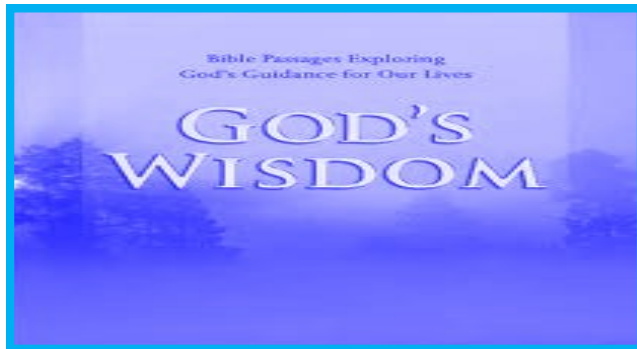


according to Romans 1:21: 'Because when they knew God they have not glorified him as God or given thanks'; *the end also of their condemnation will come upon them*, that is, their final condemnation of which Matthew 25:41 says:

'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire'. The beginning of condemnation is in the separation of soul and body; the middle, in the torment of a separated soul; the end, however, in resurrection when it will be tormented in hell with the risen body; *the end, I say, of their condemnation*, of those who now would not be corrected; *the end also of their condemnation will come upon them*;

Gregory: 'Those whom scourging now does not correct, put it off for the future'; *upon them*, because it comes from heaven to oppress them, so that they cannot resist as overwhelmed or oppressed; Psalm 10:7: 'The Lord shall rain snares upon sinners, fire and brimstone and storms of winds shall be the portion of their cup'.

END OF WISDOM 12



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THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 12

THE BOOK OF WISDOM—A PROLOGUE BY SAINT JEROME

The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence. The Jews claim that it is a work of Philo; it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed. This is the Prologue Jerome put before the Book of Wisdom; he shows firstly the origin of this book saying: 'The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style, that is, its language is so elegant that it 'has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence', that is, its taste is more Greek than Hebrew. The Greeks are more eloquent and deeper in their statements than the Hebrews. So, since this book has a most elegant style with the deepest teachings, it is clear that it was written in Greek rather than in Hebrew. Secondly, Jerome names its author when he says: 'The Jews claim that it', namely, the Book of Wisdom 'is a work of Philo' as its compiler but that Solomon was the person who discovered it. While Philo was a Jew he was highly skilled in the Greek language. Jerome says of him in the book *De viris illustribus* that 'he was a Jew of Alexandria of the class of priests'. Thirdly, he gives the reason for the title when he says: 'it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed'. The translation is based on the Douay Rheims version of the Bible.

THE COMMENTARY ON THE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF WISDOM ARE THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SERAPHIC DOCTOR SAINT BONAVENTURE, OFM

Chapter 12

Secondly, on the punishment of the Canaanites and Amorites

O how good and sweet is your spirit, O Lord, in all things! After dealing with the benefits shown to the children of Israel mainly in the affliction and punishment of the Egyptians, he treats here of the benefits shown to them mainly in the affliction of the Canaanites and Amorites, the inhabitants of the promised land.

In the first part he shows, firstly, the just punishment of these peoples; secondly, the mercy shown in the manner of punishing: *Yet even those you spared*; thirdly, the instruction by both [punishment and mercy] of the people of God: *But you being master of power*; fourthly, the condemnation of the incorrigible enemies by both: *Wherefore you have also greatly tormented them.*

(Verse 25). *Therefore, you have sent a judgment upon them as senseless children to mock them*, that is, a punishment in which they were mocked because it was with frogs and flies and similar small and contemptible animals, not with large and noble animals such as lions and bears, as is clear in Exodus, chapters 7-12.

(Verse 26). *But they by mockeries and reprehensions*, in reprehension full of mockery, *were not amended*, namely, from unfaithfulness and a perverse way of life; *experienced the worthy judgment of God*, namely, of condemnation and death.

And that some were corrected by the whips would seem to be implied; hence some Egyptians went with the Israelites, as is clear in Exodus 12:38; and the Gibeonites made a treaty with them as is clear in Joshua 9:15. *For in the things they suffered*, namely, from the divine scourging, *they bore them with difficulty*, bearing them with impatience.

They suffered, that is, endured, *by those very things*, endured, because the word for suffering comes from passion, not from patience; *with Indignation*, namely, by murmuring against God; Sirach 33:5: 'The heart of a fool is as the wheel of a cart'. *By those very things which they took for gods*, namely, brute animals; when they were destroyed, that is, punished, *by the same*, namely, by these images;

Baruch 3:19: 'The are cut off and are gone down to hell'; *seeing him*, that is, God, as if pondering God in a sensible experience; for they could not see God as God is; 1 John 4:12: 'No one has seen God at any time'. *Whom in time past*, namely, in prosperity, *they denied that they knew*, according to Exodus 5:2: 'I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go'. *The true God*, add, to be; *they acknowledged*, not from a voluntary belief but from a belief forced by the punishments; such is the faith of the demons;

James 2:19: 'You believe that there is one God. You do well; the devils also believe and tremble'; Isaiah 26:16: 'Lord, they have sought after you in distress'. 'For punishments open the eyes closed by sin', *Seeing*, namely, the Egyptians and Canaanites, *him whom in time past they denied that they knew*, add, to be, *the true God*; *they acknowledged*, I say, *by those very things which they took for gods*, that is, by brute animals; and this happened *when they were destroyed by the same*. *For which cause*, namely, because they acknowledged God, but did not glorify God,

Fourthly, the condemnation of incorrigible enemies for their contempt is treated under six headings

Wherefore and you have also greatly tormented them who in their life have lived foolishly and unjustly, by the same things which they worshipped. Here he treats of the condemnation of the incorrigible enemies because of their contempt of both divine justice and mercy; and, firstly, he treats of the whip with which they had to be corrected: secondly, the suitability of the whip: *For they went astray for a long time in the ways of error*; thirdly, the incorrigibility of those scourged: *But they that were not amended by mockeries and reprehensions*; fourthly, the evidence of incorrigibility: *For in the things they suffered, they bore them with difficulty*; fifthly, the reason why they had to be corrected: *By those very things which they took for gods*; sixthly, the carrying out of the condemnation: *For which cause the end also of their condemnation will come upon them*.

(Verse 23). *Wherefore and you have also greatly tormented them*, as if to say: in this way you give discipline to your own; *wherefore*, as by an opposite; *and*, for however; *them who in their life have lived foolishly and unjustly*, by an error in faith; or: in their life, that is, by having lived for themselves and not for God; *and unjustly*, by an error in conduct; *by the same things which they worshipped*, namely, brute animals; *you have also greatly tormented them*, that is, by most severe torments such as by frogs, flies, locusts, wasps and such like animals. *By the same things which they worshipped*, namely, in genus and without number or species.

(Verse 24). *For they went astray*, not for a short time, but *for a long time*, and this increases their sin because, 'sins are so much worse, the longer the unhappy soul remains bound'. *In the ways of error*, that is, of infidelity that, by antonomasia, is called error. Of this way, Proverbs 16:25 says: 'There is a way that seems right to a person, and the ends thereof lead to death'. *Holding those things for gods which are the most worthless among beasts*, that is, animals made artificially, not naturally. Artificial animals are called *most worthless*, because they are useless; but all natural animals have some value. *Holding those things for gods which are the most worthless among beasts*; Romans 1:23: 'They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible human person'; also Psalm 105:20: 'They changed their glory into the likeness of a calf that eats grass'. Note that it does not say 'into a calf' but 'into the likeness of a calf' which is less and against what is worse. *Living after the manner of children without understanding*, concerning sins in behaviour; 1 Corinthians 14:20: 'Do not become like children in sense'; also 1 Peter 2:2: 'As newborn babes, rational', not stupid. However, they were living like senseless infants because they made and adored images they had made, just as when, as stated in Genesis 21:9ff., Ishmael was playing with Isaac and forcing him to adore clay images, as the Hebrews say....

Firstly, on the just punishment of these people from two points of view

In the first part he treats of the kind intention of the one punishing; secondly, the equity of the punishment: *For those ancient inhabitants*. – He shows, firstly, the cause of the kind intention, secondly the sign: *And therefore you chastise them that err*; thirdly, the purpose: *that leaving their wickedness, they may believe in you, O Lord*.

(Verse 1) *O how good and sweet is your spirit, O Lord, in all things!* This exclamation implies the inability of the speaker to express the goodness of the Creator; it is also the meaning of: *O how good and sweet is your spirit, O Lord*, as if to say: I am unable to express how great it is because of the infinity of your goodness. *Good*, namely, by sharing your good things; 'good is self diffusive'; Matthew 19:17: 'No one is good other than God alone'; only God shares what belongs to God, every creature shares what belongs to another because a creature has nothing of its own; so 1 Corinthians 4:7: 'What do you have that you have not received?' *And sweet is your spirit, O Lord, in all things*, namely, in forgiving our sins; Psalm 33:9: 'O taste and see that the Lord is sweet'; I say *your spirit in all things*, that is, in us, 'Because the love of God is the source of all good'. *In all things*, especially in things in which the mercy of God is more evident; Psalm 144:9: 'The Lord is sweet to all'.

(Verse 2). *And therefore*, because you are *good and sweet, you chastise them that err*, that is, who err in faith or conduct, like those of whom Isaiah 53:6 says: 'All we like sheep have gone astray'; also Lamentations 4:14: 'They have wandered as blind men in the streets'; *you chastise by little and little*, that is, scourging at intervals, not all at once, but by sending at different times, according to Exodus 23:29-30: 'I will not cast them from your face in one year', but 'by little and little I will drive them out'; Job 35:15: 'For God does not now bring on fury, neither does God revenge wickedness exceedingly', but a little; *you chastise*, I say, either yourself or 'by others whom you fill with the Holy Spirit, John 16:18: 'The Paraclete will convince the world of sin'. *Concerning the things wherein they offend*, that is, of the sins by which they sin; *you admonish*, namely, by promising pardon, according to Matthew 4:17: 'Do penance because the kingdom of heaven is at hand'; also Isaiah 45:22: 'Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all you ends of the earth: for I am God and there is no other'; 'Blessed are they who hear the voice of the one admonishing'; Isaiah 30:21: 'Your ears shall hear the word of one admonishing you behind your back'. *And speak to them*, that is, by threatening punishment; Isaiah 1:19-20 'If you hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land; but if you will not, the sword shall devour you'; *that leaving their wickedness*, namely, of sin or infidelity; *they may believe in you, O Lord*, namely, with a formed faith; I say *in you*, not *you*, or only *to you*; Isaiah 55:7: 'Let the wicked forsake his ways etc.'. A work of penance is contrary to a work of malice, because, just as one is from good into evil, so the other is from evil into good.

For those ancient inhabitants of your holy land, whom you abhorred. Here is treated the equality of punishment and, firstly, from the point of view of the sin itself; secondly, from the point of view of the punishment: *It was your will to destroy.*

(Verse 3). *For those ancient inhabitants of your holy land, whom you abhorred.* I have said well: *You chastise them that err, by little and little;* and this is clear in an example. *For those ancient inhabitants,* namely, the Canaanites, Amorites and other such *inhabitants of our holy land,* that is, promised to the Saints, namely, Abraham, Genesis 15:16 and 18; Isaac, Genesis 26:3ff.; Jacob, Genesis 28:13ff; *whom you abhorred* because you did not want your people to marry or intermingle with them, according to Deuteronomy 7:2-3: 'You shall make no league with them nor shall you make marriages nor show mercy to them'.

(Verses 4-5). *Because they did works hateful to you,* namely, frightful sins, as below in Wisdom 14:9: *But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike; by their sorceries,* namely, poisonous, *and wicked sacrifices,* to idols, and this is against God. But there were just sacrifices offered to God as by Noah in Genesis 8:20-21. *And those murderers of their own children,* and this against one's neighbour, *without mercy,* that is, without compassion, because in their sacrifices to the demons they offered them with much devotion, according to Psalm 105:37: 'They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils'. This is against Deuteronomy 18:9-10: 'Beware lest you have a mind to imitate the abominations of those nations, neither let there be found among you anyone that shall expiate his son or daughter, making them to pass through fire'. *And eaters of people's bowels,* this is not recorded as having happened but it is believed that it could have happened, just as at the time of the siege of Samaria it is said to have happened in 2 Kings 6:25ff. and Lamentations 4:10: 'The hands of the pitiful women have boiled their own children'; *and devourers of blood,* of human blood, against Genesis 9:4: 'Flesh with blood you shall not eat'.

(Verse 6). *And those,* that is, those shedding blood, *parents,* who, even though they were parents, shed blood and this is more serious; *of blood,* I say of souls, that is, of people; a part stands for the whole and this is synecdoche, as in Exodus 1:1 and 5: 'All the souls that went into Egypt with Jacob'; *helpless souls;* : 'That is, of those unable to defend themselves, or for whom they were unwilling to offer help', namely, of their own children for whom they provided blood and whose blood they poured out in sacrifice and which they ate by eating of what was sacrificed. I say, *and those merciless murderers of their own children, and eaters of people's bowels, it was your will to destroy,* that is, to expel *from the midst of your consecration,* that is, from the sacred land of promise; it is called the sacred land of promise or a consecration because of the meaning of a sacred thing, that is, of the land of the living, because of the institution in it of the Sacraments such as the Eucharist and baptism, because it was to be the future dwelling of holy people such as the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, because of the shedding and irrigation of the blood of Christ in it, and because of the death of the holy bodies and dust, namely, of the ancient Fathers buried there; also because in it was built a sacred place, namely, the temple, and because of the birth and life of the Holy of Holies. *By the hands of our parents,* namely, of those who entered the promised land with Joshua.

(Verse 22). *Therefore whereas you chastise us, you scourge our enemies very many ways, to the end that when we judge we may think on your goodness; and when we are judged, we may hope for your mercy.*

This is as if to say: you are so generous and merciful towards enemies; *therefore whereas you chastise us,* that is, a correcting punishment which is not to be cast aside,

according to Proverbs 3:11: 'My son reject not the correction of the Lord', because it teaches; so Psalm 17:36: 'Your discipline has corrected me unto the end, and your discipline, the same shall teach me'. *Our enemies,* who have hated us even though they were loved by us, according to the warning of the Lord in Matthew 5:44: 'Love your enemies'; *you scourge very many ways,* namely, internally and externally,

according to Psalm 31:10: 'many are the scourges of the sinner'; There is a great gap between the judgment on the elect and on the reprobate; God corrects the former so that they might amend; the others pay the penalty for pride and breach of faith'.

To the end that when we judge we may think on your goodness, namely, on others whom we see are being scourged by you; 'Happy judge who always weighs the goodness and kindness of his judgment', so that, after perceiving the kindness of God judging, learns to be kind when judging others; Psalm 72:1: 'How good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart'; Nahum 1:7: 'The Lord is good and gives strength in the day of trouble, and knows them that hope in him'. *And when we are judged,* namely, by present troubles sent to us, *we may hope for your mercy,* in the future, namely, the reward of eternal life; James 1:2-3: 'My brethren, count it a joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations knowing that the trying of your faith works patience'; Romans 5:3-5: 'We glory also in tribulations knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confounds not, because the charity of God is poured on our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us'.

(Verse 20). *For if you did punish the enemies of your servants*, for a sin against a neighbour, for which servants, I say, it is said in Luke 10:16: 'Whoever hears you, hears me, and whoever despises you, despises me'; *who deserved to die*, for a sin against God who is the life of souls, *deserved*, I say, *to die*, according to Romans 1:32: 'Not only they who do such things are worthy of death' etc. *You did punish with so great deliberation*, namely, not together but punishing by stages and successively, as is clear in the plagues of Egypt; *and you did deliver*, namely, from the temporary torments because, at the prayer of Moses, they were delivered from each torment; a similar thing happened to the Canaanites. *Giving them time and place whereby they might be changed from their wickedness*; *time*, namely, a period of life, *and place*, namely, the exile of this world; on time, Revelation 2:21 says: 'I gave her a time that she might do penance'; on place, Job 24:23 says: 'God has given him place for penance, but he abuses it unto pride'.

(Verse 21). *With what circumspection have you judged your own children, to whose parents you have sworn and made covenants of good promises?* This is as if to say: with much diligence and attention, 'Arise, and be attentive to my judgment, to my cause, my God and my Lord'. A prefiguring of this is read in Genesis 3:8, that God, about to judge the sin of Adam, walked etc.

Your own children, namely, the Saints as above in Wisdom 5:5: *Behold how they are numbered among the children of God and their lot is among the saints. Or: your own children*, namely, your faithful, according to John 1:12:

'He gave then power to be made the children of God, to them that believe in his name'. *To whose parents*, namely, of the children, that is, the Patriarchs such as Abraham in Genesis 15:5ff. and 22:16ff.; Isaac as in Genesis 26:4; Jacob in Genesis 28:13ff; *you have sworn and made covenants of good promises*, that is, sworn covenants.

Note that a covenant is a simple promise, but an oath is a promise made by calling on something sacred; Hebrews 6:18: 'That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us'. *Of good promises*, namely, of the promise of land and the blessing of the seed.

(Verse 7). *That the land which of all is most dear to you might receive*, that is, that our parents might receive, *a worthy colony*, that is, the land of the journey, *of the children of God*, namely, the Patriarchs of whom is said in Hebrews 11:13: 'Confessing that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth'. *That land*, namely, the land of the pilgrimage, *which of all is most dear to you*, namely, of the lands, that is, in all the lands because of the salvation won there for the human race, according to Psalm 73:12: 'God has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth'.

Secondly, the mercy shown in the manner of the punishment is explained in two ways

Yet even those you spared as human beings, and sent wasps, forerunners of your host, to destroy them by little and little. Here the mercy shown in the manner of the punishment is explained; and, firstly, of the way in which he takes away the false reason; secondly, he adds the true reason: *For so much then as you are just, you order all things justly.*

In the first part he explains, firstly, that his manner of punishing is not due to a lack of power; secondly, nor to ignorance: *But executing your judgments by degrees you gave them place of repentance*; thirdly, nor from fear: *Neither did you for fear of anyone give pardon to their sins*; fourthly, nor from injustice: *For there is no other God but you who has care of all that you should show that you do not give judgment unjustly.*

(Verse 8). *Yet even those you spared as human beings* etc. Some understand this of the Fathers being brought in, whose enemies the Lord had mercifully destroyed, not wanting to leave them vulnerable as mortal people subject to the dangers of war; however, it seems more fitting to apply it to the Canaanite people who were to be cast out before them. Therefore, he says: *Yet even those*, even though they had sinned grievously, *you spared*, namely, by not driving them out immediately and all together, *as human beings*, clothed in weak flesh and so prone to sin. 'The imagination and thought of the human heart are prone to evil from youth', Genesis 8:21. The Lord gives this reason in Genesis 6:3: 'My spirit shall not remain in mortals because they are flesh'. *And sent wasps, forerunners of your host*, that is, a kind of stinging wasps; 'Most piercing enemies by whom the hearts of people were stung'.

These are hornets of which Deuteronomy 7:20 says: 'Moreover, the Lord your God will send also hornets among them until God destroys and consumes all'; Exodus 23:27-28: 'I will send my fear before you'; and then: 'Sending out hornets before that shall drive away the Hivites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, before you come in'. *To destroy them*, namely, the Canaanites, *by little and little*, that is, that they might settle or flee beyond the boundaries of the promised land, or beyond the boundaries of this present life, or beyond the boundaries of the land of the living; so Baruch 3:19: 'They are cut off and are gone down to hell', that is, excluded from the land of the living.

(Verse 9). *Not that you were unable to bring the wicked under the just by war*, according to Psalm 17:40: 'You have girded me with strength unto battle, and have subdued under me them that rose against me'; *or by cruel beasts*, that is, or by wild beasts, according to Jeremiah 5:6: 'a wolf in the evening has spoiled them, a leopard watches for their cities'; above in Wisdom 11:18-19: *For your almighty hand, which made the world of matter without form, was not unable to send upon them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions, or unknown beasts of a new kind, full of rage. Or with one rough word, namely, by a harsh word, to destroy them at once*, according to Jeremiah 23:29: 'Are not my words as a fire, says the Lord, and as a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?'

(Verse 10). *But executing your judgments by degrees you gave them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were a wicked generation, and their malice natural, and that their thought could never be changed*. Here, he shows that this was not done out of ignorance, namely, of their actual or original sin, saying: *But executing your judgments by degrees you gave them place of repentance*. I have said well that it was not because *you were unable to bring the wicked under the just by war*; but *by degrees*, 'that is, gradually or part by part' and successively, *executing*, namely, punishing justly; Deuteronomy 7:22: 'God will consume these nations in your sight by little and little and by degrees, lest perhaps the beasts of the earth should increase upon you'; *you gave them place of repentance*, so that when some were punished others were corrected; Job 24:23: 'God has given him place for penance and he abuses it unto pride'. *Not being ignorant*, because ignorance has no place in God just as darkness has no place in light; so 1 John 1:5: 'God is light and in God there is no darkness'. *They were a wicked generation*, from the malice of sin because they are wicked children of wicked fathers; so above in Wisdom 4:6: *For the children that are born of unlawful beds, are witnesses of wickedness against their parents; and their malice natural*, that is, like a natural malice from the adoption of an evil habit. 'Habit is another nature'; for just as what comes from nature is difficult or impossible to shed, so also what comes from habit; so Jeremiah 13:23: 'If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, you also may do well, when you have learned evil'; 'One has difficulty in rising when weighed down by a heavy mass of habit'. *And their malice natural*; 'Remaining deep-seated', namely, from the practice of an evil habit. *And that their thought could never be changed*, namely, from the stubbornness of their perverse will; 'Their own deep-seated wickedness'; Lamentations 1:14: 'The Lord has delivered me into a hand out of which I am not able to rise'. But contra: The will is free to sin and to be penitent after sin.

(Verse 19). *For you have taught your people*; however, others were not taught, so Sirach 21:14 says: 'One who is not wise in good, will not be taught'; *by such works*, namely, of justice and mercy together. *That they must be just*, because you are just, *and humane*, that is, meek, because man is an animal meek by nature; and this is so because you are not only just but merciful;

so Psalm 100:1: 'Mercy and judgment I will sing to you, O Lord'; also Psalm 111:4: 'The Lord is merciful and compassionate and just'. And if the Lord is such, so should the servant be;

so Matthew 18:33: 'Should not you have had compassion also on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' Ecclesiastes 7:17: 'Be not over-just', namely, in such a way that you exclude mercy from your justice; for the Samaritan poured on the wounded man not only wine but also oil. *And have made your children to be of a good hope*, that is, for the kindness to be shown to your faithful who are your children; so John 1:12: 'He gave them power to be made the children of God, to them that believe in his name'.

This is a good hope of which is said in Psalm 61:9: 'Trust in God all you congregation of people'; also Psalm 27:7: 'In the Lord has my heart confided and I have been helped'; 1 Peter 1:13: 'Trust perfectly in the grace which is offered you'. *Because in judging*, that is, in punishing sinners, *you give place for repentance for sins*, that is, for those persevering in sin, namely, by waiting for them to do penance; Isaiah 30:18: 'Therefore, the Lord waits so that he may have mercy on you'. This world is the place for penance; for after leaving this world there is no further place for penance; so Ecclesiastes 11:3: 'Wherever a tree falls, whether to the south or to the north, there shall it be'. 'Then there will be no place for penance, no time for making satisfaction nor for restoring virtue'; so Ecclesiastes 9:10: 'Whatever your hand is able to do, do it earnestly, for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in Sheol, whither you are hastening'.

Thirdly, he shows the lesson for the people of God in both

But you being master of power, judge with tranquility; and with great favour dispose of us, for your power is at hand when you will. Having shown the punishment of the enemies and the mercy of the judge in punishing, here he shows the lesson for the people of God in both, and he treats, firstly, of the example by which God instructs; secondly, the mercy from which God instructs: *You have taught your people by such works*; thirdly, the way in which God instructs: *You did punish the enemies of your servants who deserved to die, with so great deliberation*; fourthly, the purpose for which God instructs: *Therefore whereas you chastise us, you scourge our enemies very many ways, to the end that when we judge we may think on your goodness.*

(Verse 18). *You, however, being master* etc. I have said well, that you show your strength and power to the incorrigible; *however*, for but; *being master of power, judge with tranquility*; this can be understood as intransitive so that the meaning of *you being master of power*, is virtuous; or as transitive: *master of power*, that is, the Lord of all strength, namely, both of angelic and human;

Psalm 23:10: 'The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory'. *You judge with tranquility*, that is, with no disturbance of mind or affection; James 1:17: 'With whom there is no change'; Isaiah 42:3ff.: 'He shall bring forth judgment unto truth, he shall not be sad nor troublesome'. *And with much favour*, in effect, that is, with much moderation, you *dispose of us*, not like the judge 'who feared not God nor regarded man', Luke 18:2. *For your power is at hand when you will*; Behold, the cause of tranquility in judging and reverence in disposing, or in carrying out, namely, because God is all powerful;

Psalm 113:3: 'God has done all things whatsoever he would'.

But it is objected that according to reason the power of understanding precedes the will, not the will power. Therefore, he ought to say: you want your power to be at hand when you will be able, not able when you so wish.

It has to be said that power precedes in being but the will precedes in acting; so God is able to do many things which God does not do because God does not so will.

I reply: *Their thought could never be changed*, that is, it was hardly possible; or it was not possible on their own, but only with God inspiring. A human being is 'a wind that goes', namely, by sin, 'and returns not', namely, except by grace.

(Verse 11). *For it was a cursed seed from the beginning*, that is, in its first parent, namely, in Canaan; Genesis 9:25: 'Cursed be Canaan'.

From the beginning, that is, in the foreknowledge of God', because 'there was in them a certain evil quality worthy of being cursed'. *Neither did you for fear of anyone give pardon to their sins*. Here, for four reasons he excludes fear from God: firstly, because no one can dispute God's judgment; secondly, because no one can resist it: *Or who shall withstand your judgment*; thirdly, because no one can take revenge on God: *Or who shall come before you to be a revenger of the wicked*; fourthly, because no one can accuse God: *Or who shall accuse you, if the nations perish, which you have made.*

Therefore, he says: *Neither did you for fear of anyone give pardon to their sins*. Neither fearing as if they were greater than you; Sirach 3:21: 'Great is the power of God alone'; Isaiah 51:12: 'Who are you that you would be afraid of a mortal?' Also Job 22:4: 'Shall God reprove you for fear', as if to say: no; rather: 'The pillars of heaven tremble, and dread at God's beck', Job 26:11?

(Verse 12). *For who shall say to you*, that is, would dare to say, or can reasonably say: *What have you done*, namely by discussing the reason for your action, as if to say: No one? So Romans 9:20: 'Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why have you made me thus?' Isaiah 45:9: 'Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it: What are you making?' *Or who shall withstand your judgment*, namely, by resisting your decree? Job 9:13: 'God whose wrath no one can resist'; and in 9:19: 'If equity of judgment be demanded, no one dare bear witness for me'. *Or who shall come before you*, that is, would dare to contest and *to be a revenger of the wicked*, ready to avenge the wicked, by punishing you as if you do them an injury by condemning them? This is equivalent to saying: no one, because Deuteronomy 32:35 says: 'Revenge is mine and I will repay them in due time that their foot may slide'; also in 32:39: 'See you that I alone am and there is no other God besides me'. *Or who shall accuse you*, namely, by reproving you for doing wrong, as if to say: no one; so John 8:46: 'Which of you shall convince me of sin?' I say, *who shall accuse you, if the nations perish, which you have made?* They *perish* from their own fault, with reference to their nature; 'If they perish, it is not the fault of the Creator but a vice of nature'; Job 12:14: 'If God pulls down there is no one that can build up'.

(Verse 13). *For there is no other God but you who has care of all that you should show that you do not give judgment unjustly.* I have said well that who can carry out any of the aforementioned against your judgment? *For there is no other God but you,* according to Isaiah 45:21: 'Have not I the Lord foretold this, and there is no God else besides me?' Above in Wisdom 6:8: God 'has equally care of all'.

But contra: 1 Corinthians 9:9: 'Does God take care for oxen?' It has to be said that God's care of providence is for all, the care of discipline is only for rational creatures.

That, precisely by this, *you should show that you do not give judgment unjustly,* in the punishment of the wicked; in Psalm 118:137: 'You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is right'.

(Verse 14). *Neither shall king, nor tyrant in your sight inquire about them whom you have destroyed.* This is equivalent to saying that you so judge rightly that *neither* a king, who rules his own well and in accord with justice, *nor* a tyrant, who rules badly and unjustly, *shall inquire about them whom you have destroyed;* 'Whether you will have lost justly', according to Job 9:12: 'Who can say, why do act so?'

For so much then as you are just, you order all things justly, thinking it not agreeable to your power, to condemn him who deserves not to be punished. Here he shows the reason why God displayed mercy in the abovementioned way of punishing, and he does this by showing, firstly, that God uses justice in all things; secondly, that, notwithstanding this, God shows mercy: *And because you are Lord of all;* thirdly, that God sometimes shows power to unbelievers: *For you show your power, when people will not believe you to be absolute in power.*

(Verse 15). *For so much then as you are just,* namely, in your nature, *you order all things justly,* namely, in a creature, 'justly punishing the son' now, so that you may spare him in the future; Hebrews 12:6: 'For whom the Lord loves, the Lord chastises'; Tobit 3:2: 'You are just, O Lord, and all your judgments are just'; also in Psalm 18:10: 'The judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves'. *He who deserves not to be punished,* that is, to correct by temporal punishment, *you condemn.*

Eternal punishment, sparing one now so that you may punish in the future; so Ezekiel 16:42: 'My jealousy shall depart from me, and I will cease and be angry no more'.

Thinking it not agreeable to your power; 'That is, foreign to and unworthy of divine mercy'. For the power of God is mercy, 'God to whom it is proper always to be merciful and to spare'; also in Psalm 53:3: 'In your strength', that is, in your mercy, 'judge me'.

Or as follows: *Him who deserves not to be punished,* namely, in eternity, *you condemn,* according to what the wicked deserve; you reproach him now; *thinking,* that is, you make others judge, *it is not agreeable to your power* to condemn such a one by your power, something foreign to and unworthy of your mercy, just as the friends of Job thought him unworthy of your mercy because you had punished him so severely.

(Verse 16). *For your power* is mercy. The work of justice is said to be foreign to God, Isaiah 28:21, but the work of mercy is proper to God. This means that God is merciful to us out of God's own goodness, but that God exercises justice for a reason within us, namely, our sin. I say, *for your power,* which is mercy, *of justice,* that is, of our justice, *is the beginning* of our justification, according to the Apostle in Titus 3:5: 'Not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us'; also

Romans 3:24: 'Being justified freely by his grace'. *And because you are Lord of all,* namely, by power, *you make yourself gracious to all,* by mercy; 'So that you who are pre-eminent in power might by nature show mercy'; above in Wisdom 11:24: *You have mercy upon all, because you can do all things.*

(Verse 17). *For you show your power,* that is, power in punishing, *when people,* namely, those in error, *will not believe you to be absolute,* that is, perfect, *in power;* Job 22:17: 'They looked upon the Almighty as if he could do nothing'. *And those who do not know you,* namely, unbelievers, *in boldness you convince,* that is, you lead boldly to punishment, and rightly so because of their sins, above in Wisdom 4:20: *Their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them*