
Μακκαβαίων Δ' □ 4TH MACCABEES

INTRODUCTION

The *Fourth Book of Maccabees* is a philosophical treatise addressed to the Jews on the supremacy of religious reason over the desires of the flesh and passions of the soul. It describes at length the horrific tortures that tested the faith of Eleazar, the seven brothers, and their mother, all of whom preferred death to committing apostasy by eating unclean food. *4th Maccabees* is a classic example of the interpretation of Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy. The book is included in important manuscripts of the *Septuagint* and was early translated into Syriac; a Latin translation, *Passio Sanctorum Machabaeorum* ('The Suffering of the Holy Maccabees'), probably dates from the late 4th or early 5th Century CE.

The author's theology, with its emphasis on the absolute authority of the Law, is genuinely Jewish but with two special characteristics: **1** The martyrdoms are seen as an atonement that expiates the nation's sin and purifies the land (1:11, 17:21, 18:4). **2** The martyrs are immediately immortal, received by the Patriarchs and living in God (7:19, 16:25). Whereas *2nd Maccabees* reflects Persian influence with its emphasis on resurrection of the body, *4th Maccabees* echoes the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul (14:5–6, 16:13, 17:12, 18:23, see Lk 16:22).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The book was originally written in Greek and may have first been delivered as an oration at a festival commemorating the Maccabaeen martyrs or at the Feast of Dedication (1:10, 3:19, 14:9, cf. Jn 10:22). At one time, authorship was attributed to Josephus (but no longer) and it was given the title, "On the Supremacy of Reason."

The book has frequently been assigned to the period 20–54 CE, when Cilicia was joined to Syria and Phoenicia as a single province (4:2), and it is tempting to date it in the reign Caligula (37–41 CE), who proposed to violate the Jerusalem Temple (4:5–14). However, the fact that its concern is with a philosophical question, rather than with persecution *per se*, makes any such hypothesis conjectural. The most that can be said with certainty is that it was written between the end of the Hasmonaeen Dynasty in 63 BCE and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE.

The author was a Hellenistic Jew. Alexandria and Jerusalem have been proposed the place of its origin; however, Antioch has the best claim: the martyrs might have been brought to the royal capital (5:1) and, there, the Jews were called 'Hebrews', as in this book. Its traditional title was no doubt adopted because the account is an expansion of 2M 6:12–7:42 and the story belongs to the Maccabaeen period.

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¹ Φιλοσοφώτατον λόγον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι μέλλων, εἰ αὐτοδέσποτός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβῆς λογισμός, συμβουλεύσαιμ ἂν ὑμῖν ὁρθῶς ὅπως προσέχητε προθύμως τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ. ² καὶ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖος εἰς ἐπιστήμην παντὶ ὁ λόγος καὶ ἄλλως τῆς μεγίστης ἀρετῆς, λέγω δὴ φρονήσεως, περιέχει ἔπαινον. ³ εἰ ἄρα τῶν σωφροσύνης κωλυτικῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς φαίνεται ἐπικρατεῖν, γαστριμαργίας τε καὶ ἐπιθυμίας, ⁴ ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἐμποδιστικῶν παθῶν κυριεῦειν ἀναφαίνεται, οἷον κακοηθείας, καὶ τῶν τῆς ἀνδρείας ἐμποδιστικῶν παθῶν, θυμοῦ τε καὶ φόβου καὶ πόνου. ⁵ πῶς οὖν, ἴσως εἴποιεν ἂν τινες, εἰ τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς κρατεῖ, λήθης καὶ ἀγνοίας οὐ δεσπόζει; γελοῖον ἐπιχειροῦντες λέγειν. ⁶ οὐ γὰρ τῶν αὐτοῦ παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς κρατεῖ, ἀλλὰ τῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀνδρείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ἐναντίων, καὶ τούτων οὐχ ὥστε αὐτὰ καταλῦσαι, ἀλλ' ὥστε αὐτοῖς μὴ εἶξαι.

⁷ πολλαχόθεν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἀλλαχόθεν ἔχοιμ ἂν ὑμῖν ἐπιδείξαι

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¹ As I am going to demonstrate a most philosophical posit, namely that devout reason is sovereign over the emotions, it is right for me to advise you to pay earnest attention to philosophy. ² For, reason is essential to everyone seeking knowledge and it include the praise of rational judgement – the highest virtue. ³ So, if it is evident that reason rules over the emotions that hinder self-control, namely gluttony and lust, ⁴ it is also clear that it masters the emotions that hinder one from justice, such as malice, and those that stand in the way of courage, namely anger, fear, and pain. ⁵ Some might perhaps ask, “If reason rules the emotions, why is it not sovereign over forgetfulness and ignorance?” Their attempt at argument is ridiculous! ⁶ For, reason does not rule its own emotions but those that are opposed to justice, courage, and self-control; and it is not for the purpose of destroying them but so that one may not give way to them.

⁷ I could prove to you from many other considerations that

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¹ ‘Devout’ translates the Greek word εὐσεβῆς, meaning religious or pious; compare 5:7,31.

² ‘Rational judgement’, ‘self-control’ (v. 3), ‘justice’ and ‘courage’ (v. 4) are the four cardinal virtues of the Platonic and Stoic traditions.

³ The WEBBE has ‘temperance’ in place of ‘self-control’.

⁴ In place of ‘hinder one from justice’, the WEBBE has ‘are contrary to justice’.

⁵ An alternative reading for the last sentence is, “They are attempting to make my argument ridiculous!”

⁶ After ‘self-control’, some MSS add ‘and rational judgement’.

⁷ The NRSV lacks ‘devout’ before ‘reason’.

ὅτι αὐτοκράτωρ ἐστὶν τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμός, ⁸ πολὺ δὲ πλέον τοῦτο ἀποδείξαιμι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνδραγαθίας τῶν ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀποθανόντων, Ελεαζαρου τε καὶ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀδελφῶν καὶ τῆς τούτων μητρὸς. ⁹ ἅπαντες γὰρ οὗτοι τοὺς ἕως θανάτου πόνους ὑπεριδόντες ἐπεδείξαντο ὅτι περικρατεῖ τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμός. ¹⁰ τῶν μὲν οὖν ἀρετῶν ἔπεστί μοι ἐπαινεῖν τοὺς κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς καλοκαγαθίας ἀποθανόντας μετὰ τῆς μητρὸς ἀνδρας, τῶν δὲ τιμῶν μακαρίσαιμι ἅν. ¹¹ θυμασθέντες γὰρ οὐ μόνον ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν αἰκισαμένων, αἵτιοι κατέστησαν τοῦ καταλυθῆναι τὴν κατὰ τοῦ ἔθνους τυραννίδα νικήσαντες τὸν τύραννον τῇ ὑπομονῇ ὥστε καθαρισθῆναι δι' αὐτῶν τὴν πατρίδα. ¹² ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τούτου νῦν αὐτίκα δὴ λέγειν ἐξέσται ἀρξαμένῳ τῆς ὑποθέσεως, ὅπερ εἶωθα ποιεῖν, καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὸν περὶ αὐτῶν τρέφομαι λόγον δόξαν διδοὺς τῷ πανσόφῳ θεῷ.

¹³ Ζητοῦμεν δὴ τοίνυν εἰ αὐτοκράτωρ ἐστὶν τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμός. ¹⁴ διακρίνομεν τί ποτέ ἐστιν λογισμὸς καὶ τί πάθος, καὶ πόσαι παθῶν ἰδέαι, καὶ εἰ πάντων ἐπικρατεῖ

devout reason is dominant over the emotions ⁸ but I can demonstrate it best from the noble bravery of those who suffered death for the sake of virtue, Eleazar and the seven brothers and their mother. ⁹ For, all these, by despising sufferings that bring death, demonstrated that reason controls the emotions. ¹⁰ At this time, it is fitting me to praise for their virtues those who, with their mother, died on behalf of nobility and goodness; I count them blessed for the honour in which they are held. ¹¹ All people, even their torturers, marvelled at their courage and endurance, and they became the cause of the downfall of tyranny over their nation. By their endurance, they conquered the tyrant and thus their country was purified through them. ¹² I shall shortly have an opportunity to speak of this; but, as is our custom, I shall begin by stating my main principle and then I shall turn to their story, giving glory to the all-wise God.

¹³ Thus, our inquiry is whether reason is absolute master over the emotions. ¹⁴ We shall decide just what reason is and what emotion is, how many kinds of emotions there are, and

⁸ For the story of Eleazar and the seven brothers, see 2Mc 6:18ff.

⁹ The WEBBE has 'treating with contempt' in place of 'despising'.

¹⁰ In place of 'at this time', here following the Greek text, the NRSV has 'on this anniversary'.

¹¹ The 'tyranny' was the attempt by Antiochus IV (4:15) to impose pagan worship on the Jewish nation (see #5:1).

¹² The NRSV has 'my custom' in place of 'our custom', here following the WEBBE.

¹³ In place of 'absolute master', the NRSV has 'sovereign'.

¹⁴ The NRSV & WEBBE have 'all of these' in place of 'them all'.

τούτων ὁ λογισμός. ¹⁵ λογισμὸς μὲν δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν νοῦς μετὰ ὀρθοῦ λόγου προτιμῶν τὸν σοφίας βίον. ¹⁶ σοφία δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν γνῶσις θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτιῶν. ¹⁷ αὕτη δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ νόμου παιδεία, δι' ἧς τὰ θεῖα σεμνῶς καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα συμφερόντως μανθάνομεν. ¹⁸ τῆς δὲ σοφίας ἰδέαι καθεστήκασιν φρόνησις καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνδρεία καὶ σωφροσύνη. ¹⁹ κυριωτάτη δὲ πάντων ἡ φρόνησις, ἐξ ἧς δὴ τῶν παιδῶν ὁ λογισμὸς ἐπικρατεῖ. ²⁰ παιδῶν δὲ φύσεις εἰσὶν αἱ περιεκτικώταται δύο ἡδονή τε καὶ πόνος· τούτων δὲ ἐκάτερον καὶ περὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν πέφυκεν. ²¹ πολλαὶ δὲ καὶ περὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ τὸν πόνον παιδῶν εἰσὶν ἀκολουθίαι. ²² πρὸ μὲν οὖν τῆς ἡδονῆς ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμία, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἡδονὴν χαρά. ²³ πρὸ δὲ τοῦ πόνου ἐστὶν φόβος, μετὰ δὲ τὸν πόνον λύπη. ²⁴ θυμὸς δὲ κοινὸν πάθος ἐστὶν ἡδονῆς καὶ πόνου, εἰς ἐννοηθῇ τις ὅτι αὐτῷ περιέπεσεν. ²⁵ ἐν τῇ ἡδονῇ δὲ ἔνεστιν καὶ ἡ κακοήθης

whether reason rules over them all. ¹⁵ Reason is the mind that with sound logic prefers the life of wisdom. ¹⁶ Wisdom is the knowledge of divine and human matters and their causes. ¹⁷ This, in turn, is education in the law, by which we learn divine matters reverently and human affairs to our advantage. ¹⁸ The forms of wisdom are rational judgement, justice, courage, and self-control. ¹⁹ Rational judgement is supreme over all of these since, by means of it, reason rules over the emotions. ²⁰ The two most comprehensive sources of the emotions are pleasure and pain; and each of these is by nature concerned with the soul. ²¹ The emotions of both pleasure and pain have many consequences. ²² Thus, lust precedes pleasure and joy follows it. ²³ Before pain is fear; and after pain is sorrow. ²⁴ Anger, as a person will see by reflecting on this experience, is an emotion common to pleasure and pain. ²⁵ In pleasure, there exists a malevolent

¹⁵ The WEBBE has 'righteousness' in place of 'sound logic'.

¹⁶ The NRSV has 'the causes of these' in place of 'their causes', here following the WEBBE.

¹⁷ Jews regarded the Mosaic Law as philosophical and the highest form of education (see #11:21).

¹⁸ The four 'kinds of wisdom' are found also in Ws 8:7.

¹⁹ The WEBBE has 'self-control' in place of 'rational judgement'.

²⁰ In place of 'sources', here following the Greek text literally, the NRSV has 'types'.

²¹ The WEBBE has 'attendant affections' in place of 'consequences'.

²² The NRSV has 'desire' and 'pleasure' in place of 'lust' and 'joy', respectively.

²³ For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV reads, "Fear precedes pain and sorrow comes after."

²⁴ The Greek text of this verse is obscure.

²⁵ The WEBBE ends with 'affections' in place of 'emotions'.

διάθεσις, πολυτροπωτάτη πάντων οὕσα τῶν παθῶν, ²⁶ καὶ τὰ μὲν ψυχῆς ἀλαζονεία καὶ φιλαργυρία καὶ φιλοδοξία καὶ φιλονεικία καὶ βασκανία, ²⁷ κατὰ δὲ τὸ σῶμα παντοφαγία καὶ λαιμαργία καὶ μονοφαγία.

²⁸ καθάπερ οὖν δυεῖν τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς φυτῶν ὄντων ἡδονῆς τε καὶ πόνου πολλαὶ τούτων τῶν φυτῶν εἰσιν παραφυάδες, ²⁹ ὧν ἐκάστην ὁ παγγέωργος λογισμὸς περικαθαίρων καὶ ἀποκνίζων καὶ περιπλέκων καὶ ἐπάρδων καὶ πάντα τρόπον μεταχέων ἐξημεροῖ τὰς τῶν ἡδῶν καὶ παθῶν ὕλας. ³⁰ ὁ γὰρ λογισμὸς τῶν μὲν ἀρετῶν ἐστὶν ἡγεμὼν, τῶν δὲ παθῶν αὐτοκράτωρ.

Ἐπιθεωρεῖτε τοίνυν πρῶτον διὰ τῶν κωλυτικῶν τῆς σωφροσύνης ἔργων ὅτι αὐτοδέσποτός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς. ³¹ σωφροσύνη δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἐπικράτεια τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, ³² τῶν δὲ ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσιν ψυχικαί, αἱ δὲ σωματικαί, καὶ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων ἐπικρατεῖν ὁ λογισμὸς φαίνεται. ³³ ἐπεὶ πόθεν κινούμενοι πρὸς τὰς ἀπειρημένους τροφὰς ἀποστρεφόμεθα τὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἡδονάς; οὐχ ὅτι δύναται

tendency, which is the most complex of all the emotions. ²⁶ In the soul, it is arrogance, love of money, thirst for honour, rivalry, and malice; ²⁷ in the body, it is indiscriminate eating, greediness, and solitary gluttony.

²⁸ Just as pleasure and pain are two plants growing from the body and the soul, so there are many offshoots of these plants, ²⁹ each of which reason, the master cultivator, weeds, and prunes, and ties up, and waters, and transplants, and so in every way improves the jungle of morals and emotions. ³⁰ For, reason is the guide of the virtues but, over the emotions, it is the sole ruler.

Observe now, first, that rational judgement is absolute master over the emotions by virtue of the restraining power of self-control. ³¹ Self-control, then, consists of dominance over the desires. ³² Some desires belong to the soul, others belong to the body, and reason obviously rules over both. ³³ Otherwise, how is it that, when we are attracted to forbidden foods, we abstain from the gratification to be had

²⁶ The NRSV has 'covetousness' in place of 'love of money', here following the WEBBE.

²⁷ The NRSV has 'gormandising' in place of 'gluttony'.

²⁸ Some MSS have 'emotions' instead of the second occurrence of 'plants' (as does the WEBBE).

²⁹ The WEBBE has 'universal farmer' in place of 'master cultivator', here following the NRSV.

³⁰ The NRSV has 'sovereign' in place of 'sole ruler', here following the WEBBE.

³¹ The WEBBE has 'temperance' in place of 'self-control'.

³² In place of 'belong to the soul' and 'belong to the body', the NRSV has, respectively, 'are mental' and 'are physical'.

³³ In Judaism, desires are not to be expiated, as Stoics taught, but are to be controlled; compare v.6.

τῶν ὀρέξεων ἐπικρατεῖν ὁ λογισμός; ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι.
³⁴ τοιγαροῦν ἐνύδρων ἐπιθυμοῦντες καὶ ὀρνέων καὶ
τετραπόδων καὶ παντοίων βρωμάτων τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων
ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἀπεχόμεθα διὰ τὴν τοῦ λογισμοῦ
ἐπικράτειαν. ³⁵ ἀνέχεται γὰρ τὰ τῶν ὀρέξεων πάθη ὑπὸ τοῦ
σώφρονος νοῦς ἀνακοπτόμενα, καὶ φιμοῦται πάντα τὰ τοῦ
σώματος κινήματα ὑπὸ τοῦ λογισμοῦ.

from them? Is it not because reason is able to rule over
appetites? I for one think so. ³⁴ Therefore, when we crave
seafood, fowl and insects, and all sorts of foods that are
forbidden to us by the law, we abstain because of the mastery
of reason. ³⁵ For, the emotions of the appetites are restrained,
checked by the temperate mind, and all the impulses of the
body are reined-in by reason.

³⁴ On the prohibition of 'seafood', see Lv 11:1–31, Dt 14:3–21, Ac 10:10–14.

³⁵ Reason, informed by the Law, dominates the passions of both mind and body.

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¹ Καὶ τί θαυμαστόν, εἰ αἱ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιθυμίαι πρὸς τὴν τοῦ κάλλους μετουσίαν ἀκυροῦνται; ² ταύτη γοῦν ὁ σώφρων Ἰωσηφ ἐπαινέται, ὅτι διανοία περιεκράτησεν τῆς ἡδυπαθείας. ³ νέος γὰρ ὢν καὶ ἀκμάζων πρὸς συνουσιασμόν ἠκύρωσε τῷ λογισμῷ τὸν τῶν παθῶν οἷστρον. ⁴ καὶ οὐ μόνον δὲ τὴν τῆς ἡδυπαθείας οἷστροηλασίαν ὁ λογισμὸς ἐπικρατεῖν φαίνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσης ἐπιθυμίας. ⁵ λέγει γοῦν ὁ νόμος Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον σου οὐδὲ ὅσα τῷ πλησίον σου ἐστίν. ⁶ καίτοι ὅτε μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν εἴρηκεν ἡμᾶς ὁ νόμος, πολὺ πλεόν πείσαιμ ἂν ὑμᾶς ὅτι τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν κρατεῖν δύναται ὁ λογισμός.

Ὡσπερ καὶ τῶν κωλυτικῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης παθῶν. ⁷ ἐπεὶ τίνα τις τρόπον μονοφάγος ὢν τὸ ἥθος καὶ γαστρίμαργος ἢ καὶ μέδυσος μεταπαιδεύεται, εἰ μὴ δῆλον ὅτι κύριός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμός; ⁸ αὐτίκα γοῦν τῷ νόμῳ πολιτευόμενος, καὶ φιλάργυρός τις ᾗ, βιάζεται τὸν αὐτοῦ τρόπον τοῖς δεομένοις δανείζων χωρὶς τόκων καὶ τὸ δάνειον

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¹ Is it any wonder that the desires of the mind for what is beautiful lose their force? ² It is for this reason, certainly, that the temperate Joseph is praised, because by mental effort he overcame lust. ³ For, when he was young and in his prime for intercourse, by reasoning he nullified the frenzy of the passions. ⁴ Not only is reason proved to rule over this frenzied urge of sexual desire but also over every desire. ⁵ Thus, the law says, "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife or anything that is your neighbour's." ⁶ In fact, since the law has told us not to covet, I could prove to you all the more that reason is able to control desires.

So it is with emotions that hinder one from justice. ⁷ Otherwise, how could it be that someone who is habitually a solitary eater, a glutton, or even a drunkard can learn a better way, unless reason is clearly lord of the emotions? ⁸ Thus, a man who regulates his life by the law, even though a lover of money, is forced to act contrary to natural ways, by lending

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¹ 'Desires ... beautiful' refers to sexual desire but also suggests the concept of 'Eros' in Plato's *Symposium*.

² After 'effort', some MSS add 'in reasoning'.

³ The literal translation of 'frenzy' is 'gadfly' (see #3:17).

⁴ An alternative translation for 'every desire' is 'all covetousness'.

⁵ A quotation from Ex 20:17.

⁶ A strong affirmation here that the Law is derived from reason.

⁷ The NRSV has 'gormandiser' in place of 'eater'.

⁸ On lending without interest (to other Jews), see Ex 22:25; on the release from debt in the 7th year, see Dt 15:1-3.

τῶν ἐβδομάδων ἐνστασῶν χρεοκοπούμενος· ⁹ καὶ ἂν φειδωλὸς τις ᾗ, ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου κρατεῖται διὰ τὸν λογισμὸν μήτε ἐπικαρπολογούμενος τοὺς ἀμητοὺς μήτε ἐπιρρωγολογούμενος τοὺς ἀμπελῶνας.

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐτέρων δὲ ἔστιν ἐπιγνῶναι τοῦτο, ὅτι τῶν παθῶν ἔστιν ὁ λογισμὸς κρατῶν· ¹⁰ ὁ γὰρ νόμος καὶ τῆς πρὸς γονεῖς εὐνοίας κρατεῖ μὴ καταπροδιδούς τὴν ἀρετὴν δι' αὐτοὺς ¹¹ καὶ τῆς πρὸς γαμετὴν φιλίας ἐπικρατεῖ διὰ τὴν παρανομίαν αὐτὴν ἀπελέγχων ¹² καὶ τῆς τέκνων φιλίας κυριεύει διὰ κακίαν αὐτὰ κολάζων ¹³ καὶ τῆς φίλων συνηθείας δεσπόζει διὰ πονηρίαν αὐτοὺς ἐξελέγχων. ¹⁴ καὶ μὴ νομίσητε παράδοξον εἶναι, ὅπου καὶ ἔχθρας ἐπικρατεῖν ὁ λογισμὸς δύναται διὰ τὸν νόμον μήτε δενδροτομῶν τὰ ἡμέρα τῶν πολεμίων φυτὰ, τὰ δὲ τῶν ἐχθρῶν τοῖς ἀπολέσασι διασώζων καὶ τὰ πεπτωκότα συνεγείρων.

¹⁵ Καὶ τῶν βιαιοτέρων δὲ παθῶν κρατεῖν ὁ λογισμὸς φαίνεται, φιλαρχίας καὶ κενοδοξίας καὶ ἀλαζονείας καὶ μεγαλαυχίας καὶ βασκανίας· ¹⁶ πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ κακοήθη πάθη ὁ σώφρων νοῦς ἀπωθεῖται, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸν

without interest to the poor and cancelling the debt in the seventh year. ⁹ If one is greedy, he is ruled by the law through reason, neither gleaning his harvest nor gathering the last grapes from the vine.

In all other matters, we can recognise that reason rules his emotions. ¹⁰ For, the law masters even affection for parents and will not, for their sakes, abandon virtue. ¹¹ It masters love for one's wife, rebuking her when she breaks the law. ¹² It overrides love for children, so that one punishes them for misdeeds. ¹³ It is sovereign over the relationships of friends, so that one rebukes friends when they act wickedly. ¹⁴ Do not consider it paradoxical when reason, through the law, can prevail even over enmity. The fruit trees of the enemy are not cut down, but one preserves the property of enemies from marauders and helps raise up what has fallen.

¹⁵ It is evident that reason rules even the more violent emotions: lust for power, vainglory, boasting, arrogance, and slander. ¹⁶ For, the temperate mind repels all the malicious emotions, just as it repels anger – for, it is sovereign over even

⁹ In place of 'the last grapes from the vine', the WEBBE has simply, 'vintage'.

¹⁰ The NRSV has 'prevails ... over' in place of 'masters'.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'is superior to' in place of 'masters'.

¹² In place of 'overrides', the NRSV has 'takes precedence over'.

¹³ The WEBBE includes this as part of v. 12.

¹⁴ An alternative translation for 'what has fallen' is 'the beasts that have fallen'. The WEBBE splits this verse before 'The fruit trees'.

¹⁵ In place of 'even', some MSS have 'through'.

¹⁶ The WEBBE has 'malignant' in place of 'malicious'.

θυμόν· καὶ γὰρ τούτου δεσπόζει. ¹⁷ θυμούμενός γέ τοι Μωϋσῆς κατὰ Δαθαν καὶ Αβιρων οὐ θυμῷ τι κατ' αὐτῶν ἐποίησεν, ἀλλὰ λογισμῷ τὸν θυμόν διήτησεν. ¹⁸ δυνατὸς γὰρ ὁ σώφρων νοῦς, ὡς ἔφην, κατὰ τῶν παθῶν ἀριστεύσαι καὶ τὰ μὲν αὐτῶν μεταθεῖναι, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἀκυρῶσαι. ¹⁹ ἐπεὶ διὰ τί ὁ πάνσοφος ἡμῶν πατήρ Ιακωβ τοὺς περὶ Συμεων καὶ Λευιν αἰτιᾶται μὴ λογισμῷ τοὺς Σικιμίτας ἐθνηδὸν ἀποσφάξαντας λέγων Ἐπικατάρατος ὁ θυμὸς αὐτῶν; ²⁰ εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐδύνατο τοῦ θυμοῦ ὁ λογισμὸς κρατεῖν, οὐκ ἂν εἶπεν οὕτως. ²¹ ὁπνίκα γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατεσκεύασεν, τὰ πάθη αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἥθη περιεφύτευσε· ²² ἥνίκα δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων τὸν ἱερὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν διὰ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων ἐνεθρόνισεν, ²³ καὶ τούτῳ νόμον ἔδωκεν, καθ' ὃν πολιτευόμενος βασιλεύσει βασιλείαν σώφρονά τε καὶ δικαίαν καὶ ἀγαθὴν καὶ ἀνδρείαν.

²⁴ Πῶς οὖν, εἴποι τις ἄν, εἰ τῶν παθῶν δεσπότης ἐστὶν ὁ λογισμὸς, λήθης καὶ ἀγνοίας οὐ κρατεῖ;

this. ¹⁷ Thus, when Moses was angry with Dathan and Abiram, he did nothing against them in anger but controlled his anger by reason. ¹⁸ For, as I have said, the temperate mind is able to get the better of the emotions, to correct some, and to render others powerless. ¹⁹ Why else did Jacob, our most wise father, censure the households of Simeon and Levi for their irrational slaughter of the entire tribe of the Shechemites, saying, "Cursed be their anger"? ²⁰ For, if reason could not control anger, he would not have spoken thus. ²¹ Now, when God fashioned human beings, he planted in them emotions and inclinations; ²² but at the same time, he enthroned the mind among the senses as a sacred governor over them all. ²³ To the mind, he gave the law; and one who lives subject to this will rule a kingdom that is temperate, just, good, and courageous.

²⁴ How then, one might say, that if reason is master of the emotions, does it not control forgetfulness and ignorance?

¹⁷ On 'Dathan and Abiram', see Nb 16:1–35, Si 45:18.

¹⁸ The WEBBE has 'destroy' in place of 'render ... powerless'.

¹⁹ See Gn 49:5–7.

²⁰ In place of 'anger', the WEBBE has 'angry affections'.

²¹ According to rabbinic Judaism, God 'planted' the good and evil 'inclinations' in humans; the latter is to be controlled and is not essentially evil.

²² The WEBBE has 'holy leader' in place of 'sacred governor'.

²³ According to the Stoics and Philo, the wise man is a king. Compare the different concepts of the reign of the saints in 1Co 4:8, 6:2–3, 1P 2:9.

²⁴ Cf. 1:5.

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¹ ἔστιν δὲ κομιδῇ γελοῖος ὁ λόγος· οὐ γὰρ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς ἐπικρατεῖν φαίνεται, ἀλλὰ τῶν σωματικῶν.
² οἷον ἐπιθυμίαν τις οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ μὴ δουλωθῆναι τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ δύναται ὁ λογισμὸς παρασχέσθαι.
³ θυμὸν τις οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι ὑμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ τῷ θυμῷ δυνατὸν τὸν λογισμὸν βοηθῆσαι. ⁴ κακοήθειάν τις ἡμῶν οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ καμφοῦναι τῇ κακοηθείᾳ δύναιτ' ἂν ὁ λογισμὸς συμμαχῆσαι. ⁵ οὐ γὰρ ἐκριζωτῆς τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ ἀνταγωνιστής.
⁶ Ἔστιν γοῦν τοῦτο διὰ τῆς Δαυὶδ τοῦ βασιλέως δίψης σαφέστερον ἐπιλογίσασθαι. ⁷ ἐπεὶ γὰρ δι' ὅλης ἡμέρας προσβαλὼν τοῖς ἀλλοφύλοις ὁ Δαυὶδ πολλοὺς αὐτῶν ἀπέκτεινεν μετὰ τῶν τοῦ ἔθνους στρατιωτῶν, ⁸ τότε δὴ γενομένης ἑσπέρας ἰδρῶν καὶ σφόδρα κεκμηκῶς ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλῆιον σκηνὴν ἦλθεν, περὶ ἣν ὁ πᾶς τῶν προγόνων

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¹ However, this argument is exceedingly ridiculous; for, it is evident that reason rules not over its own emotions, but over those of the body, ² in such a way that not one of you can eradicate that kind of desire but reason can provide a way for us to avoid being enslaved by desire. ³ Not one of us can eradicate anger from the mind but reason can help to deal with anger. ⁴ Not one of us can eradicate malice but reason can give force at our side so that we do not submit to malice. ⁵ For, reason does not uproot the emotions but is their antagonist.
⁶ Now this can be understood more clearly by the story of King David's thirst. ⁷ For, David had been attacking the Philistines all day long and, together with the soldiers of his nation, he had killed many of them. ⁸ Then, when evening fell, he came, sweating and quite exhausted, to the royal tent, around which the whole army of our ancestors had

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- ¹ Despite the final clause, the emotions of vv. 2-4 are those of the mind; thus, 1:6 would fit better here.
- ² The NRSV lacks the opening 'in such a way that' and instead starts a new sentence with 'Not one'.
- ³ The WEBBE has 'root out' in place of 'eradicate' (as also in vv. 2 & 4).
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'fight' in place of 'give force'.
- ⁵ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, "For reasoning is not an eradicator, but an antagonist of the emotions."
- ⁶ Some of the details of this story (vv. 6-18) are different in 2S 23:13-17 and 1Ch 11:15-19.
- ⁷ The literal translation of 'Philistines' is 'foreigners'; in the Greek Bible, this word usually translates the Hebrew word 'Philistines'.
- ⁸ Some MSS add 'hurried and' before 'came'.

στρατὸς ἐστρατοπεδεύκει. ⁹ οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι πάντες ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἦσαν, ¹⁰ ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ὡς μάλιστα διψῶν, καίπερ ἀφρόνους ἔχων πηγάς, οὐκ ἠδύνατο δι' αὐτῶν ἰάσασθαι τὴν δίψαν, ¹¹ ἀλλὰ τις αὐτὸν ἀλόγιστος ἐπιθυμία τοῦ παρὰ τοῖς πολεμίοις ὕδατος ἐπιτείνουσα συνέφρυγεν καὶ λύουσα κατέφλεγεν. ¹² ὅθεν τῶν ὑπασπιστῶν ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιθυμίᾳ σχετλιαζόντων δύο νεανίσκοι στρατιῶται καρτεροὶ καταιδεσθέντες τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιθυμίαν τὰς παντευχίας καθωπλίσαντο καὶ κάλπην λαβόντες ὑπερέβησαν τοὺς τῶν πολεμίων χάρακας ¹³ καὶ λαθόντες τοὺς τῶν πυλῶν ἀκροφύλακας διεξήεσαν ἀνερευνώμενοι κατὰ πᾶν τὸ τῶν πολεμίων στρατόπεδον ¹⁴ καὶ ἀνευράμενοι τὴν πηγὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς θαρραλέως ἐκόμισαν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ ποτόν. ¹⁵ ὁ δὲ καίπερ τῇ δίψῃ διαπυρούμενος ἐλογίσατο πάνδεινον εἶναι κίνδυνον ψυχῇ λογισθὲν ἰσοδύναμον ποτὸν αἵματι, ¹⁶ ὅθεν ἀντιθεὶς τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τὸν λογισμὸν ἔσπεισεν τὸ πόμα τῷ θεῷ. ¹⁷ δυνατὸς γὰρ ὁ σώφρων νοῦς νικῆσαι τὰς τῶν παθῶν

encamped. ⁹ Now, all the rest of them were having their supper, ¹⁰ but the king was extremely thirsty and, though springs were plentiful there, he could not satisfy his thirst from them. ¹¹ Rather, a certain irrational longing for the water in the enemy's territory tormented and inflamed him, undid and consumed him. ¹² When his guards complained bitterly because of the king's craving, two staunch young soldiers, embarrassed because of the king's desire, armed themselves fully and, taking a pitcher, climbed over the enemy's ramparts. ¹³ Unseen by the sentinels at the gates, they went searching throughout the enemy camp ¹⁴ and, having boldly found the spring, they brought from it a drink for the king. ¹⁵ However, though he was burning with thirst, he considered it an altogether fearful danger to his soul to drink what was regarded as equivalent to blood. ¹⁶ Therefore, opposing reason to desire, he poured out the drink as an offering to God. ¹⁷ For, the temperate mind can conquer the

⁹ The literal translation for 'having their supper' is 'at supper'.

¹⁰ In place of 'springs were plentiful there', the WEBBE has 'he had numerous springs'.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'desire' in place of 'longing', here following the WEBBE.

¹² The NRSV & WEBBE have 'respecting' in place of 'embarrassed because of', here following the Greek text.

¹³ The NRSV opens with 'Eluding' in place of 'Unseen by'.

¹⁴ For this verse, the NRSV reads, "and found the spring, and from it boldly brought the king a drink."

¹⁵ On the water being 'equivalent to blood', see 2S 23:17.

¹⁶ The WEBBE lacks 'as an offering'.

¹⁷ 'Frenzied desires' translates *οἷστρον*, which, in mythology was the gadfly that tormented Io and became a symbol of uncontrolled sexual desire.

ἀνάγκας καὶ σβέσαι τὰς τῶν οἴστρων φλεγμονὰς ¹⁸ καὶ τὰς τῶν σωματῶν ἀλγηδόνας καθ' ὑπερβολὴν οὔσας καταπαλαῖσαι καὶ τῇ καλοκάγαθίᾳ τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀποπτύσαι πάσας τὰς τῶν παθῶν ἐπικρατείας.

¹⁹ Ἦδη δὲ καὶ ὁ καιρὸς ἡμᾶς καλεῖ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ σώφρονος λογισμοῦ.

²⁰ Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ βαθεῖαν εἰρήνην διὰ τὴν εὐνομίαν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν εἶχον καὶ ἔπραττον καλῶς ὥστε καὶ τὸν τῆς Ἀσίας βασιλέα Σέλευκον τὸν Νικάνορα καὶ χρήματα εἰς τὴν ἱερουργίαν αὐτοῖς ἀφορίσαι καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν αὐτῶν ἀποδέχεσθαι, ²¹ τότε δὴ τινες πρὸς τὴν κοινὴν νεωτερίσαντες ὁμόνοιαν πολυτρόποις ἐχρήσαντο συμφοραῖς.

drives of the emotions and quench the flames of frenzied desires. ¹⁸ It can overthrow bodily agonies even when they are extreme and, by nobility of reason, spurn all domination by the emotions.

¹⁹ The present occasion now invites us to a narrative demonstration of temperate reason.

²⁰ At a time when our fathers were enjoying profound peace through their observance of the law and were prospering, so that Seleucus Nicanor, king of Asia, had both assigned them money for the Temple service and recognised their commonwealth, ²¹ then some people acted against the public harmony and caused many and various disasters.

¹⁸ The WEBBE has 'wrestle down' in place of 'overthrow'.

¹⁹ The 'present occasion' was perhaps the first public reading of (an early draft of) the book.

²⁰ The author is confused about 'Seleucus Nicanor': this king (Seleucus I) ruled 305/304–281/280 BCE; the king who is meant here is Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 BCE, see #2M 3:3).

²¹ The NRSV opens with 'just at that time' in place of 'then'.

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¹ Σιμων γάρ τις πρὸς Ονιαν ἀντιπολιτευόμενος τὸν ποτε τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην ἔχοντα διὰ βίου, καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα, ἐπειδὴ πάντα τρόπον διαβάλλων ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους οὐκ ἴσχυσεν κακῶσαι, φυγὰς ὥχετο τὴν πατρίδα προδῶσων. ² ὅθεν ἦκων πρὸς Ἀπολλώνιον τὸν Συρίας τε καὶ Φοινίκης καὶ Κιλικίας στρατηγὸν ἔλεγεν ³ Εὐνοὺς ὦν τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως πράγμασιν ἦκω μηνύων πολλὰς ἰδιωτικῶν χρημάτων μυριάδας ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμων γαζοφυλακίῳς τεθησαυρίσθαι τοῖς ἱεροῖς μὴ ἐπικοινωνούσας, καὶ προσήκειν ταῦτα Σελεύκῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ. ⁴ τούτων ἕκαστα γνοὺς ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος τὸν μὲν Σιμονα τῆς εἰς τὸν βασιλέα κηδεμονίας ἐπαινεῖ, πρὸς δὲ τὸν Σέλευκον ἀναβὰς κατεμήνυσε τὸν τῶν χρημάτων θησαυρόν. ⁵ καὶ λαβὼν τὴν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐξουσίαν ταχὺ εἰς τὴν πατρίδα ἡμῶν μετὰ τοῦ καταράτου Σιμωνος καὶ βαρυτάτου στρατοῦ ⁶ προσελθὼν ταῖς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐντολαῖς ἦκειν ἔλεγεν ὅπως τὰ ἰδιωτικὰ τοῦ γαζοφυλακίου λάβοι χρήματα. ⁷ καὶ τοῦ

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¹ Now there was a certain Simon, opposed to the noble and good man, Onias, who held the High Priesthood for life. When, despite all types of slander, he was unable to injure Onias in the eyes of the people, he fled the country with the purpose of betraying it. ² So, he came to Apollonius, governor of Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia, and said, ³ "Being loyal to the king's affairs, I have come to report that in the Jerusalem treasuries there are laid up tens of thousands in private funds, which do not belong to the Temple but belong to King Seleucus." ⁴ When Apollonius learned the details of this, he praised Simon for his service to the king and went up to Seleucus to inform him of the rich treasure. ⁵ With authority to deal with it, he proceeded quickly to our country, with the accursed Simon and a very strong military force. ⁶ He said that he had come with the king's command to seize the private funds in the treasury. ⁷ The people indignantly

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- ¹ On 'Simon', see 2M 3:4 and on 'Onias', see 2M 3:1. The life tenure of the High Priest was the rule until the 1st Century CE, when the Roman procurators disregarded it (Jn 18:13, Josephus, Antiquities XVIII.ii.2, xx.10).
- ² Cilicia was joined to Syria and Phoenicia as one province only in 20–54 CE; 2M 3:5 is more accurate.
- ³ 'Private funds' were often deposited in Temples, as in a bank.
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'these things' in place of 'this', here following the WEBBE.
- ⁵ According to 2M 3:7–8, Heliodorus was put in command of dealing with this matter.
- ⁶ The NRSV has 'authority' in place of 'command'.
- ⁷ The NRSV ends this verse with, "did all that they could to prevent it."

ἔθνους πρὸς τὸν λόγον σχετλιάζοντος ἀντιλέγοντός τε, πάνδεινον εἶναι νομίσαντες εἰ οἱ τὰς παρακαταθήκας πιστεύσαντες τῷ ἱερῷ θησαυρῷ στερηθήσονται, ὡς οἶόν τε ἦν ἐκώλυνον. ⁸ μετὰ ἀπειλῶν δὲ ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος ἀπῆει εἰς τὸ ἱερόν. ⁹ τῶν δὲ ἱερέων μετὰ γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἱκετευσάντων τὸν θεὸν ὑπερασπίσαι τοῦ ἱεροῦ καταφρονουμένου τόπου ¹⁰ ἀνιόντος τε μετὰ καθωπλισμένης τῆς στρατιᾶς τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου πρὸς τὴν τῶν χρημάτων ἀρπαγὴν οὐρανόθεν ἔφιπποι προφάνησαν ἄγγελοι περιαστράπτοντες τοῖς ὅπλοις καὶ πολλὴν αὐτοῖς φόβον τε καὶ τρόμον ἐνιέντες. ¹¹ καταπεσὼν γέ τοι ἡμιθανὴς ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος ἐπὶ τὸν πάμφυλον τοῦ ἱεροῦ περίβολον τὰς χεῖρας ἐξέτεινεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ μετὰ δακρύων τοὺς Εβραίους παρεκάλει ὅπως περὶ αὐτοῦ προσευξάμενοι τὸν οὐράνιον ἐξευμενίσωνται στρατόν. ¹² ἔλεγεν γὰρ ἡμαρτηκὼς ὥστε καὶ ἀποθανεῖν ἄξιός ὑπάρχειν πᾶσιν τε ἀνθρώποις ὑμνήσειν σωθεῖς τὴν τοῦ ἱεροῦ τόπου μακαριότητα. ¹³ τούτοις ὑπαχθεῖς τοῖς λόγοις Ονίας ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, καίπερ ἄλλως εὐλαβηθεῖς, μήποτε νομίσειεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος ἐξ ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπιβουλῆς καὶ μὴ θείας δίκης ἀνηρεῖσθαι τὸν Ἀπολλώνιον

protested his words, considering it outrageous that those who had committed deposits to the sacred treasury should be deprived of them, and resisted as well as they could. ⁸ But, uttering threats, Apollonius went into the Temple. ⁹ The priests, with women and children, implored God in the Temple to shield the Holy Place that was being treated so contemptuously; ¹⁰ and, while Apollonius was going up with his armed forces to seize the money, angels on horseback, all radiant in armour, appeared from heaven, instilling in them great fear and trembling. ¹¹ Then Apollonius fell down half dead in the Temple area that was open to all, stretched out his hands toward heaven and, with tears, begged the Hebrews to pray for him and take away the wrath of the heavenly army. ¹² For, he said that he had committed a sin deserving of death and that, if he were spared, he would proclaim the blessedness of the Holy Place to all people. ¹³ Moved by these words, the High Priest Onias, although otherwise he had scruples about doing so, prayed for him so that King Seleucus would not suppose that Apollonius had been slain by human hands and not by divine justice. ¹⁴ Thus,

⁸ The NRSV has 'on to' in place of 'into'.

⁹ The WEBBE ends with, "to throw his shield over the holy, despised place."

¹⁰ Compare 3M 2:21-24, 6:18.

¹¹ In place of 'take away', the NRSV has 'propitiate'.

¹² The NRSV has 'praise' in place of 'proclaim'.

¹³ In place of 'slain by human hands', the NRSV has 'overcome by human treachery'.

¹⁴ The NRSV has 'Apollonius' in place of 'he', here following the Greek text.

ἠΰξατο περὶ αὐτοῦ. ¹⁴ καὶ ὁ μὲν παραδόξως διασωθεὶς ὥχeto δηλώσων τῷ βασιλεῖ τὰ συμβάντα αὐτῷ.

¹⁵ Τελευτήσαντος δὲ Σελεύκου τοῦ βασιλέως διαδέχεται τὴν ἀρχὴν ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Ἀντίοχος ὁ Ἐπιφανής, ἀνὴρ ὑπερήφανος καὶ δεινός, ¹⁶ ὃς καταλύσας τὸν Ονίαν τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης Ιασονα τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ κατέστησεν ἀρχιερέα ¹⁷ συνθέμενον δώσειν, εἰ ἐπιτρέψειεν αὐτῷ τὴν ἀρχήν, κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν τρισχίλια ἑξακόσια ἑξήκοντα τάλαντα. ¹⁸ ὁ δὲ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀρχιερεῖσθαι καὶ τοῦ ἔθνους ἀφηγεῖσθαι. ¹⁹ καὶ ἐξεδιήτησεν τὸ ἔθνος καὶ ἐξεπολίτευσεν ἐπὶ πᾶσαν παρανομίαν ²⁰ ὥστε μὴ μόνον ἐπ' αὐτῇ τῇ ἄκρᾳ τῆς πατρίδος ἡμῶν γυμνάσιον κατασκευάσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταλῦσαι τὴν τοῦ ἱεροῦ κηδεμονίαν. ²¹ ἐφ' οἷς ἀγανακτήσασα ἡ θεία δίκη αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς τὸν Ἀντίοχον ἐπολέμωσεν. ²² ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πολεμῶν ἦν κατ' Αἴγυπτον Πτολεμαίῳ, ἤκουσέν τε ὅτι φήμης διαδοθείσης περὶ τοῦ τεθνάναι αὐτὸν ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα χαίροιεν οἱ Ιεροσολυμίται, ταχέως ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἀνέξευξεν,

having been saved beyond all expectations, he went away to report to the king what had happened to him.

¹⁵ When King Seleucus died, his son Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded to the throne, an arrogant and terrible man, ¹⁶ who deposed Onias from the priesthood and appointed his brother Jason as High Priest. ¹⁷ He agreed that, if the office were given to him, he would pay the king three thousand six hundred and sixty talents annually. ¹⁸ So, the king appointed him High Priest and ruler of the nation. ¹⁹ He changed the nation's way of life and perverted their civil customs into all lawlessness, ²⁰ so that, he not only built a gymnasium at the very citadel of our native land, but also abolished the Temple service. ²¹ The divine justice was angered by these acts and instigated Antiochus himself against them. ²² For, when he was at war with Ptolemy in Egypt, he heard that a rumour of his death had spread and that the people of Jerusalem had rejoiced greatly. He speedily marched against them ²³ and,

¹⁵ Antiochus IV Epiphanes was actually the brother of Seleucus IV and the son of Antiochus III (see 1M 1:10).

¹⁶ The NRSV has 'Onias's brother'; here, we follow the Greek text.

¹⁷ The NRSV opens with 'Jason' in place of 'he'; here, we follow the Greek text.

¹⁸ Presumably, he was only 'ruler' over the Jewish contingent of the 'nation'.

¹⁹ The NRSV ends with, "altered its form of government in complete violation of the Law."

²⁰ An alternative translation for 'citadel' is 'high place'. A more accurate expression than 'at the citadel' would be 'under the citadel', as in 2M 4:12.

²¹ In place of 'instigated ... against', the NRSV has 'caused ... to make war on'.

²² The king referred to is Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE, see 1M 1:16–19).

²³ The NRSV has 'after he had plundered them' in place of 'having subdued them'.

²³ καὶ ὡς ἐπόρθησεν αὐτούς, δόγμα ἔθετο ὅπως, εἴ τινες αὐτῶν φάνοιεν τῷ πατρίῳ πολιτευόμενοι νόμῳ, θάνοιεν. ²⁴ καὶ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον ἴσχυεν καταλῦσαι διὰ τῶν δογμάτων τὴν τοῦ ἔθνους εὐνομίαν, ἀλλὰ πάσας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἀπειλὰς καὶ τιμωρίας ἐώρα καταλυόμενας ²⁵ ὥστε καὶ γυναῖκας, ὅτι περιέτεμον τὰ παιδία, μετὰ τῶν βρεφῶν κατακρημνισθῆναι προειδυίας ὅτι τοῦτο πείσονται. ²⁶ ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ δόγματα αὐτοῦ κατεφρονεῖτο ὑπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ, αὐτὸς διὰ βασάνων ἕνα ἕκαστον τοῦ ἔθνους ἠνάγκαζεν μιαρῶν ἀπογευομένους τροφῶν ἐξόμνυσθαι τὸν Ἰουδαισμόν.

having subdued them, he issued a decree that, if any of them lived by the ancestral law, he should die. ²⁴ When, by means of his decrees, he had not been able in any way to destroy the people's observance of the Law, but saw that all his threats and punishments were without effect ²⁵ – even women, when they had circumcised their sons, were thrown from heights along with their infants, though they knew beforehand the punishment – ²⁶ when, as I say, his decrees were despised by the people, he tried through torture to compel everyone in the nation to eat the unclean and to renounce Judaism.

²⁴ The NRSV has 'were being disregarded' in place of 'without effect'.

²⁵ This verse is a parenthetical note of detail.

²⁶ Another reading for 'Judaism' is 'the Jewish religion'.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 5

¹ Προκαθίσας γέ τοι μετὰ τῶν συνέδρων ὁ τύραννος Ἀντίοχος ἐπὶ τινος ὑψηλοῦ τόπου καὶ τῶν στρατευμάτων αὐτῷ παρεστηκότων κυκλόθεν ἐνόπλων ² παρεκέλευεν τοῖς δορυφόροις ἕνα ἕκαστον Εβραῖον ἐπισπᾶσθαι καὶ κρεῶν ὑείων καὶ εἰδωλοθύτων ἀναγκάζειν ἀπογεύεσθαι· ³ εἰ δέ τινες μὴ θέλοιεν μιαιοφαγῆσαι, τούτους τροχισθέντας ἀναιρεθῆναι. ⁴ πολλῶν δὲ συναρπασθέντων εἰς πρῶτος ἐκ τῆς ἀγέλης ὀνόματι Ελεαζαρος, τὸ γένος ἱερεὺς, τὴν ἐπιστήμην νομικὸς καὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν προήκων καὶ πολλοῖς τῶν περὶ τὸν τύραννον διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν γνώριμος, παρήχθη πλησίον αὐτοῦ. ⁵ Καὶ αὐτὸν ἰδὼν ὁ Ἀντίοχος ἔφη ⁶ Ἐγὼ πρὶν ἄρξασθαι τῶν κατὰ σοῦ βασάνων, ὧ πρεσβῦτα, συμβουλεύσαιμ ἅν σοι ταῦτα, ὅπως ἀπογευσάμενος τῶν ὑείων σώζοιο· ⁷ αἰδοῦμαι

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¹ The tyrant Antiochus, sitting in state with his counsellors on a certain high place, and with his armed troops standing around him, ² ordered the guards to seize each and every Hebrew and to compel them to eat swine flesh and food sacrificed to idols. ³ If any were not willing to eat the unclean, they were to be tortured on the wheel and so killed. ⁴ When many had been seized, one man, Eleazar by name, leader of the flock, was brought before the king. He was of priestly family, a lawyer, advanced in age, and known to many in the king's court because of his philosophy. ⁵ And, seeing him, Antiochus said, ⁶ "Before I begin to torture you, old man, I would advise you to save yourself by eating swine flesh; ⁷, for I respect your old age and your grey hairs.

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- ¹ 'Sitting in state' was perhaps in Jerusalem but Christian tradition located this in Antioch, and a church was erected there honouring the martyrs.
- ² Jews regarded the eating of 'swine flesh and food sacrificed to idols' as idolatry and profanation of the Divine Name, because it was a public defiance of God's law; compare 1Co 10:6-22.
- ³ The Greek word here translated as 'unclean', peculiar to 4M, implies that forbidden foods were polluted and particularly odious.
- ⁴ An alternative reading for '... leader of the flock, was brought' is '... was the first of the flock to be brought'. In place of 'philosophy', some MSS repeat 'advanced age'. The name 'Eleazar' (the same as 'Lazarus', Lk 16:20, Jn 11:1) may mean 'God has helped' and, as a male name, serves as a symbol for a man of great piety.
- ⁵ For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "When Antiochus saw him, he said."
- ⁶ The NRSV has 'pork' in place of 'swine flesh'. The WEBBE merges this with the following verse.
- ⁷ A Stoic philosopher regarded the distinctions of national religions and laws, such as those of Judaism, as unimportant, whereas Jews considered the Mosaic Law to be the highest philosophy. Stoics also taught that one should live according to nature.

γάρ σου τὴν ἡλικίαν καὶ τὴν πολιάν, ἣν μετὰ τοσοῦτον ἔχων χρόνον οὐ μοι δοκεῖς φιλοσοφεῖν τῇ Ἰουδαίων χρώμενος θρησκείᾳ. ⁸ διὰ τί γὰρ τῆς φύσεως κεχαρισμένης καλλίστην τὴν τοῦδε τοῦ ζώου σαρκοφαγίαν βδελύττη; ⁹ καὶ γὰρ ἀνόητον τοῦτο, τὸ μὴ ἀπολαύειν τῶν χωρὶς ὀνείδους ἡδέων, καὶ ἄδικον ἀποστρέφειν τὰς τῆς φύσεως χάριτας. ¹⁰ σὺ δέ μοι καὶ ἀνοητότερον ποιήσεις δοκεῖς, εἰ κενοδοξῶν περὶ τὸ ἀληθές ἔτι κάμῃ καταφρονήσεις ἐπὶ τῇ ἰδίᾳ τιμωρίᾳ. ¹¹ οὐκ ἐξυπνώσεις ἀπὸ τῆς φλυαρίου φιλοσοφίας ὑμῶν καὶ ἀποσκεδάσεις τῶν λογισμῶν σου τὸν λῆρον καὶ ἄξιον τῆς ἡλικίας ἀναλαβὼν νοῦν φιλοσοφήσεις τὴν τοῦ συμφέροντος ἀλήθειαν ¹² καὶ προσκυνήσας μου τὴν φιλάνθρωπον παρηγορίαν οἰκτιρήσεις τὸ σεαυτοῦ γῆρας; ¹³ καὶ γὰρ ἐνδυμήθητι ὡς, εἰ καὶ τίς ἐστὶν τῇσδε τῆς θρησκείας ὑμῶν ἐποπτικὴ δύναμις, συγγνωμονήσειεν ἅν σοι ἐπὶ πάσῃ δι' ἀνάγκην παρανομία γινομένη.

¹⁴ Τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἐπὶ τὴν ἔκθεσμον σαρκοφαγίαν ἐποτρύνοντος τοῦ τυράννου λόγον ἤτησεν ὁ Ελεαζαρος ¹⁵ καὶ λαβὼν τοῦ λέγειν ἐξουσίαν ἤρξατο δημηγορεῖν οὕτως

Although you have had them for so long a time, it does not seem to me that you are a philosopher when you observe the religion of the Jews. ⁸ When nature has granted it to us, why do you loathe the most excellent meat of this animal? ⁹ It is senseless not to enjoy delicious things that are not shameful, and sinful to spurn the gifts of nature. ¹⁰ It seems to me that you will do something even more senseless if, by holding a vain opinion concerning the truth, you continue to despise me to your own hurt. ¹¹ Will you not awaken from your trifling philosophy, dispel your futile reasoning, adopt a mind appropriate to your years, philosophise according to the truth of what is beneficial, ¹² and have compassion on your old age by respecting my kindly admonition? ¹³ For, consider this: if there is some power watching over this religion of yours, it will pardon you from any transgression that arises out of compulsion."

¹⁴ When the tyrant urged him in this fashion to eat meat unlawfully, Eleazar begged to speak. ¹⁵ And, having received permission to speak, he began to address the people as

⁸ The NRSV adds 'eating' before 'the most excellent meat'.

⁹ In place of 'sinful', the WEBBE has 'from notions of sinfulness'.

¹⁰ The WEBBE splits this verse before 'if, by holding'.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'foolish' in place of 'trifling'.

¹² In place of 'kindly admonition', the NRSV has 'humane advice'.

¹³ The NRSV has 'excuse' in place of 'pardon'.

¹⁴ The NRSV has 'asked to have a word' in place of 'begged to speak'.

¹⁵ In place of 'having received' the NRSV has 'when he had received'.

¹⁶ Ἡμεῖς, Ἀντίοχε, θείῳ πεπεισμένοι νόμῳ πολιτεύεσθαι οὐδεμίαν ἀνάγκην βιαιοτέρα εἶναι νομίζομεν τῆς πρὸς τὸν νόμον ἡμῶν εὐπειθείας· ¹⁷ διὸ δὴ κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον παρανομεῖν ἀξιοῦμεν. ¹⁸ καίτοι εἰ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν μὴ ᾗ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν, ὡς ὑπολαμβάνεις, θεῖος, ἄλλως δὲ ἐνομίζομεν αὐτὸν εἶναι θεῖον, οὐδὲ οὕτως ἐξὸν ᾗ ἡμῖν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ δόξαν ἀκυρῶσαι. ¹⁹ μὴ μικρὰν οὖν εἶναι νομίσσης ταύτην, εἰ μιαροφαγήσαιμεν, ἁμαρτίαν· ²⁰ τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ μικροῖς καὶ μέγαλοις παρανομεῖν ἰσοδύναμόν ἐστιν, ²¹ δι' ἑκατέρου γὰρ ὡς ὁμοίως ὁ νόμος ὑπερφηφάνεται. ²² χλευάζεις δὲ ἡμῶν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὥσπερ οὐ μετὰ εὐλογιστίας ἐν αὐτῇ βιούντων· ²³ σωφροσύνην τε γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιδάσκει ὥστε πασῶν τῶν ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν κρατεῖν καὶ ἀνδρείαν ἐξασκεῖ ὥστε πάντα πόνον ἐκουσίως ὑπομένειν ²⁴ καὶ δικαιοσύνην παιδεύει ὥστε· διὰ πάντων τῶν ἡθῶν ἰσονομεῖν καὶ εὐσέβειαν ἐκδιδάσκει ὥστε μόνον τὸν ὄντα θεὸν σέβειν μεγαλοπρεπῶς.

follows: ¹⁶ “We, O Antiochus, who have been persuaded to govern our lives by the Divine Law, think that there is no compulsion more powerful than our obedience to the Law. ¹⁷ Therefore, we consider that we should not transgress it in any respect. ¹⁸ Even if, as you suppose, our law were not truly divine and we had wrongly held it to be divine, not even so would it be right for us to invalidate our reputation for piety. ¹⁹ Therefore, do not suppose eating the unclean is a petty sin; ²⁰ for, transgressing the Law in matters either small or great is of equal seriousness: ²¹ in either case, the Law is equally slighted. ²² You deride our philosophy as though living by it were irrational. ²³ Yet, it teaches us self-control, so that we master all pleasures and desires, and it also trains us in courage, so that we endure any suffering willingly; ²⁴ it instructs us in justice, so that in all our dealings we act impartially, and it teaches us piety, so that with proper reverence we worship the only living God.

¹⁶ The WEBBE has ‘to be more forcible’ in place of ‘more powerful’.

¹⁷ The WEBBE replaces the pronoun, ‘it’, with the referent, ‘the Law’.

¹⁸ The WEBBE uses parentheses around ‘as you suppose’ in place of commas.

¹⁹ In place of ‘petty sin’, the WEBBE has ‘trifling offence’.

²⁰ The NRSV lacks the opening ‘for’.

²¹ The NRSV has ‘despised’ in place of ‘slighted’.

²² In place of ‘deride’, the NRSV has ‘scoff at’.

²³ In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, and sometimes in Philo, piety (or religion) is the fourth virtue. The WEBBE ends with, “we cheerfully undergo every grievance.”

²⁴ An alternative reading of the 2nd clause is, “so that we hold in balance all our habitual inclinations.”

²⁵ διὸ οὐ μιαροφαγοῦμεν· πιστεύοντες γὰρ Θεοῦ καθεστάναι τὸν νόμον οἶδαμεν ὅτι κατὰ φύσιν ἡμῖν συμπαθεῖ νομοθετῶν ὁ τοῦ κόσμου κτίστης· ²⁶ τὰ μὲν οἰκειωθησόμενα ἡμῶν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐπέτρεψεν ἐσθίειν, τὰ δὲ ἐναντιωθησόμενα ἐκώλυσεν σαρκοφαγεῖν. ²⁷ τυραννικὸν δὲ οὐ μόνον ἀναγκάζειν ἡμᾶς παρανομεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐσθίειν, ὅπως τῇ ἐχθίστῃ ἡμῶν μιαροφαγίᾳ ταύτῃ ἐπεγγελάσῃ. ²⁸ ἀλλ' οὐ γελάσεις κατ' ἐμοῦ τοῦτον τὸν γέλωτα, ²⁹ οὔτε τοὺς ἱερούς τῶν προγόνων περὶ τοῦ φυλάξαι τὸν νόμον ὅρκους οὐ παρήσω, ³⁰ οὐδ' ἂν ἐκκόψαιάς μου τὰ ὅμματα καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα μου τήξῃς. ³¹ οὐχ οὕτως εἰμὶ γέρον ἐγὼ καὶ ἄνανδρος ὥστε μοι διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν μὴ νεάζειν τὸν λογισμόν. ³² πρὸς ταῦτα τροχοὺς εὐτρέπιζε καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐκφύσα σφοδρότερον. ³³ οὐχ οὕτως οἰκτιρόμαι τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ γῆρας ὥστε δι' ἐμαυτοῦ τὸν πάτριον καταλῦσαι νόμον. ³⁴ οὐ ψεύσομαί σε, παιδευτὰ νόμε, οὐδὲ ἐξομοῦμαί σε, φίλῃ ἐγκράτεια, ³⁵ οὐδὲ καταισχυνῶ σε,

²⁵ “So, we do not eat the unclean; for, since we believe the Law was established by God, we know that the Creator of the world, in giving his laws, showed sympathy for us. ²⁶ He has permitted us to eat what will be most suitable for our lives but he has forbidden us to eat that which is not. ²⁷ It is tyrannical for you to compel us not only to break the Law but also to eat in such a way that you may deride us for eating the unclean. ²⁸ But you shall have no cause to laugh at me, ²⁹ nor will I transgress the sacred oaths of my fathers to keep the Law, ³⁰ not even if you gouge out my eyes and burn my entrails. ³¹ I am not so old and cowardly as not to be young in reason on behalf of piety. ³² So, prepare your wheels and fan the fire vehemently! ³³ I do not so pity my old age as to break the Ancestral Law by my own act. ³⁴ I will not play false to you, O Law that trained me, nor forsake you, beloved self-control. ³⁵ I will not put you to shame, philosopher Reason,

²⁵ The NRSV has ‘giving us the Law’ in place of ‘giving his laws’.

²⁶ An alternative translation of ‘lives’ is ‘souls’.

²⁷ The derision would come from the discredit brought on the Jewish people, the Mosaic Law and the God who gave it. God’s name must be hallowed (Mt 6:9).

²⁸ In place of ‘cause’, the NRSV has ‘such occasion’.

²⁹ The NRSV has ‘ancestors’ in place of ‘fathers’.

³⁰ The WEBBE has ‘consume’ in place of ‘burn’.

³¹ ‘Piety’ translates εὐσέβειαν – proper reverence toward God; no single Greek word corresponds to the English word, ‘religion’.

³² Before ‘wheels’, the NRSV adds ‘torture’.

³³ The WEBBE has ‘law of my country’ in place of ‘Ancestral Law’.

³⁴ The NRSV has ‘renounce’ in place of ‘forsake’.

³⁵ The NRSV has ‘philosophical reason’ in place of ‘philosopher Reason’, here following the WEBBE.

φιλόσοφε λόγε, οὐδὲ ἐξαρνήσομαί σε, ἱερωσύνη τιμία καὶ νομοθεσίας ἐπιστήμη· ³⁶ οὐδὲ μινεῖς μου τὸ σεμνὸν γήρως στόμα οὐδὲ νομίμου βίου ἡλικίαν. ³⁷ ἄγνόν με οἱ πατέρες εἰσδέχονται μὴ φοβηθέντα σου τὰς μέχρι θανάτου ἀνάγκας. ³⁸ ἄσεβων μὲν γὰρ τυραννήσεις, τῶν δὲ ἐμῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας λογισμῶν οὔτε λόγοις δεσπόσεις οὔτε δι' ἔργων.

nor deny you, honoured priesthood and knowledge of the Law. ³⁶ You shall not defile the honourable mouth of my old age, nor my lawful, long life. ³⁷ My fathers will receive me as pure, as one who does not fear your violence even to death. ³⁸ You may tyrannise the ungodly, but you cannot dominate my religious principles, by either words or deeds.”

³⁶ After the opening ‘You’, the NRSV adds ‘O king’.

³⁷ The WEBBE & NRSV have ‘ancestors’ in place of ‘fathers’.

³⁸ The NRSV has ‘shall not’ in place of ‘cannot’.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 6

¹ Τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀντιρρητορεύσαντα ταῖς τοῦ τυράννου παρηγορίαις παραστάντες οἱ δορυφόροι πικρῶς ἔσυραν ἐπὶ τὰ βασανιστήρια τὸν Ελεάζαρον. ² καὶ πρῶτον μὲν περιέδυσαν τὸν γεραιὸν ἐγκοσμούμενον τῇ περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν εὐσχημοσύνῃ. ³ ἔπειτα περιαγκωνίσαντες ἐκατέρωθεν μάστιξιν κατήκισον, ⁴ Πείσδητι ταῖς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐντολαῖς, ἐτέρωθεν κήρυκος ἐπιβοῶντος. ⁵ ὁ δὲ μεγαλόφρων καὶ εὐγενὴς ὡς ἀληθῶς Ελεάζαρος ὥσπερ ἐν ὀνείρῳ βασανιζόμενος κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον μετετρέπετο, ⁶ ἀλλὰ ὑψηλοὺς ἀνατείνας εἰς οὐρανὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀπεξαίνετο ταῖς μάστιξιν τὰς σάρκας ὁ γέρων καὶ κατερρεῖτο τῷ αἵματι καὶ τὰ πλευρὰ κατετιτρώσκετο. ⁷ καὶ πίπτων εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος ἀπὸ τοῦ μὴ φέρειν τὸ σῶμα τὰς ἀλγηδόνας ὁρθὸν εἶχεν καὶ ἀκλινῇ τὸν λογισμόν. ⁸ λάξ γέ τοι τῶν πικρῶν τις δορυφόρων εἰς τοὺς κενεῶνας ἐναλλόμενος ἔτυπτεν, ὅπως ἐξανίσταίτο πίπτων. ⁹ ὁ δὲ ὑπέμενε τοὺς πόνους καὶ περιεφρόνει τῆς ἀνάγκης καὶ

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¹ When Eleazar in this manner had answered the exhortations of the tyrant, the spear-bearers came and dragged him violently to the instruments of torture. ² First, they stripped the old man, though he remained adorned with the beauty of his piety. ³ After they had tied his arms and hands, they flogged him, ⁴ while a herald who faced him cried out, "Obey the king's commands!" ⁵ But the courageous and noble man, like a true Eleazar, was unmoved, as though being tortured in a dream; ⁶ yet, while the old man's eyes were raised to heaven, his flesh was being torn by scourges, his blood flowing and his sides were being cut to pieces. ⁷ Although he fell to the ground, because his body could not endure the agonies, he kept his reason upright and unswerving. ⁸ One of the cruel spear-bearers rushed at him and kicked him in the side to make him get up again after he fell; ⁹ but he bore the pains, scorned the punishment, and endured the indignity.

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¹ The NRSV has 'made eloquent response to' in place of 'answered'. In place of 'spear-bearers', the NRSV has 'guards who were standing by'.

² The WEBBE has 'adorned as he was' in place of 'though he was adorned'.

³ The NRSV has 'on both sides' in place of 'and hands'.

⁴ In place of 'who faced him', the WEBBE has 'opposite'.

⁵ On the phrase, 'true Eleazar', see #5:4.

⁶ 'Raising one's eyes to heaven' was a natural gesture in prayer, particularly that of a martyr. Compare v. 26 and Stephen's supplication (Ac 7:55).

⁷ The WEBBE has 'unbending' in place of 'unswerving'.

⁸ The NRSV has 'guards' in place of 'spear-bearers', here following the WEBBE.

⁹ The NRSV has 'torture' in place of 'indignity', here (loosely) following the WEBBE.

διεκατέρει τοὺς αἰκισμούς, ¹⁰ καὶ καθάπερ γενναῖος ἀθλητῆς τυπτόμενος ἐνῖκα τοὺς βασανίζοντας ὁ γέρων· ¹¹ ἰδρῶν γέ τοι τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ ἐπασθμαίνων σφοδρῶς καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν τῶν βασανιζόντων ἐδαυμάζετο ἐπὶ τῇ εὐψυχίᾳ.

¹² Ὅθεν τὰ μὲν ἐλεῶντες τὰ τοῦ γήρως αὐτοῦ, ¹³ τὰ δὲ ἐν συμπαθείᾳ τῆς συνηθείας ὄντες, τὰ δὲ ἐν θαυμασμῷ τῆς καρτερίας προσιόντες αὐτῷ τινες τοῦ βασιλέως ἔλεγον ¹⁴ Τί τοῖς κακοῖς τούτοις σεαυτὸν ἀλογίστως ἀπόλλεις, Ελεαζαρ; ¹⁵ ἡμεῖς μὲν τοι τῶν ἡψημένων βρωμάτων παραθήσομεν, σὺ δὲ ὑποκρινόμενος τῶν υἰείων ἀπογεύεσθαι σώσῃτι.

¹⁶ Καὶ ὁ Ελεαζαρος ὥσπερ πικρότερον διὰ τῆς συμβουλίας αἰκισθεὶς ἀνεβόησεν ¹⁷ Μὴ οὕτως κακῶς φρονήσαιοι οἱ Ἀβρααμ παῖδες ὥστε μαλακοψυχήσαντας ἀπρεπὲς ἡμῖν δρᾶμα ὑποκρίνασθαι. ¹⁸ καὶ γὰρ ἀλόγιστον εἰ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ζήσαντες τὸν μέχρι γήρως βίον καὶ τὴν ἐπ' αὐτῷ δόξαν νομίμως φυλάσσοντες νῦν μεταβαλοίμεθα ¹⁹ καὶ αὐτοὶ μὲν

¹⁰ Like a noble athlete, the old man, while being beaten, was victorious over his torturers; ¹¹ in fact, with his face bathed in sweat and gasping heavily for breath, he was admired even by his torturers by his courageous spirit.

¹² Therefore, partly out of pity for his old age, ¹³ partly out of sympathy of acquaintance, partly out of admiration for his endurance, some of the king's retinue said to him, ¹⁴ "Eleazar, why are you so irrationally destroying yourself through these evil things? ¹⁵ We will set before you some cooked meat; save yourself by pretending to eat swine flesh."

¹⁶ However, Eleazar, as though more painfully tortured by this counsel, cried out: ¹⁷ "May the children of Abraham never think so basely that out of cowardice we use an unbecoming pretence! ¹⁸ For, it would be irrational if, having lived in all truth up to old age, and, having maintained our reputation for it, we should now turn back ¹⁹ and ourselves

¹⁰ On the use of the phrase 'noble athlete', see 1Co 9:24–27, Heb 12:1.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'amazed' in place of 'was admired ... by'.

¹² In place of 'Therefore', the NRSV opens with 'At this point'.

¹³ After 'acquaintance', the NRSV adds 'with him'.

¹⁴ The WEBBE has 'unreasonably' in place of 'irrationally'.

¹⁵ The NRSV has 'pork' in place of 'swine flesh'.

¹⁶ In place of 'painfully tortured', the NRSV has 'bitterly tormented'.

¹⁷ The word, 'children', translates παῖδες.

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'in accordance with' in place of 'in all'.

¹⁹ The NRSV ends with, "in the eating of defiling food."

ἡμεῖς γενοίμεθα τοῖς νέοις ἀσεβείας τύπος, ἵνα παράδειγμα γενώμεθα τῆς μιαιροφαγίας. ²⁰ αἰσχρὸν δὲ εἰ ἐπιβιώσομεν ὀλίγον χρόνον καὶ τοῦτον καταγελῶμενοι πρὸς ἀπάντων ἐπὶ δειλία. ²¹ καὶ ὑπὸ μὲν τοῦ τυράννου καταφρονηθῶμεν ὡς ἄνθρωποι, τὸν δὲ θεῖον ἡμῶν νόμον μέχρι θανάτου μὴ προασπίσαιμεν. ²² πρὸς ταῦτα ὑμεῖς μὲν, ὦ Ἀβρααμ παῖδες, εὐγενῶς ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας τελευτᾶτε. ²³ οἱ δὲ τοῦ τυράννου δορυφόροι, τί μέλλετε;

²⁴ Πρὸς τὰς ἀνάγκας οὕτως μεγαλοφρονοῦντα αὐτὸν ἰδόντες καὶ μηδὲ πρὸς τὸν οἰκτιρισμὸν αὐτῶν μεταβαλλόμενον ἐπὶ τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸν ἀνῆγον. ²⁵ ἔνθα διὰ κακοτέχνων ὀργάνων καταφλέγοντες αὐτὸν ὑπερρίπτοσαν, καὶ δυσώδεις χυλοὺς εἰς τοὺς μυκτῆρας αὐτοῦ κατέχεον. ²⁶ ὁ δὲ μέχρι τῶν ὀστέων ἤδη κατακαυμένος καὶ μέλλων λιποθυμεῖν ἀνέτεινε τὰ ὄμματα πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπεν ²⁷ Σὺ οἶσθα, θεέ, παρόν μοι σῶξθαι βασάνοις καυστικαῖς ἀποθνήσκω διὰ τὸν νόμον. ²⁸ ἰλεως γενοῦ τῷ ἔθνει σου ἀρκεσθεῖς τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ὑπὲρ

become a pattern of impiety to the young by setting them an example of eating pollution. ²⁰ It would be shameful if we should survive for a little while and, during that time, be scorned by all for our cowardice, ²¹ and be despised by the tyrant as unmanly by not contending even to death for our divine Law. ²² Therefore, men, O children of Abraham, die nobly for your religion! ²³ And you, spear-bearers of the tyrant, why do you delay?"

²⁴ When they saw that he was so courageous in the face of the afflictions, and wholly unmoved by their compassion, they brought him to the fire. ²⁵ There, they burned him with maliciously contrived instruments, threw him down and poured stinking liquid into his nostrils. ²⁶ When he was now burned to his very bones and about to expire, he lifted up his eyes to God and said, ²⁷ "You know, O God, that though I might have been saved, I am dying in fiery torture for the sake of the Law. ²⁸ Be merciful to your people, and let my

²⁰ The WEBBE lacks the phrase, 'during that time'.

²¹ In place of 'as unmanly' the WEBBE has 'for cowardice'.

²² The NRSV lacks 'men'.

²³ The NRSV has 'guards' in place of 'spear-bearers', here following the WEBBE.

²⁴ In place of 'they brought', the NRSV has 'the guards brought'.

²⁵ Just what the 'stinking liquids' were and what was their exact purpose is uncertain.

²⁶ The WEBBE has 'Godward' in place of 'to God'.

²⁷ The NRSV has 'burning torments' in place of 'fiery torture'.

²⁸ The NRSV has 'our punishment' in place of 'my punishment'.

αὐτῶν δίκη. ²⁹ καθάρσιον αὐτῶν ποιήσον τὸ ἐμὸν αἷμα καὶ ἀντίψυχον αὐτῶν λαβὲ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν. ³⁰ καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὁ ἱερός ἀνὴρ εὐγενῶς ταῖς βασάνοις ἐναπέθανεν καὶ μέχρι τῶν τοῦ θανάτου βασάνων ἀντέστη τῷ λογισμῷ διὰ τὸν νόμον.

³¹ Ὁμολογουμένως οὖν δεσπότης τῶν παθῶν ἐστὶν ὁ εὐσεβὴς λογισμός. ³² εἰ γὰρ τὰ πάθη τοῦ λογισμοῦ κεκρατήκει, τούτοις ἂν ἀπέδομεν τὴν τῆς ἐπικρατείας μαρτυρίαν. ³³ νυνὶ δὲ τοῦ λογισμοῦ τὰ πάθη νικήσαντος αὐτῷ προσηκόντως τὴν τῆς ἡγεμονίας προσνέμομεν ἐξουσίαν. ³⁴ καὶ δίκαιόν ἐστὶν ὁμολογεῖν ἡμᾶς τὸ κράτος εἶναι τοῦ λογισμοῦ, ὅπου γε καὶ τῶν ἔξωθεν ἀλγηδόνων ἐπικρατεῖ, ἐπεὶ καὶ γελοῖον. ³⁵ καὶ οὐ μόνον τῶν ἀλγηδόνων ἐπιδείκνυμι κεκρατηκέναι τὸν λογισμόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἡδονῶν κρατεῖν καὶ μηδὲν αὐταῖς ὑπείκειν.

punishment suffice for them. ²⁹ Let my blood be their purification and take my life in exchange for theirs.” ³⁰ Saying this, the holy man died nobly in his tortures; even in the tortures of death, he resisted, by virtue of reason, for the sake of the Law.

³¹ Admittedly, then, devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. ³² For, if the emotions had prevailed over reason, we would have testified to their domination. ³³ However, now that reason has conquered the emotions, we properly attribute to it the authority of first place. ³⁴ It is only fair for us to acknowledge the dominance of reason when it can master even external agonies. It would be ridiculous to deny it. ³⁵ I have proved not only that reason has mastered agonies, but also that it masters pleasures and in no respect yields to them.

²⁹ ‘In exchange’ translates *ἀντίψυχον*, a word used by the martyr Ignatius of Antioch in his letters; compare 1:11, 9:24, 12:17, 17:21–22, 18:4, Mk 10:45. The idea of expiation derives ultimately from Is 53:5–12 and is also found in the “*Manual of Discipline*,” found in the *Qumran MSS*.

³⁰ The NRSV opens with ‘After he said this’.

³¹ The transition from religious language in vv. 27–29 to the philosophical note of ‘devout reason’ is abrupt; but, for this author, the two are one.

³² The WEBBE has ‘mastery’ in place of ‘domination’.

³³ The NRSV has ‘power to govern’ in place of ‘authority of first place’, here following the WEBBE.

³⁴ The last sentence (which the WEBBE includes in v. 35) here follows the *Peshitta*; the meaning of the LXX is uncertain.

³⁵ The WEBBE ends with ‘and withstands them’.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 7

¹ Ὡςπερ γὰρ ἄριστος κυβερνήτης ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν
Ελεάζαρου λογισμὸς πηδαλιουχῶν τὴν τῆς εὐσεβείας ναῦν ἐν
τῷ τῶν παθῶν πελάγει ² καὶ καταικιζόμενος ταῖς τοῦ
τυράννου ἀπειλαῖς καὶ καταντλούμενος ταῖς τῶν βασάνων
τρικυμίαις ³ κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον ἔτρεψε τοὺς τῆς εὐσεβείας
οἴακας, ἕως οὗ ἔπλευσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς ἀθανάτου νίκης λιμένα.
⁴ οὐχ οὕτως πόλις πολλοῖς καὶ ποικίλοις μηχανήμασιν
ἀντέσχε ποτὲ πολιορκουμένη, ὥς ὁ πανάγιος ἐκεῖνος. τὴν
ἱερὰν ψυχὴν αἰκισμοῖς τε καὶ στρέβλαις πυρπολούμενος
ἐνίκησεν τοὺς πολιορκοῦντας διὰ τὸν ὑπερασπίζοντα τῆς
εὐσεβείας λογισμόν. ⁵ ὥςπερ γὰρ πρόκρημνον ἄκραν τὴν
ἑαυτοῦ διάνοιαν ὁ πατὴρ Ελεάζαρ ἐκτείνας περιέκλασεν τοὺς
ἐπιμαινομένους τῶν παθῶν κλύδωνας. ⁶ ὦ ἄξιε τῆς
ἱερωσύνης ἱερεῦ, οὐκ ἐμίανας τοὺς ἱεροὺς ὀδόντας οὐδὲ τὴν
θεοσέβειαν καὶ καθαρισμόν χωρήσασαν γαστέρα ἐκοίνωσας
μιαροφαγία. ⁷ ὦ σύμφωνε νόμου καὶ φιλόσοφε θείου βίου.

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¹ For, like a most skilful pilot, the reasoning of our father
Eleazar steered the ship of religion over the sea of the
emotions; ² and, though buffeted by the threats of the tyrant
and overwhelmed by the mighty waves of tortures, ³ in no
way did he turn the rudder of religion until he sailed into the
harbour of victory over death. ⁴ No city besieged with so
many ingenious war machines has ever held out, as did that
most holy man. Even though his sacred life was consumed
by fiery tortures and racks, he conquered his besiegers with
the shield of his devout reason. ⁵ For, in projecting his
disposition like a jutting cliff, our father Eleazar broke the
maddening waves of the emotions. ⁶ O priest, worthy of the
priesthood! You neither defiled your sacred teeth nor let your
stomach, which had room only for reverence and purity,
partake of profanity by eating the unclean. ⁷ O, man in
harmony with the Law and philosopher devoted to a divine

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- ¹ The metaphor of 'the pilot and the ship', common in Greek literature, recurs in 13:6-7 and in 15:31-32 as a reference to Noah's ark; cf. 1P 3:20.
- ² The WEBBE has 'breakers' in place of 'mighty waves'.
- ³ The NRSV has 'immortal victory' in place of 'victory over death'.
- ⁴ In place of 'sacred life', the WEBBE has 'pious soul'; the Greek (ἱερὰν ψυχὴν) could mean either, equally well.
- ⁵ The NRSV has 'setting his mind firm' in place of 'projecting his disposition', here following the WEBBE.
- ⁶ The Jewish concept of defiling and profaning was realistic, as though a physical infection were incurred (see 2M 6:20); contrast Mk 7:15, Ac 10:13-15.
- ⁷ The WEBBE has 'sage' in place of 'philosopher'.

⁸ τοιούτους δεῖ εἶναι τοὺς δημιουργοῦντας τὸν νόμον ἰδίῳ αἵματι καὶ γενναίῳ ἰδρῶτι τοῖς μέχρι θανάτου πάθεσιν ὑπερασπίζοντας. ⁹ σύ, πάτερ, τὴν εὐνομίαν ἡμῶν διὰ τῶν ὑπομονῶν εἰς δόξαν ἐκύρωσας καὶ τὴν ἁγιαστίαν σεμνολογήσας οὐ κατέλυσας καὶ διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἐπιστοποίησας τοὺς τῆς θείας φιλοσοφίας σου λόγους, ¹⁰ ὦ βασάνων βιαιότερε γέρων καὶ πυρὸς εὐτονώτερε πρεσβῦτα καὶ παθῶν μέγιστε βασιλεῦ Ελεάζαρ. ¹¹ ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ Ααρων τῷ θυμιατηρίῳ καθωπλισμένος διὰ τοῦ ἐθνοπλήθους ἐπιτρέχων τὸν ἐμπυριστὴν ἐνίκησεν ἄγγελον, ¹² οὕτως ὁ Ααρωνίδης Ελεάζαρ διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς ὑπερτηκόμενος οὐ μετετρέπη τὸν λογισμόν. ¹³ καίτοι τὸ θαυμασιώτατον, γέρων ὢν λελυμένων μὲν ἤδη τῶν τοῦ σώματος τόνων, περικεχαλασμένων δὲ τῶν σαρκῶν, κεκμηκότων δὲ καὶ τῶν νεύρων ἀνενέασεν ¹⁴ τῷ πνεύματι διὰ τοῦ λογισμοῦ καὶ τῷ Ἰσακίῳ λογισμῷ τὴν πολυκέφαλον στρέβλαν ἠκύρωσεν. ¹⁵ ὦ μακαρίου γήρως καὶ σεμνῆς πολιᾶς καὶ βίου νομίμου, ὃν πιστὴ θανάτου σφραγὶς ἐτελείωσεν.

life! ⁸ Such should be those who are administrators of the Law, shielding it with their own blood and noble sweat in sufferings even to death. ⁹ You, father, strengthened our loyalty to the Law through your glorious endurance, and you did not abandon the holiness that you praised but, by your deeds, you made your words of divine philosophy credible. ¹⁰ O, aged man, more powerful than tortures; O elder, fiercer than fire; O supreme king over the passions, Eleazar! ¹¹ For, just as our father Aaron, armed with the censer, ran through the multitude and conquered the fiery angel, ¹² so the son of Aaron, Eleazar, though wasted away by the fire, remained unmoved in his reason. ¹³ Most amazing, indeed, though he was an old man, his body no longer tense and firm, his muscles flabby, his sinews feeble, he became young again ¹⁴ in spirit through reason; and by reason like that of Isaac, he rendered the many-headed rack ineffective. ¹⁵ O man of blessed age and venerable grey hair and of lawful abiding life, whom the faithful seal of death has perfected!

⁸ The literal meaning of ‘administrators’ is ‘those who make (or create) something’; the Greek is obscure.

⁹ Some MSS lack the word ‘divine’ (θείας), as does the WEBBE.

¹⁰ The WEBBE has ‘more vigorous’ in place of ‘fiercer’.

¹¹ Some MSS lack the word ‘fiery’.

¹² Inexplicably, the WEBBE has ‘consuming fire’ in place of ‘multitude’, here following the Greek text (ἐθνοπλήθους).

¹³ The literal translation of the Greek for ‘his body no longer tense and firm’ is ‘the tautness of his body already loosed’.

¹⁴ The ‘many-headed rack’ was clearly some vile instrument of torture.

¹⁵ In place of ‘grey hair’ the WEBBE has ‘hoar head’.

¹⁶ Εἰ δὴ τοίνυν γέρων ἀνὴρ τῶν μέχρι θανάτου βασάνων περιεφρόνει δι' εὐσέβειαν, ὁμολογουμένως ἡγεμὼν ἐστὶν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβῆς λογισμός. ¹⁷ ἴσως δ' ἂν εἴποιέν τινες Τῶν παθῶν οὐ πάντες περικρατοῦσιν, ὅτι οὐδὲ πάντες φρόνιμον ἔχουσιν τὸν λογισμὸν. ¹⁸ ἀλλ' ὅσοι τῆς εὐσεβείας προνοοῦσιν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας, οὗτοι μόνοι δύνανται κρατεῖν τῶν τῆς σαρκὸς παθῶν ¹⁹ πιστεύοντες ὅτι θεῶ οὐκ ἀποθνήσκουσιν, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ οἱ πατριάρχαι ἡμῶν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, ἀλλὰ ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ. ²⁰ οὐδὲν οὖν ἐναντιοῦται τὸ φαίνεσθαι τινὰς παδοκρατεῖσθαι διὰ τὸν ἀσθενῆ λογισμὸν. ²¹ ἐπεὶ τίς πρὸς ὅλον τὸν τῆς φιλοσοφίας κανόνα φιλοσοφῶν καὶ πεπιστευκὼς θεῷ ²² καὶ εἰδὼς ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν πάντα πόνον ὑπομένειν μακάριόν ἐστιν, οὐκ ἂν περικρατήσκειν τῶν παθῶν διὰ τὴν θεοσέβειαν; ²³ μόνος γὰρ ὁ σοφὸς καὶ ἀνδρεῖός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν κύριος.

¹⁶ So if, because of piety, an aged man despised tortures even to death, certainly devout reason is ruler of the emotions. ¹⁷ Some perhaps might say, "Not all have full command of emotions, because not all have wise reason." ¹⁸ Nevertheless, as many as attend to religion with a whole heart, these alone are able to control the passions of the flesh; ¹⁹ for, they believe that they, like our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, do not die to God but live to God. ²⁰ So, no contradiction arises when some persons appear to be dominated by their emotions because of the weakness of their reason. ²¹ What person, who walks religiously by the whole rule of philosophy and trusts in God, ²² and knows that it is a blessing to endure any suffering for the sake of virtue, would not be able to overcome the emotions through godliness? ²³ For, only the wise and brave is masters of his emotions.

¹⁶ The NRSV has 'governor' in place of 'ruler'.

¹⁷ In place of 'wise', the NRSV has 'prudent'.

¹⁸ The WEBBE has 'emotions' in place of 'passions'.

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'patriarchs' in place of 'fathers'.

²⁰ The WEBBE opens rather archaically, "This circumstance, then, is by no means an objection."

²¹ In place of 'walks religiously', the NRSV has 'lives as a philosopher'.

²² The NRSV has 'blessed' in place of 'a blessing' and the WEBBE has 'a blessed thing'.

²³ Other readings for 'brave' are 'courageous' (as NRSV) and 'gallant'.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 8

¹ Διὰ τοῦτό γέ τοι καὶ μειρακίσκοι τῷ τῆς εὐσεβείας λογισμῷ φιλοσοφοῦντες χαλεπωτέρων βασανιστηρίων ἐπεκράτησαν. ² ἐπειδὴ γὰρ κατὰ τὴν πρώτην πείραν ἐνικήθη περιφανῶς ὁ τύραννος μὴ δυνηθεὶς ἀναγκάσαι γέροντα μιαροφαγῆσαι, τότε δὴ σφόδρα περιπαθῶς ἐκέλευσεν ἄλλους ἐκ τῆς λείας τῶν Εβραίων ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ εἰ μὲν μιαροφαγῆσαιεν, ἀπολύειν φαγόντας, εἰ δ' ἀντιλέγοιεν, πικρότερον βασανίζειν.

³ ταῦτα διαταξαμένου τοῦ τυράννου, παρῆσαν ἀγόμενοι μετὰ γεραιᾶς μητρὸς ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοὶ καλοὶ τε καὶ αἰδήμονες καὶ γενναῖοι καὶ ἐν παντὶ χαρίεντες. ⁴ οὓς ἰδὼν ὁ τύραννος καθάπερ ἐν χορῷ μέσσην τὴν μητέρα περιέχοντας ἤσθετο ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τῆς εὐπρεπείας ἐκπλαγεὶς καὶ τῆς εὐγενείας προσεμειδίασεν αὐτοῖς καὶ πλησίον καλέσας ἔφη ⁵ Ὡ νεανίαί, φιλοφρόνως ἐγὼ καθ' ἑνὸς ἐκάστου ὑμῶν θαυμάζω, τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοσούτων ἀδελφῶν ὑπερτιμῶν οὐ μόνον συμβουλεύω μὴ μανῆναι τὴν αὐτὴν τῷ προβασανισθέντι γέροντι μανίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρακαλῶ

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¹ This is why even boys, trained with the philosophy of devout reason, have prevailed over still more bitter tortures.

² For, when the tyrant was manifestly defeated in his first attempt, being unable to compel an old man to eat the unclean, then, in violent rage, he commanded to bring others of the Hebrew captives and that any who ate the unclean would be freed after eating but, if any were to refuse, they would be tortured even more cruelly.

³ When the tyrant had given these orders, seven brothers were brought before him, along with their aged mother. They were handsome, modest, noble, and accomplished. ⁴ When the tyrant saw them, encircling their mother like a chorus, he was pleased with them; and, struck by their appearance and nobility, he smiled at them, called them nearer, and said, ⁵ “Young men, with favourable feelings I admire the beauty of you all and greatly honour the number of such brothers. Not only do I advise you not to share the madness of the old man who has just been tortured, but I also exhort you to yield

4 MACCABEES 8

¹ The WEBBE includes this verse as 7:24.

² The WEBBE includes the part of this verse up to the 1st ‘unclean’ as 7:25.

³ ‘Accomplished’ (‘graceful’) expresses the Greek ideal of physical beauty joined to perfect education.

⁴ A Greek ‘chorus’ was a company of dancers, who often moved in a circle and spoke lines in unison; compare 14:7.

⁵ Note that this is v. 4 in the WEBBE (see #1 & #2) up to ‘but I also’, which therein begins v. 5.

συνείξαντάς μοι τῆς ἐμῆς ἀπολαύειν φιλίας· ⁶ δυνάμην δ' ἂν ὥσπερ κολάζειν τοὺς ἀπειθοῦντάς μου τοῖς ἐπιτάγμασιν, οὕτω καὶ εὐεργετεῖν τοὺς εὐπειθοῦντάς μοι. ⁷ πιστεύσατε οὖν καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμῶν πραγμάτων ἡγεμονικὰς λήμψεσθε ἀρνησάμενοι τὸν πατριὸν ὑμῶν τῆς πολιτείας θεσμόν· ⁸ καὶ μεταλαβόντες Ἑλληνικοῦ βίου καὶ μεταδιδιαιτηθέντες ἐντρυφήσατε ταῖς νεότησιν ὑμῶν· ⁹ ἐπεὶ, ἐὰν ὀργίλως με διάδησθε διὰ τῆς ἀπειθείας, ἀναγκάσετέ με ἐπὶ δειναῖς κολάσεσιν ἓνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν διὰ τῶν βασάνων ἀπολέσαι. ¹⁰ κατελεήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοὺς, οὓς καὶ ὁ πολέμιος ἔγωγε καὶ τῆς ἡλικίας καὶ τῆς εὐμορφίας οἰκτίρομαι. ¹¹ οὐ διαλογιεῖσθε τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐδὲν ὑμῖν ἀπειδήσασιν πλὴν τοῦ μετὰ στρεβλῶν ἀποθανεῖν ἀπόκειται;

¹² Ταῦτα δὲ λέγων ἐκέλευσεν εἰς τὸ ἔμπροσθεν τιθέναι τὰ βασανιστήρια, ὅπως καὶ διὰ τοῦ φόβου πείσειεν αὐτοὺς μιαροφαγήσαι. ¹³ ὥς δὲ τροχούς τε καὶ ἀρδρέμβολα, στρεβλωτήριά τε καὶ τροχαντῆρας καὶ καταπέλτας καὶ λέβητας,

to me and to enjoy my friendship. ⁶ Just as I am able to punish those who disobey my orders, so I can be a benefactor to those who obey me. ⁷ Trust me, then, and you will have positions of authority in my government if you renounce the ancestral tradition of your national life. ⁸ Enjoy your youth by conforming to the Greek way of life and by changing your manner of living. ⁹ For, if by disobedience you provoke my anger, you will compel me to destroy each one of you with dreadful punishments through tortures. ¹⁰ Therefore, have mercy on yourselves. Even I, your enemy, have compassion for your age and handsome appearance. ¹¹ Will you not consider this: that, if you disobey, nothing remains for you but to die in torture?"

¹² When he had said this, he ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward, so that fear might sway them to eat unclean meat. ¹³ When the spearman had placed before them wheels and joint-breakers, racks and hooks, catapults

⁶ 'Benefactor' was a title often adopted by Hellenistic monarchs; in Lk 22:25, it seems ironic, as here. The WEBBE includes this as part of v. 5.

⁷ The WEBBE has this verse as v. 6.

⁸ Antiochus could have believed that the 'Greek way of life' was the highest civilisation and that Judaism was superstitious. Thus, it is a tragic conflict between two points of view.

⁹ The NRSV has 'rouse' in place of 'provoke'.

¹⁰ In place of 'age', the NRSV has 'youth'.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'on the rack' in place of 'in torture'; a literal translation of the Greek (μετὰ στρεβλῶν) could be 'after/with twisting'.

¹² Many of the 'instruments of torture' subsequently listed cannot be precisely described; cf. 11:10.

¹³ The meaning of the Greek here translated as 'hooks' and 'catapults' is uncertain; some translate the former as 'wooden horses'; the latter appears elsewhere in 4M as an instrument of torture.

τήγανά τε καὶ δακτυλήθρας καὶ χειῖρας σιδηρεῖς καὶ σφῆνας καὶ τὰ ζώπυρα τοῦ πυρὸς οἱ δορυφόροι προέδεσαν, ὑπολαβὼν ὁ τύραννος ἔφη ¹⁴ Μειράκια, φοβήθητε, καὶ ἦν σέβεσθε δίκην, ἵλεως ὑμῖν ἔσται δι' ἀνάγκην παρανομήσασιν.

¹⁵ Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ ὀρῶντες δεινὰ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντεφιλοσόφησαν τῷ τυράννῳ καὶ διὰ τῆς εὐλογιστίας τὴν τυραννίδα αὐτοῦ κατέλυσαν.

¹⁶ καίτοι λογισώμεθα, εἰ δειλόψυχοί τινες ἦσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἄνδρες, ποίοις ἂν ἐχρήσαντο λόγοις; οὐχὶ τούτοις; ¹⁷ ὦ τάλανες ἡμεῖς καὶ λίαν ἀνόητοι· βασιλέως ἡμᾶς καλοῦντος καὶ ἐπὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ παρακαλοῦντος, εἰ πεισθείημεν αὐτῷ, ¹⁸ τί βουλήμασιν κενοῖς ἑαυτοὺς εὐφραίνομεν καὶ θανατηφόρον ἀπειθείαν τολμῶμεν; ¹⁹ οὐ φοβηθησόμεθα, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, τὰ βασανιστήρια καὶ λογιούμεθα τὰς τῶν βασάνων ἀπειλὰς καὶ φευξόμεθα τὴν κενοδοξίαν ταύτην καὶ ὀλεθροφόρον ἀλαζονείαν; ²⁰ ἐλεήσωμεν τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἡλικίας καὶ κατοικτίρωμεν τὸ τῆς μητρὸς γῆρας ²¹ καὶ ἐνθυμηθῶμεν ὅτι

and cauldrons, braziers and thumbscrews, and iron claws, wedges and bellows, the tyrant resumed speaking: ¹⁴ “Be afraid, young men; whatever justice you worship will be merciful to you when you transgress under compulsion.”

¹⁵ Now, when they had heard the inducements and saw the dreadful devices, not only were they not afraid but even opposed the tyrant’s arguments; and, by their good reason, nullified his power. ¹⁶ Let us consider the matter. What argument might they have had if any of them had been weak-

spirited and cowardly but as follows? ¹⁷ “O wretches that we are and so senseless! When the king exhorts us and calls us to his bounty, we should obey him. ¹⁸ Why do we cheer in vain resolves and indulge in disobedience bringing death?

¹⁹ Shall we not fear, O men and brothers, the instruments of torture and consider the threats of torments, and give up this vanity and destructive pride? ²⁰ Let’s have compassion on our youth and relent over our mother’s age. ²¹ and let us bear

¹⁴ Note that this is v. 13 in the WEBBE.

¹⁵ Epictetus the Stoic taught that, while the tyrant may chain a person’s leg or cut off one’s head, he could neither chain nor cut off one’s moral purpose (*Discourses* i.18.17).

¹⁶ The NRSV has ‘cowardly and unmanly’ in place of ‘weak-spirited and cowardly’.

¹⁷ Note that this is v. 16 in the WEBBE.

¹⁸ The NRSV has ‘take pleasure’ in place of ‘cheer’.

¹⁹ The NRSV ends with, “and this arrogance that threatens to destroy us.”

²⁰ For this verse, here (loosely) following the WEBBE, the NRSV reads, “Let us take pity on our youth and have compassion on our mother’s age.”

²¹ In place of ‘bear in mind’, the NRSV has ‘seriously consider’.

ἀπειθοῦντες τεθνηξόμεθα. ²² συγγνώσεται δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ ἡ θεία
δίκη δι' ἀνάγκην τὸν βασιλέα φοβηθεῖσιν. ²³ τί ἐξάγομεν
ἑαυτοὺς τοῦ ἡδίστου βίου καὶ ἀποστεροῦμεν ἑαυτοὺς τοῦ
γλυκέος κόσμου; ²⁴ μὴ βιαζόμεθα τὴν ἀνάγκην μηδὲ
κενοδοξήσωμεν ἐπὶ τῇ ἑαυτῶν στρέβλῃ. ²⁵ οὐδ' αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος
ἐκουσίως ἡμᾶς θανατοῖ φοβηθέντας τὰ βασανιστήρια.
²⁶ πόθεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοσαύτη ἐντέτηκε φιλονεικία καὶ ἡ
θανατηφόρος ἀρέσκει καρτερία, παρὸν μετὰ ἀταραξίας ζῆν
τῷ βασιλεῖ πεισθέντας;

²⁷ ἀλλὰ τούτων οὐδὲν εἶπον οἱ νεανῖαι βασανίζεσθαι
μέλλοντες οὐδὲ ἐνεθυμήθησαν. ²⁸ ἦσαν γὰρ περίφρονες τῶν
παθῶν καὶ αὐτοκράτορες τῶν ἀλγηδόνων, ²⁹ ὥστε ἅμα τῷ
παύσασθαι τὸν τύραννον συμβουλεύοντα αὐτοῖς
μιαροφαγῆσαι, πάντες διὰ μιᾶς φωνῆς ὁμοῦ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῆς
αὐτῆς ψυχῆς εἶπον

in mind that we will be dying as rebels! ²² Divine justice will
excuse us for fearing the king through necessity. ²³ Why
banish ourselves from this most pleasant life and deprive
ourselves of this delightful world? ²⁴ Let us not oppose fate
or take hollow pride in our own torture. ²⁵ The Law itself
would not arbitrarily put us to death for fearing torture.
²⁶ Why does such contentiousness excite us and such a fatal
stubbornness please us, when we can live in peace if we obey
the king?"

²⁷ But the youths, though about to be tortured, neither said
nor thought anything of this kind. ²⁸ For, they were
contemptuous of the emotions and sovereign over agonies,
²⁹ so that, as soon as the tyrant had ceased counselling them
to eat the unclean, all with one voice together, as from one
mind, said:

²² The NRSV has 'when we are under compulsion' in place of 'though necessity'.

²³ Before 'banish', the NRSV adds 'do we'.

²⁴ An alternative translation of 'fate' is 'compulsion'.

²⁵ The Law would not excuse a Jew for committing idolatry, even under duress.

²⁶ The WEBBE has 'angry zeal' in place of 'contentiousness'.

²⁷ For 'thought', the NRSV has 'seriously considered'.

²⁸ Note that this is v. 17 in the WEBBE.

²⁹ 'With one voice' reflects the 'chorus' of v. 4. The WEBBE numbers this verse '28-29' (see the footnotes throughout this chapter on verse number differences between the WEBBE and the NRSV & Rahlfs).

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 9

¹ Τί μέλλεις, ὦ τύραννε; ἔτοιμοι γάρ ἐσμεν ἀποθνήσκειν ἢ παραβαίνειν τὰς πατρίους ἡμῶν ἐντολάς· ² αἰσχυρόμεθα γὰρ τοὺς προγόνους ἡμῶν εἰκότως, εἰ μὴ τῇ τοῦ νόμου εὐπειθείᾳ καὶ συμβούλῳ Μωυσεῖ χρησαίμεθα. ³ σύμβουλε τύραννε παρανομίας, μὴ ἡμᾶς μισῶν ὑπὲρ αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐλέα. ⁴ χαλεπώτερον γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θανάτου νομίζομεν εἶναί σου τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ παρανόμῳ σωτηρίᾳ ἡμῶν ἔλεον. ⁵ ἐκφοβεῖς δὲ ἡμᾶς τὸν διὰ τῶν βασάνων θάνατον ἡμῶν ἀπειλῶν ὥσπερ οὐχὶ πρὸ βραχέως παρ' Ελεαζαρου μαθὼν. ⁶ εἰ δ' οἱ γέροντες τῶν Εβραίων διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ βασανισμοὺς ὑπομείναντες εὐσέβησαν, ἀποθάνοιμεν ἂν δικαιότερον ἡμεῖς οἱ νέοι τὰς βασάνους τῶν σῶν ἀναγκῶν ὑπεριδόντες, ἃς καὶ ὁ παιδευτὴς ἡμῶν γέρων ἐνίκησεν. ⁷ πείραζε τοιγαροῦν, τύραννε· καὶ τὰς ἡμῶν ψυχὰς εἰ θανατώσεις διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν, μὴ νομίσῃς ἡμᾶς βλάπτειν βασανίζων. ⁸ ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ διὰ τῆσδε τῆς κακοπαθείας καὶ ὑπομονῆς τὰ τῆς

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¹ "Why do you delay, O tyrant? For, we are ready to die rather than transgress the injunctions of our fathers: ² we would be disgracing our fathers unless we obey the Law and Moses our counsellor. ³ Tyrant and counsellor of lawlessness, do not, hating us, pity us more than we pity ourselves. ⁴ For, we consider your escape, ensuring our safety through transgression of the Law, more grievous than death itself. ⁵ You try to terrify us by threatening us with death by torture, as though you learned nothing from Eleazar; ⁶ if the aged men of the Hebrews because of their religion lived piously while enduring torture, it would be even more fitting that we young men should die despising your coercive tortures, which our aged instructor also overcame. ⁷ Test us then, O tyrant; and if you take our lives because of our religion, do not suppose that you can injure us by torturing us. ⁸ For we, through this severe suffering and endurance, shall have the

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- ¹ The NRSV has 'our ancestral commandments' in place of 'the injunctions of our fathers'.
- ² In place of 'Moses', some MSS have 'knowledge' (as does the WEBBE).
- ³ The meaning of the Greek here translated, 'pity ourselves', is uncertain.
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'this pity of yours' in place of 'your escape'.
- ⁵ Before 'you learned nothing', the NRSV adds 'a short time ago'.
- ⁶ In place of 'lived', some MSS have 'died'.
- ⁷ The NRSV opens with, "Therefore, tyrant, put us to the test."
- ⁸ The WEBBE lacks, 'and shall be with God, on whose account we suffer'.

ἀρετῆς ἅθλα ἔξομεν καὶ ἐσόμεθα παρὰ θεῶ, δι' ὃν καὶ πάσχομεν.⁹ σὺ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἡμῶν μισοφονίαν αὐτάρκη καρτερήσεις ὑπὸ τῆς θείας δίκης αἰώνιον βάσανον διὰ πυρός.

¹⁰ Ταῦτα αὐτῶν εἰπόντων οὐ μόνον ὡς κατὰ ἀπειθούντων ἐχαλέπαινεν ὁ τύραννος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς κατὰ ἀχαρίστων ὠργίσθη. ¹¹ ὅθεν τὸν πρεσβύτατον αὐτῶν κελευσθέντες παρῆγον οἱ ὑπασπισταὶ καὶ διαρρήξαντες τὸν χιτῶνα διέδησαν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς βραχίονας ἱμᾶσιν ἐκατέρωθεν. ¹² ὡς δὲ τύπτοντες ταῖς μάστιξιν ἐκοπίασαν μηδὲν ἀνύοντες, ἀνέβαλον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν τροχόν. ¹³ περὶ ὃν κατατεινόμενος ὁ εὐγενὴς νεανίας ἔξαρδρος ἐγίνετο. ¹⁴ καὶ κατὰ πᾶν μέλος κλώμενος ἐκακηγόρει λέγων ¹⁵ Τύραννε μιαιώτατε καὶ τῆς οὐρανοῦ δίκης ἐχθρὲ καὶ ὠμόφρων, οὐκ ἀνδροφονήσαντά με τοῦτον καταικίζεις τὸν τρόπον οὐδὲ ἀσεβήσαντα ἀλλὰ θείου νόμου προασπίζοντα. ¹⁶ καὶ τῶν δορυφόρων λεγόντων Ὁμολόγησον φαγεῖν, ὅπως ἀπαλλαγῇς τῶν βασάνων, ¹⁷ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Οὐχ οὕτως ἰσχυρὸς ὑμῶν ἐστὶν ὁ

prize of virtue and shall be with God, on whose account we suffer; ⁹ but you, for your bloodthirstiness toward us, will, from the divine justice, justly endure eternal torment by fire.”

¹⁰ When they had said this, the tyrant was not only exasperated at them for being disobedient but enraged with them for being ungrateful. ¹¹ Then, at his command, the guards brought forward the eldest and, tearing off his tunic, they bound his hands and arms with thongs on each side. ¹² When they had laboured hard without effect in scourging him, they hurled him on the wheel. ¹³ When the noble youth was stretched out on this, his limbs were dislocated; ¹⁴ and, with every member disjointed he renounced the tyrant, saying, ¹⁵ “Most accursed tyrant, enemy of heavenly justice, savage of mind, you torture me not because I am a murderer, or as one acting impiously, but because I protect the divine Law.” ¹⁶ When the spearmen said, “Agree to eat so that you may be released from the torturers,” ¹⁷ he replied, “You accursed

⁹ The NRSV has ‘deservedly’ in place of ‘justly’.

¹⁰ The details here do not agree with the earlier account in 2M 7:3–6; the author allows himself the freedom of an historical novelist.

¹¹ The NRSV has ‘having torn off’ in place of ‘tearing off’.

¹² For this verse, the NRSV is rather more verbose: “When they had worn themselves out beating him with scourges, without accomplishing anything, they placed him upon the wheel.”

¹³ The WEBBE ends with, “he was dislocated.”

¹⁴ The WEBBE lacks the opening conjunction.

¹⁵ In place of ‘you torture me’, the NRSV has ‘you mangle me in this manner’.

¹⁶ The NRSV has ‘guards’ in place of ‘spearmen’.

¹⁷ The NRSV has ‘abominable’ in place of ‘accursed’.

τροχός, ὃ μιαινοὶ διάκονοι, ὥστε μου τὸν λογισμὸν ἄγξαι· τέμνετέ μου τὰ μέλη καὶ πυροῦτέ μου τὰς σάρκας καὶ στρεβλοῦτε τὰ ἄρθρα. ¹⁸ διὰ πασῶν γὰρ ὑμᾶς πείσω τῶν βασιάνων ὅτι μόνοι παῖδες Εβραίων ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς εἰσιν ἀνίκητοι. ¹⁹ ταῦτα λέγοντι ὑπέστρωσαν πῦρ καὶ τὸ διερεθίζον τὸν τροχὸν προσεπικατέτεινον· ²⁰ ἐμολύνετο δὲ πάντοθεν αἷματι ὁ τροχός, καὶ ὁ σωρὸς τῆς ἀνδρακιᾶς τοῖς τῶν ἰχώρων ἐσβέννυτο σταλαγμοῖς, καὶ περὶ τοὺς ἄξονας τοῦ ὀργάνου περιέρρεον αἱ σάρκες. ²¹ καὶ περιτετμημένον ἤδη ἔχων τὸ τῶν ὀστέων πῆγμα ὁ μεγαλόφρων καὶ Αβραμιαῖος νεανίας οὐκ ἐστέναξεν, ²² ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν πυρὶ μετασχηματιζόμενος εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν ὑπέμεινεν εὐγενῶς τὰς στρέβλας ²³ Μιμήσασθέ με, ἀδελφοί, λέγων, μή μου τὸν ἀγῶνα λειποτακτήσητε μηδὲ ἐξομώσησθέ μου τὴν τῆς εὐψυχίας ἀδελφότητα. ²⁴ ἱερὰν καὶ εὐγενῆ στρατείαν στρατεύσασθε περὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας, δι' ἧς ἰλεως ἡ δικαία καὶ πάτριος ἡμῶν πρόνοια τῷ ἔθνει γενηθεῖσα τιμωρήσειεν τὸν ἀλάστορα τύραννον. ²⁵ καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὁ ἱεροπρεπὴς νεανίας ἀπέρρηξεν τὴν ψυχὴν.

lackeys, your wheel is not so powerful as to strangle my reason. Cut my limbs, burn my flesh and twist my joints; ¹⁸ through all these tortures I will convince you that the children of the Hebrews alone are invincible on behalf of virtue." ¹⁹ While he was saying this, they heaped on fuel and, fanning the flames, they tightened the wheel further. ²⁰ The wheel was smeared all over with blood, the hot coals were being quenched by the drippings of gore, and pieces of flesh were falling off the axles of the machine. ²¹ Although the framework of his bones was already broken, the brave youth, worthy of Abraham, did not groan; ²² but, as though transformed by fire into immortality, he nobly endured the rack. ²³ "Imitate me, brothers," he said. "Do not leave your post in my struggle or renounce our courageous family ties. ²⁴ Fight the sacred and noble battle for religion. Thereby, the just Providence of our fathers may become merciful to our nation and punish the accursed tyrant." ²⁵ When he had said this, the saintly youth broke the thread of life.

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'where virtue is concerned' in place of 'on behalf of virtue'.

¹⁹ The meaning of the Greek here translated, 'flames', is uncertain.

²⁰ The WEBBE has 'ashes' in place of 'coals'.

²¹ In place of 'framework of his bones', the NRSV has 'ligaments joining his bones'.

²² The same Greek word for 'transformed' is also used Ph 3:21; synonymous verbs are used in 1Co 15:51-52 & 2Co 3:18. The literal translation of 'immortality' is 'that which is imperishable', as in 17:12, 1Co 15:53.

²³ In place of 'in my struggle', some MSS have 'forever'.

²⁴ 'Accursed' translates ἀλάστορα, a word from the Greek tragedies.

²⁵ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the WEBBE reads, "Saying this, the revered youth abruptly closed his life."

²⁶ Θαυμασάντων δὲ πάντων τὴν καρτεροψυχίαν αὐτοῦ ἦγον οἱ δορυφόροι τὸν καθ' ἡλικίαν τοῦ προτέρου δεύτερον καὶ σιδηρεῖς ἐναρμοσάμενοι χειρὰς ὀξέσι τοῖς ὄνυσιν ὀργάνῳ καὶ καταπέλτῃ προσέδησαν αὐτόν. ²⁷ ὥς δ' εἰ φαγεῖν βούλοιτο πρὶν βασανίζεσθαι πυνθανόμενοι τὴν εὐγενῆ γνώμην ἤκουσαν, ²⁸ ἀπὸ τῶν τενόντων ταῖς σιδηρεαῖς χερσὶν ἐπισπασάμενοι μέχρι τῶν γενείων τὴν σάρκα πᾶσαν καὶ τὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς δορὰν οἱ παρδάλεοι θῆρες ἀπέσυρον. ὁ δὲ ταύτην βαρέως τὴν ἀλγηδόνα καρτερῶν ἔλεγεν ²⁹ Ὡς ἡδὺς πᾶς θανάτου τρόπος διὰ τὴν πατριὸν ἡμῶν εὐσέβειαν. ἔφη τε πρὸς τὸν τύραννον ³⁰ Οὐ δοκεῖς, πάντων ὠμότατε τύραννε, πλέον ἐμοῦ σε βασανίζεσθαι ὁρῶν σου νικώμενον τὸν τῆς τυραννίδος ὑπερήφανον λογισμὸν ὑπὸ τῆς διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἡμῶν ὑπομονῆς; ³¹ ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ταῖς διὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἡδοναῖς τὸν πόνον ἐπικουφίζομαι, ³² σὺ δὲ ἐν ταῖς τῆς ἀσεβείας ἀπειλαῖς βασανίζῃ. οὐκ ἐκφεύξῃ δέ, μιαρώτατε τύραννε, τὰς τῆς θείας ὀργῆς δίκας.

²⁶ While all were marvelling at his courageous spirit, the spearmen brought in the next eldest and, after putting on iron gauntlets with sharp hooks, they bound him to the torture machine and catapult. ²⁷ Before torturing him, they inquired if he were willing to eat, and they heard his noble decision. ²⁸ After they tore out his sinews with the iron hands, leopard-like animals flayed all his flesh up to his chin and tore away his scalp; but he steadfastly endured this agony and said, ²⁹ “How sweet is any kind of death for the religion of our fathers!” To the tyrant he said, ³⁰ “Do you not think, you most savage tyrant, that you are being tortured more than I, as you see the arrogant design of your tyranny being defeated by our endurance for the sake of religion? ³¹ I lighten my pain by the joys that come from virtue ³² but you suffer torture by the threats that come from impiety. You will not escape, you most accursed tyrant, the judgements of the divine wrath.”

²⁶ The stories from here through 12:19 follow 2M 7:7–40 in general but are made more vivid and sensational.

²⁷ Some MSS end this verse with, “*having heard his noble decision, they tore him to shreds.*”

²⁸ The NRSV opens with, “*These leopard-like animal tore out ...*”

²⁹ Compare 2M 6:30 and the letter to the Romans by the Christian martyr Ignatius and also the Latin saying, ‘*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*’.

³⁰ The NRSV includes the last part of v. 29 in this verse.

³¹ At the start of this verse, the WEBBE adds, ‘*For*’.

³² The NRSV has ‘*abominable*’ in place of ‘*accursed*’.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 10

¹ Καὶ τούτου τὸν αἰοίδιμον θάνατον καρτερήσαντος ὁ τρίτος ἤγετο παρακαλούμενος πολλὰ ὑπὸ πολλῶν ὅπως ἀπογευσάμενος σώζοιτο. ² ὁ δὲ ἀναβοήσας ἔφη Ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι αὐτός με τοῖς ἀποθανοῦσιν ἔσπειρεν πατήρ, καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ μήτηρ ἐγέννησεν, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀνετράφην δόγμασιν; ³ οὐκ ἐξόμνυμαι τὴν εὐγενῆ τῆς ἀδελφότητος συγγένειαν. ⁵ οἱ δὲ πικρῶς ἐνέγκαντες τὴν παρρησίαν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀρθρεμβόλοις ὀργάνοις τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἐξήρθρουν καὶ ἐξ ἁρμῶν ἀναμοχλεύοντες ἐξεμέλιζον, ⁶ τοὺς δακτύλους καὶ τοὺς βραχίονας καὶ τὰ σκέλη καὶ τοὺς ἀγκῶνας περιέκλων. ⁷ καὶ κατὰ μὴδὲνα τρόπον ἰσχύοντες αὐτὸν ἄγξαι περιλύσαντες τὰ ὅργανα σὺν ἄκραις ταῖς τῶν δακτύλων κορυφαῖς ἀπεσκύδιζον. ⁸ καὶ εὐθέως ἤγον ἐπὶ τὸν τροχόν, περὶ ὃν ἐκ σπονδύλων ἐκμελιζόμενος ἐώρα τὰς ἐαυτοῦ

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¹ When he too had endured a glorious death, the third was let in, and many urged him to save himself by tasting the meat; ² but he shouted, "Do you not know that the father of those who died is my father too, and the same mother bore me, and that I was brought up in the same way? ³ I do not renounce the noble relationship of my brothers." ⁵ Enraged by the man's boldness, they disjoined his hands and feet with their instruments, dismembering him by prying his limbs from his sockets, ⁶ and breaking his fingers, arms and legs, and elbows. ⁷ Since they were not able in any way to break his spirit, they abandoned the instruments and scalped him with their fingernails in a Scythian fashion. ⁸ They immediately brought him to the wheel, and while this was dislocating his vertebrae, he saw his own flesh torn all

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¹ Before 'urged', the NRSV adds 'repeatedly'.

² In place of 'in the same way', the NRSV has 'on the same teachings'.

³ The NRSV has 'kinship' for 'relationship'.

⁴ Most MSS lack this verse, included in the NRSV only as a footnote. It may be a later interpolation – compare Mt 10:28, Lk 12:4–5. The NRSV translation is, "So, if you have any instrument of torture, apply it to my body; for you cannot touch my soul, even if you wish." The Greek is: πρὸς ταῦτα εἴ τι ἔχετε κολαστήριον προσαγάγετε τῷ σώματί μου· τῆς γὰρ ψυχῆς μου, οὐδ' ἂν θέλητε ἅψασθαι, δύνασθαι.

⁵ Freedom of speech was one of the ideals of Greek democracy.

⁶ The WEBBE has 'ankles' in place of 'elbows'.

⁷ The literal translation of 'break his spirit' is 'strangle him'; in place of 'abandoned the instruments', some MSS have 'tore off his skin'. The Scythians were notorious for their barbarous cruelty (2M 4:47, 3M 7:5).

⁸ In place of 'streams', the NRSV has 'drops'.

σάρκας περιλακίζόμενας καὶ κατὰ σπλάγχχνων σταγόνας αἵματος ἀπορρεούσας. ⁹ μέλλων δὲ ἀποθνήσκειν ἔφη ¹⁰ Ἡμεῖς μὲν, ὧ μισητάτατε τύραννε, διὰ παιδείαν καὶ ἀρετὴν θεοῦ ταῦτα πάσχομεν. ¹¹ σὺ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ μισοφροσύνην ἀκαταλύτους καρτερήσεις βασάνους.

¹² Καὶ τούτου θανόντος ἀδελφοπρεπῶς τὸν τέταρτον ἐπεσπῶντο λέγοντες ¹³ Μὴ μανῆς καὶ σὺ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς σου τὴν αὐτὴν μανίαν, ἀλλὰ πεισθεῖς τῷ βασιλεῖ σῶζε σεαυτόν. ¹⁴ ὁ δὲ αὐτοῖς ἔφη Οὐχ οὕτως καυστικώτερον ἔχετε κατ' ἐμοῦ τὸ πῦρ ὥστε με δειλανδρῆσαι. ¹⁵ μὰ τὸν μακάριον τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου θάνατον καὶ τὸν αἰώνιον τοῦ τυράννου ὄλεθρον καὶ τὸν αἰδίδιον τῶν εὐσεβῶν βίον, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι τὴν εὐγενῆ ἀδελφότητα. ¹⁶ ἐπινόει, τύραννε, βασάνους, ἵνα καὶ δι' αὐτῶν μάθῃς ὅτι ἀδελφός εἰμι τῶν προβασανισθέντων. ¹⁷ ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ αἰμοβόρος καὶ φονώδης καὶ παμμισαρώτατος Ἀντίοχος ἐκέλευσεν τὴν γλῶτταν αὐτοῦ ἐκτεμεῖν. ¹⁸ ὁ δὲ ἔφη Καὶ ἄφελος τὸ τῆς φωνῆς ὄργανον, καὶ σιωπώντων ἀκούει

around and streams of blood flowing from his entrails.

⁹ When he was about to die, he said, ¹⁰ “We, most accursed tyrant, are suffering for the sake of our godly training and virtue; ¹¹ but you, because of your impiety and blood-thirstiness, will undergo unceasing torments.”

¹² When he too had died in a way worthy of his brothers, they dragged in the fourth, saying, ¹³ “Do not give way to the same madness as your brothers but obey the king and save yourself.” ¹⁴ But he said to them, “You do not have a fire hot enough to make me play the coward. ¹⁵ By the blessed death of my brothers, by the eternal destruction of the tyrant, and by the eternal life of the pious, I will not renounce our noble brotherhood. ¹⁶ Invent tortures, tyrant, that you may learn from them that I am a brother to those tortured before.”

¹⁷ When he had said this, the bloodthirsty, murderous, and unholy Antiochus gave orders to cut out his tongue; ¹⁸ but he said, “Even if you remove my organ of speech, God still hears

⁹ The WEBBE lacks the words, ‘he was’.

¹⁰ The NRSV has ‘abominable’ in place of ‘accursed’.

¹¹ Cf. the previous brother’s curse (9:32).

¹² In place of ‘way’, the NRSV has ‘manner’.

¹³ At the start of this verse, the NRSV adds ‘As for you’.

¹⁴ In place of ‘hot enough to’ the WEBBE has ‘so scorching as to’.

¹⁵ The seven brothers and their mother here represent the entire Jewish nation.

¹⁶ Before ‘tortured’, the NRSV adds ‘who have been’.

¹⁷ The NRSV has ‘utterly abominable’ in place of ‘unholy’, here following the WEBBE.

¹⁸ In place of ‘the silent’, the NRSV has ‘those who are mute’.

ὁ θεός· ¹⁹ ἰδοὺ προκεχάλασται ἡ γλῶσσα, τέμνε, οὐ γὰρ
παρὰ τοῦτο τὸν λογισμὸν ἡμῶν γλωττοτομήσεις. ²⁰ ἡδέως
ὑπὲρ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ τοῦ σώματος μέλη ἀκρωτηριαζόμεθα. ²¹ σὲ
δὲ ταχέως μετελεύσεται ὁ θεός, τὴν γὰρ τῶν θείων ὕμνων
μελωδὸν γλῶτταν ἐκτέμνεις.

the silent. ¹⁹ See, here is my tongue; cut it off; for, in spite of
this, you will not silence our reason. ²⁰ Gladly, for the sake of
God, we let our bodily members be mutilated. ²¹ God will
visit you swiftly; for, you are cutting out a tongue that has
been melodious with divine hymns.”

¹⁹ The NRSV has ‘make or reason speechless’ in place of ‘silence our reason’.

²⁰ The WEBBE ends with, “we lose our limbs.”

²¹ The WEBBE ends with, “the tongue, the instrument of divine melody.”

Μακκαβαίων Δ' ΙΙ

¹ Ὡς δὲ καὶ οὗτος ταῖς βασάνοις καταικισθεὶς ἐναπέθανεν, ὁ πέμπτος παρεπήδησεν λέγων ² Οὐ μέλλω, τύραννε, πρὸς τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀρετῆς βασανισμὸν παραιτεῖσθαι, ³ αὐτὸς δ' ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ παρῆλθον, ὅπως καὶ ἐγὼ κατακτείνῃς περὶ πλειόνων ἀδικημάτων ὀφειλήσης τῇ οὐρανίῳ δίκῃ τιμωρίαν. ⁴ ὦ μισάρετε καὶ μισάνθρωπε, τί δράσαντας ἡμᾶς τοῦτον πορθεῖς τὸν τρόπον; ⁵ ὅτι τὸν πάντων κτίστην εὐσεβοῦμεν καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἐνάρετον αὐτοῦ ζῶμεν νόμον; ⁶ ἀλλὰ ταῦτα τιμῶν, οὐ βασάνων ἐστὶν ἄξια. ⁹ τοιαῦτα δὲ λέγοντα οἱ δορυφόροι δῆσαντες αὐτὸν εἴλκον ἐπὶ τὸν καταπέλτην, ¹⁰ ἐφ' ὃν δῆσαντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ γόνατα καὶ ταῦτα ποδάγραῖς σιδηραῖς ἐφαρμόσαντες τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ περὶ τροχιαῖον σφῆνα κατέκαμψαν, περὶ ὃν ὅλος περὶ τὸν τροχὸν σκορπίου τρόπον

4 MACCABEES 11

¹ When he too died, disfigure in torments, the fifth leaped up, saying, ² "I will not refuse, tyrant, to be tortured for the sake of virtue. ³ I have come of my own accord, so that by murdering me you will incur punishment from the heavenly justice for even more crimes. ⁴ Hater of virtue, hater of people: for what act of ours are you destroying us in this way? ⁵ Is it because we revere the Creator of all things and live according to his virtuous Law? ⁶ But this is worthy of honours, not torments." ⁹ As he said this, the spear-bearers bound him and dragged him to the rack; ¹⁰ they tied him to it on his knees, and fitting iron clamps on them, they twisted his loins around the wedge on the wheel, so that he was completely curled back like a scorpion, and all his members

4 MACCABEES 11

- ¹ In place of 'disfigured in his torments', the NRSV has 'after being cruelly tortured'.
- ² The WEBBE has 'intend ... to get excused from torture' in place of 'refuse ... to be tortured', here following the NRSV.
- ³ This brother introduces a new idea: he welcomes torture so that the tyrant may be punished the more.
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'hater of humankind' in place of 'hater of people'; the literal translation of the Greek (μισάνθρωπε) is 'misanthrope'.
- ⁵ In place of 'virtuous' the WEBBE has 'surpassing'.
- ⁶ For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "But these deeds deserve honour, not tortures."
- ⁷ Many MSS lack vv. 7-8, which are interpolations; the NRSV includes them only as a footnote. The translation therein is as follows: "⁷ If you but understood human feelings and had hope of salvation from God – ⁸ but as it is, you are a stranger to God and persecute those who serve him."
- ⁸ The Greek text is: ⁷ εἴπερ ἡσθάνου ἀνθρώπου πόθον καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶχες παρὰ Θεῷ σωτηρίου· ⁸ νυνὶ δὲ ἀλλότριος ὢν Θεοῦ πολεμεῖς τοὺς εὐσεβοῦντας εἰς τὸν Θεόν.
- ⁹ The NRSV has 'guards' in place of 'spear-bearers'.
- ¹⁰ The NRSV has 'back' in place of 'loins'; the meaning of the Greek word here translated, 'wheel', is uncertain.

ἀνακλώμενος ἐξεμελίζετο. ¹¹ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα στενοχωρούμενος καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀγχόμενος ¹² Καλᾶς, ἔλεγεν, ἄκων, ὦ τύραννε, χάριτας ἡμῖν χαρίζη διὰ γενναιοτέρων πόνων ἐπιδείξασθαι παρέχων τὴν εἰς τὸν νόμον ἡμῶν καρτερίαν.

¹³ Τελευτήσαντος δὲ καὶ τούτου ὁ ἕκτος ἤγετο μαιρακίσκος, ὃς πυνθανομένου τοῦ τυράννου εἰ βούλοιτο φαγὼν ἀπολύεσθαι, ὁ δὲ ἔφη ¹⁴ Ἐγὼ τῇ μὲν ἡλικίᾳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μού εἰμι νεώτερος, τῇ δὲ διανοίᾳ ἡλικιώτης. ¹⁵ εἰς ταῦτα γὰρ γεννηθέντες καὶ ἀνατραφέντες ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν ὀφείλομεν ὁμοίως. ¹⁶ ὥστε εἴ σοι δοκεῖ βασανίζειν μὴ μιαροφαγοῦντα, βασάνιζε. ¹⁷ ταῦτα αὐτὸν εἰπόντα παρῆγον ἐπὶ τὸν τροχόν, ¹⁸ ἐφ' οὗ κατατεινόμενος ἐπιμελῶς καὶ ἐκσπονδυλιζόμενος ὑπεκαίετο. ¹⁹ καὶ ὀβελίσκους ὀξεῖς πυρώσαντες τοῖς νώτοις προσέφερον καὶ τὰ πλευρὰ διαπείραντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σπλάγχνα διέκαιον. ²⁰ ὁ δὲ

were disjointed. ¹¹ In this condition, gasping for breath and in anguish of body, ¹² "Tyrant," he said, "They are splendid favours that you grant us against your will; for, through these noble sufferings, you give us an opportunity to show our adherence to the Law."

¹³ When he too had died, the sixth, a mere boy, was led in. When the tyrant inquired whether he was willing to eat and be released, he said, ¹⁴ "I am younger in age than my brothers but I am their equal in mind. ¹⁵ Since to this end we were born and bred, we ought likewise to die for the same cause. ¹⁶ So, if you intend to torture me for not eating the unclean, go on torturing!" ¹⁷ When he had said this, they led him to the wheel. ¹⁸ He was stretched tight upon it, his back was broken, and he was roasted from underneath. ¹⁹ To his back, they applied sharp spits they had heated in the fire and pierced his ribs so that his entrails were burnt away. ²⁰ While being

¹¹ The WEBBE reads, "With his breath thus confined, and his body strangled."

¹² The WEBBE includes 'he said' as part of v. 11; here, we follow the Greek text.

¹³ The account of this paragraph expands that of 2M 7:18-19.

¹⁴ Another reading for 'mind' here is 'understanding'.

¹⁵ The NRSV has 'principles' in place of 'cause'.

¹⁶ In place of 'the unclean', the NRSV has 'defiling foods'.

¹⁷ Note that, in v. 9, the previous brother is led to the 'rack' (καταπέλτην) rather than to the 'wheel' (τροχόν).

¹⁸ After 'roasted', some MSS add 'by fire'.

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'burnt through' in place of 'burnt away'.

²⁰ In place of 'good and holy contest', the NRSV has 'contest befitting holiness'.

βασανιζόμενος Ὁ ἱεροπρεποῦς ἀγῶνος, ἔλεγεν, ἐφ' ὃν διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν εἰς γυμνασίαν πόνων ἀδελφοὶ τοσοῦτοι κληθέντες οὐκ ἐνικήθημεν. ²¹ ἀνίκητος γὰρ ἐστίν, ὦ τύραννε, ἡ εὐσεβὴς ἐπιστήμη. ²² καλοκάγαθία καθωπλισμένος τεθνήξομαι καὶ γὰρ μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου ²³ μέγαν σοὶ καὶ αὐτὸς προσβάλλων ἀλάστορα, καινουργὲ τῶν βασάνων καὶ πολέμει τῶν ἀληθῶς εὐσεβούντων. ²⁴ ἔξ μειράκια καταλελύκαμέν σου τὴν τυραννίδα. ²⁵ τὸ γὰρ μὴ δυνηθῆναί σε μεταπεῖσαι τὸν λογισμὸν ἡμῶν μήτε βιάσασθαι πρὸς τὴν μιαροφαγίαν οὐ κατάλυσίς ἐστίν σου; ²⁶ τὸ πῦρ σου ψυχρὸν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἄπονοι οἱ καταπέλται, καὶ ἀδύνατος ἡ βία σου. ²⁷ οὐ γὰρ τυράννου, ἀλλὰ θείου νόμου προεστήκασιν ἡμῶν οἱ δορυφόροι· διὰ τοῦτο ἀνίκητον ἔχομεν τὸν λογισμόν.

tortured, he said, "O, good and holy contest, in which, for religion, we brothers have been called to an arena of pain and have not been defeated! ²¹ For, religious knowledge, O tyrant, is invincible. ²² I also, armed with nobility, will die with my brothers, ²³ and I myself will bring a great avenger upon you, you inventor of tortures and enemy of those who are truly pious. ²⁴ We six boys have destroyed your tyranny. ²⁵ Since you have not been able to persuade us to change our mind or to force us to eat the unclean, is not this your downfall? ²⁶ Your fire is cold to us, and the catapults painless, and your violence powerless. ²⁷ For, it is not the guards of the tyrant but those of the divine Law that are set over us; therefore, unconquered, we will hold fast to reason."

²¹ 'Religious knowledge' could also mean science; in Greek thought, true knowledge almost always leads to virtue; in Judaism, knowledge of the Mosaic Law at least predisposes one toward it.

²² The NRSV has 'equipped' in place of 'armed'.

²³ Another reading for 'truly pious' is 'truly devout'; the Greek is ἀληθῶς εὐσεβούντων.

²⁴ In place of 'destroyed', the NRSV has 'paralysed'.

²⁵ In place of 'the unclean', the NRSV has 'defiling foods'.

²⁶ It is not entirely clear exactly what the 'catapults' (καταπέλται) were; the WEBBE has 'racks'.

²⁷ The WEBBE has 'are our defenders' in place of 'set over us'.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 12

¹ Ὡς δὲ καὶ οὗτος μακαρίως ἀπέθανεν καταβληθεὶς εἰς λέβητα, ὁ ἑβδομος παρεγίνετο πάντων νεώτερος. ² ὃν κατοικτίρας ὁ τύραννος, καίπερ δεινῶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ κακισθεὶς, ὁρῶν ἤδη τὰ δεσμὰ περικείμενα πλησιέστερον αὐτὸν μετεπέμψατο καὶ παρηγορεῖν ἐπειρᾶτο λέγων ³ Τῆς μὲν τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ἀπονοίας τὸ τέλος ὁρᾷ· διὰ γὰρ ἀπειθείαν στρεβλωθέντες τεθνήσκουσιν. ⁴ σὺ δὲ εἰ μὲν μὴ πεισθεῖς, τάλας βασανισθεὶς καὶ αὐτὸς τεθνήξῃ πρὸ ὥρας, ⁵ πεισθεὶς δὲ φίλος ἔσῃ καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἀφηγήσῃ πραγμάτων. ⁶ καὶ ταῦτα παρακαλῶν τὴν μητέρα τοῦ παιδὸς μετεπέμψατο, ὅπως αὐτὴν ἐλεήσας τοσούτων υἱῶν στερηθεῖσαν παρορμήσειεν ἐπὶ τὴν σωτήριον εὐπείθειαν τὸν περιλειπόμενον. ⁷ ὁ δὲ τῆς μητρὸς τῇ Εβραίδι φωνῇ προτρεψαμένης αὐτόν, ὡς ἐροῦμεν μετὰ μικρὸν ὕστερον, ⁸ Λύσατέ μέ φησιν, εἴπω τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ

4 MACCABEES 12

¹ When he too, thrown into the cauldron, had died a blessed death, the seventh and youngest of all came forward. ² Even though the tyrant had been vehemently reproached by the brothers, he felt strong pity for this child seeing him already in fetters. He had him brought nearer and tried to persuade him, saying, ³ "You see the result of your brothers' madness; for, they died in torments through disobedience. ⁴ You too, if you do not obey, will be miserably tortured and die before your time; ⁵ but, if you obey, you will be my friend and a leader in the government of the kingdom." ⁶ Having thus exhorted him, he sent for the boy's mother to show compassion on her for the loss of so many sons and to incline her to persuade the surviving son to obey. ⁷ But, when his mother had exhorted him in Hebrew, as we shall soon relate, ⁸ he said, "Let me loose, let me speak to the king and to all his

4 MACCABEES 12

¹ The WEBBE has 'martyrdom' in place of 'death'.

² It is interesting that the 'tyrant' could feel 'strong pity'; see #8:10 & #11:7. The WEBBE includes the part of this verse from 'seeing him' as v. 3.

³ The NRSV has 'stupidity' in place of 'madness'. In the WEBBE, this is v. 4.

⁴ The WEBBE merges this with the previous verse.

⁵ The NRSV has 'yield to persuasion' in place of 'obey'.

⁶ The NRSV opens with, "When he had thus appealed to him."

⁷ Rather than 'Hebrew', the mother may have spoken *Aramaic*, as in Ac 21:40. Many Palestinians, and the author's first readers, spoke Greek; her use of Hebrew indicates her devotion to the sacred tongue. For dramatic effect, the author postpones the speech to 16:16-23.

⁸ The words, 'he said', are not in the Greek text but are implied.

φίλοις πᾶσιν. ⁹ καὶ ἐπιχαρέντες μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ τοῦ παιδὸς ταχέως ἔλυσαν αὐτόν. ¹⁰ καὶ δραμὼν ἐπὶ πλησίον τῶν τηγάνων ¹¹ Ἀνόσιέ, φησιν, καὶ πάντων πονηρῶν ἀσεβέστατε τύραννε, οὐκ ἡδέσθης παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ λαβὼν τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τοὺς θεράποντας αὐτοῦ κατακτεῖναι καὶ τοὺς τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀσκητὰς στρεβλῶσαι; ¹² ἀνδ' ὧν ταμιεύσεται σε ἡ δίκη πυκνότερῳ καὶ αἰωνίῳ πυρὶ καὶ βασάνοις, αἱ εἰς ὅλον τὸν αἰῶνα οὐκ ἀνήσουσίν σε. ¹³ οὐκ ἡδέσθης ἄνθρωπος ὧν, θηριωδέστατε, τοὺς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς καὶ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν γεγονότας στοιχείων γλωττοτομήσαι καὶ τοῦτον καταικίσας τὸν τρόπον βασανίσαι. ¹⁴ ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν εὐγενῶς ἀποθανόντες ἐπλήρωσαν τὴν εἰς τὸν θεὸν εὐσέβειαν, σὺ δὲ κακῶς οἰμώξεις τοὺς τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγωνιστὰς ἀναιτίως ἀποκτεῖνας. ¹⁵ ὅθεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἀποδηήσκειν μέλλων ἔφη ¹⁶ Οὐκ ἀπαυτομολῶ τῆς τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου ἀριστείας. ¹⁷ ἐπικαλοῦμαι δὲ τὸν πατρῶον θεὸν ὅπως ἰλεως γένηται τῷ ἔθνει ἡμῶν. ¹⁸ σὲ δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν βίῳ καὶ θανόντα

friends.” ⁹ Extremely pleased by the boy’s declaration, they freed him at once. ¹⁰ Running to the nearest of the braziers, ¹¹ he said, “You profane tyrant, most impious of all the wicked, since you have received good things and also your kingdom from God, were you not ashamed to murder his servants and torture on the wheel the practitioners of religion? ¹² Therefore, justice has laid up for you eternal fire and tortures, which will cling to you for all time. ¹³ Were you not ashamed, as a man, yet most savage, to cut out the tongues of men of like feeling and origin as you, and to maltreat and torture them in this way? ¹⁴ But they, by dying nobly, fulfilled their service to God; but you will wail bitterly for having killed without cause the contestants for virtue.” ¹⁵ Then, being about to die, he said, ¹⁶ “I do not desert the excellent example of my brothers, ¹⁷ and I call on the God of our ancestors to be merciful to our nation; ¹⁸ but on you he will take vengeance both in this present life and when you

⁹ The WEBBE has ‘rejoicing exceedingly at’ in place of ‘extremely pleased by’.

¹⁰ In place of ‘braziers’, here following the NRSV, the WEBBE has ‘pans’.

¹¹ ‘The practitioners’ translates ἀσκητὰς, almost ‘the athletes of religion’; compare v. 14 and Philo (On Dreams, i.59).

¹² The literal translation of ‘for all time’ is ‘throughout the whole age’; here, we follow the NRSV.

¹³ ‘Like feeling and origin as you’ reflects a Stoic idea, found also in Ws 7:1–6, Ac 14:15.

¹⁴ The WEBBE splits this verse, starting v. 15 at ‘but you’.

¹⁵ Note that this is v. 16 in the WEBBE, wherein subsequent verse numbers in this chapter are incremented by one.

¹⁶ In place of ‘excellent example’, some MSS have ‘witness’.

¹⁷ In place of ‘our nation’, some MSS have ‘my race’.

¹⁸ For this verse, the WEBBE reads, “But you, both living and dead, he will punish.”

τιμωρήσεται. ¹⁹ καὶ ταῦτα κατευξάμενος ἑαυτὸν ἔρριψε κατὰ τῶν τηγάνων, καὶ οὕτως ἀπέδωκεν. are dead.” ¹⁹ After he had uttered these imprecations, he flung himself into the braziers and so ended his life.

¹⁹ The literal translation of ‘ended his life’ is ‘gave up’; other MSS read ‘gave up his spirit (or soul)’. The mother also kills herself in 17:1. The remaining defenders of Massada at the end of the Jewish War of 66–73 CE killed one another; Jews, like Stoics, approved of suicide in certain circumstances.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' Ι3

¹ Εἰ δὲ τοίνυν τῶν μέχρι θανάτου πόνων ὑπερεφρόνησαν οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοί, συνομολογεῖται πανταχόθεν ὅτι αὐτοδέσποτός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβῆς λογισμός. ² εἰ γὰρ τοῖς πάθεσι δουλωθέντες ἐμιαροφάγησαν, ἐλέγομεν ἂν τούτοις αὐτοὺς νενικῆσθαι. ³ νυνὶ δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐπαινουμένῳ παρὰ θεῷ λογισμῷ περιεγένοντο τῶν παθῶν, ⁴ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν παριδεῖν τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῆς διανοίας, ἐπεκράτησαν γὰρ καὶ πάθους καὶ πόνων. ⁵ πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἔστιν τούτοις τὴν τῆς εὐλογιστίας παδοκράτειαν ὁμολογεῖν, οἱ τῶν μὲν διὰ πυρὸς ἀλγηδόνων οὐκ ἐπεστράφησαν; ⁶ καθάπερ γὰρ προβλήτες λιμένων πύργοι τὰς τῶν κυμάτων ἀπειλὰς ἀνακόπτοντες γαληνὸν παρέχουσι τοῖς εἰσπλέουσι τὸν ὅρμον, ⁷ οὕτως ἡ ἑπτάπυργος τῶν νεανίσκων εὐλογιστία τὸν τῆς εὐσεβείας ὀχυρώσασα λιμένα τὴν τῶν παθῶν ἐνίκησεν ἀκολασίαν. ⁸ ἱερὸν γὰρ εὐσεβείας στήσαντες χορὸν παρεδάρσυνον ἀλλήλους λέγοντες ⁹ Ἀδελφικῶς ἀποθάνωμεν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ

4 MACCABEES 13

¹ If then, the seven brothers despised sufferings even unto death, all sides must concede that devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. ² For, if they had been slaves to their emotions and had eaten the unclean, we would say they had been conquered by them; ³ but it was not so. But, by reason, which is praised by God, they mastered their emotions. ⁴ The supremacy of the mind over these cannot be overlooked; for, it mastered both emotions and pains. ⁵ How, then, can we fail to confess the mastery of right reason over emotion in those who were not turned back by fiery agonies? ⁶ For, just as towers jutting out from harbours hold back the threatening waves and make it calm for those who sail into the port, ⁷ so the seven-towered right reason of the youths, by fortifying the harbour of religion, conquered the tempest of emotions. ⁸ For, they formed a holy choir of religion and encouraged one another, saying, ⁹ "Brothers, let us die like brothers for

4 MACCABEES 13

¹ The martyrdoms attest the supremacy of pious reason; compare 6:31–35.

² In place of 'the unclean', the NRSV has 'defiling food'.

³ The NRSV has 'prevailed over' in place of 'mastered'.

⁴ The NRSV has 'the brothers mastered' in place of 'it mastered', here more closely following the Greek text.

⁵ In place of 'mastery' the NRSV has 'sovereignty'.

⁶ The NRSV has 'over the harbours' in place of 'from harbours'.

⁷ Before 'emotions', the NRSV adds 'the'.

⁸ The NRSV has 'chorus' in place of 'choir'.

⁹ This verse refers to the story of Dn 3.

τοῦ νόμου· μιμησώμεθα τοὺς τρεῖς τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσσυρίας νεανίσκους, οἱ τῆς ἰσοπολίτιδος καμίνου κατεφρόνησαν. ¹⁰ μὴ δειλανδρήσωμεν πρὸς τὴν τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐπίδειξιν. ¹¹ καὶ ὁ μὲν Θάρρει, ἀδελφέ ἔλεγεν, ὁ δὲ Εὐγενῶς καρτέρησον, ¹² ὁ δὲ καταμνησθεῖς ἔλεγεν Μνήσθητε πόθεν ἐστέ, ἢ τίνος πατρὸς χειρὶ σφαγιασθῆναι διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ὑπέμεινεν Ἰσαακ. ¹³ εἷς δὲ ἕκαστος ἀλλήλους ὁμοῦ πάντες ἐφορῶντες φαιδροὶ καὶ μάλα θαρραλέοι ἑαυτοὺς, ἔλεγον, τῷ θεῷ ἀφιερῶσωμεν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας τῷ δόντι τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ χρήσωμεν τῇ περὶ τὸν νόμον φυλακῇ τὰ σώματα. ¹⁴ μὴ φοβηθῶμεν τὸν δοκοῦντα ἀποκτεννεῖν· ¹⁵ μέγας γὰρ ψυχῆς ἀγὼν καὶ κίνδυνος ἐν αἰωνίῳ βασάνῳ κείμενος τοῖς παραβᾶσι τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ. ¹⁶ καθοπλισώμεθα τοιγαροῦν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ λογισμοῦ παδοκρατεῖαν. ¹⁷ οὕτω γὰρ θανόντας ἡμᾶς Ἀβρααμ καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακωβ ὑποδέξονται καὶ πάντες οἱ πατέρες ἐπαινέσουσιν. ¹⁸ καὶ ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν ἀποσπωμένων αὐτῶν ἀδελφῶν ἔλεγον οἱ περιλειπόμενοι Μὴ καταισχύνης

the sake of the Law; let us imitate the three youths in Assyria who despised the same ordeal of the furnace. ¹⁰ Let us not be cowardly in the demonstration of our piety.” ¹¹ One said, “Courage, brother,” another said, “Bear up nobly,” ¹² and another said, “Remember whence you came, and the father by whose hand Isaac would have submitted to being slain for the sake of piety.” ¹³ One and all, looking at each other, cheerful and undaunted, said, “Let us with all our hearts consecrate ourselves to God, who gave us our lives, and let us use our bodies as a bulwark for the Law. ¹⁴ Let us not fear him who thinks he is killing us; ¹⁵ for, great is the trial of the soul and the danger of eternal torment laid up for those who transgress the commandment of God. ¹⁶ So, let us arm ourselves in self-control, which is divine reason. ¹⁷ For, if we die thus, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will welcome us, and all the fathers will praise us.” ¹⁸ Those who remained said to each of the brothers who were being dragged away, “Do not

¹⁰ The WEBBE has ‘manifestation’ in place of ‘demonstration’.

¹¹ Here, we do not translate the opening conjunction (καὶ – literally, ‘and’); the NRSV has ‘while’.

¹² The brothers’ story became a favourite theme for Christians (Hb 11:17–19).

¹³ An alternative translation for ‘lives’ is ‘souls’.

¹⁴ Compare Mt 10:28, Lk 12:4.

¹⁵ The NRSV has ‘struggle’ in place of ‘trial’.

¹⁶ In place of ‘arm ourselves in’, the NRSV has ‘put on the full armour of’.

¹⁷ In place of ‘die’, some MSS have ‘suffer’.

¹⁸ The NRSV has ‘betray the brothers’ in place of ‘betray those’.

ἡμᾶς, ἀδελφέ, μηδὲ ψεύσῃ τοὺς προαποθανόντας ἡμῶν ἀδελφούς.

¹⁹ οὐκ ἀγνοεῖτε δὲ τὰ τῆς ἀδελφότητος φίλτρα, ἅπερ ἡ θεία καὶ πάνσοφος πρόνοια διὰ πατέρων τοῖς γεννωμένοις ἐμέρισεν καὶ διὰ τῆς μητρώας φυτεύσασα γαστρός, ²⁰ ἐν ᾗ τὸν ἴσον ἀδελφοὶ κατοικήσαντες χρόνον καὶ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῳ πλασθέντες καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ αἵματος ἀΐξηθέντες καὶ διὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ψυχῆς τελεσφορηθέντες ²¹ καὶ διὰ τῶν ἴσων ἀποτεχθέντες χρόνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν γαλακτοποτοῦντες πηγῶν, ἀφ' ὧν συντρέφονται ἐναγκαλισμάτων φιλάδελφοι ψυχαί· ²² καὶ αὖξονται σφοδρότερον διὰ συντροφίας καὶ τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν συνηθείας καὶ τῆς ἄλλης παιδείας καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐν νόμῳ θεοῦ ἀσκήσεως.

²³ οὕτως δὴ τοίνυν καθεστηκυίης συμπαθοῦς τῆς φιλαδελφίας οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοὶ συμπαθέστερον ἔσχον πρὸς ἀλλήλους. ²⁴ νόμῳ γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ παιδευθέντες καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς ἐξασκήσαντες ἀρετὰς καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ συντραφέντες βίῳ μᾶλλον ἑαυτοὺς ἡγάπων. ²⁵ ἡ γὰρ ὁμοζηλία τῆς καλοκάγαθίας ἐπέτεινεν αὐτῶν τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους εὐνοίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν·

put us to shame, brother, or betray those who have died before us."

¹⁹ You are not ignorant of the charm of family ties, which the divine and all-wise Providence has imparted through fathers to children and was implanted in the mother's womb.

²⁰ There, each brother spent the same length of time and was shaped during the same period; and, growing from the same blood and completed through the same principle of life.

²¹ When they were born, at equal intervals, they drank milk from the same springs. From such embraces, brotherly souls are nourished; ²² and they grow stronger from this common nurture and daily companionship and from both general education and discipline in the Law of our God.

²³ When sympathy and brotherly affection had thus been established, the brothers were the more sympathetic to one another. ²⁴ Since they had been educated by the same Law and trained in the same virtues, and brought up in right living, they loved one another even more. ²⁵ A common zeal for nobility strengthened their good will toward one another,

¹⁹ 'Charm' translates φίλτρα, a magical token believed to produce love; 'divine and all-wise Providence' is a Stoic concept (9:24, 17:22).

²⁰ The NRSV ends this verse, here loosely following the WEBBE, with, "and through the same life, they were brought to the light of day."

²¹ In place of 'at equal intervals', the NRSV has 'after an equal time of gestation'.

²² The NRSV adds 'our' before 'discipline'.

²³ The WEBBE ends with, "had a more sympathetic mutual harmony."

²⁴ The WEBBE opens with, "For, having been educated ..."

²⁵ In place of 'a common zeal', the WEBBE has 'the same ardour'.

²⁶ σὺν γὰρ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ ποθεινοτέραν αὐτοῖς κατεσκεύαζον τὴν φιλαδελφίαν. ²⁷ ἀλλ' ὅμως καίπερ τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς συνηθείας καὶ τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἡθῶν τὰ τῆς ἀδελφότητος αὐτοῖς φίλτρα συναυξόντων ἀνέσχοντο διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς οἱ ὑπολειπόμενοι, τοὺς καταικίζομένους ὀρῶντες μέχρι θανάτου βασανιζομένους,

and their concord, ²⁶ because they could make their brotherly love more fervent with the aid of their religion. ²⁷ Although nature, companionship, and virtuous morals had augmented the affection of family ties, those who were left endured for the sake of religion, while watching their brothers being maltreated and tortured to death.

²⁶ The WEBBE has 'desirable to them' in place of 'fervent'.

²⁷ In place of 'morals', the NRSV has 'habits'.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' Ι4

¹ προσέτι καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν αἰκισμὸν ἐποτρύνοντες, ὡς μὴ μόνον τῶν ἀλγηδόνων περιφρονῆσαι αὐτοὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν τῆς φιλαδελφίας παθῶν κρατῆσαι.

² Ὡ βασιλέων λογισμοὶ βασιλικώτεροι καὶ ἐλευθέρων ἐλευθερώτεροι. ³ Ὡ ἱερᾶς καὶ εὐαρμόστου περὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας τῶν ἐπτὰ ἀδελφῶν συμφωνίας. ⁴ οὐδεὶς ἐκ τῶν ἐπτὰ μειρακίων ἐδειλίασεν οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸν θάνατον ὥκνησεν, ⁵ ἀλλὰ πάντες ὥσπερ ἐπ' ἀθανασίας ὁδὸν τρέχοντες ἐπὶ τὸν διὰ τῶν βασάνων θάνατον ἔσπευδον. ⁶ καθάπερ αἱ χεῖρες καὶ οἱ πόδες συμφώνως τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀφηγήμασιν κινοῦνται, οὕτως οἱ ἱεροὶ μείρακες ἐκεῖνοι ὡς ὑπὸ ψυχῆς ἀθανάτου τῆς εὐσεβείας πρὸς τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς συνεφώνησαν θάνατον. ⁷ Ὡ πανάγιε συμφώνων ἀδελφῶν ἐβδομάς. καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπτὰ τῆς κοσμοποιίας ἡμέραι περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν, ⁸ οὕτως περὶ τὴν ἐβδομάδα χορεύοντες οἱ μείρακες ἐκύκλουν τὸν τῶν βασάνων

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¹ Furthermore, they encouraged them to face the torture, so that they not only despised their agonies, but also mastered the emotions of brotherly love.

² O Reason, more royal than kings and freer than the free! ³ O sacred and harmonious concord of the seven brothers on behalf of religion! ⁴ None of the seven youths proved coward or shrank from death, ⁵ but all of them, as though running the course toward immortality, hastened to death by torture. ⁶ Just as the hands and feet move in harmony with the guidance of the mind, so those holy youths, as though moved by an immortal spirit of devotion, agreed to go to death for its sake. ⁷ O, most holy seven, brothers in harmony! For, just as the seven days of Creation move in choral dance around religion, ⁸ so these youths, forming a chorus, encircled the sevenfold fear of tortures and dissolved it. ⁹ Even now, we

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¹ The WEBBE has 'urged them on' in place of 'encouraged them'.

² An alternative translation for 'reason' is 'minds'.

³ In place of 'brothers', the WEBBE has 'kindred'.

⁴ The WEBBE has 'turned cowardly' in place of 'proved coward'.

⁵ The WEBBE has 'through torture' in place of 'by torture'.

⁶ In place of 'spirit of devotion', the WEBBE has 'soul of religion'.

⁷ The WEBBE lacks the words, 'move in choral dance', here following the NRSV.

⁸ The Greek, here translated as 'sevenfold fear', is obscure.

⁹ In place of 'when we hear', the WEBBE has 'at the recital'.

φόβον καταλύοντες. ⁹ νῦν ἡμεῖς ἀκούοντες τὴν θλιψὶν τῶν νεανιῶν ἐκείνων φρίττομεν· οἱ δὲ οὐ μόνον ὁρῶντες, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μόνον ἀκούοντες τὸν παραχρῆμα ἀπειλῆς λόγον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσχοντες ἐνεκαρτέρουν, καὶ τοῦτο ταῖς διὰ πυρὸς ὀδύναις· ¹⁰ ὣν τί γένοιτο ἐπαλγέστερον; ὅξεϊα γὰρ καὶ σύντομος οὔσα ἡ τοῦ πυρὸς δύναμις ταχέως διέλυεν τὰ σώματα.

¹¹ Καὶ μὴ θαυμαστὸν ἡγεῖσθε εἰ ὁ λογισμὸς περιεκράτησε τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων ἐν ταῖς βασάνοις, ὅπου γε καὶ γυναικὸς νοῦς πολυτροπωτέρων ὑπερεφρόνησεν ἀλγηδόνων· ¹² ἡ μήτηρ γὰρ τῶν ἐπτὰ νεανίσκων ὑπήνεγκεν τὰς ἐφ' ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν τέκνων στρέβλας.

¹³ Θεωρεῖτε δὲ πῶς πολὺπλοκὸς ἐστὶν ἡ τῆς φιλοτεκνίας στοργὴ ἔλκουσα πάντα πρὸς τὴν τῶν σπλάγχνων συμπάθειαν, ¹⁴ ὅπου γε καὶ τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα ὁμοίαν τὴν εἰς τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν γεννώμενα συμπάθειαν καὶ στοργὴν ἔχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. ¹⁵ καὶ γὰρ τῶν πετεινῶν τὰ μὲν ἡμεῖς κατὰ τὰς οἰκίας ὁροφοιτοῦντα προασπίζει τῶν νεοττῶν, ¹⁶ τὰ δὲ κατὰ κορυφὰς ὀρέων καὶ φαράγγων ἀπορρῶγας καὶ δένδρων ὅπας

ourselves shudder as we hear of the suffering of these young men; they not only saw what was happening, not only heard the direct word of threat, but also bore the sufferings patiently, and in agonies of fire at that. ¹⁰ What could be more excruciatingly painful than this? For, the power of fire is intense and swift, and it consumed their bodies quickly.

¹¹ Do not consider it amazing that reason had full command over these men in their tortures, since the mind of woman despised even more diverse agonies; ¹² for, the mother of the seven young men bore up under the racking of each of her children.

¹³ Consider how comprehensive is the love of offspring, which draws everyone to sympathy of affection. ¹⁴ Even irrational animals, as well as human beings, have a sympathy and parental love for their offspring. ¹⁵ Among birds, the tame ones protect their young by building on the housetops ¹⁶ and the others, by building in precipitous chasms and in holes and tops of trees, hatch the nestlings and ward off the

¹⁰ A more literal translation for 'consumed' (as NRSV) is 'dissolved' (as WEBBE).

¹¹ The mother's death is merely mentioned in 2M 7:41; here (14:11–17:1) it is made the climax of the oration.

¹² The NRSV adds 'one' after 'each'.

¹³ For this verse, here following the WEBBE (and Greek text), the NRSV reads, "Observe how complex is a mother's love for her children, which draws everything toward an emotion felt in her inmost parts."

¹⁴ The analogy between 'irrational animals' and 'human beings' (vv. 14–19) was a theme of popular Greek philosophy.

¹⁵ At the beginning of this verse, the NRSV adds, 'For example'.

¹⁶ Before 'in precipitous chasms', the WEBBE adds 'on the tops of mountains and'.

καὶ τὰς τούτων ἄκρας ἐννοσοποιησάμενα ἀποτίκτει καὶ τὸν
προσιόντα κωλύει· ¹⁷ εἰ δὲ καὶ μὴ δύναιντο κωλύειν,
περιπτάμενα κυκλόθεν αὐτῶν ἀλγοῦντα τῇ στοργῇ
ἀνακαλούμενα τῇ ἰδίᾳ φωνῇ, καθ' ὃ δύναται, βοηθεῖ τοῖς
τέκνοις. ¹⁸ καὶ τί δεῖ τὴν διὰ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων ἐπιδεικνύναι
πρὸς τὰ τέκνα συμπάθειαν, ¹⁹ ὅπου γε καὶ μέλισσαι περὶ τὸν
τῆς κηρογονίας καιρὸν ἐπαμύνονται τοὺς προσιόντας καὶ
καθάπερ σιδήρῳ τῷ κέντρῳ πλήσσουσι τοὺς προσιόντας τῇ
νοσσιᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ ἀπαμύνουσιν ἕως θανάτου; ²⁰ ἀλλ' οὐχὶ
τὴν Ἀβρααμ ὁμόψυχον τῶν νεανίσκων μητέρα μετεκίνησεν
συμπάθεια τέκνων.

intruder. ¹⁷ If they are not able to keep it away, they do what
they can to help their young by flying in circles around them
in the anguish of love, warning them with their own calls.
¹⁸ Thus, why is it necessary to demonstrate sympathy for
children by the example of irrational animals, ¹⁹ since even
bees, at the time for making honeycombs, defend themselves
against intruders and, as though with an iron sword, sting
those who approach their hive and defend it even to the
death? ²⁰ Nevertheless, sympathy for her children did not
sway the mother of the young men; she was of the same mind
as Abraham.

¹⁷ In place of 'keeping it away', here following the Greek text, the NRSV has 'keep the intruder away'.

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'unreasoning' in place of 'irrational', here following the WEBBE (as also in v. 14).

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'dart' in place of 'sword' and the WEBBE lacks 'iron'.

²⁰ The mother's constancy is the supreme proof of the dominance of religious reason; Abraham had offered Isaac.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 15

¹ Ὡ λογισμὲ τέκνων παθῶν τύραννε καὶ εὐσέβεια μητρὶ τέκνων ποθεινότερα. ² μήτηρ δυεῖν προκειμένων, εὐσεβείας καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ αὐτῶν σωτηρίας προσκαίρου κατὰ τὴν τοῦ τυράννου ὑπόσχεσιν, ³ τὴν εὐσέβειαν μᾶλλον ἡγάπησεν τὴν σφύζουσιν εἰς αἰωνίαν ζωὴν κατὰ θεόν. ⁴ Ὡ τίνα τρόπον ἡθολογήσασιν φιλότεκνα γονέων πάσῃ. ψυχῆς τε καὶ μορφῆς ὁμοιότητα εἰς μικρὸν παιδὸς χαρακτῆρα θαυμάσιον ἐναποσφραγίζομεν, μάλιστα διὰ τὸ τῶν παθῶν τοῖς γεννηθεῖσιν τὰς μητέρας τῶν πατέρων καθεστάναι συμπαθεστέρας. ⁵ ὅσω γὰρ καὶ ἀσθενόψυχοι καὶ πολυγονώτεροι ὑπάρχουσιν αἱ μητέρες, τοσούτω μᾶλλον εἰσιν φιλοτεκνότεραι. ⁶ πασῶν δὲ τῶν μητέρων ἐγένετο ἡ τῶν ἐπὶ αὐτῶν παίδων μήτηρ φιλοτεκνότερα, ἥτις ἐπὶ αὐτῶν κυφορίαις τὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐπιφυτευομένη φιλοστοργίαν ⁷ καὶ διὰ πολλὰς τὰς καθ' ἑκάστον αὐτῶν ὥδιναις ἠναγκασμένη τὴν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἔχειν συμπάθειαν, ⁸ διὰ τὸν

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¹ O reason of the children, lord over the emotions and piety, more valued by the mother than her children! ² Two ways were set for this mother: religion and the safety of her seven sons for a time, as the tyrant had promised. ³ She loved religion more, the religion that preserves them for eternal life according to God. ⁴ In what way can I express the emotions of parents who love their children? We impress upon the character of a small child a wondrous likeness both of mind and of form. Especially is this true of mothers who, through their birth pangs, have a deeper sympathy toward their offspring. ⁵ Considering that mothers are the weaker sex and give birth to many, they are more devoted to their children. ⁶ The mother of the seven boys, more than any other mother, loved her children. In seven pregnancies, she had engendered tender love toward them ⁷ and, because of the many pains she suffered with each of them, she had sympathy for

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¹ The NRSV and WEBBE have 'religion' in place of 'piety'.

² The 'two courses', the two ways of Jr 21:8, became a pattern of Jewish thought.

³ The NRSV ends this verse with 'God's promise'; here, we follow the LXX.

⁴ The phrase, 'of mind and of form', reflects a Stoic idea.

⁵ An alternative reading of this verse is, "For, to the degree that mothers are weaker and the more children they bear, the more they are devoted to their children."

⁶ The NRSV has 'implanted in herself' in place of 'engendered'.

⁷ The WEBBE ends with, "she was compelled to have sympathy with them."

πρὸς τὸν θεὸν φόβον ὑπερεῖδεν τὴν τῶν τέκνων πρόσκαιρον σωτηρίαν. ⁹ οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν καλοκάγαθίαν τῶν υἱῶν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν νόμον αὐτῶν εὐπείθειαν μεῖζω τὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔσχεν φιλοστοργίαν. ¹⁰ δίκαιοί τε γὰρ ἦσαν καὶ σώφρονες καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι καὶ μεγαλόψυχοι καὶ φιλάδελφοι καὶ φιλομήτορες οὕτως ὥστε καὶ μέχρι θανάτου τὰ νόμιμα φυλάσσοντας πείθεσθαι αὐτῇ.

¹¹ ἀλλ' ὅμως καίπερ τοσούτων ὄντων τῶν περὶ τὴν φιλοτεκνίαν εἰς συμπάθειαν ἐλκόντων τὴν μητέρα, ἐπ' οὐδενὸς αὐτῶν τὸν λογισμὸν αὐτῆς αἱ παμποίκιοι βάσανοι ἴσχυσαν μετατρέψαι, ¹² ἀλλὰ καὶ καθ' ἓνα παῖδα καὶ ὁμοῦ πάντας ἡ μήτηρ ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς εὐσεβείας προετρέπετο θάνατον. ¹³ ὧ φύσις ἱερὰ καὶ φίλτρα γονέων καὶ γένεσι φιλόστοργε καὶ τροφεία καὶ μητέρων ἀδάμαστα πάθη. ¹⁴ καθένα στρεβλούμενον καὶ φλεγόμενον ὀρώσα μήτηρ οὐ μετεβάλλετο διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν. ¹⁵ τὰς σάρκας τῶν τέκνων ἑώρα περὶ τὸ πῦρ τηχομένας καὶ τοὺς τῶν ποδῶν καὶ χειρῶν δακτύλους ἐπὶ γῆς σπαίροντας καὶ τὰς τῶν κεφαλῶν μέχρι τῶν περὶ τὰ γένεια σάρκας ὥσπερ προσωπεῖα προκειμένας.

them;⁸ yet, through fear of God, she disdained the temporary safety of her children. ⁹ Not only so, but also because of the nobility of her sons and their ready obedience to the Law, she felt a greater tenderness toward them. ¹⁰ For, they were righteous, self-controlled, brave, and high-minded, and they loved their brothers and their mother, so that they obeyed her even to death in keeping the ordinances.

¹¹ Yet, though so many factors influenced the mother to suffer with them out of love for her children, in the case of none of them were the various tortures strong enough to pervert her reason. ¹² Rather, each child separately, and all of them together, the mother urged on to death for religion. ¹³ O sacred nature and parental love, yearning of parents toward offspring, nurture and indomitable suffering by mothers! ¹⁴ The mother, who saw them tortured and burned one by one, because of religion, did not change her attitude. ¹⁵ She watched the flesh of her children being consumed by fire, their toes and fingers scattered on the ground, and the flesh of the head to the chin exposed like masks.

⁸ The NRSV has 'because of' in place of 'through'.

⁹ The WEBBE has 'maternal affection' in place of 'tenderness'.

¹⁰ In place of 'high-minded', the NRSV has 'magnanimous'.

¹¹ The NRSV opens with 'Nevertheless' in place of 'Yet'.

¹² The NRSV ends with 'religion's sake' in place of 'religion'.

¹³ The concept of giving birth includes the idea of spiritual birth; compare 16:13, 17:6, Ga 4:19.

¹⁴ Before 'parental love', the NRSV adds 'affection of'.

¹⁵ An alternative translation for 'scattered' is 'quivering'.

¹⁶ ὦ πικροτέρων νῦν πόνων πειρασθεῖσα μήτηρ ἥπερ τῶν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ὠδίνων. ¹⁷ ὦ μόνη γύναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν ὀλόκληρον ἀποκνήσασα. ¹⁸ οὐ μετέτρεψέν σε πρωτοτόκος ἀποπνέων οὐδὲ δεύτερος εἰς σὲ οἰκτρὸν βλέπων ἐν βασάνοις, οὐ τρίτος ἀποψύχων, ¹⁹ οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐνὸς ἐκάστου θεωροῦσα ταυρηδὸν ἐπὶ τῶν βασάνων ὀρῶντας τὸν αὐτὸν αἰκισμὸν καὶ τοὺς μυκτῆρας προσημειομένους τὸν θάνατον αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔκλαυσας. ²⁰ ἐπὶ σαρκὶν τέκνων ὀρῶσα σάρκας τέκνων ἀποκαιόμενας καὶ ἐπὶ χερσὶν χεῖρας ἀποτεμνομένας καὶ ἐπὶ κεφαλαῖς κεφαλὰς ἀποδειροτομουμένας καὶ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς νεκροὺς πίπτοντας καὶ πολυάνδριον ὀρῶσα τῶν τέκνων τὸ χωρίον διὰ τῶν βασάνων οὐκ ἐδάκρυσας. ²¹ οὐχ οὕτως σειρήνιοι μελωδία οὐδὲ κύκνιοι πρὸς φιληκοίαν φωναὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἐφέλκονται ὥς τέκνων φωναὶ μετὰ βασάνων μητέρα φωνούντων. ²² πηλίκαις καὶ πόσαις τότε ἡ μήτηρ τῶν υἱῶν βασανιζομένων τροχοῖς τε καὶ καυτηρίοις ἐβασανίζετο βασάνοις. ²³ ἀλλὰ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτῆς ὁ εὐσεβὴς λογισμὸς ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀνδρειώσας ἐπέτεινεν τὴν πρόσκαιρον φιλοτεκνίαν παριδεῖν.

¹⁶ O mother, tried now by more bitter pains than those at birth! ¹⁷ O woman, who alone gave birth to such complete devotion! ¹⁸ When the firstborn expired, it did not turn you, nor when the second, looking miserable in his in tortments, nor the third, breathing out his soul; ¹⁹ nor did you weep when you looked at the eyes of each one in his tortures gazing boldly at the same agonies, and their nostrils foreboding death. ²⁰ When you saw children's flesh burned upon children's flesh, severed hands upon hands, scalped heads upon heads, and dead falling on dead, and when you saw the place filled with many spectators of the torturing, you did not shed tears. ²¹ Neither the melodies of sirens nor the songs of swans attract the attention of their hearers, like voices of the children in torture calling to their mother. ²² How great and how many tortments the mother then suffered, as her sons were tortured on the wheel and with the fires! ²³ Yet, devout reason, giving her heart a man's courage in the very midst of her emotions, strengthened her to disregard, for the time, her parental love.

¹⁶ The NRSV ends more verbosely: "than even the birth pangs you suffered for them."

¹⁷ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the WEBBE reads, "O you only woman who have produced perfect holiness!"

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'breathed his last' in place of 'expired' and has 'expired' in place of 'breathing out his soul'.

¹⁹ The NRSV ends with, "saw in their nostrils the signs of the approach of death."

²⁰ The WEBBE has 'choir of children turned through torture into a burying ground' in place of 'the place filled with many spectators of the torturing'.

²¹ The 'melodies of sirens' and 'songs of swans' may refer to a traditional Greek story.

²² The NRSV has 'hot irons' in place of 'fires'.

²³ The NRSV opens with 'Nevertheless' in place of 'Yet'.

²⁴ καίπερ ἑπτὰ τέκνων ὀρώσα ἀπώλειαν καὶ τὴν τῶν στρεβλῶν πολὺπλοκὸν ποικιλίαν, ἀπάσας ἢ γενναία μήτηρ ἐξέλυσε διὰ τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν πίστιν. ²⁵ καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν βουλευτηρίῳ τῇ ἑαυτῆς ψυχῇ δεινούς ὀρώσα συμβούλους φύσιν καὶ γένεσιν καὶ φιλοτεκνίαν καὶ τέκνων στρέβλας, ²⁶ δύο ψήφους κρατοῦσα μήτηρ, θανατηφόρον τε καὶ σωτήριον, ὑπὲρ τέκνων ²⁷ οὐκ ἐπέγνω τὴν σώζουσιν ἑπτὰ υἱούς πρὸς ὀλίγον χρόνον σωτηρίαν, ²⁸ ἀλλὰ τῆς θεοσεβοῦς Ἀβρααμ καρτερίας ἢ θυγάτηρ ἐμνήσθη. ²⁹ ὦ μήτηρ ἔθνους, ἔκδικε τοῦ νόμου καὶ ὑπερασπίστρια τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ τοῦ διὰ σπλάγχχνων ἀγῶνος ἀδελφοφόρε· ³⁰ ὦ ἀρρένων πρὸς καρτερίαν γενναιοτέρα καὶ ἀνδρῶν πρὸς ὑπομονὴν ἀνδρειότερα. ³¹ καθάπερ γὰρ ἡ Νωε κιβωτὸς ἐν τῷ κοσμοπληθεῖ κατακλυσμῷ κοσμοφοροῦσα καρτερῶς ὑπέμεινε τοὺς κλύδωνας, ³² οὕτως σὺ ἡ νομοφύλαξ πανταχόθεν ἐν τῷ τῶν παθῶν περιαντλουμένη κατακλυσμῷ καὶ καρτεροῖς ἀνέμοις, ταῖς τῶν υἱῶν βασάνοις, συνεχομένη γενναίως ὑπέμεινας τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας χειμῶνας.

²⁴ Although she witnessed the destruction of seven children and the complex and various tortures, this noble mother disregarded all these through faith in God. ²⁵ For, as in the council chamber of her own soul, she saw mighty advocates: nature, family, parental love, and the racking of her children. ²⁶ This mother had two votes, one for death, the other safety for her children. ²⁷ She did not approve that which would preserve the seven sons for a short time ²⁸ but this daughter of God-fearing Abraham remembered his fortitude. ²⁹ O mother of the nation, avenger of the Law and champion of religion, who carried away the prize of the contest in your heart! ³⁰ O nobler than males in endurance and more courageous than men in perseverance! ³¹ Like Noah's Ark, bearing the world in the Universal Flood, stoutly endured the waves, ³² so you, O guardian of the Law, overwhelmed from every side by the flood of your emotions and the violent winds, the torture of your sons, endured nobly and withstood the storms that assail religion.

²⁴ In place of 'disregarded all these', some MSS read, 'having bidden them farewell, surrendered them'.

²⁵ Vv. 25-26 compare the mother's situation with that of the 'council chamber' of a Greek city.

²⁶ The NRSV has 'deliverance' in place of 'safety'.

²⁷ The NRSV has 'the deliverance that would' in place of 'that which would'.

²⁸ The WEBBE lacks 'God-fearing' but adds 'holy' before 'fortitude'.

²⁹ In place of 'avenger', the NRSV has 'vindicator'.

³⁰ The NRSV has 'steadfastness' in place of 'endurance' and 'endurance' in place of 'perseverance'.

³¹ The WEBBE has 'world-filling flood' in place of 'Universal Flood', here following the NRSV.

³² Before 'storms', the NRSV adds 'wintry'.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 16

¹ Εἰ δὲ τοίνυν καὶ γυνὴ καὶ γεραιὰ καὶ ἑπτὰ παίδων μήτηρ ὑπέμεινεν τὰς μέχρι θανάτου βασάνους τῶν τέκνων ὀρῶσα, ὁμολογουμένως αὐτοκράτωρ ἐστὶν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβὴς λογισμός. ² ἀπέδειξα οὖν ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἄνδρες τῶν παθῶν ἐκράτησαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυνὴ τῶν μεγίστων βασάνων ὑπερεφρόνησεν. ³ καὶ οὐχ οὕτως οἱ περὶ Δανιηλ λέοντες ἦσαν ἄγριοι οὐδὲ ἡ Μισαηλ ἐκφλεγόμενη κάμινος λαβροτάτω πυρί, ὡς ἡ τῆς φιλοτεκνίας περιέκαιεν ἐκείνην φύσις ὀρῶσαν αὐτῆς οὕτως ποικίλως βασανιζομένους τοὺς ἑπτὰ υἱούς. ⁴ ἀλλὰ τῷ λογισμῷ τῆς εὐσεβείας κατέσβεσεν τὰ τοσαῦτα καὶ τηλικάῦτα πάθη ἡ μήτηρ.

⁵ Καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο ἐπιλογίσασθε, ὅτι δειλόψυχος εἰ ἦν ἡ γυνὴ καίπερ μήτηρ οὔσα, ὠλοφύρετο ἂν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ἴσως ἂν ταῦτα εἶπεν ⁶ Ὁ μελέα ἔγωγε καὶ πολλάκις τρισαθλία, ἥτις ἑπτὰ παῖδας τεκοῦσα οὐδενὸς μήτηρ γεγέννημαι. ⁷ ὦ μάταιοι ἑπτὰ κυοφορίαι καὶ ἀνόνητοι ἑπτὰ δεκάμηνοι καὶ ἄκαρποι τιθηνίαι καὶ ταλαίπωροι γαλακτοτροφίαι. ⁸ μάτην δὲ ἐφ'

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¹ If then, a woman, advanced in years and mother of seven sons, endured seeing her children tortured to death, it must be admitted that devout reason is master even of the emotions. ² Thus, I have proved not only that men have ruled over the emotions but also that a woman has despised the fiercest tortures. ³ The lions around Daniel were not so savage, nor was the raging fiery furnace of Mishael so intensely hot as her innate parental love, inflamed as she saw her seven sons tortured in such varied ways. ⁴ Nevertheless, the mother quenched emotions so great and powerful by devout reason.

⁵ Consider this also: If the woman, being a mother, had been fainthearted, she would have mourned over them and perhaps spoken thus: ⁶ "O, I am wretched and many times unhappy! After bearing seven children, I am now the mother of none! ⁷ O seven childbirths all in vain, seven profitless pregnancies, fruitless suckling and wretched nursing! ⁸ In

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¹ The NRSV has 'sovereign' in place of 'master'.

² In place of 'proved', the NRSV has 'demonstrated'.

³ Concerning Daniel and the lions, see Dn 6:1-24; on 'Mishael', see Dn 1:7, 3:19-30.

⁴ The NRSV has 'so many and such great emotions' in place of 'emotions so great and powerful'.

⁵ The WEBBE has 'their mother' in place of 'a mother', here (loosely) following the NRSV.

⁶ In place of 'unhappy', the WEBBE has 'miserable'.

⁷ The NRSV has 'nurturing' in place of 'suckling'.

⁸ The NRSV adds 'birth' before 'pangs'.

ὑμῖν, ὦ παῖδες, πολλὰς ὑπέμεινα ὠδῖνας καὶ χαλεπωτέρας φροντίδας ἀνατροφῆς. ⁹ ὦ τῶν ἐμῶν παίδων οἱ μὲν ἄγαμοι, οἱ δὲ γήμαντες ἀνόνητοι· οὐκ ὄψομαι ὑμῶν τέκνα οὐδὲ μάμμη κληθεῖσα μακαρισθῆσομαι. ¹⁰ ὦ ἡ πολὺπαις καὶ καλλίπαις ἐγὼ γυνὴ χήρα καὶ μόνη πολύθρηνος· ¹¹ οὐδ' ἂν ἀποθάνω, θάπτοντα τῶν υἱῶν ἔξω τινά.

¹² Ἀλλὰ τοῦτω τῷ θρήνῳ οὐδένα ὠλοφύρετο ἡ ἱερὰ καὶ θεοσεβὴς μήτηρ οὐδ' ἵνα μὴ ἀποθάνωσιν ἀπέτρεπεν αὐτῶν τινά οὐδ' ὥς ἀποθνησκόντων ἐλυπήθη, ¹³ ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀδαμάντινον ἔχουσα τὸν νοῦν καὶ εἰς ἀθανασίαν ἀνατίκτουσα τὸν τῶν υἱῶν ἀριθμὸν μᾶλλον ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐπὶ τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦς προετρέπετο ἱκετεύουσα. ¹⁴ ὦ μήτηρ δι' εὐσέβειαν θεοῦ στρατιῶτι πρεσβῦτι καὶ γύναι, διὰ καρτερίαν καὶ τύραννον ἐνίκησας καὶ ἔργοις δυνατωτέρα καὶ λόγοις εὐρέθης ἀνδρός. ¹⁵ καὶ γὰρ ὅτε συνελήμφθης μετὰ τῶν παίδων, εἰστήκεις τὸν Ελεάζαρον ὁρῶσα βασανιζόμενον καὶ ἔλεγες τοῖς παισὶν ἐν τῇ Εβραϊδὶ φωνῇ ¹⁶ ὦ παῖδες, γενναῖος ὁ ἀγών, ἐφ' ὃν κληθέντες ὑπὲρ τῆς διαμαρτυρίας τοῦ ἔθνους

vain, my sons, I endured many pangs for you, and the more grievous anxieties of upbringing. ⁹ O, my children, some unmarried, some married without profit. I will not see your children or have the joy of being called grandmother. ¹⁰ O, I who had many and fair children, am a lone widow much to be pitied! ¹¹ When I die, I shall have no son to bury me."

¹² Yet, with such a lament, that holy and God-fearing mother wept for none of them, nor did she dissuade any of them from dying, nor grieve for them as for the dead. ¹³ Rather, as one with an adamant mind and giving rebirth for immortality to the full number of her sons, she urged them on to death on behalf of religion. ¹⁴ O mother, soldier of God for religion, aged and woman! By endurance, you have defeated even a tyrant and, in word and deed, you have proved more powerful than a man. ¹⁵ For, when you were seized with your children, you stood and watched Eleazar in torture, and said to your sons in Hebrew, ¹⁶ "My sons, noble is the contest to which you are called to bear witness for the nation. Fight

⁹ For 'profit', the NRSV has 'offspring'.

¹⁰ An alternative reading of 'much to be pitied' is 'with many sorrows'.

¹¹ For both Hebrews and Greeks, having no son to bury one was a supreme calamity.

¹² The WEBBE includes the words up to 'none of them' in v. 11.

¹³ The NRSV opens with 'On the contrary' in place of 'Rather'.

¹⁴ The WEBBE has 'woman' in place of 'mother'.

¹⁵ On the use of the 'Hebrew', see #12:7.

¹⁶ Compare this more rhetorical speech (vv. 16–23) with 2M 7:27–29.

ἐναγωνίσασθε προθύμως ὑπὲρ τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου· ¹⁷ καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν τὸν μὲν γέροντα τοῦτον ὑπομένειν τὰς διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἀλγηδόνας, ὑμᾶς δὲ τοὺς νεανίσκους καταπλαγῆναι τὰς βασάνους. ¹⁸ ἀναμνήσθητε ὅτι διὰ τὸν Θεὸν τοῦ κόσμου μετελάβετε καὶ τοῦ βίου ἀπελαύσατε, ¹⁹ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλετε πάντα πόνον ὑπομένειν διὰ τὸν Θεόν, ²⁰ δι' ὃν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ἀβρααμ ἔσπευδεν τὸν ἐθνοπάτορα υἱὸν σφαγιάσαι Ἰσαακ, καὶ τὴν πατρῷαν χεῖρα ξιφηφόρον καταφερομένην ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὀρῶν οὐκ ἔπηξεν. ²¹ καὶ Δανιηλ ὁ δίκαιος εἰς λέοντας ἐβλήθη, καὶ Ἀνανίας καὶ Ἀζαριᾶς καὶ Μισαηλ εἰς κάμινον πυρὸς ἀπεσφενδονήθησαν καὶ ὑπέμειναν διὰ τὸν Θεόν. ²² καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν τὴν αὐτὴν πίστιν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἔχοντες μὴ χαλεπαίνετε. ²³ ἀλόγιστον γὰρ εἰδότες εὐσέβειαν μὴ ἀνδίστασθαι τοῖς πόνοις.

²⁴ Διὰ τούτων τῶν λόγων ἡ ἑπταμήτωρ ἓνα ἕκαστον τῶν υἱῶν παρακαλοῦσα ἀποθανεῖν ἔπεισεν μᾶλλον ἢ παραβῆναι τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ²⁵ ἔτι δὲ καὶ ταῦτα εἰδότες ὅτι οἱ διὰ

zealously for our ancestral Law. ¹⁷ For, it would be shameful if this old man endures such agonies for religion, while you young men were afraid of the tortures. ¹⁸ Remember that it is through God that you have existence and have enjoyed it; ¹⁹ and, therefore, you ought to endure any suffering for the sake of God. ²⁰ For his sake, also our father Abraham was zealous to sacrifice his son Isaac, the ancestor of our nation; and when Isaac saw his father's hand wielding a knife and descending upon him, he did not cower. ²¹ Daniel the righteous was thrown to the lions, and Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael were hurled into the fiery furnace and endured it for the sake of God. ²² You too must have the same faith in God and not be grieved. ²³ It is unreasonable for people who have religious knowledge not to withstand pain."

²⁴ By these arguments, the mother of the seven encouraged and persuaded each of her sons to die rather than violate God's commandment. ²⁵ They knew also that those who die

¹⁷ The NRSV has 'an aged man' in place of 'this old man'.

¹⁸ In place of 'existence', the NRSV has 'a share in the world'.

¹⁹ The WEBBE has 'affliction' in place of 'suffering'.

²⁰ In place of 'knife', the Greek text has 'sword'.

²¹ See Dn 3 for the stories of Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael.

²² For this verse, here following the NRSV, the WEBBE reads, "You, then, having the same faith towards God, don't be troubled."

²³ The WEBBE has 'troubles' in place of 'pain'.

²⁴ The NRSV has 'words' in place of 'arguments', here following the WEBBE.

²⁵ The literal translation of 'knew' is 'saw'.

τὸν Θεὸν ἀποθνήσκοντες ζῶσιν τῷ Θεῷ ὥσπερ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακωβ καὶ πάντες οἱ πατριάρχαι. for the sake of God live to God, as do Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs.

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 17

¹ Ἐλεγον δὲ καὶ τῶν δορυφόρων τινὲς ὅτι ὥς ἔμελλεν συλλαμβάνεσθαι καὶ αὐτὴ πρὸς θάνατον, ἵνα μὴ ψαύσειέν τις τοῦ σώματος αὐτῆς, ἑαυτὴν ἔρριψε κατὰ τῆς πυρᾶς.

² Ὡ μῆτηρ σὺν ἑπτὰ παισὶν καταλύσασα τὴν τοῦ τυράννου βίαν καὶ ἀκυρώσασα τὰς κακὰς ἐπινοίας αὐτοῦ καὶ δείξασα τὴν τῆς πίστεως γενναιότητα. ³ καθάπερ γὰρ σὺ στέγη ἐπὶ τοὺς στύλους τῶν παίδων γενναίως ἰδρυμένη ἀκλινῆς ὑπήνεγκας τὸν διὰ τῶν βασάνων σεισμόν. ⁴ θάρρει τοιγαροῦν, ὦ μῆτηρ ἱερόψυχε, τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς ὑπομονῆς βεβαίαν ἔχουσα πρὸς τὸν θεόν. ⁵ οὐχ οὕτως σελήνη κατ' οὐρανὸν σὺν ἄστροις σεμνὴ καθέστηκεν, ὥς σὺ τοὺς ἰσαστέρους ἑπτὰ παῖδας φωταγωγήσασα πρὸς τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἔντιμος καθέστηκας θεῷ καὶ ἐστήρισαι σὺν αὐτοῖς ἐν οὐρανῷ. ⁶ ἦν γὰρ ἡ παιδοποιία σου ἀπὸ Ἀβρααμ τοῦ πατρός. ⁷ Εἰ δὲ ἐξὸν ἡμῖν ἦν ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τινος ζωγραφῆσαι τὴν τῆς εὐσεβείας σου ἱστορίαν, οὐκ ἂν ἔφριττον οἱ θεωροῦντες

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¹ Some of the spear-bearers said that, when she was also about to be seized and put to death, she threw herself into the flames so that no one might touch her body.

² O mother who, with your seven sons, rendered as void the violence of the tyrant, frustrated his evil designs, and exhibited the courage of your faith! ³ For you, nobly set like a roof on the pillars of your sons, you held firm and unswerving against the earthquake of the tortures. ⁴ Cheer up, therefore, O holy-minded mother! Hold the firm hope of your steadfastness with God. ⁵ The moon in heaven, with the stars, does not stand so august as you, who, after lighting the way of your star-like seven sons to piety, stand in honour before God and are firmly set in heaven with them. ⁶ For, your children were true descendants of father, Abraham.

⁷ If it were possible for us to paint on a tablet the story of your religion, would not those who first beheld it have shuddered

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¹ The NRSV has 'guards' in place of 'spear-bearers', here following the WEBBE.

² The author has already pronounced high praises on Eleazar (7:1-15), the brothers (14:2-10) and the mother (Ch. 15), sometimes addressing them directly. The oration now comes to its climax.

³ 'Roof', 'pillars' and 'earthquake' are metaphors appropriate to Antioch, where there were frequent earthquakes, but applicable also to Palestine.

⁴ For this verse, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has, "Take courage, therefore, O holy-minded mother, maintaining firm an enduring hope in God."

⁵ Stoics regarded the 'stars' as living beings; for Jews, the language was metaphorical.

⁶ The literal translation of this verse is, "For your childbearing was from Abraham the father;" other MSS read, "For ... Abraham the servant."

⁷ An alternative rendering of 'possible' is 'permitted'; at this time, the Jews may have taken the commandment of Ex 20:4 strictly.

ὁρῶντες μητέρα ἑπτὰ τέκνων δι' εὐσέβειαν ποικίλας βασάνους μέχρι θανάτου ὑπομείναντες;⁸ καὶ γὰρ ἄξιον ἦν καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐπιταφίου ἀναγράψαι καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους εἰς μνείαν λεγόμενα

⁹ Ἐνταῦθα γέρων ἱερεὺς καὶ γυνὴ γεραία καὶ ἑπτὰ παῖδες ἐγκεκῆδενται διὰ τυράννου βίαν τὴν Εβραίων πολιτείαν καταλῦσαι θέλοντος,¹⁰ οἳ καὶ ἐξεδίκησαν τὸ γένος εἰς θεὸν ἀφορῶντες καὶ μέχρι θανάτου τὰς βασάνους ὑπομείναντες.

¹¹ Ἀληθῶς γὰρ ἦν ἀγὼν θεῖος ὁ δι' αὐτῶν γεγενημένος.
¹² ἡθλοδέτει γὰρ τότε ἀρετὴ δι' ὑπομονῆς δοκιμάζουσα. τὸ νῆκος ἀφθαρσία ἐν ζωῇ πολυχρονίῳ.¹³ Ελεάζαρ δὲ προηγωνίζετο, ἡ δὲ μήτηρ τῶν ἑπτὰ παιδῶν ἐνήθλει, οἳ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ ἡγωνίζοντο.¹⁴ ὁ τύραννος ἀντηγωνίζετο· ὁ δὲ κόσμος καὶ ὁ τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίος ἐθεώρει.¹⁵ Θεοσέβεια δὲ ἐνίκᾳ τοῦς ἑαυτῆς ἀθλητὰς στεφανοῦσα.¹⁶ τίνες οὐκ ἐθαύμασαν τοὺς τῆς θείας νομοθεσίας ἀθλητὰς; τίνες οὐκ ἐξεπλάγησαν;

as they saw the mother of the seven children enduring their varied tortures to death for the sake of religion?⁸ Indeed, it would be proper to inscribe on their tomb these words, as a reminder to the people of our nation:

⁹ "Here lie buried an aged priest and an aged woman and seven sons, because of the violence of the tyrant who wished to destroy the Hebrew way of life.¹⁰ They avenged their nation, looking to God and enduring torture even to death."

¹¹ Truly, they were engaged in a divine contest;¹² for, on that day, virtue judged the contest and gave the prize to endurance, namely, immortality, eternal life.¹³ Eleazar led the way, the mother of the seven sons entered the contest and the brothers fought.¹⁴ The tyrant was the antagonist, and the world and living men were the spectators.¹⁵ Reverence for God was victor and crowned her own athletes.¹⁶ Who did not admire the athletes of divine legislation? Who were not amazed?

⁸ An alternative reading of the end of this verse is, "as a memorial to the heroes of our people."

⁹ 'Way of life' translates πολιτείαν, which can also mean 'commonwealth'.

¹⁰ The NRSV has 'vindicated' in place of 'avenged', here following the WEBBE.

¹¹ For this verse, the NRSV reads, "Truly, the contest in which they were engaged was divine."

¹² For this verse, the NRSV reads, "for, on that day, virtue gave the awards and tested them for their endurance. The prize was immortality in endless life."

¹³ In place of 'to contend', the NRSV has 'contestant'.

¹⁴ The NRSV has 'the human race' in place of 'living men'.

¹⁵ The NRSV has 'its own' in place of 'her own'.

¹⁶ In place of 'divine', some MSS have 'true'.

¹⁷ Αὐτός γέ τοι ὁ τύραννος καὶ ὅλον τὸ συμβούλιον ἐθαύμασαν αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπομονήν, ¹⁸ δι' ἣν καὶ τῷ θεῷ νῦν παρεστήκασιν θρόνῳ καὶ τὸν μακάριον βιοῦσιν αἰῶνα. ¹⁹ καὶ γὰρ φησιν ὁ Μωϋσῆς Καὶ πάντες οἱ ἡγιασμένοι ὑπὸ τὰς χεῖράς σου. ²⁰ καὶ οὗτοι οὖν ἁγιασθέντες διὰ θεὸν τετίμηνται, οὐ μόνον ταύτῃ τῇ τιμῇ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ δι' αὐτοὺς τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν τοὺς πολεμίους μὴ ἐπικρατῆσαι ²¹ καὶ τὸν τύραννον τιμωρηθῆναι καὶ τὴν πατρίδα καθαρισθῆναι, ὥσπερ ἀντίψυχον γεγονότας τῆς τοῦ ἔθνους ἁμαρτίας. ²² καὶ διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐκείνων καὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῶν ἡ θεία πρόνοια τὸν Ἰσραὴλ προκακωθέντα διέσωσεν.

²³ Πρὸς γὰρ τὴν ἀνδρείαν αὐτῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ ταῖς βασάνοις αὐτῶν ὑπομονήν ὁ τύραννος ἀπιδὼν ἀνεκήρυξεν ὁ Ἀντίοχος τοῖς στρατιώταις αὐτοῦ εἰς ὑπόδειγμα τὴν ἐκείνων ὑπομονήν ²⁴ ἔσχεν τε αὐτοὺς γενναίους καὶ ἀνδρείους εἰς πεζομαχίαν καὶ πολιορκίαν καὶ ἐκπορδήσας ἐνίκησεν πάντας τοὺς πολεμίους.

¹⁷ The tyrant himself and all his council marvelled at their endurance, ¹⁸ through which they now stand before the divine throne and live a blessed life. ¹⁹ For, Moses says, "All the saints are under your hands." ²⁰ These, then, who have been sanctified through God, are honoured, not only with this honour, but also by the fact that, because of them, our enemies did not rule over our nation; ²¹ and the tyrant was punished and the homeland purified – they having become, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation. ²² Through the blood of these devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been mistreated.

²³ For, the tyrant Antiochus, when he saw the courage of their virtue and their endurance under the tortures, proclaimed them to his soldiers as an example for their own endurance; ²⁴ and this made them brave and courageous for infantry battle and siege, and he ravaged and conquered all his enemies.

¹⁷ Before 'endurance', some MSS add 'virtue and'; the NRSV includes the words in a footnote.

¹⁸ For 'blessed life', the NRSV has 'the life of eternal blessedness'.

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'who are consecrated' in place of 'the saints'.

²⁰ Some MSS have 'for the sake of' in place of 'through'.

²¹ The WEBBE lacks the words, 'as it were'.

²² 'Atoning sacrifice' translates ἱλαστηρίου, as in Rm 3:25; compare Hb 9:11–15, 1P 1:19, 1J 1:7.

²³ For 'the courage of their virtue', the WEBBE has 'courageous virtue'.

²⁴ Actually, Antiochus was not successful and died in Babylon (1M 6:1–16).

Μακκαβαίων Δ' 18

¹ Ὡ τῶν Αβραμιαίων σπερμάτων ἀπόγονοι παῖδες Ἰσραηλῖται, πείθεσθε τῷ νόμῳ τούτῳ καὶ πάντα τρόπον εὐσεβεῖτε ² γινώσκοντες ὅτι τῶν πατρῶν ἐστὶν δεσπότης ὁ εὐσεβὴς λογισμὸς καὶ οὐ μόνον τῶν ἐνδοθεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἔξωθεν πόνων.

³ Ἄνδρες ὧν διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν προέμενοι τὰ σώματα τοῖς πόνοις ἐκεῖνοι οὐ μόνον ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐθαυμάσθησαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ θείας μερίδος κατηξιώθησαν.

⁴ Καὶ δι' αὐτοὺς εἰρήνευσεν τὸ ἔθνος, καὶ τὴν εὐνομίαν τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς πατρίδος ἀνανεωσάμενοι ἐκπεπόρθησαν τοὺς πολεμίους. ⁵ καὶ ὁ τύραννος Ἀντίοχος καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς τετιμώρηται καὶ ἀποθανὼν κολάζεται· ὥς γὰρ οὐδὲν οὐδαμῶς ἴσχυσεν ἀναγκάσαι τοὺς Ἱεροσολυμίτας ἀλλοφυλῆσαι καὶ τῶν πατρῶν ἐθῶν ἐκδιαιτηθῆναι, τότε ἀπάρας ἀπὸ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἐστράτευσεν ἐπὶ Πέρσας.

⁶ Ἐλεγεν δὲ ἡ μήτηρ τῶν ἐπτὰ παίδων καὶ ταῦτα τὰ δικαιώματα τοῖς τέκνοις ⁷ ὅτι Ἐγὼ ἐγενήθην παρθένος ἀγνή

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¹ O Israelite children, descendants of the seed of Abraham, obey this law and always exercise piety in every way, ² knowing that devout reason is the master of all emotions, not only of those sufferings from within, but also those from without.

³ Therefore, those who gave up their bodies in suffering for the sake of religion were not only admired by men but were deemed worthy of a divine portion.

⁴ Because of them, the nation gained peace and, by reviving observance of the Law in the homeland, they ravaged the enemy. ⁵ The tyrant Antiochus was both punished on earth and is being chastised after his death. Since in no way whatever was he able to compel the Israelites to become pagans and to abandon their ancestral customs, he left Jerusalem and marched against the Persians.

⁶ The righteous mother of the seven sons spoke as follows to her children: ⁷ "I was a pure virgin and did not go outside

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- ¹ This exhortation seems repetitious after 17:7-24 but it is the author's method to employ recurrent themes.
- ² The WEBBE has 'religious reasoning' in place of 'devout reason'.
- ³ In place of 'of a divine portion', the NRSV has 'to share in a divine inheritance'.
- ⁴ The WEBBE has 'drove the enemy out of the land' in place of 'ravaged the enemy'.
- ⁵ The second sentence of this verse does not fit well with the first.
- ⁶ Compare the mother's last words in this paragraph with 2M 7:22-29. The mother is the supreme heroine of the story.
- ⁷ The literal translation for the end of this verse is, "but I guarded the rib that was built."

οὐδὲ ὑπερέβην πατρικὸν οἶκον, ἐφύλασσον δὲ τὴν
 ὠκοδομημένην πλευράν. ⁸ οὐδὲ ἔφθειρέν με λυμεῶν ἐρημίας
 φθορεὺς ἐν πεδίῳ, οὐδὲ ἐλυμήνατό μου τὰ ἄγνα τῆς
 παρθενίας λυμεῶν ἀπάτης ὄφιος. ⁹ ἔμεινα δὲ χρόνον ἀκμῆς
 σὺν ἀνδρί· τούτων δὲ ἐνηλίκων γενομένων ἐτελεύτησεν ὁ
 πατὴρ αὐτῶν, μακάριος μὲν ἐκεῖνος, τὸν γὰρ τῆς εὐτεκνίας
 βίον ἐπιζήσας τὸν τῆς ἀτεκνίας οὐκ ὠδυνήθη καιρόν. ¹⁰ ὃς
 ἐδίδασκεν ὑμᾶς ἔτι ὡς σὺν ὑμῖν τὸν νόμον καὶ τοὺς προφήτας.
¹¹ τὸν ἀναιρεθέντα Ἀβελ ὑπὸ Καὶν ἀνεγίνωσκέν τε ὑμῖν καὶ
 τὸν ὀλοκαρπούμενον Ἰσαακ καὶ τὸν ἐν φυλακῇ Ἰωσηφ.
¹² ἔλεγεν δὲ ὑμῖν τὸν ζηλωτὴν Φινεες, ἐδίδασκέν τε ὑμᾶς τοὺς
 ἐν πυρὶ Ἀνανιαν καὶ Ἀζαριαν καὶ Μισαηλ. ¹³ ἐδόξαζεν δὲ καὶ
 τὸν ἐν λάκκῳ λεόντων Δανιηλ, ὃν ἐμακάριζεν.
¹⁴ ὑπεμίμνησκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν Ἡσαιου γραφὴν τὴν
 λέγουσαν Κἂν διὰ πυρὸς διέλθῃς, φλόξ οὐ κατακαύσει σε.
¹⁵ τὸν ὑμνογράφον ἐμελώδει ὑμῖν Δαυιδ λέγοντα Πολλαὶ αἱ
 θλίψεις τῶν δικαίων. ¹⁶ τὸν Σαλωμῶντα ἐπαροιμιάζεν ὑμῖν

my father's house; but I guarded the rib from which woman
 was made. ⁸ No seducer corrupted me on a desert plain, nor
 did the destroyer, the deceitful serpent, defile the purity of
 my virginity. ⁹ In the time of my maturity, I remained with
 my husband and, when these sons had grown up, their father
 died. A happy man was he, who lived out his life with good
 children and did not have the grief of bereavement. ¹⁰ While
 yet with you, he taught you the Law and the Prophets. ¹¹ He
 read to you about Abel slain by Cain, and the offering up of
 Isaac, and about Joseph in prison. ¹² He told you of the zeal
 of Phinehas, and he taught you about Hananiah, Azariah and
 Mishael in the fire. ¹³ He praised Daniel in the den of the lions
 and blessed him. ¹⁴ He reminded you of the scripture of
 Isaiah, which says, "Even though you go through the fire, the
 flame shall not consume you." ¹⁵ He sang to you the songs of
 the psalmist David, who said, "Many are the afflictions of the
 righteous." ¹⁶ He recounted to you Solomon's proverb,

⁸ On the 'desert plain', women were in danger from men and from demons, who were believed to inhabit the wilderness (See Dt 22:25-27).

⁹ The WEBBE includes the words up to 'with my husband' as part of v. 8.

¹⁰ In place of 'yet', the NRSV has 'he was still'.

¹¹ The NRSV has 'Isaac who was offered as a burnt offering' in place of 'the offering up of Isaac'.

¹² The WEBBE has 'the zealous Phinehas' in place of 'the zeal of Phinehas'.

¹³ In place of 'praised', the WEBBE has 'glorified'.

¹⁴ See Is 43:2.

¹⁵ See Ps 34:19.

¹⁶ See Pr 3:18 (here modified slightly).

λέγοντα Ξύλον ζωῆς ἐστὶν τοῖς ποιοῦσιν αὐτοῦ τὸ θέλημα.

¹⁷ τὸν Ιεζεκιηλ ἐπιστοποῖ τὸν λέγοντα Εἰ ζήσεται τὰ ὀστά τὰ ξηρὰ ταῦτα; ¹⁸ ὥδῃν μὲν γάρ, ἣν ἐδίδαξεν Μωϋσῆς, οὐκ ἐπελάθετο διδάσκων τὴν λέγουσαν ¹⁹ Ἐγὼ ἀποκτενῶ καὶ ζῆν ποιήσω· αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν καὶ ἡ μακρότης τῶν ἡμερῶν.

²⁰ Ὁ πικρᾶς τῆς τότε ἡμέρας καὶ οὐ πικρᾶς, ὅτε ὁ πικρὸς Ἑλλήνων τύραννος πῦρ πυρὶ σβέσας λέβησιν ὠμοῖς καὶ ζέουσι θυμοῖς ἀγαγὼν ἐπὶ τὸν καταπέλτην καὶ πάλιν τὰς βασάνους αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἐπτὰ παῖδας τῆς Αβρααμίτιδος ²¹ τὰς τῶν ὀμμάτων κόρας ἐπήρωσεν καὶ γλώσσας ἐξέτεμεν καὶ βασάνοις ποικίλαις ἀπέκτεινεν. ²² ὑπὲρ ὧν ἡ θεία δίκη μετέτληθεν καὶ μετελεύσεται τὸν ἀλάστορα τύραννον. ²³ οἱ δὲ Αβραμιαῖοι παῖδες σὺν τῇ ἀθλοφόρῳ μητρὶ εἰς πατέρων χορὸν συναγελάζονται ψυχὰς ἀγνὰς καὶ ἀθανάτους ἀπειληφότες παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ. ²⁴ Ὡς ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμην.

“There is a tree of life for those who do his will.” ¹⁷ He confirmed the query of Ezekiel, “Shall these dry bones live?”

¹⁸ For, he did not forget to teach you the song that Moses taught, which says, ¹⁹ “I kill and I make alive: this is your life and the length of your days.””

²⁰ O bitter, and yet not bitter, was that day when that bitter tyrant of the Greeks quenched fire with fire in his cruel cauldrons and, in his burning rage, brought those seven sons of the daughter of Abraham to the rack and to more tortures, ²¹ pierced their eyeballs and cut out their tongues, and put them to death with various tortures. ²² For these crimes, divine justice pursued and will pursue the accursed tyrant. ²³ However, the sons of Abraham, with their victorious mother, are gathered together in the chorus of the fathers, and have received pure and immortal souls from God. ²⁴ To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁷ See Ezk 37:2-3.

¹⁸ The WEBBE includes the first words of v. 19 in this verse (up to ‘make alive’).

¹⁹ See Dt 32:39, 30:20.

²⁰ In place of ‘more’, some MSS have, ‘all his’. This peroration sums up many previous themes set forth throughout the book.

²¹ The NRSV has ‘the pupils of their eyes’ in place of ‘their eyeballs’.

²² The WEBBE has ‘pestilent wretch’ in place of ‘accursed tyrant’.

²³ In place of ‘immortal’, some MSS have, ‘victorious’.

²⁴ The NRSV has ‘whom’ in place of ‘him’.