητι).

²³ 'Abominations' is a biblical term for false gods and idols (see Dt 7:26, 27:15, et cetera).

²⁴ The translation, 'the vilest and most despicable of animals' follows the Itala MSS; the LXX has 'among the animals of their enemies'.

καὶ ἐν ζώοις τῶν αἰσχυρῶν ἄτιμα
νηπίων δίκην ἀφρόνων ψευσθέντες.
²⁵ διὰ τοῦτο ὡς παισὶν ἀλογίστοις
τὴν κρίσιν εἰς ἐμπαιγμὸν ἔπεμψας.
²⁶ οἱ δὲ παιγνίοις ἐπιτιμῆσεως μὴ νουθετηθέντες
ἀξίαν θεοῦ κρίσιν πειράσουσιν.
²⁷ ἐφ' οἷς γὰρ αὐτοὶ πάσχοντες ἡγανάκτουν,
ἐπὶ τούτοις, οὓς ἐδόκουν θεούς,
ἐν αὐτοῖς κολαζόμενοι ἰδόντες,
ὃν πάλαι ἠρνοῦντο εἶδέναι, θεὸν ἐπέγνωσαν ἀληθῆ·
διὸ καὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς καταδίκης ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐπῆλθεν.

and most despicable of animals,
being deluded like silly little children.
²⁵ Therefore, as to children with no sense,
you gave a judgement making fools of them.
²⁶ But those who would not heed a mocking reproof,
were soon to endure a worthy sentence from God.
²⁷ For, through the suffering they were indignant of,
punishment in the creatures they thought to be gods,
they saw and recognised as the true God
him whom they previously refused to know.
This is why the final condemnation fell on them.

²⁵ The NJB has 'sentence' in place of 'judgement'.

²⁶ The NJB ends with, "a sentence worthy of God."

²⁷ Pharaoh eventually acknowledged the action of God (Ex 12:31-32), having long refused to do so (Ex 7-11), but continued to defy him.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 13

- ¹ Μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει,
οἷς παρῆν θεοῦ ἀγνωσία
καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὁρωμένων ἀγαθῶν
οὐκ ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι τὸν ὄντα
οὔτε τοῖς ἔργοις προσέχοντες ἐπέγνωσαν τὸν τεχνίτην,
² ἀλλ' ἢ πῦρ ἢ πνεῦμα ἢ ταχινὸν ἀέρα
ἢ κύκλον ἄστρων ἢ βίαιον ὕδωρ
ἢ φωστῆρας οὐρανοῦ πρυτάνεις κόσμου θεοὺς ἐνόμισαν.
³ ὧν εἰ μὲν τῇ καλλονῇ τερπόμενοι
ταῦτα θεοὺς ὑπελάμβανον,
γνώτωσαν πόσῳ τούτων ὁ δεσπότης ἐστὶ βελτίων,
ὁ γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους γενεσιάρχης ἔκτισεν αὐτά·
⁴ εἰ δὲ δύναμιν καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἐκπλαγέντες,
νοησάτωσαν ἀπ' αὐτῶν πόσῳ ὁ κατασκευάσας
αὐτὰ δυνατώτερός ἐστιν·
⁵ ἐκ γὰρ μεγέθους καὶ καλλονῆς κτισμάτων
ἀναλόγως ὁ γενεσιουργὸς αὐτῶν θεωρεῖται.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 13

- ¹ Yes, foolish by nature are all men
who are unaware of God,
and who, from good things seen,
have not been able to discover Him-who-is,
who do not recognise the Artist from his works.
² But fire, or wind, or the swift air,
the sphere of the stars, swirling water, heaven's lamps,
they thought to be gods who rule the world.
³ If, charmed by their beauty,
they have taken these for gods;
let them know how much their Master excels them,
since the very source of beauty that created them.
⁴ If they have been impressed by their power and energy,
let them deduce from these how much mightier
is he that has formed them.
⁵ In the grandeur and beauty of the creatures,
by analogy, we may contemplate their Maker.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 13

- ¹ The NRSV has 'artisan' in place of 'Artist' and the NJB has 'Artificer'; the spectacle and study of nature ought to raise the human spirit to a transcendent God, a universal Creator.
² The NJB has 'govern' in place of 'rule'.
³ The last line is a Greek touch (cf. vv. 5,7, Si 43:9-12). The Old Testament had often praised the majesty and power of God as manifested in the Creation (Job 36:22-26, Ps 19:1-2, Is 40:12-14) but never the beauty of the world seen as a work of art reflecting its author.
⁴ The NRSV has 'people' in place of 'they', here following the Greek text.
⁵ The NJB opens with, "Since through the grandeur..." Literally translated, the verse ends, "is the first Maker of them seen."

⁶ ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐπὶ τούτοις μέμψις ἐστὶν ὀλίγη,
καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ τάχα πλανῶνται
θεὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ θέλοντες εὐρεῖν.
⁷ ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ ἀναστρεφόμενοι διερευνῶσιν
καὶ πείθονται τῇ ὄψει, ὅτι καλὰ τὰ βλεπόμενα.
⁸ πάλιν δ' οὐδ' αὐτοὶ συγγνωστοί·
⁹ εἰ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι
ἵνα δύνωνται στοχάσασθαι τὸν αἰῶνα,
τὸν τούτων δεσπότην πῶς τάχιον οὐχ εὔρον;
¹⁰ Ταλαίπωροι δὲ καὶ ἐν νεκροῖς αἱ ἐλπίδες αὐτῶν,
οἵτινες ἐκάλεσαν θεοὺς ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων,
χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον τέχνης ἐμμελέτημα
καὶ ἀπεικασματα ζώων
ἢ λίθον ἄχρηστον χειρὸς ἔργον ἀρχαίας.
¹¹ εἰ δὲ καὶ τις ὑλοτόμος τέκτων
εὐκίνητον φυτὸν ἐκπρίσας
περιέξυσεν εὐμαθῶς πάντα τὸν φλοιὸν αὐτοῦ
καὶ τεχνησάμενος εὐπρεπῶς
κατεσκεύασεν χρήσιμον σκεῦος εἰς ὑπηρεσίαν ζωῆς,

⁶ But small blame attaches to these men,
and perhaps they go astray only in their search
for God and their eagerness to find him.
⁷ Familiar with his works, they investigate them
and fall victim to appearances, seeing so much beauty.
⁸ Yet, even so, they have no excuse:
⁹ If they are capable of acquiring enough knowledge
to be able to investigate the world,
how have they been so slow to find its Master?
¹⁰ Wretched are they, with their hopes in dead things,
who have given the title of gods to human artefacts,
gold or silver, skilfully worked,
and figures of animals,
or useless stone, carved by some hand long ago.
¹¹ Take a carpenter who is woodcutter:
he fells a suitable tree,
neatly strips off the bark all over
and then, with admirable skill,
works the wood into an object useful in daily life.

⁶ An alternative translation for 'small' is 'least', as compared with the idolaters of v. 10.

⁷ The author partly excuses such idolatry as arising from an honest search for God; however, such people should not be excused (v. 8), as they should have discerned the Lord of created things.

⁸ The WEBBE ends with, "they are not to be excused."

⁹ In place of 'Master', the WEBBE has 'Sovereign Lord'.

¹⁰ Polemics against idols (as 13:10–14:11), current in Greek philosophy, are commonplace in biblical writings (e.g. Is 44:9–20, Jr 10:1–16, Ba 6).

¹¹ The NJB & WEBBE lack the words, 'a carpenter who is'.

¹² τὰ δὲ ἀποβλήματα τῆς ἐργασίας
 εἰς ἐτοιμασίαν τροφῆς ἀναλώσας ἐνεπλήσθη,
¹³ τὸ δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπόβλημα εἰς οὐδὲν εὐχρηστον,
 ξύλον σκολιὸν καὶ ὄζοις συμπεφυκός,
 λαβὼν ἔγλυψεν ἐν ἐπιμελείᾳ ἀργίας αὐτοῦ
 καὶ ἐμπειρίᾳ συνέσεως ἐτύπωσε αὐτό,
 ἀπέικασεν αὐτὸ εἰκόνι ἀνθρώπου
¹⁴ ἢ ζῶντι ἐντελεῖ ὁμοίωσεν αὐτό
 καταχρίσας μίλτῳ καὶ φύκει ἐρυθίνῃ χροᾷ αὐτοῦ
 καὶ πᾶσαν κηλῖδα τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ καταχρίσας
¹⁵ καὶ ποιήσας αὐτῷ αὐτοῦ ἄξιον οἶκημα
 ἐν τοίχῳ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἀσφαλισάμενος σιδήρῳ.
¹⁶ ἵνα μὲν οὖν μὴ καταπέσῃ, προενόησεν αὐτοῦ
 εἰδὼς ὅτι ἀδυνατεῖ ἑαυτῷ βοηθῆσαι.
 καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶν εἰκὼν καὶ χρεῖαν ἔχει βοηθείας.
¹⁷ περὶ δὲ κτημάτων καὶ γάμων αὐτοῦ καὶ τέκνων
 προσευχόμενος
 οὐκ αἰσχύνεται τῷ ἀψύχῳ προσλαλῶν
 καὶ περὶ μὲν ὑγείας τὸ ἀσθενὲς ἐπικαλεῖται,
¹⁸ περὶ δὲ ζωῆς τὸ νεκρὸν ἀξιοῖ,

¹² Burning the bits left over from his work,
 he cooks his food, then eats his fill.
¹³ There is still a good-for-nothing bit left over,
 a gnarled and knotted billet:
 he carves it with the diligence of his leisure hours,
 he shapes it with the skill of experience;
 he gives it the shape of a man,
¹⁴ or perhaps he makes it into some vile animal,
 smears it with ochre, paints its surface red,
 and coats over all its blemishes.
¹⁵ And he makes a worthy home for it,
 lets it into the wall, fixes it with an iron clamp.
¹⁶ Thus, he makes sure that it will not fall down –
 being well aware that it cannot help itself,
 since it is only an image, and needs to be helped.
¹⁷ Yet, if he wishes to pray for his goods,
 for his marriage, for his children,
 he does not blush to harangue this lifeless thing –
 and for health, he invokes what is weak.
¹⁸ For life, he pleads with what is dead,

¹² The NJB lacks 'burning'.

¹³ In place of 'skill of experience', the NRSV has 'skill gained in idleness'; another alternative is 'intelligent skill'.

¹⁴ The WEBBE has 'worthless' in place of 'vile'.

¹⁵ The NJB opens with 'He next makes'; here, we more closely follow the Greek text.

¹⁶ The WEBBE places the last line in parentheses.

¹⁷ The WEBBE includes the last line as part of v. 18.

¹⁸ The NJB lacks 'good', here following the WEBBE.

περὶ δὲ ἐπικουρίας τὸ ἀπειρότατον ἱκετεύει,
περὶ δὲ ὁδοιπορίας τὸ μὴδὲ βάσει χρῆσθαι δυνάμενον,
¹⁹ περὶ δὲ πορισμοῦ καὶ ἐργασίας καὶ χειρῶν ἐπιτυχίας
τὸ ἀδρανέστατον ταῖς χερσὶν εὐδράνεια ἀίτεῖται.

for help, he goes begging to total inexperience,
for a good journey, what cannot even use its feet.
¹⁹ For profit, an undertaking, and success in his craft,
he still asks ability of that whose hands have no ability.

¹⁹ The NJB has ‘*strength*’ in place of ‘*ability*’ (twice in this verse).

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος Ι4

- ¹ Πλοῦν τις πάλιν στελλόμενος καὶ ἄγρια μέλλων
διοδεύειν κύματα
τοῦ φέροντος αὐτὸν πλοίου σαθρότερον
ξύλον ἐπιβοᾶται.
- ² ἐκεῖνο μὲν γὰρ ὄρεξις πορισμῶν ἐπενόησεν,
τεχνίτις δὲ σοφία κατεσκεύασεν·
- ³ ἢ δὲ σή, πάτερ, διακυβερνᾷ πρόνοια,
ὅτι ἔδωκας καὶ ἐν θαλάσῃ ὁδὸν
καὶ ἐν κύμασι τρίβον ἀσφαλῆ
- ⁴ δεικνὺς ὅτι δύνασαι ἐκ παντὸς σῶζειν,
ἵνα καὶ ἄνευ τέχνης τις ἐπιβῇ.
- ⁵ θέλεις δὲ μὴ ἀργὰ εἶναι τὰ τῆς σοφίας σου ἔργα·
διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐλαχίστῳ ξύλῳ πιστεύουσιν
ἄνθρωποι ψυχὰς
καὶ διελθόντες κλύδωνα σχεδία διεσώθησαν.
- ⁶ καὶ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀπολλυμένων ὑπερηφάνων γιγάντων
ἡ ἐλπίς τοῦ κόσμου ἐπὶ σχεδίας καταφυγοῦσα

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 14

- ¹ Again, someone else, taking ship to cross
the wild waves,
loudly invokes a piece of wood frailer than
the vessel that bears him.
- ² Agreed, the ship is the product of a craving for gain;
its building embodies the wisdom of the shipwright.
- ³ But your providence, Father, is what steers it;
for, you opened a path even through the sea,
and a safe way over the waves,
- ⁴ showing that you can save, whatever happens,
so that, even without skill, a man may put to sea.
- ⁵ It is your will that the works of your Wisdom be fertile,
so men entrust their lives
to the smallest piece of wood,
and cross the waves on a raft, yet find land safely.
- ⁶ And, in the beginning, when proud giants perished,
the hope of the world took refuge on a raft;

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 14

- ¹ The 'piece of wood' refers to the effigy of a tutelary god at the prow or on the poop (cf. Ac 28:11).
- ² The 'wisdom of the shipwright' is the technical skill of the artisan, the fruit of Wisdom (8:6, cf. Ex 31:3, 35:31).
- ³ The term 'providence' (πρόνοια), appearing here for the first time in the LXX, is borrowed from Greek philosophy and literature.
- ⁴ The NJB has 'experience' in place of 'skill', here following the WEBBE.
- ⁵ The NJB ends with, "yet are kept safe and sound."
- ⁶ The 'giants' play an important part in Jewish tradition and legend (see Gn 6:4, Si 16:7, Ba 3:26) and in Greek legends. The 'raft' refers to Noah's Ark (see 10:4) not, as some have thought, to the cross of Christ. At the beginning of the verse, the Greek text may be corrupt.

ἀπέλιπεν αἰῶνι σπέρμα γενέσεως τῇ σῇ
 κυβερνηθεῖσα χειρί.
 7 εὐλόγηται γὰρ ξύλον, δι' οὗ γίνεται δικαιοσύνη·
 8 τὸ χειροποίητον δέ, ἐπικατάρατον αὐτὸ
 καὶ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτό,
 ὅτι ὁ μὲν ἠργάζετο, τὸ δὲ φθαρτὸν θεὸς ὠνομάσθη.
 9 ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ μισητὰ θεῷ καὶ ὁ ἀσεβῶν
 καὶ ἡ ἀσέβεια αὐτοῦ·
 10 καὶ γὰρ τὸ πραχθὲν σὺν τῷ δράσαντι κολασθήσεται.
 11 διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐν εἰδώλοις ἐθνῶν ἐπισκοπὴ ἔσται,
 ὅτι ἐν κτίσματι θεοῦ εἰς βδέλυγμα ἐγενήθησαν
 καὶ εἰς σκάνδαλα ψυχαῖς ἀνθρώπων
 καὶ εἰς παγίδα ποσὶν ἀφρόνων.
 12 Ἀρχὴ γὰρ πορνείας ἐπίνοια εἰδώλων,
 εὗρεσις δὲ αὐτῶν φθορὰ ζωῆς.
 13 οὔτε γὰρ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οὔτε εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἔσται·
 14 κενοδοξία γὰρ ἀνθρώπων εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον,
 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο σύντομον αὐτῶν τὸ τέλος ἐπενοήθη.

they preserved the seed of an eternal generation,
 steered by your hand.
 7 Blessed is the wood through which comes uprightness,
 8 but accursed than man-made idol,
 yes, and it and its maker:
 for, he made it and, though perishable, called it a god.
 9 For, God holds in equal hatred the godless
 and his godlessness.
 10 Both work and workman will be alike punished.
 11 So, even the idols of the nations will have a visitation
 for, in God's Creation, they are an abomination,
 and a scandal for human souls,
 and a snare for the feet of the foolish.
 12 The idea of making idols was the origin of fornication;
 their discovery corrupted life.
 13 They weren't in the beginning; they won't be forever.
 14 Men's vanity brought them into the world
 and a quick end is therefore reserved for them.

7 The WEBBE has 'righteousness' for 'uprightness'.

8 The literal translation of 'man-made idol' is 'the thing made by hand' (i.e. human hand) but the expression often means idols in the LXX.

9 The NJB transposes 'in equal hatred' to the end of the verse.

10 For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "for truly the deed will be punished together with him who committed it."

11 The NJB lacks the opening conjunctions in the last 2 lines.

12 'Fornication' here means religious infidelity (#Ho 1:2) but the intellectual error leads on to corruption of morals (see Rm 1:24–32, Ep 4:17–19).

13 For 'weren't' and 'won't be', the NJB has 'did not/will not exist'.

14 Several good MSS have, for the 1st line, "that death made its entry into the world," under the influence of 2:24.

¹⁵ ἄώρῳ γὰρ πένθει τρυχόμενος πατήρ
 τοῦ ταχέως ἀφαιρεθέντος τέκνου εἰκόνα ποιήσας
 τὸν ποτε νεκρὸν ἄνθρωπον νῦν ὡς θεὸν ἐτίμησεν
 καὶ παρέδωκεν τοῖς ὑποχειρίοις μυστήρια καὶ τελετάς·
¹⁶ εἶτα ἐν χρόνῳ
 κρατυνθέν τὸ ἀσεβὲς ἔθος ὡς νόμος ἐφυλάχθη.
¹⁷ καὶ τυράννων ἐπιταγαῖς ἐδρῆσκειέτο τὰ γλυπτὰ,
 οὓς ἐν ὅψει μὴ δυνάμενοι τιμᾶν ἄνθρωποι
 διὰ τὸ μακρὰν οἰκεῖν
 τὴν πόρρωθεν ὅψιν ἀνατυπωσάμενοι
 ἐμφανῇ εἰκόνα τοῦ τιμωμένου βασιλέως ἐποίησαν,
 ἵνα ὡς παρόντα τὸν ἀπόντα κολακεύωσιν
 διὰ τῆς σπουδῆς.
¹⁸ εἰς ἐπίτασιν δὲ θρησκείας καὶ τοὺς ἀγνοοῦντας
 ἢ τοῦ τεχνίτου προετρέψατο φιλοτιμία·
¹⁹ ὁ μὲν γὰρ τάχα κρατοῦντι βουλούμενος ἀρέσαι
 ἐξεβιάσατο τῇ τέχνῃ τὴν ὁμοιότητα ἐπὶ τὸ κάλλιον·
²⁰ τὸ δὲ πλήθος ἐφελκόμενον διὰ τὸ εὖχαρι τῆς ἐργασίας
 τὸν πρὸ ὀλίγου τιμηθέντα
 ἄνθρωπον νῦν σέβασμα ἐλογίσαντο.

¹⁵ A father afflicted by untimely mourning
 has an image made of his child so soon carried off,
 and now pays divine honours to what was a corpse,
 handing on mysteries and ceremonies to his people.
¹⁶ Time passes;
 the custom hardens and is observed as law.
¹⁷ Rulers ordered for statues to be worshipped:
 people who could not honour them in person,
 because they lived too far away,
 would have a portrait made of their distant face,
 to have a visible image of their honoured king;
 meaning, by such zeal, to flatter the absent
 as if he were present.
¹⁸ Even men who did not know him spread his cult,
 stimulated by the artist's enthusiasm.
¹⁹ For the latter, doubtless wishing to please his ruler,
 exerted all his skill to surpass the reality,
²⁰ and the crowd, allured by the beauty of the work,
 mistook for a god someone
 whom recently they had honoured as a man.

-
- ¹⁵ Two examples are now adduced of how human vanity brought idols into existence, each emphasising the idolatrous worship paid to deified human beings, rather than the deification itself.
¹⁶ The WEBBE includes the 1st line of v. 17 in this verse.
¹⁷ In the 2nd line, the NRSV has 'monarchs' in place of 'them', here following the Greek text.
¹⁸ For the 2nd line, the WEBBE reads, "urged forward by the ambition of the architect."
¹⁹ In place of 'the latter', the WEBBE has just 'he'.
²⁰ The NJB has 'attracted' in place of 'allured', here following the WEBBE.

²¹ καὶ τοῦτο ἐγένετο τῷ βίῳ εἰς ἔνεδρον,
 ὅτι ἢ συμφορᾷ ἢ τυραννίδι δουλεύσαντες ἄνθρωποι
 τὸ ἀκοινώνητον ὄνομα λίθοις καὶ ξύλοις περιέθεσαν.

²² Εἴτ' οὐκ ἤρκεσεν τὸ πλανᾶσθαι
 περὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ γνῶσιν,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ ζῶντες ἀγνοίας πολέμῳ
 τὰ τοσαῦτα κακὰ εἰρήνην προσαγορεύουσιν.

²³ ἢ γὰρ τεκνοφόνους τελετὰς ἢ κρύφια μυστήρια
 ἢ ἐμμανεῖς ἐξάλλων δεσμῶν κώμους ἄγοντες

²⁴ οὔτε βίους οὔτε γάμους καθαροὺς ἔτι φυλάσσουσιν,
 ἕτερος δ' ἕτερον ἢ λοχῶν ἀναιρεῖ ἢ νοθεύων ὀδυνᾷ.

²⁵ πάντα δ' ἐπιμιξέχει αἷμα καὶ φόνος, κλοπὴ καὶ δόλος,
 φθορά, ἀπιστία, τάραχος, ἐπιорκία,

²⁶ δόρυβος ἀγαθῶν, χάριτος ἀμνηστία,
 ψυχῶν μiasμός, γενέσεως ἐναλλαγή,
 γάμων ἀταξία, μοιχεία καὶ ἀσέλγεια.

²⁷ ἢ γὰρ τῶν ἀνωνύμων εἰδώλων θρησκεία
 παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας ἐστίν·

²¹ And this became a snare for life:
 that men, enslaved by misfortune or by tyranny,
 conferred the ineffable Name on sticks and stones.

²² It is not enough for them
 to have such misconceptions about God;
 but, living in the fierce warfare of ignorance,
 they call these terrible evils peace.

²³ With their child-murdering rites, their occult mysteries,
 or their furious orgies with outlandish customs,

²⁴ no longer do they guard life or purity of marriage,
 treacherously killing or grieving each other by adultery.

²⁵ All filled with blood and murder, theft, and fraud,
 corruption, treachery, turmoil, perjury,

²⁶ disturbance of decent people, forgetfulness of favours,
 pollution of souls, sins against nature,
 disorder in marriage, adultery, and debauchery.

²⁷ For, the worship of idols with no name
 is the beginning, cause, and end of every evil.

²¹ See Ex 3:14 for the revelation of the Name of God to Moses.

²² The 3rd line refers to both the inner conflict caused by the unleashing of the passions, and external conflict, since the passions disrupt society.

²³ The 2nd line is an allusion to the Bacchanalian orgies of the Dionysiac Mysteries, or to the frenzied immorality of the Phrygian Mysteries.

²⁴ For the 1st line, here following the WEBBE, the NJB reads, "they no longer retain any purity in their lives or their marriages."

²⁵ In place of 'turmoil', the NJB has 'riot' and the WEBBE has 'tumult'.

²⁶ The literal translation of 'sins against nature' is 'inversion of generation'; the NRSV has 'sexual perversion'.

²⁷ 'With no name' probably means 'non-existence'; another interpretation (as in the NRSV) is 'whose name should not be used' (see Ex 23:13, Ps 16:4, Ho 2:17, Ws 14:21).

28 ...
 ἢ γὰρ εὐφραινόμενοι μεμήνασιν ἢ προφητεύουσιν ψευδῇ
 ἢ ζῶσιν ἀδίκως ἢ ἐπιορκοῦσιν ταχέως·
 29 ἀψύχοις γὰρ πεποιθότες εἰδώλοις
 κακῶς ὁμόσαντες ἀδικηθῆναι οὐ προσδέχονται.
 30 ἀμρότερα δὲ αὐτοὺς μετελεύσεται τὰ δίκαια,
 ὅτι κακῶς ἐφρόνησαν περὶ Θεοῦ προσέχοντες εἰδώλοις
 καὶ ἀδίκως ὥμοσαν
 ἐν δόλῳ καταφρονήσαντες ὁσιότητος·
 31 οὐ γὰρ ἡ τῶν ὀμνυμένων δύναμις,
 ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν ἀμαρτανόντων δίκη
 ἐπεξέρχεται ἀεὶ τὴν τῶν ἀδίκων παράβασιν.

28 ...
 or they prophesy falsely, or they live wicked lives,
 or they lightly commit perjury.
 29 Since they put their trust in lifeless idols,
 they do not reckon their false oaths can harm them.
 30 But just doom will pursue them for this double crime:
 for degrading the concept of God by adhering to idols
 and wickedly perjuring themselves
 in contempt for what is holy.
 31 For, it is not the power of oaths men swear
 but the punishment reserved for sinners
 that always follows the offences of the wicked.

28 There appears to be a line missing in the Greek text at the start of this verse; the NJB, loosely following the Vg (*Aut enim dum lætantur insaniunt*) adds, "They either carry their merrymaking to the point of frenzy."

29 The WEBBE has 'wicked oath' in place of 'false oaths'.

30 The NJB has 'penalties' in place of 'doom'.

31 An alternative reading of 'oaths men swear' is 'things by which men swear'.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 15

- ¹ Σὺ δέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, χρηστὸς καὶ ἀληθής,
μακρόθυμος καὶ ἐλέει διοικῶν τὰ πάντα.
² καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ἀμάρτωμεν, σοὶ ἐσμεν,
εἰδότες σου τὸ κράτος·
οὐχ ἀμαρτησόμεθα δέ, εἰδότες ὅτι σοὶ λελογίσμεθα.
³ τὸ γὰρ ἐπίστασθαί σε ὁλόκληρος δικαιοσύνη,
καὶ εἰδέναι σου τὸ κράτος ῥίζα ἀθανασίας.
⁴ οὔτε γὰρ ἐπλάνησεν ἡμᾶς
ἀνθρώπων κακότεχνος ἐπίνοια
οὐδὲ σκιαγράφων πόνος ἄκαρπος,
εἶδος σπιλωθὲν χρώμασιν διηλλαγμένοις,
⁵ ὧν ὅψις ἄφροσιν εἰς ὄρεξιν ἔρχεται,
ποθεῖ τε νεκρᾶς εἰκόνας εἶδος ἄπνουν.
⁶ κακῶν ἐρασταὶ ἄξιοί τε τοιούτων ἐλπίδων
καὶ οἱ δοῶντες καὶ οἱ ποθοῦντες καὶ οἱ σεβόμενοι.
⁷ Καὶ γὰρ κεραμεὺς ἀπαλὴν γῆν θλίβων ἐπίμοχθον
πλάσσει πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν ἡμῶν ἐν ἑκάστον·

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 15

- ¹ But you, our God, are kind and true,
slow to anger, mercifully governing all things.
² Even if we sin, we are yours,
since we acknowledge your power,
but we will not sin, knowing that we count as yours.
³ To know you is indeed the perfect virtue,
and to know your power is the root of immortality.
⁴ We have not been duped by inventions
of misapplied plans of men,
or by the sterile work of painters,
by figures daubed with assorted colours,
⁵ the sight of which sets fools into lust
and hankering for the lifeless form of a dead image.
⁶ Lovers of evil and worthy of such hopes
are those who make desire and worship them.
⁷ And take a potter, laboriously working the soft earth,
shaping each object for us to use.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 15

- ¹ In place of 'all things', the NJB has 'the universe'.
² The Israelites do not stop being God's, since they know he exerts his power with compassion, offering the possibility of repentance.
³ The literal translation of 'perfect' is 'entire'.
⁴ The NJB has 'human skill' in place of 'plans of men'.
⁵ Another reading for 'lust' (according to some MSS) is 'reproach'.
⁶ After 'evil', the WEBBE adds 'things'.
⁷ The author attacks the makers of idols and satirises a maker of figurines, a craft common enough in the Hellenistic world (cf. 13:11-19).

ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πηλοῦ ἀνεπλάσατο
τά τε τῶν καθαρῶν ἔργων δοῦλα σκεύη
τά τε ἐναντία, πάντα ὁμοίως·
τούτων δὲ ἑτέρου τίς ἐκάστου ἐστὶν ἡ χρῆσις,
κριτῆς ὁ πηλουργός.

- ⁸ καὶ κακόμοχθος
θεὸν μάταιον ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πλάσσει πηλοῦ
ὃς πρὸ μικροῦ ἐκ γῆς γεννηθεὶς
μετ' ὀλίγον πορεύεται ἐξ ἧς ἐλήμφθη,
τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπαιτηθεὶς χρέος.
- ⁹ ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὐτῷ φροντὶς οὐχ ὅτι μέλλει κάμνειν
οὐδ' ὅτι βραχυτελῆ βίον ἔχει,
ἀλλ' ἀντρείδεται μὲν χρυσοῦργοις καὶ ἀργυροχοοῖς
χαλκοπλάστας τε μιμεῖται
καὶ δόξαν ἡγεῖται ὅτι κίβδηλα πλάσσει.
- ¹⁰ σποδὸς ἢ καρδία αὐτοῦ,
καὶ γῆς εὐτελεστέρα ἢ ἐλπίς αὐτοῦ,
πηλοῦ τε ἀτιμότερος ὁ βίος αὐτοῦ,
- ¹¹ ὅτι ἡγνόησεν τὸν πλάσαντα αὐτὸν
καὶ τὸν ἐμπνεύσαντα αὐτῷ ψυχὴν ἐνεργοῦσαν
καὶ ἐμφυσήσαντα πνεῦμα ζωτικόν,

But, out of the self-same clay,
he models vessels intended for a noble use
and those for a contrary purpose, all alike:
which of these two uses will he have
is for the potter himself to decide.

- ⁸ Then, labouring to an evil end,
he models a futile god from the same clay,
although so recently made out of earth himself,
and shortly to return to what he was taken from,
when asked to give back the soul that was lent to him.
- ⁹ Even so, he does not worry about having to die
or about the shortness of his life,
but strives to outdo to goldsmiths and silversmiths,
imitates the bronze-workers,
and prides himself on modelling counterfeits.
- ¹⁰ His heart is ash
and his hope is viler than earth;
his life is more wretched than clay!
- ¹¹ For, he has misconceived the One who modelled him,
who breathed an active soul into him
and inspired a living spirit.

⁸ In place of 'labouring to an evil end', here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'ill-spent effort'. Another reading for 'soul' is 'life'.

⁹ Instead of thinking of his end, of which the clay he uses ought to remind him (Gn 3:19), the potter makes himself ridiculous by trying to vie with artists working in nobler materials. The WEBBE has 'brass' in place of 'bronze' and offers 'copper' as an alternative.

¹⁰ The NRSV has 'cheaper' in place of 'viler' and 'dirt' in place of 'earth'.

¹¹ 'Active soul' and 'living spirit' are synonymous.

¹² ἀλλ' ἐλογίσαντο παίγνιον εἶναι τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν
καὶ τὸν βίον πανηγυρισμὸν ἐπικερδῆ,
δεῖν γάρ φησιν ὅθεν δῆ, καὶ ἐκ κακοῦ, πορίζειν.
¹³ οὗτος γὰρ παρὰ πάντας οἶδεν ὅτι ἀμαρτάνει
ὑλῆς γεώδους εὐθραυστα σκεύη
καὶ γλυπτὰ δημιουργῶν.
¹⁴ πάντες δὲ ἀφρονέστατοι
καὶ τάλανες ὑπὲρ ψυχὴν νηπίου
οἱ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ λαοῦ σου καταδυναστεύσαντες αὐτόν,
¹⁵ ὅτι καὶ πάντα τὰ εἰδῶλα τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐλογίσαντο θεούς,
οἷς οὔτε ὀμμάτων χρῆσις εἰς ὄρασιν
οὔτε ῥῖνες εἰς συνολκὴν ἀέρος
οὔτε ὦτα ἀκούειν οὔτε δάκτυλοι χειρῶν εἰς ψηλάφησιν
καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἀργοὶ πρὸς ἐπίβασιν.
¹⁶ ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς,
καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα δεδανεισμένος ἐπλάσεν αὐτούς·
οὐδεὶς γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅμοιον ἄνθρωπος ἰσχύει πλάσαι θεόν·
¹⁷ θνητὸς δὲ ὢν νεκρὸν ἐργάζεται χειρὶν ἀνόμοις·
κρείττων γὰρ ἐστὶν τῶν σεβασμάτων αὐτοῦ,
ὢν αὐτὸς μὲν ἔζησεν, ἐκεῖνα δὲ οὐδέποτε. —

¹² Rather, he counted our life as a kind of game,
and our lifetime here like a fair, full of bargains.
He says, "A man must make a living, even if by evil."
¹³ He, more than any other, knows he is sinning,
he who from one earthy stuff makes brittle pots
and engraved images.
¹⁴ But most foolish,
and more pitiable than the soul of a baby,
are the enemies who once oppressed your people,
¹⁵ and have taken all the idols of the heathen for gods;
these can use neither their eyes for seeing,
nor their nostrils for breathing the air,
nor their ears for hearing, nor their fingers for handling,
and their feet are helpless for walking.
¹⁶ They have been made, you see, by a man,
modelled by a being whose own breath is borrowed.
No man can model a god to resemble himself.
¹⁷ As a mortal, his evil hands can make only a dead thing.
He himself is worthier than the things he worships,
since he will at least have lived, but never they.

¹² In place of 'he counted', some MSS read 'they counted'. For 'lifetime', some read 'way of life'.

¹³ The NJB has 'idols' in place of 'engraved images'.

¹⁴ The 'enemies' are more pitiable than a 'baby' since they are even more easily deceived.

¹⁵ For the last line, the NJB reads simply, "nor their feet for walking."

¹⁶ In the 1st line, the NJB has 'human being' in place of 'man'.

¹⁷ The NRSV ends the verse, "... but the idols never had."

¹⁸ καὶ τὰ ζῶα δὲ τὰ ἔχθιστα σέβονται·
ἀνοία γὰρ συγκρινόμενα τῶν ἄλλων ἐστὶ χείρονα·
¹⁹ οὐδ' ὅσον ἐπιποθῆσαι ὡς ἐν ζώων ὅψει καλὰ τυγχάνει,
ἐκπέφευγεν δὲ
καὶ τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔπαινον καὶ τὴν εὐλογίαν αὐτοῦ.

¹⁸ And they worship even the most hateful of animals,
worse than the rest in their degree of stupidity,
¹⁹ without the beauty seen in animals, which we desire;
but they have been excluded
from God's praises and blessing.

¹⁸ The NJB has 'loathsome' in place of 'hateful'.

¹⁹ At the dawn of Creation, God had blessed whatever he had endowed with life (Gn 1:22,28, 2:3). After the Fall, he laid his curse on the snake (Gn 3:14-15). The animal gods of the Egyptians deserve the same condemnation.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 16

- ¹ Διὰ τοῦτο δι' ὁμοίων ἐκολάσθησαν ἀξίως
καὶ διὰ πλήθους κνωδάλων ἐβασανίσθησαν.
- ² ἀνθ' ἧς κολάσεως εὐεργετήσας τὸν λαόν σου
εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ὀρέξεως ξένην γεῦσιν
τροφὴν ἡτοιμάσας ὀρυγομήτραν,
- ³ ἵνα ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντες τροφὴν
διὰ τὴν εἰδέχθειαν τῶν ἐπαπεσταλμένων
καὶ τὴν ἀναγκαίαν ὄρεξιν ἀποστρέφονται,
αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐπ' ὀλίγον ἐνδεεῖς γενόμενοι
καὶ ξένης μετὰσχωσι γεύσεως.
- ⁴ ἔδει γὰρ ἐκείνοις μὲν ἀπαραίτητον ἐνδειαν
ἐπελθεῖν τυραννοῦσιν,
τούτοις δὲ μόνον δειχθῆναι
πῶς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν ἐβασανίζοντο.
- ⁵ Καὶ γὰρ ὅτε αὐτοῖς δεινὸς ἐπῆλθεν θηρίων θυμὸς
δήγμασιν τε σκολιῶν διεφθείροντο ὄφρων,
οὐ μέχρι τέλους ἔμεινεν ἡ ὀργή σου·
- ⁶ εἰς νουθεσίαν δὲ πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐταράχθησαν

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 16

- ¹ Thus, they were deservedly punished
and tormented by swarms of vermin.
- ² Instead of this punishment, you benefitted your people
and provided quails for them,
a delicacy to satisfy their appetite.
- ³ Thus, through their longing for food,
at the repulsive sight of the creatures sent against them,
found that they had lost their natural appetite;
whereas your own people, after a short privation,
were to have a rare relish for their portion.
- ⁴ It was inevitable that relentless want
should seize the former oppressors,
only for your people to be shown
how their enemies were being tortured.
- ⁵ And when the fearful rage of wild beasts overtook them
and they were perishing by the bites of writhing snakes,
your retribution did not continue to the end.
- ⁶ Affliction struck them briefly, by way of warning,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 16

- ¹ At the end of the 1st line, the NJB adds 'by similar creatures' and the WEBBE further adds 'like those which they worship'.
- ² The NJB opens with 'In contrast to this' in place of 'Instead of this'.
- ³ Literal translated, the 3rd line ends, "they loathed the necessary appetite."
- ⁴ In place of 'only', the NJB has 'enough'.
- ⁵ In the 1st line, the WEBBE has 'your people' in place of 'them', which is difficult to explain.
- ⁶ Instead of 'token', a number of important MSS have 'answer'.

σύμβολον ἔχοντες σωτηρίας εἰς
 ἀνάμνησιν ἐντολῆς νόμου σου.
 7 ὁ γὰρ ἐπιστραφεὶς οὐ διὰ τὸ θεωρούμενον ἐσώζετο,
 ἀλλὰ διὰ σέ τὸν πάντων σωτῆρα.
 8 καὶ ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἔπεισας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν
 ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ῥυόμενος ἐκ παντὸς κακοῦ.
 9 οὓς μὲν γὰρ ἀκριδῶν καὶ μυιῶν ἀπέκτεινεν δῆγματα,
 καὶ οὐχ εὐρέθη ἴαμα τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῶν,
 ὅτι ἄξιοι ἦσαν ὑπὸ τοιούτων κολασθῆναι.
 10 τοὺς δὲ υἱούς σου
 οὐδὲ ἰοβόλων δρακόντων ἐνίκησαν ὁδόντες,
 τὸ ἔλεος γάρ σου ἀντιπαρῆλθεν καὶ ἰάσατο αὐτούς.
 11 εἰς γὰρ ὑπόμνησιν τῶν λογίων σου ἐνεκεντρίζοντο
 καὶ ὀξέως διεσώζοντο,
 ἵνα μὴ εἰς βαθεῖαν ἐμπεσόντες λήθην
 ἀπερίσπαστοι γένωνται τῆς σῆς εὐεργεσίας.
 12 καὶ γὰρ οὔτε βοτάνη οὔτε μάλαγμα
 ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς,
 ἀλλὰ ὁ σός, κύριε, λόγος ὁ πάντας ἰώμενος.
 13 σὺ γὰρ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου ἐξουσίαν ἔχεις

and they had a saving token
 to remind them of the commandment of your Law.
 7 For, he who turned to it was not saved by what he saw,
 but by you, the Saviour of all.
 8 And, by such means, you proved to our enemies
 that you are the one who delivers from every evil.
 9 For them, the bites of locusts and flies proved fatal
 and no remedy could be found to save their lives,
 since they deserved to be punished by such creatures.
 10 But your children,
 the fangs of poisonous snakes couldn't harm them,
 as your mercy came to their help and cured them.
 11 One sting – how quickly hated –
 to remind them of your pronouncements
 rather than that, by sinking into deep forgetfulness,
 they should be cut off from your kindness.
 12 And, truly, it was neither herb nor poultice
 that cured them
 but your word, Lord, which heals all people.
 13 Yes, you have authority over life and death,

7 The author puts a merciful interpretation on Nb 21:4–9 and also states that the bronze snake had no power of itself.

8 The enemies are imagined to be aware of these events (cf. 11:3), unless the author has in own times in mind.

9 With the plague of locusts (Ex 10:4–15), the author associates the flies and mosquitoes (Ex 8:12–20), though the term he uses is vague.

10 In place of ‘came to their help’, the WEBBE has ‘passed by where they were’.

11 An alternative reading of the last line is, “they should not become insensible to your benefits;” the meaning of the Greek is uncertain.

12 For the last line, the NJB reads, “but your all-healing word, O Lord.”

13 In place of ‘you have authority’, the NJB has ‘you are the one with the power’.

καὶ κατὰγεις εἰς πύλας ᾗδου καὶ ἀνάγεις·
¹⁴ ἄνθρωπος δὲ ἀποκτέννει μὲν τῇ κακίᾳ αὐτοῦ,
 ἐξελθὼν δὲ πνεῦμα οὐκ ἀναστρέφει
 οὐδὲ ἀναλύει ψυχὴν παραλημφθεῖσαν.
¹⁵ Τὴν δὲ σὴν χεῖρα φυγεῖν ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν·
¹⁶ ἀρνούμενοι γάρ σε εἰδέναι ἀσεβεῖς
 ἐν ἰσχύι βραχίονός σου ἐμαστιγώδησαν
 ξένοις ὑετοῖς καὶ χαλάζαις
 καὶ ὄμβροις διωκόμενοι ἀπαραιτήτοις
 καὶ πυρὶ καταναλισκόμενοι.
¹⁷ τὸ γὰρ παραδοξότατον,
 ἐν τῷ πάντα σβεννύντι ὕδατι
 πλεῖον ἐνήργει τὸ πῦρ,
 ὑπέρμαχος γὰρ ὁ κόσμος ἐστὶν δικαίων·
¹⁸ ποτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἡμεροῦτο φλόξ,
 ἵνα μὴ καταφλέξῃ τὰ ἐπ' ἀσεβεῖς ἀπεσταλμένα ζῶα,
 ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ βλέποντες εἰδῶσιν
 ὅτι θεοῦ κρίσει ἐλαύνονται·
¹⁹ ποτὲ δὲ καὶ μεταξὺ ὕδατος ὑπὲρ
 τὴν πυρὸς δύναμιν φλέγει,

bringing to the gates of Hades and back again.
¹⁴ A human being out of malice may put to death,
 but he cannot bring the departed spirit back
 or free the soul that Hades has once received.
¹⁵ But it is not possible to escape your hand.
¹⁶ The godless, refusing to acknowledge you,
 were scourged by the strength of your arm,
 pursued by strange rains,
 and hail and unrelenting downpours,
 and consumed by fire.
¹⁷ Even more paradoxical,
 in the water that quenches all,
 the fire raged fiercer than ever;
 for, the elements fight for the upright.
¹⁸ At one moment, the fire would die down,
 to not consume the animals sent against the godless
 and to make clear to them by that sight,
 that the judgement of God pursued them.
¹⁹ At another time, in the very heart of the water,
 it would burn more fiercely than fire

¹⁴ 'Hades' is not expressed in the Greek text (the last line literally reads 'or free the soul that has been received') but the meaning is clear.

¹⁵ The NJB lacks the opening 'But'.

¹⁶ All the features of this catalogue refer to the plague of hail (Ex 9:13–35) but the author, in the true manner of Midrash, exploits all the possibilities: for the 'rains', see Ex 9:29 (LXX), 33–34; for the 'fire', see Ex 9:23–24, Ps 78:47–49, 105:32 (where there is 'rain' as well).

¹⁷ In place of 'paradoxical' (παραδοξότατον), the NJB has 'wonderful' and the WEBBE has 'marvellous'.

¹⁸ The author seems to think that the earlier plagues are still going on when the seventh, the plague of hail, breaks over Egypt (cf. Ex 9:13–35).

¹⁹ Some MSS have 'sending' in place of 'providing'.

ἵνα ἀδίκου γῆς γενήματα διαφθείρῃ.

²⁰ ἀνθ' ὧν ἀγγέλων τροφήν ἐψώμισας τὸν λαόν σου
καὶ ἔτοιμον ἄρτον
ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ παρέσχες αὐτοῖς ἀκοπιάτως
πᾶσαν ἡδονὴν ἰσχύοντα
καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀρμόνιον γεῦσιν·

²¹ ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὑπόστασίς σου τὴν σὴν
πρὸς τέκνα ἐνεφάνιζεν γλυκύτητα,
τῇ δὲ τοῦ προσφερομένου ἐπιθυμία ὑπηρετῶν
πρὸς ὃ τις ἐβούλετο μετεκρινᾶτο.

²² χιῶν δὲ καὶ κρύσταλλος ὑπέμεινε πῦρ καὶ οὐκ ἐτήκετο,
ἵνα γινῶσιν ὅτι τοὺς τῶν ἐχθρῶν καρπούς
κατέφθειρε πῦρ φλεγόμενον ἐν τῇ χαλάζῃ
καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑετοῖς διαστράπτων·

²³ τοῦτο πάλιν δ, ἵνα τραφῶσιν δίκαιοι,
καὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλέλησται δυνάμεως.

²⁴ Ἡ γὰρ κτίσις σοὶ τῷ ποιήσαντι ὑπηρετοῦσα
ἐπιτείνεται εἰς κόλασιν κατὰ τῶν ἀδίκων
καὶ ἀνίεται εἰς εὐεργεσίαν
ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπὶ σοὶ πεποιθότων.

to ruin the produce of a wicked land.

²⁰ However, you gave your people the food of angels,
and gave them bread already made
from the heavens, untiringly,
containing every delight
and to satisfy every taste.

²¹ Moreover, the substance you gave
showed sweetness to your children,
for, comforting to the taste of whoever ate it,
it transformed itself into what each eater wished.

²² Snow and ice endured the fire, without melting;
this was to show them that,
to destroy the harvests of their enemies,
fire would burn even in hail and flare in falling rain,
²³ whereas, on the other hand, it forgot its own power
in the service of feeding the upright.

²⁴ For, the Creation, serving you, its Creator,
tautens to punish the wicked
and, in kindness, slackens
on behalf of those who trust in you.

²⁰ The NJB opens with, “How differently with your people! You gave them the food of angels.”

²¹ The last line contradicts the fact that the Israelites eventually grumbled about the monotony of eating manna.

²² The phrase, ‘snow and ice’, refers to the manna, which Ex 16:14 compares to the dew and Nb 11:7 (LXX) to ice (see 19:21).

²³ The WEBBE has ‘again’ in place of ‘on the other hand’, here following the NJB.

²⁴ ‘Tautens’ and ‘slackens’ are metaphors borrowed from stringed musical instruments (cf. 19:21).

²⁵ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τότε εἰς πάντα μεταλλευομένη
 τῇ παντοτρόφῳ σου δωρεᾷ ὑπηρέτει
 πρὸς τὴν τῶν δεομένων θέλησιν,
²⁶ ἵνα μάθωσιν οἱ υἱοί σου, οὓς ἠγάπησας, κύριε,
 ὅτι οὐχ αἱ γενέσεις τῶν καρπῶν τρέφουσιν ἄνθρωπον,
 ἀλλὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου τοὺς σοὶ πιστεύοντας διατηρεῖ.
²⁷ τὸ γὰρ ὑπὸ πυρὸς μὴ φθειρόμενον
 ἀπλῶς ὑπὸ βραχείας ἀκτῖνος ἡλίου
 θερμαινόμενον ἐτήκετο,
²⁸ ὅπως γνωστὸν ᾗ ὅτι δεῖ φθάνειν
 τὸν ἥλιον ἐπ' εὐχαριστίαν σου
 καὶ πρὸς ἀνατολὴν φωτὸς ἐντυγχάνειν σοι·
²⁹ ἀχαρίστου γὰρ ἐλπίς ὡς χειμέριος πάχνη τακήσεται
 καὶ ῥυήσεται ὡς ὕδωρ ἄχρηστον.

²⁵ And this is why, by changing into all things,
 it obediently served your all-nourishing bounty,
 conforming to the wishes of those who were in need;
²⁶ so that your beloved children might learn, Lord,
 that it is not the various crops that nourish a man,
 but your word, which preserves all who believe in you.
²⁷ For, that which fire could not destroy
 melted away when it was simply warmed
 by a faint sunbeam,
²⁸ to show that, to give you thanks,
 we must rise before the sun
 and meet you at the dawning of the day;
²⁹ but the hope of the ungrateful melts like winter frost
 and flows away like water running to waste.

²⁵ Alternative readings of 'in need' are 'were asking' or 'were praying'.

²⁶ The NJB has 'provide nourishment' in place of 'nourish a man'.

²⁷ For the 2nd line, the NJB reads, "melted in the heat of a single sunbeam."

²⁸ The lesson, based on a very free interpretation of Ex 16:21, alludes to the practices of offering morning prayer at dawn or first light.

²⁹ For the 2nd line, the WEBBE reads, "and will flow away as water that has no use."

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 17

- ¹ Μεγάλαι γάρ σου αἱ κρίσεις καὶ δυσδιήγητοι·
διὰ τοῦτο ἀπαιδευτοὶ ψυχαὶ ἐπλανήθησαν.
- ² ὑπειληφότες γὰρ καταδυναστεύειν
ἔθνος ἅγιον ἄνομοι
δέσμιοι σκότους καὶ μακρᾶς πεδῆται νυκτὸς
κατακλεισθέντες ὀρόφοις
φυγάδες τῆς αἰωνίου προνοίας ἔκειντο.
- ³ λανθάνειν γὰρ νομίζοντες ἐπὶ κρυφαίοις ἀμαρτήμασιν
ἀφεγγεῖ λήθης παρακαλύμματι
ἐσκορπίσθησαν θαμβούμενοι δεινῶς
καὶ ἰνδάλμασιν ἐκταρασσόμενοι.
- ⁴ οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ κατέχων αὐτοὺς
μυχὸς ἀφόβους διεφύλαττεν,
ἥχοι δ' ἐκταράσσοντες αὐτοὺς περιεκόμπουν,
καὶ φάσματα ἀμειδῆτοις κατηφῇ
προσώποις ἐνεφανίζετο.
- ⁵ καὶ πυρὸς μὲν οὐδεμία βία κατίσχυεν φωτίζειν,
οὔτε ἄστρων ἑκλαμπροὶ φλόγες
καταυγάζειν ὑπέμενον τὴν στυγνὴν ἐκείνην νύκτα.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 17

- ¹ Yes, your judgements are great and impenetrable,
which is why uninstructed souls have gone astray.
- ² When the lawless thought they held
a holy nation in their power,
they were prisoners of darkness and the long night,
confined under their own roofs,
banished from eternal providence.
- ³ While they thought to be unseen with their secret sins,
curtained by dark forgetfulness,
they were scattered in fearful dismay
and terrified by apparitions.
- ⁴ The hiding place sheltering them
could not ward off their fear;
but terrifying noises echoed round them,
and dismal phantoms appeared
with unsmiling faces.
- ⁵ And no fire prevailed to give them light,
nor were the brightly blazing stars
strong enough to illuminate that dreadful night.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 17

- ¹ In place of 'impenetrable', the WEBBE has 'hard to interpret'.
² Before 'the long night', the WEBBE has 'bound in fetters of' (and the NJB has a similar phrase).
³ The NJB has 'unnoticed' in place of 'unseen', here following the WEBBE.
⁴ The NJB lacks the word, 'terrifying', here following the WEBBE.
⁵ The NJB lacks 'strong enough' in the last line.

⁶ διεφαίνετο δ' αὐτοῖς μόνον
 αὐτομάτη πυρὰ φόβου πλήρης,
 ἐκδευματούμενοι δὲ τῆς μὴ θεωρουμένης ἐκείνης ὄψεως
 ἡγοῦντο χεῖρω τὰ βλεπόμενα.
⁷ μαγικῆς δὲ ἐμπαίγματα κατέκειτο τέχνης,
 καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ φρονήσει ἀλαζονείας ἔλεγχος ἐφύβριστος·
⁸ οἱ γὰρ ὑπισχνούμενοι δαίματα
 καὶ ταραχὰς ἀπελαύνειν ψυχῆς νοσοῦσης,
 οὔτοι καταγέλαστον εὐλάβειαν ἐνόσουν.
⁹ καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὴδὲν αὐτοὺς ταραχῶδες ἐφόβει,
 κνωδάλων παρόδοις
 καὶ ἐρπετῶν συριγμοῖς ἐκσεσοβημένοι
 διώλλυντο ἔντρομοι
 καὶ τὸν μηδαμόθεν φευκτὸν ἀέρα
 προσιδεῖν ἀρνούμενοι.
¹⁰ δειλὸν γὰρ ἰδίῳ πονηρίᾳ μάρτυρι καταδικαζομένη,
 ἀεὶ δὲ προσεῖληφεν τὰ χαλεπὰ
 συνεχομένη τῇ συνειδήσει·
¹¹ οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν φόβος
 εἰ μὴ προδοσία τῶν ἀπὸ λογισμοῦ βοηθημάτων,

⁶ The only light that appeared to them
 was a spontaneous blaze, full of fear;
 in their terror, they considered the things they saw
 more terrible than anything they had seen.
⁷ Their magical illusions were powerless now,
 and a shameful rebuke of their boasted understanding.
⁸ For, those who promised to drive out fears
 and disorders from sick souls
 were now themselves sick with ludicrous fright.
⁹ And when there was nothing frightful to scare them,
 the vermin creeping past
 and the hissing of reptiles
 filled them with panic
 and they would not look at empty air,
 which they could not escape.
¹⁰ Wickedness, self-condemned, is a cowardly thing;
 under pressure from conscience,
 it always assumes the worst.
¹¹ Fear, indeed, is nothing other
 than the failure of aids offered by reason.

⁶ In place of 'full of fear', the NJB has 'a fearful sight to see'.

⁷ For the 2nd line, here following the WEBBE, the NJB has, "and their claims to intelligence were ignominiously confounded."

⁸ The WEBBE has 'fearfulness' in place of 'fright'.

⁹ The NJB & WEBBE have the text from 'filled with panic' in a separate verse (v. 10).

¹⁰ Note that this is v. 11 in the NJB, NRSV & WEBBE (cf. #9), wherein all subsequent verse numbers are accordingly incremented.

¹¹ This is a remarkable description of fear.

¹² ἔνδοθεν δὲ οὖσα ἥττων ἢ προσδοκία
 πλείονα λογίζεται τὴν ἄγνοιαν τῆς παρεχούσης
 τὴν βάσανον αἰτίας.
¹³ οἱ δὲ τὴν ἀδύνατον ὄντως νύκτα
 καὶ ἐξ ἀδυνάτου ἄδου μυχῶν ἐπελθοῦσαν
 τὸν αὐτὸν ὕπνον κοιμώμενοι
¹⁴ τὰ μὲν τέρασιν ἠλαύνοντο φαντασμάτων,
 τὰ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς παρελύοντο προδοσίᾳ·
 αἰφνίδιος γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀπροσδόκητος φόβος ἐπεχύθη.
¹⁵ εἶθ' οὕτως, ὃς δὴ ποτ' οὖν ἦν ἐκεῖ καταπίπτων,
 ἐφρουρεῖτο εἰς τὴν ἀσίδηρον εἰρκτὴν κατακλεισθεῖς·
¹⁶ εἴ τε γὰρ γεωργὸς ἦν τις ἢ ποιμὴν
 ἢ τῶν κατ' ἐρημίαν ἐργάτης μόχθων,
 προλημφθεῖς τὴν δυσάλυκτον ἔμενεν ἀνάγκην,
 μιᾷ γὰρ ἀλύσει σκότους πάντες ἐδέθησαν·
¹⁷ εἴ τε πνεῦμα συρίζον
 ἢ περὶ ἀμφιλαφεῖς κλάδους ὀρνέων ἤχος εὐμελῆς
 ἢ ῥυθμὸς ὕδατος πορευομένου βία
 ἢ κτύπος ἀπηνῆς καταρριπτομένων πετρῶν

¹² The less you rely within yourself on these,
 the more alarming it is not to know
 the cause of your suffering.
¹³ But they, all through the powerless night,
 and which came from the recesses of weak Hades,
 sleeping the same sleep,
¹⁴ were now chased by monstrous spectres,
 now paralysed by the fainting of their souls;
 for, a sudden, unexpected terror had attacked them.
¹⁵ And thus, whoever it might be that fell there
 stayed captive, shut in this prison without iron bars.
¹⁶ Whether he was ploughman or shepherd,
 or somebody at work in the desert,
 he was still overtaken and suffered the inevitable fate,
 for, all were bound with one chain of darkness.
¹⁷ The sougling of the wind,
 the tuneful noise of birds in the spreading branches,
 the measured beat of water in its powerful course,
 the headlong din of rocks cascading down,

¹² Note that this is v. 13 in many/most English translations.

¹³ For this verse, here (loosely) following the WEBBE, the NJB reads, "And they, all locked in the same sleep, while that darkness lasted – which was in fact quite powerless and had issued from the depths of the equally powerless Hades."

¹⁴ The author here seems to speak of the night of the death of the Egyptians' first-born.

¹⁵ The NJB lacks the word, 'iron'.

¹⁶ In place of 'with one chain', the NJB has 'by the one same chain'.

¹⁷ In vv. 17–18 (vv. 18–19 in the NJB/NRSV), the terror of the Egyptians is illustrated by seven incidents.

¹⁸ ἢ σκιρτώντων ζώων δρόμος ἀθρόωτος
ἢ ὠρυομένων ἀπηνεστάτων θηρίων φωνή
ἢ ἀντανακλωμένη ἐκ κοιλότητος ὀρέων ἡχώ,
παρέλυσεν αὐτοὺς ἐκφοβοῦντα.
¹⁹ ὅλος γὰρ ὁ κόσμος λαμπρῶ κατελάμπετο φωτὶ
καὶ ἀνεμποδίστοις συνέχετο ἔργοις·
²⁰ μόνοις δὲ ἐκείνοις ἐπετέτατο βαρεῖα νύξ
εἰκὼν τοῦ μέλλοντος αὐτοὺς διαδέχασθαι σκότους,
ἐαυτοῖς δὲ ἦσαν βαρύτεροι σκότους.

¹⁸ the unseen course of bounding animals,
the roaring of the most savage of wild beasts,
the echo rebounding from the clefts in the mountains,
all held them paralysed with fear.
¹⁹ For, the whole world shone with clear light
and, unhindered, went about its work.
²⁰ Over them alone there spread a heavy darkness,
image of the dark that would receive them;
but to themselves, they were heavier than darkness.

¹⁸ The WEBBE includes the last line of v. 17 in this verse.

¹⁹ The NJB has 'the light of day' in place of 'clear light'.

²⁰ For the last line, the NJB reads, "but heavier than the darkness was the burden they were to themselves."

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 18

- ¹ Τοῖς δὲ ὁσίοις σου μέγιστον ἦν φῶς·
ὧν φωνὴν μὲν ἀκούοντες μορφὴν δὲ οὐχ ὁρῶντες,
ὅτι μὲν οὐ κακέῖνοι ἐπεπόνθεισαν, ἐμακάριζον,
² ὅτι δ' οὐ βλάπτουσιν προηδικημένοι,
 ἡύχαρίστουν
καὶ τοῦ διενεχθῆναι χάριν ἐδέοντο.
³ ἀνδ' ὧν πυριφλεγῆς στῦλον
ὁδηγὸν μὲν ἀγνώστου ὁδοιπορίας,
ἥλιον δὲ ἀβλαβῆ φιλοτίμου ξενιτείας παρέσχες.
⁴ ἄξιοι μὲν γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι στερηθῆναι φωτὸς
 καὶ φυλακισθῆναι σκότει
οἱ κατακλείστους φυλάξαντες τοὺς υἱοὺς σου,
δι' ὧν ἤμελλεν τὸ ἄφθαρτον
 νόμου φῶς τῷ αἰῶνι δίδοσθαι.
⁵ Βουλευσαμένους δ' αὐτοὺς
 τὰ τῶν ὁσίων ἀποκτεῖναι νήπια
καὶ ἐνὸς ἐκτεθέντος τέκνου καὶ σωθέντος
εἰς ἔλεγχον τὸ αὐτῶν ἀφείλω πλῆθος τέκνων
καὶ ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἀπώλεσας ἐν ὕδατι σφοδρῶ.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 18

- ¹ But for your holy ones, there was a very great light.
Their enemies, who could hear them but not see them,
counted it a happy thing that they too had suffered.
² For doing no injury in return for previous wrongs,
 they thanked them
and asked forgiveness for their past ill-will.
³ You provided a blazing pillar of fire
to guide your people's unknown journey,
a mild sun for their ambitious migration.
⁴ The others deserved to be deprived of light
 and imprisoned in darkness,
for, they had kept in captivity your sons,
by whom the incorruptible light of the Law
was to be given to men.
⁵ As they had resolved to kill
 the infants of the holy ones,
and, as of the abandoned, only one child was saved,
you took away from them their horde of children
and destroyed them all in the wild water.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 18

- ¹ For the last line, the NJB, following the Itala MSS, reads, 'Called the fortunate because they had not suffered too'.
² An alternative reading of the last line is 'and pleaded with them to leave' (see Ex 10:24, 11:8, 12:33).
³ The NJB inserts the following line at the start of this verse: "In contrast to the darkness."
⁴ The NRSV has 'their enemies' in place of 'the others', and the WEBBE has 'the Egyptians'; here, we following the Greek text.
⁵ The NJB opens the 3rd line with, "you punished them by carrying away."

⁶ ἐκεῖνη ἡ νύξ προεγνώσθη πατράσιν ἡμῶν,
 ἵνα ἀσφαλῶς εἰδότες οἷς ἐπίστευσαν
 ὅρκοις ἐπευθυμήσωσιν.
⁷ προσεδέχθη ὑπὸ λαοῦ σου
 σωτηρία μὲν δικαίων, ἐχθρῶν δὲ ἀπώλεια·
⁸ ᾧ γὰρ ἐτιμωρήσω τοὺς ὑπεναντίους,
 τούτῳ ἡμᾶς προσκαλεσάμενος ἐδόξασας.
⁹ κρυφῇ γὰρ ἐθυσίαζον ὅσοι παῖδες ἀγαθῶν
 καὶ τὸν τῆς θειότητος νόμον ἐν ὁμοιοῖα διέθεντο
 τῶν αὐτῶν ὁμοίως καὶ ἀγαθῶν
 καὶ κινδύνων μεταλήμψεσθαι τοὺς ἁγίους
 πατέρων ἥδη προαναμέλποντες αἶνους.
¹⁰ ἀντήχει δ' ἀσύμφωνος ἐχθρῶν ἡ βοή,
 καὶ οἶκτρά διεφέρετο φωνὴ θρηνουμένων παιδῶν·
¹¹ ὁμοίᾳ δὲ δίκῃ δοῦλος ἅμα δεσπότη κολασθεῖς
 καὶ δημότης βασιλεῖ τὰ αὐτὰ πάσχων,
¹² ὁμοθυμαδὸν δὲ πάντες ἐν ἐνὶ ὀνόματι θανάτου
 νεκροὺς εἶχον ἀναριθμήτους·
 οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸς τὸ θάψαι οἱ ζῶντες ἦσαν ἱκανοί,

⁶ That night was known in advance to our fathers,
 so, knowing well in whom they had put their trust,
 they would be sure of his promises.
⁷ Your people thus were expecting
 the rescue of the upright and the ruin of the enemy.
⁸ For, by the vengeance you exacted on our adversary,
 you glorified us by calling us to you.
⁹ Holy children of the good offered sacrifice in secret
 and, with one accord, enacted this holy law:
 that they should share good things
 and dangers alike, the holy people;
 and forthwith they chanted the hymns of the fathers.
¹⁰ In echo came the discordant cries of their enemies,
 and the pitiful wails of mourning children was spread.
¹¹ The same just doom struck master and slave alike
 and the commoner suffered the same as the king.
¹² All together, they were struck by the same death,
 all had innumerable dead.
 The living were not sufficient to even bury them;

-
- ⁶ The 'fathers' are either the Israelites on the eve of the Exodus (Ex 11:4-7) or, more probably, the Patriarchs, to whom God had promised to deliver their descendants from bondage in Egypt (Gn 15:13-14, 46:3-4).
⁷ The NJB has 'waiting for' in place of 'expecting'.
⁸ The annihilation of the Egyptian first-born, celebration of the Passover and Exodus, designated the Israelites as the people of God (#Dt 7:6).
⁹ 'Holy children of the good' means of good stock, of holy lineage; the phrase could also be translated 'the holy children of good things'.
¹⁰ In place of 'was spread', the NJB has 'could be heard from far away'.
¹¹ The NJB has 'punishment' in place of 'just doom'.
¹² The WEBBE has 'most cherished' in place of 'flower'.

ἐπεὶ πρὸς μίαν ῥοπὴν
 ἢ ἐντιμότερα γένεσις αὐτῶν διέφθαρτο.
 13 πάντα γὰρ ἀπιστοῦντες διὰ τὰς φαρμακείας
 ἐπὶ τῷ τῶν πρωτοτόκων ὀλέθρῳ
 ὡμολόγησαν θεοῦ υἱὸν λαὸν εἶναι.
 14 ἡσυχου γὰρ σιγῆς περιεχούσης τὰ πάντα
 καὶ νυκτὸς ἐν ἰδίῳ τάχει μεσαζούσης
 15 ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος ἀπ' οὐρανῶν
 ἐκ θρόνων βασιλείων
 ἀπότομος πολεμιστῆς
 εἰς μέσον τῆς ὀλεθρίας ἤλατο γῆς
 ξίφος ὃς τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιταγὴν σου φέρων
 16 καὶ στὰς ἐπλήρωσεν τὰ πάντα θανάτου
 καὶ οὐρανοῦ μὲν ἥπτετο, βεβήκει δ' ἐπὶ γῆς.
 17 τότε παραχρῆμα φαντασίαι μὲν ὀνείρων
 δεινῶν ἐξετάραξαν αὐτούς,
 φόβοι δὲ ἐπέστησαν ἀδόκητοι,
 18 καὶ ἄλλος ἀλλαχῇ ῥιφεῖς ἡμίθνητος
 δι' ἣν ἔθνησκον αἰτίαν ἐνεφάνισεν·
 19 οἱ γὰρ ὄνειροι θορυβήσαντες αὐτοὺς

for, at one stroke,
 the flower of their offspring had perished.
 13 Those whose spells made them completely incredulous,
 when faced with the destruction of their first-born,
 acknowledged this people to be sons of God.
 14 When peaceful silence lay over all things
 and night had run half of her swift course,
 15 your all-powerful Word leapt down from the heavens,
 from the royal throne,
 like a pitiless warrior
 into the heart of a doomed land.
 Carrying your true command like a sharp sword,
 16 it stood and filled the universe with death;
 and while it touched the sky it stood upon the earth.
 17 Immediately, dreams and gruesome visions
 overwhelmed them with terror,
 unexpected fears assailed them.
 18 Hurlled down, some here, some there, half dead,
 they were able to say why they were dying.
 19 For, the dreams that had troubled them

13 Relying on their spells, the Egyptians hoped to be able to beat Moses; but, this time, God strikes directly.

14 The NJB adds 'the' before 'half'.

15 The WEBBE includes the last line as part of v. 16.

16 For the 2nd line, the NJB reads, "though standing on the earth, it touched the sky."

17 What follows has no basis in the narrative of the Exodus.

18 For 'were able to say', the WEBBE has 'made known'.

19 In place of 'forewarned', the NJB has 'warned ... beforehand'.

τοῦτο προεμήνυσαν,
ἵνα μὴ ἀγνοοῦντες δι' ὃ κακῶς πάσχουσιν
ἀπόλωνται.

- ²⁰ Ἦψατο δὲ καὶ δικαίων πείρα θανάτου,
καὶ θραῦσις ἐν ἐρήμῳ ἐγένετο πλήθους.
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἔμεινεν ἡ ὀργή·
- ²¹ σπεύσας γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἄμεμπτος προεμάχησεν
τὸ τῆς ἰδίας λειτουργίας ὄπλον
προσευχὴν καὶ θυμιάματος ἐξιλασμόν κομίσας·
ἀντέστη τῷ θυμῷ καὶ πέρας ἐπέθηκε τῇ συμφορᾷ
δεικνὺς ὅτι σὸς ἐστὶν θεράπων·
- ²² ἐνίκησεν δὲ τὸν χόλον οὐκ ἰσχύϊ τοῦ σώματος,
οὐχ ὅπλων ἐνεργείᾳ,
ἀλλὰ λόγῳ τὸν κολάζοντα ὑπέταξεν
ὄρκους πατέρων καὶ διαθήκας ὑπομνήσας.
- ²³ σωρηδὸν γὰρ ἤδη πεπτωκότων ἐπ' ἀλλήλων νεκρῶν
μεταξὺ στάς ἀνέκοψε τὴν ὀργὴν
καὶ διέσχισεν τὴν πρὸς τοὺς ζῶντας ὁδόν.
- ²⁴ ἐπὶ γὰρ ποδήρους ἐνδύματος ἦν ὅλος ὁ κόσμος,
καὶ πατέρων δόξαι
ἐπὶ τετραστίχου λίθων γλυφῆς,

forewarned them of this,
so they should not die without knowing why they were
afflicted.

- ²⁰ Experience of death also touched the upright
and many were struck down in the desert;
but the Retribution did not last long.
- ²¹ For a blameless man hurried to their defence.
Wielding the weapons of his sacred office,
prayer and expiating incense,
he confronted Retribution and put an end to the plague,
thus showing that he was your servant.
- ²² He overcame Hostility, not by physical strength,
nor by force of arms;
but by word, he prevailed over the Punisher,
by recalling oaths and covenants made to the fathers.
- ²³ Already, the corpses lay piled in heaps
when he interposed and beat Retribution back
and cut off its way to the living.
- ²⁴ For, the whole world was on his flowing robe,
the glory of the Fathers
engraved on the four rows of stones,

²⁰ The 'death' was penalty for the revolt following the punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Nb 17:6–15).

²¹ The literal translation of the 3rd line is 'the expiation sacrifice of incense'.

²² 'Hostility' (the NRSV has 'wrath') is conjectural; the LXX has 'the whole' (τὸν χόλον).

²³ The NJB has 'approach' in place of 'way'.

²⁴ The insignia of the High Priest are given a cosmic symbolism here, as was already customary in Hellenised Jewry.

καὶ μεγαλωσύνη σου ἐπὶ διαδήματος κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ.
²⁵ τούτοις εἶξεν ὁ ὀλεθρεύων, ταῦτα δὲ ἐφοβήθη·
ἦν γὰρ μόνη ἡ πεῖρα τῆς ὀργῆς ἱκανή.

and your Majesty on the diadem on his head.
²⁵ The Destroyer yielded to these; he was afraid.
This one experience of Retribution was enough.

²⁵ The 'Destroyer' is possibly an angel like the one in 1Ch 21:15–16 (cf. Ex 12:23). In place of 'he was afraid'; the *Textus Receptus* has 'they were afraid'.

Σοφία Σαλωμωνος 19

- ¹ Τοῖς δὲ ἀσεβέσιν μέχρι τέλους ἀνελεήμων
θυμὸς ἐπέστη·
προῆδει γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα,
² ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐπιτρέψαντες τοῦ ἀπιέναι
καὶ μετὰ σπουδῆς προπέμψαντες αὐτοὺς
διώξουσιν μεταμεληθέντες.
³ ἔτι γὰρ ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντες τὰ πένθη
καὶ προσοδυρόμενοι τάφοις νεκρῶν
ἕτερον ἐπεσπásαντο λογισμὸν ἀνοίας
καὶ οὓς ἱκετεύοντες ἐξέβαλον,
τούτους ὡς φυγάδας ἐδίωκον.
⁴ εἶλκεν γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἡ ἀξία ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ πέρας ἀνάγκη
καὶ τῶν συμβεβηκότων ἀμνηστίαν ἐνέβαλεν,
ἵνα τὴν λείπουσαν ταῖς βασάνοις
προσαναπληρώσωσιν κόλασιν,
⁵ καὶ ὁ μὲν λαός σου παράδοξον ὁδοιπορίαν πειράσῃ,
ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ξένον εὗρωσι θάνατον.
⁶ ὅλη γὰρ ἡ κτίσις ἐν ἰδίῳ γένει

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 19

- ¹ But the godless were assailed by merciless anger
to the very end,
for, he knew beforehand what they would do,
² how, after letting his people go
and hastening their departure,
they would change their minds and give chase.
³ They were still conducting their mourning rites
and lamenting at the tombs of their dead,
when another mad scheme came into their heads
and those who begged to be let go,
they set out to pursue as fugitives.
⁴ A well-deserved fate urged them to this extreme
and made them forget what had already happened,
so that they would add to their torments
the one punishment outstanding.
⁵ and, while your people travelled a marvellous road,
they would meet an extraordinary death.
⁶ For, the whole Creation, in its various forms,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 19

- ¹ The WEBBE has 'indignation' in place of 'anger'.
² In place of 'after letting', here following numerous MSS, the *Textus Receptus*, *Itala* and *Syriac* MSS have 'after deciding'; and, in place of 'go', the *Textus Receptus* has 'be absent'; the literal translation for 'hastening their departure' is 'having packed them off in a hurry'.
³ The WEBBE has 'foolish decision' in place of 'mad scheme'.
⁴ The literal translation for 'well-deserved fate' is 'worthy necessity'.
⁵ In place of 'experiencing', some MSS have 'accomplishing'.
⁶ The meaning of this verse is obscure.

πάλιν ἄνωθεν διετυποῦτο
 ὑπηρετοῦσα ταῖς σαῖς ἐπιταγαῖς,
 ἵνα οἱ σοὶ παῖδες φυλαχθῶσιν ἀβλαβεῖς.
 7 ἢ τὴν παρεμβολὴν σκιάζουσα νεφέλη,
 ἐκ δὲ προυφεστῶτος ὕδατος ξηρᾶς
 ἀνάδυσις γῆς ἐδεωρήθη,
 ἐξ ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης ὁδὸς ἀνεμπόδιστος
 καὶ χλοηφόρον πεδῖον ἐκ κλύδωνος βιαίου·
 8 δι' οὗ πανθενεὶ διήλθον οἱ τῇ σῇ σκεπαζόμενοι χειρὶ
 δεωρήσαντες θαυμαστὰ τέρατα.
 9 ὥς γὰρ ἵπποι ἐνεμήθησαν
 καὶ ὥς ἄμνοι διεσκίρτησαν
 αἰνοῦντές σε, κύριε, τὸν ῥυσάμενον αὐτούς.
 10 ἐμέμνηντο γὰρ ἔτι τῶν ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ αὐτῶν,
 πῶς ἀντὶ μὲν γενέσεως ζώων ἐξήγαγεν ἡ γῆ σκνῖπα,
 ἀντὶ δὲ ἐνύδρων ἐξηρεύσατο
 ὁ ποταμὸς πληθὺς βατράχων.
 11 ἐφ' ὕστέρῳ δὲ εἶδον καὶ γένεσιν νέαν ὀρνέων,
 ὅτε ἐπιθυμία προαχθέντες ἠτήσαντο ἐδέσματα τρυφῆς·
 12 εἰς γὰρ παραμυθίαν
 ἐκ θαλάσσης ἀνέβη αὐτοῖς ὀρυγομήτρα.

was made new again,
 submitting to your commands,
 so your children should be kept unharmed.
 7 Overshadowing the camp, there was the Cloud;
 where there had been water,
 dry land was seen to rise;
 the Red Sea became an unimpeded way,
 and the tempestuous waves a green plain.
 8 Sheltered by your hand, the whole nation passed over,
 gazing at these amazing marvels.
 9 They were like horses at pasture;
 and they skipped about like lambs,
 singing your praises, Lord, their deliverer.
 10 For, they still remembered the events of their exile,
 how the land bred mosquitoes instead of animals
 and instead of fish,
 the river disgorged millions of frogs.
 11 Afterwards, they were to see a new kind of bird,
 when, led on by greed, they wanted something tasty,
 12 For, to comfort them,
 quails came up for them out of the sea.

7 The term, 'the Red Sea' (ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης), is not used in ancient texts; normally, it is called 'the Sea of Reeds', or just 'the Sea' (#Ex 13:18).

8 The NJB has 'prodigies' in place of 'marvels'.

9 For the last line, the WEBBE reads, "praising you, O Lord, who was their deliverer."

10 The NJB transposes 'instead of fish' to the end of the verse.

11 In place of 'a new kind of bird', the NJB has 'a new way for birds to come into being'.

12 The author takes Nb 11:31 literally; the quails came out of the sea (as the mosquitoes came out of the earth and the frogs out of the River Nile).

¹³ Καὶ αἱ τιμωρίαι τοῖς ἁμαρτωλοῖς ἐπῆλθον
οὐκ ἄνευ τῶν προγεγονότων
τεκμηρίων τῇ βίᾳ τῶν κεραυνῶν·
δικαίως γὰρ ἔπασχον ταῖς ἰδίαις αὐτῶν πονηρίαις,
καὶ γὰρ χαλεπωτέραν μισοξενίαν ἐπετήδευσαν.
¹⁴ οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἀγνοοῦντας οὐκ ἐδέχοντο παρόντας·
οὔτοι δὲ εὐεργέτας ξένους ἐδουλοῦντο.
¹⁵ καὶ οὐ μόνον, ἀλλ' ἢ τις ἐπισκοπὴ ἔσται αὐτῶν,
ἐπεὶ ἀπεχθῶς προσεδέχοντο τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους·
¹⁶ οἱ δὲ μετὰ ἐορτασμάτων
εἰσδεξάμενοι τοὺς ἤδη
τῶν αὐτῶν μετεσχηκότας δικαίων
δεινοῖς ἐκάκωσαν πόνοις.
¹⁷ ἐπλήγησαν δὲ καὶ ἀορασίᾳ
ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνοι ἐπὶ ταῖς τοῦ δικαίου θύραις,
ὅτε ἀχανεῖ περιβληθέντες σκότει
ἕκαστος τῶν ἑαυτοῦ θυρῶν τὴν δίοδον ἐζήτει.
¹⁸ Δι' ἑαυτῶν γὰρ τὰ στοιχεῖα μεθαρμοζόμενα,
ὥσπερ ἐν ψαλτηρίῳ
φθόγγοι τοῦ ῥυθμοῦ τὸ ὄνομα διαλλάς σουσιν,

¹³ And, on the sinners, punishment rained down
not without and early warning
in the form of the sound of thunder.
and they suffered justly for their own crimes,
since they had shown such bitter hatred to foreigners.
¹⁴ Others had failed to welcome strangers who came
but the Egyptians had enslaved guests and benefactors.
¹⁵ The sinners, moreover, will certainly be punished for it,
since they gave the foreigners a hostile welcome.
¹⁶ But after the festive reception
to people who already shared
the same rights as themselves,
they later burdened them with terrible labours.
¹⁷ Hence, they were struck with blindness,
like the sinners at the gates of the upright,
when, yawning darkness all around them,
each had to grope his own way through his own door.
¹⁸ For, as the notes of a lute vary the type of rhythm,
even so the elements,
changing their order one with another,

-
- ¹³ This additional touch to the biblical story is suggested either by Ps 77:17–18 or by an ancient interpretation of Ex 14:24, as found in the Tg.
¹⁴ The ‘others’ refers to the inhabitants of Sodom, proverbially regarded as the worst of criminals.
¹⁵ The text of the 1st line is difficult, susceptible to different punctuation and the structure is incomplete: the author is either going on with his exculpation of the Sodomites or meaning that they too can expect a punitive ‘visitation’ (cf. 14:11).
¹⁶ The 2nd line is probably an allusion to a contemporary grievance of the Alexandrian Jews.
¹⁷ ‘Struck with blindness’ is a rhetorical description of the plague of darkness. The 2nd line refers to Lot (10:6, cf. Gn 19:11).
¹⁸ Greek writings frequently use musical metaphors for the interplay of the elements composing the universe.

πάντοτε μένοντα ἤχῳ,
 ὅπερ ἐστὶν εἰκάσαι ἐκ τῆς
 τῶν γεγονότων ὥσεως ἀκριβῶς·
¹⁹ χερσαῖα γὰρ εἰς ἔνυδρα μετεβάλλετο,
 καὶ νηκτὰ μετέβαινεν ἐπὶ γῆς·
²⁰ πῦρ ἴσχυεν ἐν ὕδατι τῆς ἰδίας δυνάμεως,
 καὶ ὕδωρ τῆς σβεστικῆς φύσεως ἐπελανθάνετο·
²¹ φλόγες ἀνάπαλιν εὐφθάρτων ζώων
 οὐκ ἐμάραναν σάρκας ἐμπεριπατούντων,
 οὐδὲ τηκτὸν κρυσταλλοειδὲς εὔτηκτον
 γένος ἀμβροσίας τροφῆς.
²² Κατὰ πάντα γάρ, κύριε,
 ἐμεγάλυνας τὸν λαόν σου καὶ ἐδόξασας
 καὶ οὐχ ὑπερεῖδες
 ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ καὶ τόπῳ παριστάμενος.

continuing always in its sound,
 as may clearly be seen from
 the things that have happened.

- ¹⁹ Land animals became aquatic;
 swimming ones took to the land.
²⁰ Fire reinforced its strength in water
 and water forgot the power of extinguishing it.
²¹ Flames, on the other hand, did not char the flesh
 of delicate animals that ventured into them;
 neither did they melt the crystalline grains
 of ambrosial food that were melted easily.
²² Yes, Lord, in every way,
 you have made your people great and glorious;
 and standing by them,
 being present at any time or place.

¹⁹ The 1st line alludes to the Israelites and their cattle, while crossing the Red Sea; the 2nd line alludes to the frogs (Ex 8:2).

²⁰ For ‘the power of extinguishing it’, the WEBBE reads, ‘its quenching power’.

²¹ For the last 2 lines, the NJB reads, “nor did they melt the heavenly food resembling ice and as easily melted.”

²² This abrupt ending gives the lesson of the historical survey: Gods *help* for this people.