

Wisdom from the Wisest

One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it arose. (Ecc 1:4-5)

That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecc 1:9)

I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge." And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind. For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. (Ecc 1:16-18)

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. (Ecc 2:11)

Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I myself perceived that the same event happens to them all. (Ecc 2:13-14)

For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. (Ecc 2:21)

Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. (Ecc 2:24)

For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. (Ecc 2:26)

I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor - it is the gift of God. I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him. That which is has already been, and what is to be has already been; and God requires an account of what is past. (Ecc 3:12-15)

Moreover I saw under the sun: In the place of judgment, wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, iniquity was there. I said in my heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." (Ecc 3:16-17)

All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? So I perceived that nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him? (Ecc 3:20-22)

Better a handful with quietness than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind. (Ecc 4:6)

Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecc 4:12)

Better a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. For he comes out of prison to be king, although he was born in his kingdom. I saw all the living who walk under the sun; they were with the second youth who stands in his place. There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king; yet those who came afterward will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and grasping for the wind. (Ecc 4:13-16)

Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. (Ecc 5:1)

Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God. (Ecc 5:5-7)

Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field. He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes? The sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep. (Ecc 5:9-12)

Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor - this is the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart. (Ecc 5:18-20)

If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he - for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice - but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place? (Ecc 6:3-6)

All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied. (Ecc 6:7)

Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. (Ecc 6:9)

Whatever one is, he has been named already, for it is known that he is man; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he. (Ecc 6:10)

A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth; better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (Ecc 7:1-4)

Do not say, "Why are the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this. (Ecc 7:10)

Wisdom is good with an inheritance, and profitable to those who see the sun. For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, but the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it. (Ecc 7:11-12)

I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs life in his wickedness. Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? It is good that you grasp this, and also not remove your hand from the other; for he who fears God will escape them all. Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers of the city. For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. (Ecc 7:15-20)

As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out? (Ecc 7:24)

And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her. (Ecc 7:26)

"Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes." (Ecc 7:29)

Who is like a wise man? And knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the sternness of his face is changed. (Ecc 8:1)

Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, "What are you doing?" He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; and a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, because for every matter there is a time and judgment, though the misery of man increases greatly. For he does not know what will happen; so who can tell him when it will occur? No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it. (Ecc 8:4-8)

Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are a shadow, because he does not fear before God. (Ecc 8:11-13)

So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor all the days of his life which God gives him under the sun. When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night, then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it. For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. People know neither love nor hatred by anything they see before them. (Ecc 8:15 - 9:1)

Go eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, and let your head lack no oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (Ecc 9:7-10)

If the axe is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success. (Ecc 10:10)

A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes merry; but money answers everything. (Ecc 10:19)

Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth. If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if a tree falls to the south or the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie. He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. As you do not know what is the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes everything. In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good. (Ecc 11:1-6)

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity. (Ecc 11:9-10)

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them":

Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the well. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. (Ecc 12:1, 6-7)

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecc 12:13-14)

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