

ECCLESIASTES

¹ The words of Ecclesiastes*, son of David, king of Jerusalem.

² Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes; vanity of vanities, and all things *be* vanity.

³ What hath a man more[*over*] of all his travail, by which he travaileth under the sun?

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

⁵ The sun riseth [*up*], and goeth down, and turneth again to his 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.

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.

⁸ All things *be* hard; a man may not declare those things by word; the eye is not 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,

* **CHAPTER 1:1** That is, of Solomon, for 'Ecclesiastes' is said, 'a speaker to the people'.

10 neither any man may say, Lo! this thing is new; for now it went before in worlds, that were 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.

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.

14 I saw all things that be made under the sun, and lo! all things *be* vanity and torment of spirit.

15 Wayward men be amended of hard; 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.

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;

18 for in much wisdom is much indignation, and he that increaseth knowing, increaseth also travail.

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.

² And laughing I areckoned error, and I said to joy, What art thou, deceived in vain?

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.

⁴ I magnified, *either made great*, my works, I builded houses to me, and I planted vines;

⁵ I made yards [*or gardens*] and orchards, and I set those with trees of all kinds;

⁶ and I made cisterns of waters, for to water the wood of [*the*] trees growing.

⁷ I had in possession servants and handmaids; and I had much meine, and droves of great beasts, and great flocks of sheep, over all men that were 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;

⁹ and I passed in riches all men that were before me in Jerusalem. Also wisdom dwelled stably 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.

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 in vain, I saw in all things vanity and torment of soul, and that nothing under [*the*] sun dwelleth.

¹² I passed forth to behold wisdom, and errors, and folly; *I said*, What is a man, that he may pursue [*or follow*] the king, his maker?

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, a fool goeth in darkneses; and I learned, that one perishing was of ever either.

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.

¹⁶ For the mind of a wise man shall not be, in like manner as neither *that* of a fool, without end, and [*the*] times to coming [*or to come*] shall cover all things altogether with forgetting; a learned man dieth in like manner as an unlearned man.

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.

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?

²⁰ Wherefore I ceased, and mine heart forsook for to travail further under [*the*] sun.

²¹ For why when another man travaileth in wisdom, and teaching, and busyness, he leaveth things gotten to an idle man; and therefore this is vanity, and 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?

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

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.

²⁵ Who shall devour so, and shall flow in 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.

CHAPTER 3

¹ All things have time, and all things under [*the*] sun pass by their spaces.

² Time of birth, and time of dying; time to plant, and time to draw up that that is planted.

³ Time to slay, and time to make whole; 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 together; time to embrace, and time to be far from embracings, *or embraces*.

⁶ Time to get, and time to lose; time to keep, and time to cast away.

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

⁸ Time to love, and time of hatred; time of battle, and time of peace.

⁹ What hath a man more of his travail?

¹⁰ I saw the torment, which God gave to the sons of men, that they be occupied therein.

¹¹ God made all things good in their time, and gave the world to disputing of them, that a man find not 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.

¹³ For why each man that eateth and drinketh, and seeth good of his travail; 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.

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

¹⁶ I saw under [*the*] sun unfaithfulness in the place of doom; and wickedness in the place of righteousness.

¹⁷ And I said in mine heart, The Lord shall deem a just [*or rightwise*] man, and an unfaithful man; and the time of each thing shall be then.

¹⁸ I said in mine heart of the sons of men, that God should prove them, and show 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,

²⁰ and all things go to one place; those be made of earth, and those turn again altogether into earth.

²¹ Who knoweth, if the spirit[s] of the sons of Adam goeth upward, and if the spirits of beasts goeth downward?

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 him, that he know things that 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 the tears of the guiltless, and no man *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;

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.

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 superfluous busyness.

⁵ A fool foldeth together his hands, and eateth his flesh,

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;

⁸ one there is, and he hath not a second; neither a son, nor a brother; and nevertheless he ceaseth not to travail, neither his eyes be filled with riches; neither he bethinketh *him*, and saith, To whom travail I, and deceive my soul in goods? In this also is vanity, and the worst torment.

⁹ Therefore it is better, that two be together than one; for they have profit of 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.

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

¹² And if any man hath [*the*] mastery against one, twain [*or two*] against-stand him; a threefold cord is broken of hard.

¹³ A poor man and wise is better than an eld [*or old*] king and foolish, that cannot before-see into time to coming [*or after*].

¹⁴ For sometime a man goeth out, both from prison and chains, to a realm; 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 for him.

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.

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.

² Speak thou not anything follily, neither thine heart be swift to bring forth a word before God; for God *is* in heaven, and thou art on earth, therefore 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.

⁶ Give thou not thy mouth, that thou make thy flesh to do sin; neither say thou before an angel, No purvey-ance there is; lest peradventure the Lord be wroth on thy words, and destroy all the works of thine hands.

⁷ Where be many dreams, *be* full many vanities, and words without number; but dread thou God.

⁸ If thou seest false challenges of needy men, and violent dooms, 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 earth commandeth to the servant.

¹⁰ An avaricious man shall not be [*ful*] filled of money; and he that loveth riches shall not take fruits of them; and therefore this *is* vanity.

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

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

¹⁴ For they perish in the worst torment; he begat a son, that shall be in sovereign 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.

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?

¹⁷ In all the days of his life he ate in darknesses, 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 [*the*] days of his life, which God gave to him; and this is his part.

¹⁹ And to each man, to whom God gave riches, and chattel [*or substance*], 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.

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, 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 [*or substance*], 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 it*. This is vanity, and a great wretchedness.

* **CHAPTER 6:2** For God draweth him away suddenly from present life.

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 [*or substance*], and wanteth burying; I pronounce of this man, that a dead-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 [*the*] goods; whether all things hasten not to one place?

⁷ All the travail of a man *is* in his mouth, but the soul of him shall not be [*ful*] filled with goods.

⁸ What hath a wise man more than a fool? and what hath a poor *man*, but that he go thither, where is 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.

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.

¹¹ Words be full many, and have much vanity in disputing. What need is it to a man to seek greater things than himself;

¹² since he knoweth not, what shall befall to him in his life, in the number of days of his pilgrimage, and in the time that passeth as 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; 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 of mourning* the end of all men is *warned of*, and a man living thinketh, what is to coming [*or to come*].

³ Ire [*or wrath*] is better than laugh-ing; 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;

⁶ for as the sound of thorns burning under a pot, so *is* the laughing of a fool. But also this *is* vanity.

⁷ False challenge troubleth a wise man, and it shall lose the strength of his heart.

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.

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 *or foolish*.

¹¹ Forsooth wisdom with riches is more profitable, and profiteth more to men seeing 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.

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 goods, and before eschew thou an evil day; for God made so this day as that day, that a man find not just complainings against him.

¹⁵ Also I saw these things in the days of my nativity*; a just [*or rightwise*] man perisheth in his rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*], and a wicked man liveth much time in his malice.

¹⁶ Do not thou be just [*or rightwise*] over much, neither understand thou more than is needful; lest thou be astonied.

¹⁷ Do thou not wickedly much, and do not thou be a fool; lest thou die in a time not thine.

¹⁸ It is good, that thou sustain a just [*or rightwise*] man; but also withdraw thou not thine hand from him; for he that dreadeth God, is not negligent of anything.

¹⁹ Wisdom hath strengthened a wise man, over ten princes of a city.

²⁰ Forsooth no just [*or rightwise*] man there is in [*the*] earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

²¹ But also give thou not thine heart to all 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.

* **CHAPTER 7:15** That is, *of present life, that passeth soon away, so it is not no but vanity.*

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

²⁴ much more than it was; and the depth is low, who shall find it?

²⁵ I compassed all things with my soul, to know, and to behold, and seek 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 the snare of hunters, and her heart is a net, and her hands be bonds; he that pleaseth God shall escape her, but he that is a sinner, shall be taken of her.

²⁷ Lo! I found this, said Ecclesiastes, one and other, that I should find reason,

²⁸ which my soul seeketh yet; and I found not. I found one man of a thousand; and I found not a woman of all.

²⁹ I found this only, that God made a man rightful [*or made man right*]; and he meddled himself with questions without number.

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.

² I keep the mouth of the king, and the commandments and [*the*] swearings of 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;

⁴ and his word is full of power, and no man may 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 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 holy place; and they were praised in the city, as *men* of just [*or rightwise*] works; but also this is vanity.

¹¹ Forsooth for the sentence is not brought forth soon against evil men, the sons of men do evils without any dread.

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*.

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.

14 Also another vanity there is, that is done on earth. Just [*or rightwise*] 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 [*or rightwise*] men; but I deem also this most vain.

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.

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.

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 inasmuch as he travaileth more to seek, by so much he shall find less; yea, though a wise man say that he knoweth, he shall not be able to find.

CHAPTER 9

1 I treated all these things in mine heart, to understand diligently. Just [*or rightwise*] 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.

2 But all things be kept uncertain into the time to coming [*or to come*]; for all things befall evenly to a just [*or rightwise*] 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.

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 [*or 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.

⁵ For they that live know that they shall die; but dead men know nothing more, neither have need further; for their mind is given to forgetting.

⁶ Also their love, and hatred, and envy, perished altogether; 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.

⁸ In each time thy clothes be white, and oil fail not from thine head.

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.

10 Work thou busily, whatever thing thine hand may do; for neither work, neither reason, nor knowing, nor wisdom, shall be at hells [*or with hell*], whither thou hastest.

11 I turned me to another thing, and I saw under [*the*] sun, that running [*or course*] 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 things*.

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 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.

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.

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?

17 The words of wise men be heard in silence, more than the cry of a prince among fools.

* **CHAPTER 9:11** That is, *uncertainty, that oweth to refrain a man from pride.*

18 Better is wisdom than armours [*or arms*] of battle; and he that sinneth in one thing, shall lose many goods.

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.

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

3 But also a fool going in the way, when he is unwise, guesseth all men fools.

4 If the spirit of him, that hath power, goeth upon thee, forsake thou not thy place; for curing, or caring, *or taking heed*, shall make 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;

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

7 I saw servants on horses, and princes as servants going on the earth.

8 He that diggeth a ditch, shall fall into it; and an adder shall bite him, that destroyeth a hedge.

9 He that beareth over stones, shall be tormented in those; and he that cutteth trees, shall be wounded of those [*or them*].

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.

11 If a serpent biteth, *it biteth* in silence; he that backbiteth privily, hath nothing less than it.

¹² The words of the mouth of a wise man *be* grace; and the lips of an unwise man shall cast him down.

¹³ The beginning of his words *is* folly; and the last thing of his mouth *is* the worst error.

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?

¹⁵ The travail of fools shall torment them, that know not 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 sustain their kind, and not to lechery.

¹⁸ The highness of houses shall be made low in sloths; and the house shall drop *rain* in the feebleness of hands.

¹⁹ In laughing, they dispose bread and wine, that they drinking eat largely; and all things obey 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 *or wings*, shall tell the sentence.

CHAPTER 11

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

² Give thou parts seven, and also eight; for thou knowest not, what evil shall come [*up*] on earth.

³ If clouds be filled, they shall shed [*or pour*] 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.

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.

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.

⁷ The light is sweet, and delightful to the eyes to see the sun.

⁸ If a man liveth many years, and is glad in all these, he oweth to have mind of [*the*] dark time, and of many days; and when those shall come, [*the*] things passed shall be reprov'd of vanity.

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.

¹⁰ Do thou away ire [*or wrath*] from thine heart, and remove thou malice from thy flesh; for why youth and lust be vain things, *or vanity*.

CHAPTER 12

¹ Have thou mind on thy Creator* 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.

² Before that the sun be dark, and the light, and stars, and the moon; and the clouds turn again after rain.

³ When the doorkeepers 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;

⁴ and shall close the doors in the street, in the lowliness of [*the*] voice of a grinder; and they shall rise at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song shall wax deaf.

⁵ And high things shall dread, and shall be afear'd in the way; and an almond tree shall flower, a locust shall be made fat, and 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 altogether on the cistern;

⁷ and dust turn again into his earth, whereof it was, and the spirit turn again to God, that gave it.

* **CHAPTER 12:1** The Hebrew for '*thy creator*' sounds much like the Hebrew for '*thy grave*'. (*Good News Bible*)

⁸ The vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes, the vanity of vanities, and all things *be* vanity. [*Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes, vanity of vanities, and all things vanity.*]

⁹ And when 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 profitable words, and he wrote most rightful [*or right*] 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.

¹² My son, seek thou no more than these; none end there is to make many books, and oft thinking is torment of [*the*] flesh.

¹³ All we hear together the end of speaking. Dread thou God, and keep his behests; that is *to know*, every man.

¹⁴ *God* shall bring all things into doom, that *be* done; for each thing covered, *either privy*, whether it *be* good, or evil.

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Wycliffe's Bible with Modern Spelling, was made in response to requests from readers who wanted my Wycliffe's Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha in one volume. Printing limitations dictated the number of pages available to me and the letter size. In my previous books, Wycliffe's Bible, Wycliffe's Old Testament, Vols. 1 amp 2, Wycliffe's New Testament, and Wycliffe's Apocrypha, I have tens of thousands of rewritten verses, presented in parentheses "()", to provide help in comprehending the 14th century Middle English vocabulary and grammar. In this present volume, with space at a premium, those "helps" had to be eliminated, to make room for the text of the Apocrypha.

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