

ECCLESIASTES

CHAPTER 1

1 The words of Ecclesiastes¹, son of David, king of Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes; vanity of vanities, and all things *be* vanity. (Emptiness and futility, said Ecclesiastes; emptiness and futility, yea, everything *is* empty and futile.)

3 What hath a man more[over] of all his travail, by which he travaileth under the sun? (What profiteth a person from all his labour, that he laboureth at under the sun?)

4 A generation passeth away, [and] *another* generation cometh; but the earth standeth without end. (One generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh; but the earth endureth forever.)

5 The sun riseth [up], and goeth down, and turneth again to his place (and returneth to its place); and there it riseth again,

6 and compasseth by the south, and turneth again to the north. The spirit compassing all things goeth about, and turneth again into his circles. (and goeth around to the south, and then returneth to the north. Going around, the wind goeth about touching all things, and then returneth full circle.)

7 All floods enter into the sea, and the sea floweth not over *the marks set of God*; the floods turn again to the place from whence they come forth, that they flow [out] again. (All the rivers enter into the sea, and the sea floweth not over *the boundaries set by God*; the rivers return to the places from where they came forth, only so that they can flow out again.)

8 All things *be* hard; a man may not declare those things by word (a person cannot declare all of these things with words alone); the eye is not (ful)filled by sight, neither the ear is filled by hearing.

9 What is that thing that was, that that shall come? What is that thing that is made, that that shall be made?

Nothing under the sun *is* new, (What is that thing that was, but that which shall come again? What is that thing that is made, but that which shall be made later? Nothing *is* new under the sun,)

10 neither any man may say, Lo! this thing is new; for now it went before in worlds, that were before us. (nor can anyone say, Lo! this is new; for it hath already come before, in the time that was before us.)

11 Mind of the former things is not, but soothly neither thinking of those things, that shall come afterward, shall be at them that shall come in the last time. (Remembering the former things is not done, and those things that come now, shall not be remembered by those who shall come after us.)

12 I Ecclesiastes was king of Israel in Jerusalem;

13 and I purposed in my soul to seek and ensearch wisely of all things, that be made under the sun. God gave this evil occupation to the sons of men, that they should be occupied therein. (and I purposed in my mind to wisely seek out and to search into everything, that is done under the sun. God gave this difficult task to the sons and daughters of men, so that they would be occupied with it.)

14 I saw all things that be made under the sun, and lo! all things *be* vanity and torment of spirit. (I saw everything that is done under the sun, and lo! everything is empty and futile, like chasing the wind.)

15 Wayward men be amended of hard (The wayward can only be corrected with great difficulty); and the number of fools is great without end.

16 I spake in mine heart, and I said, Lo! I am made great, and I passed in wisdom all men, that were before me in Jerusalem; and my soul saw many things wisely, and I learned. (I said in my heart, Lo! I am made great, and I have surpassed in wisdom all who were before me in Jerusalem; I have seen many things, and I have become wise, yea, I have learned much.)

17 And I gave mine heart, that I should know prudence and doctrine, and errors and folly. And I knew that in these things also was travail and torment of spirit; (And I gave my heart, *or I applied my mind*, so that I would

¹ *That is, (the words) of Solomon, for 'Ecclesiastes' is said, 'a speaker to the people'.*

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understand wisdom and doctrine, and errors and foolishness. And I learned that all these things were also empty *and futile*, like chasing the wind;)

18 for in much wisdom is much indignation, and he that increaseth knowing, increaseth also travail. (for the greater one's wisdom, the greater one's anger, *or one's vexation*, and he who increaseth his knowledge, also increaseth his own troubles.)

CHAPTER 2

1 Therefore I said in mine heart, I shall go, and I shall flow in delights, and I shall use goods; and I saw also that this was vanity. (And so I said in my heart, I shall go, and I shall enjoy all delights, and I shall enjoy all good things; and I saw that this was also empty and futile.)

2 And laughing I reckoned error, and I said to joy, What art thou, deceived in vain? (And I reckoned laughter as but error, and I said to joy, Of what value art thou?)

3 I thought in mine heart to withdraw my flesh from wine, that I should lead over my soul to wisdom, and that I would eschew folly, till I should see, what were profitable to the sons of men; in which deed the number of days of their life under the sun is needful. (I thought in my heart to withdraw my flesh from wine, so that I could lead over my soul unto wisdom, and so that I would eschew foolishness, until I could see, what was profitable to the sons and daughters of men; yea, which deeds, *or works*, be useful, *or meaningful*, all the days of their lives under the sun.)

4 I magnified, *either made great*, my works, I builded houses to me (I built houses for myself), and I planted vines;

5 I made yards and orchards, and I set those with trees of all kind(s);

6 and I made cisterns of waters, for to water the wood of [the] trees growing. (and I made water cisterns, to water the trees growing in the woods, *or in the groves*.)

7 I had in possession servants and handmaids; and I had much household, and droves of great beasts, and great flocks of sheep, over all men that were before me in Jerusalem. (I had in possession servants and servantesses/male and female slaves; and I had many slaves born in my house, and herds of great beasts, and great flocks of sheep, yea, more than all those who came before me in Jerusalem.)

8 I gathered together to me silver and gold, and the castles of kings and of provinces; I made to me singers

and singeresses, and [the] delights of the sons of men, and cups and vessels in service, to pour out wines; (I gathered together for myself silver and gold, from the castles of kings and out of provinces; I got singers and singeresses for myself, and *enjoyed* all the delights of the sons and daughters of men, yea, with cups and vessels for service, to pour the wine into;)

9 and I passed in riches all men that were before me in Jerusalem. Also wisdom dwelled stably with me, (and I surpassed in wealth all those who came before me in Jerusalem. And wisdom dwelled steadfastly with me,)

10 and all things which mine eyes desired, I denied not to them; neither I refrained mine heart, that not it used all lust, and delighted itself in these things which I had made ready; and I deemed this my part, if I used my travail. (and anything which my eyes desired, I did not deny them; nor did I refrain my heart from anything it desired, and it delighted itself in those things which I had prepared for it; and I judged this my portion, for all my labour.)

11 And when I had turned me to all the works which mine hands had made, and to the travails in which I had sweated (over) in vain, I saw in all things vanity and torment of soul, and that nothing under [the] sun dwelleth. (And when I turned and looked upon all the works which my hands had made, and upon the labour which I had sweated over, I saw that everything was empty and futile, like chasing the wind, and that nothing remained stable, *or unchanging*, under the sun.)

12 I passed forth to behold wisdom, and errors, and folly; *I said*, What is a man, that he may follow the king, his maker? (*I said*, What new thing can even he who followeth the king do?)

13 And I saw, that wisdom went so much before folly, as much as light is diverse from darkneses.

14 The eyes of a wise man *be* in his head, (and) a fool goeth in darkneses; and I learned, that one perishing was of ever either. (The eyes of a wise person *be* in his head, and a fool goeth in the darkness; but I learned, that the same perishing, *or the same death*, would come to both of them.)

15 And I said in mine heart, If one death shall be both of the fool and of me, what profiteth it to me, that I gave more busyness to wisdom? And I spake with my soul, and perceived, that this also was vanity. (And I said in my heart, If one death shall be for both the fool and for me, what profiteth it to me, that I gave more busyness, *or more effort and study*, to wisdom? And I spoke with

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myself, and understood, that this was also empty and futile.)

16 For the mind of a wise man shall not be, (and) in like manner as neither (that) of a fool, without end, and [the] times to coming shall cover all things (al)together with forgetting; a learned man dieth in like manner as an unlearned man. (For a wise person shall not be remembered, and in like manner neither shall a fool, yea, for ever, and the times to come shall altogether cover all things with forgetting; for a learned person dieth in the same manner as an unlearned person.)

17 And therefore it annoyed me of my life, seeing that all things under [the] sun be evil, and that all things *be* vanity and torment of the spirit. (And so it vexed me to live, seeing that all things under the sun be troublesome, and that everything *is* empty and futile, like chasing the wind.)

18 Again I cursed all my busyness, by which I travailed most studiously under [the] sun; and I shall have an heir after me,

19 whom I know not, whether he shall be wise either a fool; and he shall be lord in my travails, for which I sweated greatly, and was busy; and is there anything so vain? (whom I know not, whether he shall be wise or a fool; but he shall be the lord of all my works, for which I was so busy, and greatly sweated over; is there anything so empty and futile as this?)

20 Wherefore I ceased, and mine heart forsook for to travail further under [the] sun. (And so I ceased to study, and my heart did not desire to labour any more under the sun.)

21 For why when another man travailleth in wisdom, and teaching, and busyness, he leaveth things gotten to an idle man; and therefore this *is* vanity, and great evil. (For though a person laboureth over something with wisdom, and knowledge, and diligence, he must leave all that he hath gotten to someone else, who did not labour over it; and so this *is* empty and futile, and a great evil.)

22 For why what shall it profit to a man of all his travail, and torment of spirit, with which he was tormented under [the] sun? (For what shall it profit a person for all his labour, and trials and tribulations, with which he was tormented under the sun?)

23 All his days be full of sorrows and mischiefs, and by night he resteth not in soul; and whether this is not vanity? (All his days be full of sorrows and mischiefs, and at night his soul resteth not; and is not this all empty and

futile?)

24 Whether it is not better to eat and drink, and to show to his soul [the] goods of his travails? and this *thing* *is* of the hand of God. (Is it not better for a person to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good things from all his labour? and this *is* also from the hand of God.)

25 Who shall devour so, and shall flow in (such) delights, as I *have*? (Who shall ever devour such *food*, and shall flow in, *or shall enjoy*, such delights, as I *have*?)

26 God gave wisdom, and knowing, and gladness to a good man in his sight; but he gave torment, and superfluous busyness to a sinner, that he increase, and gather together, and give to him that pleaseth God; but also this *is* vanity, and vain busyness of soul. (God gave wisdom, and knowledge, and happiness to those who be good before him; but he gave torment, and superfluous busyness to the sinner, so that first he increase, and gather together, but then he must give it all to him who pleaseth God; but this is also empty and futile, like chasing the wind.)

CHAPTER 3

1 All things have time, and all things under [the] sun pass by their spaces. (Everything hath a time, and all things pass forth in their places under the sun.)

2 Time of birth, and time of dying; time to plant, and time to draw up that that is planted. (Time to be born, and time to die; time to plant, and time to draw up what is planted.)

3 Time to slay, and time to make whole (Time to kill, and time to heal); time to destroy, and time to build.

4 Time to weep, and time to laugh; time to bewail, and time to dance.

5 Time to scatter stones, and time to gather (them) together; time to embrace, and time to be far from embracings.

6 Time to get, and time to lose; time to keep, and time to cast away. (Time to get, and time to set free; time to keep, and time to throw away.)

7 Time to cut, and time to sew together; time to be still, and time to speak (time to be silent, and time to speak).

8 Time to love, and time of hatred; time of battle, and time of peace. (Time to love, and time to hate; time to fight, and time to make peace.)

9 What hath a man more of his travail? (What more hath a person for all of his labour?)

10 I saw the torment, which God gave to the sons of

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men, that they be occupied therein. (I saw the torment, which God gave to the sons and daughters of men, and with which they be occupied.)

11 God made all things good in their time, and gave the world to disputing of them, that a man find not (out) the work that God hath wrought from the beginning unto the end. (God made all things good in their time, and let the world dispute over them, but no one shall understand the work that God hath wrought from the beginning unto the end.)

12 And I knew that nothing was better *to a man*, but to be glad, and to do good *works* in his life. (And so I know that there *is* nothing better *for a person*, but to be happy, and to do good *works* in his life.)

13 For why each man that eateth and drinketh, and seeth good of his travail; this is the gift of God. (For each person who eateth, and drinketh, and seeth the good that cometh from all of his labour; yea, this is the gift of God.)

14 I have learned that all the works, that God made, last steadfastly unto without end; we may not add anything to those *works*, neither take away from those *things*, which God made, that he be dreaded (which God made, so that he be feared/so that he be revered).

15 That thing that is made, dwelleth perfectly; those things that shall come, were before; and God restoreth that, that is gone (and God restoreth what is gone).

16 I saw under [the] sun unfaithfulness in the place of doom; and wickedness in the place of rightfulness. (I saw under the sun unfaithfulness in place of judgement, *or of justice*; and wickedness in place of righteousness, *or of uprightness*.)

17 And I said in mine heart, The Lord shall deem a just man, and an unfaithful man; and the time of each thing shall be then. (And I said in my heart, The Lord shall judge the righteous, and the unfaithful; and then shall be the *proper* time for each thing.)

18 I said in mine heart of the sons (and daughters) of men, that God should prove them, and show (them) that they be like beasts.

19 Therefore one is the perishing of man and of beasts, and even condition *is* of ever either; as a man dieth, so and those *beasts* die; all *those* breathe in like manner, and a man hath nothing more than a beast. All things be subject to vanity, (And so the perishing of people and of beasts is one and the same, and the condition of both of them *is* equal, *or even*; for as a person dieth, so do those *beasts* die; *they* all breathe in like manner, and a person hath nothing more than a beast. Everything is empty and

futile,)

20 and all things go to one place; those be made of earth, and those turn again (al)together into earth. (and all things go to one place; they all be made of dust, *or of dirt*, and they shall all return to the dust, *or to the dirt*.)

21 Who knoweth, if the spirit of the sons of Adam goeth upward, and if the spirit of beasts goeth downward? (Yet who knoweth, if the spirits of the sons and daughters of Adam go upward to heaven, and if the spirits of the beasts go downward into the ground? *I do not know*.)

22 And I perceived that nothing is better, than that a man be glad in his work, and that this be his part; for who shall bring (to) him, that he know things that shall come after him? (And I perceived that nothing is better, than that a person be happy in his work, and that this be his portion; for who shall bring him *the knowledge*, so that he know what shall come after him?)

CHAPTER 4

1 I turned me to other things, and I saw false challenges, that be done under the sun (and I saw much oppression, that is done under the sun), and the tears of the guiltless, and (that) no man (was a) comforter; and that they destitute, *either forsaken*, of the help of all men, may not against-stand the violence of them.

2 And I praised more dead men than living men; (And I praised the dead more than the living;)

3 and I deemed him, that was not born yet, and saw not the evils that be done under the sun, *to be* more blessed than ever either. (and I judged him, who was not yet born, and saw not the evils that be done under the sun, *to be* more blessed than either the living or the dead.)

4 Again I beheld all the travails of men, and busynesses; and I perceived that those be open to [the] envy of the neighbour; and therefore in this is vanity (and so this is emptiness and futility), and superfluous business.

5 A fool foldeth together his hands, and eateth his flesh (and eateth his meat),

6 and saith, Better is an handful, with rest, than ever either hand full, with travail and torment of soul.

7 I beheld and found also another vanity under the sun; (I looked and found more emptiness and futility under the sun;)

8 one there is, and he hath not a second; neither a son, nor a brother; and nevertheless he ceaseth not to

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travail, neither his eyes be (ful)filled with riches; neither he bethinketh (to) *him(self)*, and saith, To whom travail I, and deceive my soul in goods? In this also is vanity, and the worst torment. (one is alone, and he hath not a second, *or someone with him*; neither a son, nor a brother; and yet he ceaseth not to labour, and his eyes be not fulfilled with his riches; nor he thinketh to *himself*, and saith, For whom do I labour, and deprive myself of the enjoyment of good things? This is also empty and futile, and the worst torment.)

9 Therefore it is better, that two be together than one; for they have profit of their fellowship. (And so it is better, that two be together, rather than that they be alone; for they shall have profit, *or shall benefit*, from their fellowship.)

10 If one falleth down, he shall be underset of the tother; woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth, he hath none to raise him up. (If one falleth down, he shall be helped up by the other; woe to him who is alone, for when he falleth, he hath no one to raise him up again.)

11 And if twain sleep *together*, they shall be nourished together; (but) how shall one be made hot?

12 And if any man hath [the] mastery against one, twain against-stand him; a threefold cord is broken of hard (a threefold cord is much harder to break).

13 A poor man and wise is better than an eld king and fool(ish), that cannot before-see into time to coming. (A poor person who is wise, is better than an old king who is foolish, and who cannot foresee into the time to come, *or who will not listen to good advice*.)

14 For sometime a man goeth out, both from prison and chains, to a realm (and becometh a king); and another, born into a realm, is wasted by neediness.

15 I saw all men living that go under the sun, with the second young waxing man, that shall rise (up) for him. (I saw all the living who go under the sun, and yet for each, someone young shall rise up, and shall take their place.)

16 The number of people, of all that were before him, is great without measure, and they that shall come afterward, shall not be glad in him; but also this *is* vanity and torment of the spirit. (The number of all the people, who be under him, is great without measure, and yet they who shall come after, shall not be grateful to him; but this *is* also empty and futile, like chasing the wind.)

CHAPTER 5

1 Thou that enterest into the house of God, keep thy foot, and nigh thou for to hear; for why much better is

obedience, than the sacrifice of fools, that know not what evil they do. (Thou who enterest into the House of God, keep thy foot, and draw close to hear; for obedience is much better than the sacrifice of fools, who know not what evil they do.)

2 Speak thou not anything follily (Do not thou say anything foolish), neither (let) thine heart be swift to bring forth a word before God; for God *is* in heaven, and thou art on earth, therefore (let) thy words be few.

3 Dreams follow many busynesses, and folly shall be found in many words.

4 If thou hast avowed anything to God, tarry thou not to yield *it*; for an unfaithful and fond promise displeaseth him; but yield thou whatever thing thou hast avowed;

5 and it is much better to make not a vow, than after a vow to yield not the promises. (and it is much better to not make a vow, than to make a vow and then not yield the promises.)

6 Give thou not thy mouth, that thou make thy flesh to do sin; neither say thou before an angel, No purveyance there is; lest peradventure the Lord be wroth on thy words, and destroy all the works of thine hands. (Give thou not thy mouth, that thou make thy flesh to do sin; nor then say thou before an angel, This is but a mistake; lest perhaps the Lord be angry with thy words, and destroy all the works of thy hands.)

7 Where be many dreams, *be* full many vanities, and words without number; but dread thou God. (Where there be many dreams, there *is* much that is empty and futile, and words without number; rather, fear thou God/rather, have thou reverence for God.)

8 If thou seest false challenges of needy men, and violent dooms (If thou seest the poor oppressed, and grave injustice), and that rightfulness is destroyed in the province, wonder thou not on this doing; for another is higher than an high man, and also other men be more high above these men;

9 and furthermore the king of all (the) earth commandeth to the servant. (and ultimately the King of all the earth commandeth to all his servants.)

10 An avaricious man shall not be [ful]filled of money; and he that loveth riches shall not take (the) fruits of them; and therefore this *is* vanity. (A greedy person shall never be fulfilled, *or filled full*, with money; and he who loveth riches shall never *truly* enjoy their fruits, *or their earnings*; and so this *is* empty and futile.)

11 Where there be many riches, also many men there *be*, that eat those (Where there be many riches, there

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also *be* many people, who shall eat them); and what profiteth it to the holder, but that he seeth [the] riches with his eyes?

12 Sleep is sweet to him that worketh, whether he eat little either much; but the fullness of a rich man suffereth not him to sleep. (Sleep is sweet to him who worketh, whether he eat a little or a great deal; but a rich person's fullness will not allow him to sleep.)

13 Also another sickness is full evil, which I saw under the sun; riches (that) *be* kept into the harm of their lord.

14 For they perish in the worst torment; (and) he begat a son, that shall be in sovereign neediness. (And then those riches be lost in a terrible calamity; and so he hath begotten a son, who shall be left in great neediness.)

15 As he went naked out of his mother's womb, so he shall turn again; and he shall take away with him nothing of his travail. (As he went naked out of his mother's womb, so he shall return; and he shall not take away with him anything gained from all his labour.)

16 Utterly *it is* a wretched sickness; as he came, so he shall turn again. What profiteth it to him, that he travailed into the wind? (*Yea, it is* utterly a wretched sickness; as he came, so he shall return. What hath it profited him? he hath only laboured for the wind!)

17 In all the days of his life he ate in darkneses, and in many busynesses, and in neediness, and sorrow.

18 Therefore this seemed good to me, that a man eat, and drink, and use gladness of his travail, in which he travailed under the sun, in the number of days of his life, which God gave to him; and this is his part. (And so it seemed good to me, that a person should eat, and drink, and enjoy, *or get happiness from*, the fruits of his labour, for which he laboured under the sun, in the days of his life, which God gave to him; yea, this is his portion.)

19 And to each man, to whom God gave riches, and chattel, and gave power to him to eat of those, and to use his part, and to be glad of his travail; this is the gift of God. (And to each person, to whom God gave riches, and substance, and gave the power to him to enjoy them, and to use his portion, and to be happy in his labour, *or in his work*; this is the gift of God.)

20 For he shall not think much on the days of his life, for God occupieth his heart with delights.

CHAPTER 6

1 Also another evil there is (There is also another evil), which I saw under the sun; and certainly *it is* oft used with men.

2 A man *is*, to whom God gave riches, and chattel, and honour; and nothing faileth to his soul of all things which he desireth; and God giveth not power to him, that he eat thereof, but a strange man shall devour it². This is vanity, and a great wretchedness. (There *is* a person, to whom God gave riches, and possessions, and honour; and he lacketh nothing of all the things which he desireth; but God giveth him not the power to enjoy those things, but a stranger shall enjoy them. This is empty and futile, and a great wretchedness.)

3 If a man engendereth an hundred free sons, and hath many days of age, and his soul useth not the goods of his chattel, and wanteth burying; I pronounce of this man, that a dead-born child is better than he. (Yea, if a man begetteth a hundred sons, and hath many years of age, and yet he is not able to enjoy the good things in his life, and at the last he even lacketh a proper burial, *or a proper tomb*; I declare of this man, that a still-born child is better than he.)

4 For he cometh in vain, and goeth to darkneses; and his name shall be done away by forgetting.

5 He saw not the sun, neither knew the diversity of good and of evil;

6 also though he live two thousand years, and useth not goods; whether all things hasten not to one place? (even if he live two thousand years, he hath not enjoyed the good things in his life; and do not all hasten to one and the same place?)

7 All the travail of a man *is* in his mouth, but the soul of him shall not be [ful]filled with goods. (All the labour of a person *is* for his mouth, yet his belly, *or his appetite*, shall never be fulfilled with enough good things.)

8 What hath a wise man more than a fool? and what hath a poor *man*, but that he go thither, where is life? (What more hath a person who is wise, than a person who is a fool? or what hath someone who is poor, but that he go there, with a knowledge, *or with an understanding*, of life?)

9 It is better to see that, that thou covetest, than to desire that, that thou knowest not; but also this is vanity, and presumption of spirit. (It is better to see what thou covetest, than to desire what thou knowest not; but this is also empty and futile, like chasing the wind.)

10 The name of him that shall come, is called now, and it is known, that he is a man, and he may not strive in doom against a stronger than himself. (The name of what

² For God draweth him away suddenly from (this) present life.

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is to come is known and understood, and it is also known, that one cannot argue in court against someone stronger than oneself.)

11 Words be full many, and have much vanity in disputing. What need is it to a man to seek greater things than himself; (There can be a great many words, but there is much that is empty and futile in disputing, or in arguing. What profiteth it to someone,)

12 since he knoweth not, what shall befall to him in his life, in the number of (the) days of his pilgrimage, and in the time that passeth as (a) shadow? either who may show to him, what thing under [the] sun shall come after him?

CHAPTER 7

1 A good name is better than precious ointments (A good name, *or a good reputation*, is better than expensive perfume); and the day of death *is better* than the day of birth.

2 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of a feast; for in that *house* the end of all men is *warned* (of), and a man living thinketh, what is to coming (for in that *house* the end of all people is *warned* of, and the living should think of what is to come).

3 Ire is better than laughing; for the soul of a trespasser is amended by the heaviness of (his) cheer.

4 The heart of wise men *is* where sorrow is; and the heart of fools *is* where *folly* gladness is.

5 It is better to be reprov'd of a wise man, than to be deceived by the flattering of fools; (It is better to be rebuked by a wise person, than to be deceived by the flattery of fools;)

6 for as the sound of thorns burning under a pot, so is the laughing of a fool. But also this *is* vanity. (for the sound of thorns burning under a pot, *is* like the laughter of a fool. But this is also empty and futile.)

7 False challenge troubleth a wise man, and it shall lose the strength of his heart. (Untrue words, *that is, lies and slander*, trouble a wise person, and they shall destroy the strength of his heart, *that is, his resolve, or his determination*.)

8 Forsooth the end of prayer is better than the beginning. A patient man is better than a proud man.

9 Be thou not swift to be wroth; for ire resteth in the bosom of a fool. (Do not thou be quick to get angry; for anger lieth in the heart of a fool.)

10 Say thou not, What guessest thou is the cause, that the former times were better than be now? for why such

asking is fond (for such questioning is foolish).

11 Forsooth wisdom with riches is more profitable, and profiteth more to men seeing the sun. (For wisdom is more profitable than riches, and profiteth all who see the sun.)

12 For as wisdom defendeth, so money *defendeth*; but learning and wisdom have this moreover, that those give life to them that have them. (For like wisdom defendeth, so money *defendeth*; but learning and wisdom have this as well, that they give life to those who have them.)

13 Behold thou the works of God, *and* see that no man may amend him, whom *God* hath despised.

14 In a good day use thou (thy) goods, and before eschew thou an evil day (On a good day, enjoy thy good things, but shun thou them on an evil day); for God made so this day as that day, (so) that a man find not just complainings against him.

15 Also I saw these things in the days of my nativity³; a just man perisheth in his rightfulness, and a wicked man liveth much time in his malice. (And I have seen these things since the day of my birth/in my empty and futile days; a righteous person perisheth in his righteousness, and a wicked person liveth a great deal of time in his malice.)

16 Do not thou be just over much, neither understand thou more than is needful; lest thou be astonied. (Do not thou be too good, nor understand thou more than is useful; lest thou be regarded with contempt, *or with derision*.)

17 Do thou not wickedly much (Do not thou do many wicked things), and do not thou be a fool; lest thou die in a time not thine.

18 It is good, that thou sustain a just man; but also withdraw thou not thine hand from him; for he that dreadeth God, is not negligent of anything. (It is good that thou sustain the one, but also do not thou withdraw thy hand from the other; for he who feareth God, is not negligent of anything.)

19 Wisdom hath strengthened a wise man, over ten princes of a city. (Wisdom can strengthen the wise, more than ten leaders of a city.)

20 Forsooth no just man there is in [the] earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. (But there is no righteous person in the earth who only, *or who always*, doeth good, and never sinneth.)

³ *That is, (the days) of (this) present life, that passeth soon away, so it is not no but vanity (so that they be but empty and futile).*

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21 But also give thou not thine heart to all (the) words, that be said; lest peradventure thou hear thy servant cursing thee;

22 for thy conscience knoweth, that also thou hast cursed oft other men. (for thy conscience knoweth that thou also hast often cursed other people.)

23 I assayed all things in wisdom; I said, I shall be made wise, and it went away further from me (I said, I shall be made wise, but it went farther away from me),

24 much more than it was; and the depth is low, who shall find it? (much more than it was before; and to such a depth, yea, so low down, that who shall ever be able to find it?)

25 I compassed all things with my soul (I put my mind upon everything, yea), to know, and to behold, and (to) seek (out) wisdom, and reason, and to know the wickedness of a fool, and the error of unprudent men.

26 And I found a woman bitterer than death, the which is (like) the snare of hunters, and her heart is (like) a net, and her hands be (like) bonds; he that pleaseth God shall escape her, but he that is a sinner, shall be taken of her. (And I found a woman more bitter than death, who is like a hunter's snare, and her heart is like a net, and her hands be like bonds; he who pleaseth God shall escape her, but he who is a sinner shall be caught by her.)

27 Lo! I found this, said Ecclesiastes, (concerning) one (thing) and (an)other, that I should find (the) reason,

28 which my soul seeketh yet; and (other things) I found not. I found one man of a thousand; and I found not a woman of all. (which my soul yet seeketh; but other things I did not find. I found one man out of a thousand; but I did not find one woman out of all of them.)

29 I found this only, that God made a man rightful [that God made man right]; and (then) he meddled himself with questions without number. (I found only this, that God made a person upright, *or clear-headed*; but then he mixed himself in/mixed himself up with too many questions.)

CHAPTER 8

1 Who is such as a wise man? and who knoweth the solving, *either expounding*, of a word? The wisdom of a man shineth in his cheer; and the mightiest shall change his face (The wisdom of a person shineth in their face; and maketh even the mightiest to change his expression, *or his countenance*).

2 I keep the mouth of the king, and the

commandments and [the] swearings of God. (I counsel, *or advice*, thee to obey the king's commands, and to keep your oath, *or your pledge*, to God.)

3 Haste thou not to go away from his face, and dwell thou not in evil work. For he shall do all thing, that he will (For he shall do anything, that he desireth);

4 and his word is full of power, and no man may say to him (and no one can say to him), Why doest thou so?

5 He that keepeth the commandment *of God*, shall not feel anything of evil; the heart of a wise man understandeth time and answer.

6 Time and season is to each work; and much torment is of a man,

7 for he knoweth not [the] things passed, and he may not know by any messenger [the] things to come.

8 It is not in the power of man to forbid the spirit, *that is, his soul, from going out from the body*, neither he hath power in the day of death, neither he is suffered to have rest, when the battle nigheth; neither wickedness shall save a wicked man.

9 I beheld all these things, and I gave mine heart in(to) all works, that be done under the sun. Sometime a man is lord of a man, to his evil.

10 I saw wicked men buried, which, when they lived yet, were in (the) holy place; and they were praised in the city, as *men* of just works; but also this is vanity. (I saw the wicked buried, which, when they still lived, were in the holy place; and they were praised in the city, as *people* of righteous works; but this is also empty and futile.)

11 Forsooth for the sentence is not brought forth soon against evil men, the sons of men do evils without any dread. (But because the punishment is not brought forth quickly against evil people, the sons and daughters of men do evil without any fear.)

12 Nevertheless of that, that a sinner doeth evil an hundred times, and is suffered by patience, I knew that good *it* shall be to men dreading God, that reverence his face, *or presence*. (Nevertheless, even though a sinner may do evil a hundred times, and is patiently allowed to, I know that *it* shall be good for those who fear God, yea, for those who have reverence before his face, *or in his presence*.)

13 Good be not to the wicked man, neither his days be made long; but pass they as shadow, that dread not the face of the Lord. (But good shall not be to a wicked person, nor shall his days be made long; but they shall pass like a shadow, those who do not fear the face of the

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Lord/those who do not have reverence before the Lord.)

14 Also another vanity there is, that is done on earth. Just men there be, to whom evils come, as if they did the works of wicked men; and wicked men there be, that be as secure, as if they had (done) the deeds of just men; but I deem also this most vain. (There is also another vanity, that is done on the earth/There is also more that is empty and futile, that is found on the earth. There be good, *or righteous*, people, to whom evils come as if they did the works of the wicked; and there be wicked people, who be as secure as if they had done the deeds of the good, *or of the righteous*; but I also judge this to be most empty and futile.)

15 Therefore I praised gladness, that no good was to a man under the sun, but to eat, and drink, and to be joyful; and that he should bear away with himself only this of his travail, in the days of his life, which God gave to him under the sun. (And so I praised pleasure, *or enjoyment*, yea, that there was no better thing for anyone under the sun, but to eat, and drink, and to be joyful; for he hath only this from all his labour, which he can carry away with himself, in all the days of his life, which God gave to him under the sun.)

16 And I setted mine heart to know wisdom, and to understand the parting, which is turned in earth. A man is, that by days and nights, taketh not sleep with *his* eyes. (And I set my heart to know wisdom, and to understand what is done on the earth. And in trying to understand this, a person might not close *his* eyes in sleep for many days and nights.)

17 And I understood, that of all the works of God, a man may find no reason of those things, that be done under the sun (And I understood, that of all the works of God, a person can find no reason for those things, that be done under the sun); and inasmuch as he travaileth more to seek (it out), by so much (the more) he shall find (it) less; yea, though a wise man say that he knoweth, (*or understandeth*, what is done under the sun,) he shall not be able to find (it out).

CHAPTER 9

1 I treated all these things in mine heart, to understand diligently. Just men, and wise men there be, and their works be in the hand of God; and nevertheless a man knoweth not, whether he is worthy of love or of hate. (I treated, *or considered*, all these things in my mind, to diligently understand them. There be the righteous, and the wise, and all their works be in God's

hands; yet nevertheless a person knoweth not whether he is worthy of love, or of hate.)

2 But all things be kept uncertain into the time to coming; for all things befall evenly to a just man and to a wicked man, to a good man and to an evil man, to a clean man and to an unclean man, to a man offering offerings and sacrifices, and to a man despising sacrifices; as a good man, so and a sinner; as a forsworn man, so and he that greatly sweareth truth (as to a good man, and so to a sinner; as to a forsworn man, and so to him who greatly sweareth truth).

3 This thing is the worst among all things, that be done under the sun, that the same thing befall to all men; wherefore and the hearts of the sons of men be filled with malice and with despising in their life; and after these things, they shall be led down into hells. (This thing is the worst among all things, that be done under the sun, that the same thing befall to all people; yea, the hearts of the sons and daughters of men be filled with malice and despising during their lives; and then after these things, they go down to Sheol, *or the land of the dead*/they go down to hell.)

4 No man there is, that liveth ever, and that hath trust of this thing; better is a quick dog than a dead lion. (But for everyone who liveth, there is still hope; yea, a living dog is better than a dead lion.)

5 For they that live know that they shall die; but dead men know nothing more, neither have meed further; for their mind is given to forgetting. (For they who live at least know that they shall die; but the dead know nothing, nor have any further reward; even the memory of them is forgotten.)

6 Also the(ir) love, and hatred, and envy, (have) perished (al)together; and they have no part in this world, and in the work that is done under the sun.

7 Therefore go thou, *just man*, and eat thy bread in gladness, and drink thy wine with joy; for thy works please God. (And so, *O righteous person*, go thou, and eat thy bread with happiness, and drink thy wine with joy; for thy works please God.)

8 In each time thy clothes be white, and oil fail not from thine head. (At all times let thy clothes be white, and let thy head not lack oil.)

9 Use thou life with the wife which thou lovest, in all the days of the life of thine unstableness, that be given to thee under the sun, in all the time of thy vanity; for this is thy part in thy life and [thy] travail, by which thou travailest under the sun. (Enjoy thou life with the wife

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whom thou lovest, in all the days of thy unstable, *or thy changing*, life, that be given to thee under the sun, in all thy empty and futile time; for this is thy portion in thy life, and thy labour in which thou labourest under the sun.)

10 Work thou busily, whatever thing thine hand may do; for neither work, neither reason, nor knowing, nor wisdom, shall be at hells, whither thou hastest. (Busily work thou, at whatever thy hands can do; for neither work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, be in the land of the dead, where thou hastenest.)

11 I turned me to another thing, and I saw under [the] sun, that running is not of swift men, neither battle *is* of strong men, neither bread *is* of wise men, neither riches *be* of teachers, nor grace *is* of craftsmen; but time and hap *is* in all things⁴. (I turned me to another thing, and I saw under the sun, that the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong, or bread to the wise, or riches to those who teach, or favour to the skilled, but timing and happenstance *be* to everything.)

12 A man knoweth not his end; but as fishes be taken with an hook, and as birds be taken with a snare, so men be taken in (an) evil time, when it cometh suddenly [up]on them.

13 Also I saw this wisdom under the sun, and I proved *it* the most.

14 A little city, and few men therein; a great king came against it, and compassed it with pales, and he builded strongholds, *either engines*, by compass; and [the] besieging was made perfect. (There was a small city, with only a few people in it; a great king came against it, and surrounded it with posts, and he built strongholds, *or bulwarks*, all around it; and so the siege was made perfect.)

15 And a poor man and a wise was found therein; and he delivered the city by his wisdom, and no man bethought afterward on that poor man. (And a poor but wise man was found there; and he saved the city by his wisdom, but afterward no one thought much about that poor man.)

16 And I said, that wisdom is better than strength; how therefore is the wisdom of a poor man despised, and his words be not heard? (And I have always said, that wisdom is better than strength; and so why is the wisdom of a poor man despised, and his words not listened to?)

17 The words of wise men be heard in silence, more than the cry of a prince among fools. (The words of the wise should be heard in silence, much more than the loud cry of a leader of a group of fools.)

18 Better is wisdom than armours of battle; and he that sinneth in one thing, shall lose many goods. (Better is wisdom than the arms, *or the weapons*, of battle; and he who sinneth in one thing, shall lose much that is good.)

CHAPTER 10

1 Flies that die (in it), lose the sweetness of [the] ointment. A little folly at some time is more precious than wisdom and glory. (Flies that die in an ointment can destroy its sweetness. And so a little foolishness can sometimes destroy wisdom and glory.)

2 The heart of a wise man *is* in his right side; and the heart of a fool *is* in his left side. (The heart of a wise person *is* in the right; and the heart of a fool *is* in the wrong.)

3 But also a fool going in the way, when he is unwise, guesseth all men fools. (And a fool, going on the way, since he is unwise, thinketh that all the other people be fools.)

4 If the spirit of him, that hath power, goeth upon thee, forsake thou not thy place (If the spirit of him, who hath power, goeth against thee, do not leave thy position, *that is, do not resign thy post*); for curing, *or taking heed*, shall make (the) greatest sins to cease.

5 An evil there is, that I saw under the sun, and going out as by error from the face of the prince; (There is an evil that I saw under the sun, and going out as an error from the leader, *or from the ruler*);

6 a fool (is) set in high dignity, and rich men sit beneath.

7 I saw servants on horses, and princes as servants going on the earth. (I saw servants *riding* on horses, and princes, *or leaders*, walking on the ground like servants.)

8 He that diggeth a ditch, shall fall into it; and an adder shall bite him, that destroyeth a hedge. (He who diggeth a ditch, shall fall into it; and he who destroyeth a hedge, shall be bitten by a serpent *hiding in it*.)

9 He that beareth over stones, shall be tormented in those; and he that cutteth trees, shall be wounded of those. (He who carrieth stones, can be hurt by them; and he who cutteth wood, can be injured when cutting it.)

10 If iron is folded again, and it *is* not as before, but is made blunt, it shall be made sharp with much travail; and wisdom shall follow after busyness.

⁴ *That is, uncertainty, (and) that oughteth to refrain a man from pride.*

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11 If a serpent biteth, *it biteth* in silence; he that backbiteth privily, hath nothing less than it (he who privately, *or secretly*, backbiteth someone is no better).

12 The words of the mouth of a wise man *be* grace; and the lips of an unwise man shall cast him down. (The words out of the mouth of a wise person *bring him* favour; but the lips of an unwise person shall bring him down.)

13 The beginning of his words *is* folly; and the last thing of his mouth *is* the worst error. (His words begin with foolishness; and the last thing out of his mouth *is* the worst error of all.)

14 A fool multiplieth words; a man knoweth not, what was before him, and who may show to him that, that shall come after him? (and who can show him what shall come after him?)

15 The travail of fools shall torment them, that know not how to go into the city. (Fools work themselves to exhaustion, yet they do not even know how to go into the city.)

16 Land, woe to thee, whose king is a child, and whose princes eat early.

17 Blessed *is* the land, whose king is noble; and whose princes eat in their time, to (only) sustain the(ir) kind, and not to lechery. (Happy *is* the land, whose king is well born, *or refined*; and whose leaders eat at the proper time, only to sustain themselves, and not unto drunkenness.)

18 The highness of houses shall be made low in sloths; and the house shall drop (rain) in the feebleness of hands (and a house shall leak due to feeble, *or weak*, hands).

19 In laughing, they dispose bread and wine, that they drinking eat largely; and all things obey to money. (With laughter, they array *the table with* bread and wine, so that they can enjoy all the abundance; for everything showeth obedience to money.)

20 In thy thought backbite thou not the king, and in the private of thy bed, curse thou not a rich man; for the birds of heaven shall bear thy voice, and he that hath pens, shall tell the sentence. (In thy thoughts backbite thou not the king, and in the privacy of thy bed, curse thou not the rich; for the birds of the heavens, *or of the air*, shall carry thy voice, and he that hath wings, shall tell what thou hast said.)

CHAPTER 11

1 Send thy bread [up]on waters passing forth, for after many times thou shalt find it. (Send thy bread upon the

water, and after a time, thou shalt receive it back, *and more along with it*.)

2 Give thou (thy) parts (to) seven, and also (to) eight, (*that is, do not put all thy eggs in one basket*); for thou knowest not, what evil shall come [up]on (the) earth.

3 If clouds be filled, they shall shed out rain on the earth; if a tree falleth down to the south, either to the north, in whatever place it falleth down, there it shall be.

4 He that espieth the wind, soweth not; and he that beholdeth the clouds, shall never reap. (He who looketh for the wind, soweth not; and he who watcheth the clouds, shall never reap, *or bring in the harvest*.)

5 As thou knowest not, which is the way of the spirit, and by what reason bones be joined together in the womb of a woman with child, so thou knowest not the works of God, which is maker of all things (who is the Maker of all things).

6 Early sow thy seed, and thine hand cease not in the eventide; for thou knowest not, what shall come forth more, this either that; and if ever either *come forth* together, it shall be the better. (Sow thy seed early, and do not stop thy work in the evening/and do not stop thy work until the evening; for thou knowest not, what shall come forth more, this or that; or if both will *come forth* together, and it shall be the better.)

7 The light *is* sweet, and delightful to the eyes to see the sun. (The light *is* sweet, and it is delightful, *or pleasant*, for thine eyes to see the sun.)

8 If a man liveth many years, and is glad in all these, he oughteth to have mind of [the] dark time, and of (those) many days (yet to come); and when those shall come, [the] things passed (away) shall be reprov'd of vanity. (If a person liveth many years, and is happy in all of them, he still ought to remember the dark time, and the many days yet to come; and when they do come, the things passed away shall be rebuked as but empty and futile.)

9 Therefore, thou young man, be glad in thy youth, and thine heart be in goodness in the days of thy youth, and go thou in the ways of thine heart, and in the beholding of thine eyes; and know thou, that for all these things God shall bring thee into doom. (And so, O young man, be happy in thy youth, and let thy heart be in goodness in the days of thy youth, and go thou in the ways of thy heart, and in the beholding of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God shall bring thee to the judgement.)

10 Do thou away ire from thine heart, and remove thou

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malice from thy flesh; for why youth and lust be vain things, *or vanity*. (Do thou away anger from thy heart, and remove thou malice from thy flesh; because youth and lust be but empty and futile.)

CHAPTER 12

1 Have thou mind on thy Creator⁵ in the days of thy youth, before that the time of thy torment come, and the years *of thy death* nigh, of which thou shalt say, Those please not me. (Think thou upon thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before that the time of thy torment come, and the years *of thy death* approach, of which thou shalt say, These days do not please me at all.)

2 Before that the sun be (made) dark, and the light, and stars, and the moon; and the clouds turn again after rain. (Before that the sun, and the light, and the stars, and the moon all be made dark; and the clouds return after the rain.)

3 When the (door)keepers of the house shall be moved, and [the] strongest men shall tremble; and [the] grinders shall be idle, when the number shall be made less, and seers by the holes shall wax dark; (When the guards of the house shall be shaken, and the strong shall tremble; and the grinders shall be idle, when their number shall be made less, and the eyes of those who see out by the windows shall grow dark, *or grow dim*;)

4 and (they) shall close the doors in the street (and they shall close the doors to the street), in the lowness of [the] voice of a grinder; and they shall rise (up) at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song shall wax deaf.

5 And high things shall dread, and shall be afeared in the way (And when they shall fear high places, and shall be afraid to go on the way, *or to go out in public*); and an almond tree shall flower, a locust shall be made fat, and (the) capers shall be destroyed; for a man shall go into the house of his everlastingness, and wailers shall go about in the street.

6 *Have thou mind on thy Creator*, before that a silveren rope be broken, and a golden lace run against, and a water pot be all-broken on the well, and a wheel be broken (al)together on the cistern; (*Think thou upon thy Creator*, before that the silver rope is broken, and the golden bowl is broken, and the water pot at the well is broken, and the wheel at the cistern is broken, *yea*,

before that all is ended;)

7 and dust turn again into his earth, whereof it was, and the spirit turn again to God, that gave it. (and the dust, *or the dirt*, return to the earth, where it was before, and the spirit return to God, who gave it.)

8 The vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes, the vanity of vanities [Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes, vanity of vanities], and all things *be* vanity. (Emptiness and futility, said Ecclesiastes, *yea*, everything *is* emptiness and futility.)

9 And when Ecclesiastes was most wise (And for Ecclesiastes was most wise), he taught the people, and he told out the things which he did, and he sought out *wisdom*, and made many parables;

10 he sought (out) profitable words, and he wrote most rightful words, and full of truth.

11 The words of wise men *be* as pricks, and as nails fastened deep, which be given of one shepherd by the counsels of masters. (For the words of the wise *be* like pricks, and like nails driven deep, for they be given from the one Shepherd for the counsel of us all.)

12 My son, seek thou no more than these; none end there is to make many books, and oft thinking is (a) torment of [the] flesh. (My son, seek thou no more than this; for there is no end to the making of many books, and thinking too much will only torment thy flesh.)

13 All we hear together the end of (the) speaking. Dread thou God, and keep his behests; that is (*for*) *to know*, every man. (Hear now the end, *or the conclusion*, of all this speaking. Fear God/Revere God, and obey his commands; that is *for* everyone *to know*.)

14 *God* shall bring all things into doom, that be done; for each thing covered, *either privy*, whether it be good, or evil. (For *God* shall bring all that is done to the judgement; even each thing that is covered, *or is done in secret, or privately*, whether it be good, or evil.) ☆

⁵ The Hebrew for 'thy Creator' sounds much like the Hebrew for 'thy grave'. (Good News Bible)

