

Ecclesiastes: The Teacher's Reflections – Part 3 (c. 937t–932t BC)

Ecclesiastes 9–12

On Living and Dying

9:1 So all this I laid to my heart, and I concluded that the righteous and the wise, as well as their deeds, *are* in the hand of God. So no one knows anything that will *come* to them, whether *it will be* love or hatred.

2 The same fate *comes* to everyone:

to the righteous and to the wicked,
to the good and to the wicked,
to the clean and to the unclean,
to those who sacrifice and to those who do not sacrifice.
As *with* the good *man*, so also to the sinner;
as *with* those who swear an oath, so *also* those who fear oaths.

3 This *is* the injustice that is done under the sun:

the same fate *comes* to everyone.
Also the hearts of humans are full *of* evil;
delusion *is* in their hearts during their lives, and then they die.

4 Whoever is joined to all the living has hope. After all, even a live dog is better than a dead lion!

5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything. They no longer have a reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten.

6 What they loved and hated, as well as what they desired, has already perished. They no longer have any share in what is done under the sun.

On Enjoying Life

7 Go—eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart! For God already has approved your deeds.

8 Always be clothed in white garments, and never let your head lack oil!

9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which he gives you under the sun, because this *is* your lot in life and in the toil with which you toil under the sun.

10 Whatever your hand finds to do—do *it* with *all* your might; for in Sheol—where you are going—no one works, plans, knows, or thinks about anything.

On the Paradoxes of Life

11 I looked again and saw under the sun that the race *does* not *belong* to the swift, the battle *does* not *belong* to the mighty, food *does* not *belong* to the wise, wealth *does* not *belong* to the intelligent, and success *does* not *belong* to the skillful, for time and chance befalls all of them.

12 For man does not know his time. Just as fish are caught in a cruel net and like birds who are seized in a snare, so also humans are ensnared at a cruel time when it falls suddenly upon them.

On the Wisdom of the Poor

13 I have also seen this *example* of wisdom under the sun, and it *seemed* great to me.

14 *There was* a small city with few people in it. A great king came and besieged it, building great siege works against it.

15 Now, a poor wise man was found in it, and he delivered the city by his wisdom.

16 So I concluded that wisdom *is* better than might, yet the wisdom of the poor is despised, and his words are not heard.

On Wisdom and Folly

17 The words of the wise are heard in peace
more than the shouting of a ruler *is heard* among the fools.

18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war,
but one sinner destroys much good.

10:1 Dead flies cause a bad smell *and* ruin the ointment of the perfumer.
So also a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

2 The heart of the wise *inclines* to his right,
but the heart of the fool *inclines* to his left.

3 Even when the fool walks along the road, he lacks sense;
he tells everyone *that* he is a fool.

On the Folly of Rulers

- 4 If the anger of the ruler rises against you,
do not leave your post,
for calmness can undo great offenses.
- 5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun—
it is an error that proceeds from a ruler!
- 6 The fool is set in many high places,
but the rich sit in lowly places.
- 7 I have even seen slaves *riding* on horses
and princes walking like slaves on the earth!

On the Need for Wisdom in Work

- 8 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it.
Whoever breaks through a wall, a snake will bite him.
- 9 Whoever quarries stones will be wounded by them.
Whoever splits logs will be endangered by them.
- 10 If the ax is blunt but one does not sharpen its edge,
he must exert more effort,
but the advantage of wisdom *is* it brings success.
- 11 If the snake bites before the charming,
the snake charmer will not succeed.

On Wise Speech and Thought

- 12 The wise man *wins* favor by the words of his mouth,
but the fool is devoured by his own lips.
- 13 He begins by saying what is foolish
and ends by uttering what is wicked delusion.
- 14 The fool talks too much,
for no one knows what will be.
Who can tell anyone what will happen in the future?
- 15 The fool is so worn out by a hard day's work
he cannot even find his way home at night.

On the Importance of Wise Leadership

- 16 Woe to you, O land, when your king is a youth
and your princes feast in the morning.
- 17 Blessed are you, O land, when your king is a son of nobility
and your princes feast at the proper time—
to gain strength and not to get drunk.
- 18 Through sloth the roof sinks in,
and through idleness of hands the house leaks.
- 19 Feasts are held for celebration,
wine cheers the living,
and money answers everything.
- 20 Do not curse the king even in your thoughts,
and do not curse the rich even in your own bedroom,
for a bird of the sky may carry your voice;
a winged messenger may repeat your words.

On the Need for Diversification in Labor and Investment

- 11:1 Send out your bread on the water,
for in many days you will find it.
- 2 Divide your share in seven or in eight,
for you do not know what disaster will happen on the earth.
- 3 When the clouds are full,
they empty rain on the earth.
Whether a tree falls to the south or whether it falls to the north,
the place where the tree falls—there it will be.

- 4 Whoever watches the wind will not sow;
whoever watches the clouds will not reap.
- 5 Just as you do not know how the path of the wind *goes*,
nor how the bones *of a fetus* form in a mother's womb,
so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.
- 6 Sow your seed in the morning,
and do not let your hands rest in the evening,
for you do not know what will prosper—
whether this or that, or whether both of them alike will succeed.

On the Pleasures of Youth

- 7 The light is sweet,
and it *is* pleasant for the eyes to see the sun.
- 8 For if a man lives many years,
let him rejoice in all of them!
Let him remember that the days of the darkness will be many—
all that is coming *is* vanity!
- 9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth!
Follow the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes—
but know that God will bring you into judgment for all these things.
- 10 Banish anxiety from your heart,
and put away pain from your body,
for youth and vigor *are* vanity.

On Serving God Before Old Age Comes

- 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth—
before the days of trouble come
and the years draw near when you will say,
“I find no pleasure in them!”
- 2 Before the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars darken
and the clouds return after the rain.
- 3 When the guards of the house tremble,
and the men of strength are bent;
the grinders cease because they are few,
and those looking through the windows see dimly.
- 4 When the doors on the street are shut,
when the sound of the grinding mill is low;
one rises up to the sound of the bird,
and all the daughters of song are brought low.
- 5 They are afraid of heights,
and terrors *are* on the road.
The almond tree blossoms,
and the grasshopper draws itself along, and desire fails
because man goes to his eternal home,
and the mourners go about in the streets.
- 6 Before the silver cord is snapped
and the golden bowl is broken;
and the jar at the foundation is broken,
and the wheel at the cistern is broken.
- 7 And the dust returns to the earth as it was,
and the breath returns to God who gave it.

Theme Repeated

- 8 “Vanity of vanity!” says the Teacher.
“Everything *is* vanity!”

Epilogue

9 The Teacher was full of wisdom, and he taught the people with knowledge. He carefully considered many proverbs and carefully arranged them.

10 The Teacher sought to find delightful words, and he wrote what is upright—truthful words.

11 The words of the wise *are* like cattle goads; the collections of the sages *are* like pricks inflicted by one shepherd.

12 My son, be careful about anything beyond these things. For the writing of books is endless, and too much study is wearisome.

13 Now that all has been heard, here is the final conclusion:

Fear God and obey his commandments,
for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

14 For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

The Death of Solomon (932t BC)

1 Kings 11:41–43	2 Chronicles 9:29–31
<p>41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did and his wisdom; <i>are</i> they not written on the scroll of the acts of Solomon?</p> <p>42 All the days that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all of Israel <i>were</i> forty years.</p> <p>43 Then Solomon slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David his father, and Rehoboam his son became king in his place.</p>	<p>29 As for the remainder of the words of Solomon <i>from</i> the first to the last, are they not written in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat?</p> <p>30 And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.</p> <p>31 And Solomon slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.</p>

Scripture quotations are from the [Lexham English Bible \(LEB\)](#). Copyright 2012 [Logos Bible Software](#). Lexham is a registered trademark of [Logos Bible Software](#).