

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE 108

Lesson 31 (Mini-Episode): “Happy Is the [One] That Findeth Wisdom”

Class Member Reading: 1 Kings 4:32; Proverbs 1:7; 9:9-10; 3:5-7; 16:27-28; 18:8; 25:18; 13:10; 16:18; 22:6; 15:13; 17:22; 2 Nephi 9:28-29; Matthew 12:36-37; D&C 68:25-28

1 Kings 4:32

³² He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

Proverbs 1:7

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

9:9-10

⁹ Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will gain in learning.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

3:5-7

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

16:27-28

²⁷ Scoundrels concoct evil,
and their speech is like a scorching fire.

²⁸ A perverse person spreads strife,

and a whisperer separates close friends.

18:8

⁸ The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.

25:18

¹⁸ Like a war club, a sword, or a sharp arrow
is one who bears false witness against a neighbour.

13:10

¹⁰ By insolence the heedless make strife,
but wisdom is with those who take advice.

16:18

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.

22:6

⁶ Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray.

15:13

¹³ A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance,
but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.

17:22

²² A cheerful heart is a good medicine,
but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.

2 Nephi 9:28-29

28 O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

29 But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.

Matthew 12:36-37

³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgement you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; ³⁷for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.'

D&C 68:25-28

25 And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

26 For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

27 And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.

28 And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

Additional Reading: Proverbs 1:1-9:18; 10:1-22:16; 22:17-24:22; 24:23-34; 25:1-29:27; 30:1-31:31; Ecclesiastes 1-6, 7-12

1:1-9:18

1The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

Prologue

² For learning about wisdom and instruction,
for understanding words of insight,
³ for gaining instruction in wise dealing,
righteousness, justice, and equity;
⁴ to teach shrewdness to the simple,
knowledge and prudence to the young—
⁵ let the wise also hear and gain in learning,
and the discerning acquire skill,
⁶ to understand a proverb and a figure,
the words of the wise and their riddles.

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Warnings against Evil Companions

⁸ Hear, my child, your father's instruction,
and do not reject your mother's teaching;
⁹ for they are a fair garland for your head,
and pendants for your neck.
¹⁰ My child, if sinners entice you,
do not consent.
¹¹ If they say, 'Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood;
let us wantonly ambush the innocent;
¹² like Sheol let us swallow them alive
and whole, like those who go down to the Pit.
¹³ We shall find all kinds of costly things;
we shall fill our houses with booty.
¹⁴ Throw in your lot among us;
we will all have one purse'—
¹⁵ my child, do not walk in their way,
keep your foot from their paths;
¹⁶ for their feet run to evil,
and they hurry to shed blood.
¹⁷ For in vain is the net baited
while the bird is looking on;

¹⁸ yet they lie in wait—to kill themselves!
and set an ambush—for their own lives!
¹⁹ Such is the end of all who are greedy for gain;
it takes away the life of its possessors.

The Call of Wisdom

²⁰ Wisdom cries out in the street;
in the squares she raises her voice.
²¹ At the busiest corner she cries out;
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:
²² ‘How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?
²³ Give heed to my reproof;
I will pour out my thoughts to you;
I will make my words known to you.
²⁴ Because I have called and you refused,
have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,
²⁵ and because you have ignored all my counsel
and would have none of my reproof,
²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when panic strikes you,
²⁷ when panic strikes you like a storm,
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.
²⁸ Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.
²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,
³⁰ would have none of my counsel,
and despised all my reproof,
³¹ therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way
and be sated with their own devices.
³² For waywardness kills the simple,
and the complacency of fools destroys them;
³³ but those who listen to me will be secure

and will live at ease, without dread of disaster.’

The Value of Wisdom

2 My child, if you accept my words
and treasure up my commandments within you,
² making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;
³ if you indeed cry out for insight,
and raise your voice for understanding;
⁴ if you seek it like silver,
and search for it as for hidden treasures—
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
⁷ he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly,
⁸ guarding the paths of justice
and preserving the way of his faithful ones.
⁹ Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;
¹⁰ for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
¹¹ prudence will watch over you;
and understanding will guard you.
¹² It will save you from the way of evil,
from those who speak perversely,
¹³ who forsake the paths of uprightness
to walk in the ways of darkness,
¹⁴ who rejoice in doing evil
and delight in the perverseness of evil;
¹⁵ those whose paths are crooked,
and who are devious in their ways.

¹⁶ You will be saved from the loose woman,

from the adulteress with her smooth words,
¹⁷ who forsakes the partner of her youth
and forgets her sacred covenant;
¹⁸ for her way leads down to death,
and her paths to the shades;
¹⁹ those who go to her never come back,
nor do they regain the paths of life.

²⁰ Therefore walk in the way of the good,
and keep to the paths of the just.
²¹ For the upright will abide in the land,
and the innocent will remain in it;
²² but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

Admonition to Trust and Honour God

3 My child, do not forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commandments;
² for length of days and years of life
and abundant welfare they will give you.

³ Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them round your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴ So you will find favour and good repute
in the sight of God and of people.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
⁸ It will be a healing for your flesh

and a refreshment for your body.

⁹ Honour the LORD with your substance
and with the first fruits of all your produce;
¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.

¹¹ My child, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,
¹² for the LORD reproves the one he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.

The True Wealth

¹³ Happy are those who find wisdom,
and those who get understanding,
¹⁴ for her income is better than silver,
and her revenue better than gold.
¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.
¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honour.
¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called happy.

God's Wisdom in Creation

¹⁹ The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens;
²⁰ by his knowledge the deeps broke open,
and the clouds drop down the dew.

The True Security

- ²¹ My child, do not let these escape from your sight:
keep sound wisdom and prudence,
²² and they will be life for your soul
and adornment for your neck.
- ²³ Then you will walk on your way securely
and your foot will not stumble.
- ²⁴ If you sit down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
- ²⁵ Do not be afraid of sudden panic,
or of the storm that strikes the wicked;
- ²⁶ for the LORD will be your confidence
and will keep your foot from being caught.
- ²⁷ Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in your power to do it.
- ²⁸ Do not say to your neighbour, 'Go, and come again;
tomorrow I will give it'—when you have it with you.
- ²⁹ Do not plan harm against your neighbour
who lives trustingly beside you.
- ³⁰ Do not quarrel with anyone without cause,
when no harm has been done to you.
- ³¹ Do not envy the violent
and do not choose any of their ways;
- ³² for the perverse are an abomination to the LORD,
but the upright are in his confidence.
- ³³ The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the abode of the righteous.
- ³⁴ Towards the scorners he is scornful,
but to the humble he shows favour.
- ³⁵ The wise will inherit honour,
but stubborn fools, disgrace.

Parental Advice

4 Listen, children, to a father's instruction,
and be attentive, that you may gain insight;
2 for I give you good precepts:
do not forsake my teaching.
3 When I was a son with my father,
tender, and my mother's favourite,
4 he taught me, and said to me,
'Let your heart hold fast my words;
keep my commandments, and live.
5 Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away
from the words of my mouth.
6 Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.
7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,
and whatever else you get, get insight.
8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;
she will honour you if you embrace her.
9 She will place on your head a fair garland;
she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.'

Admonition to Keep to the Right Path

10 Hear, my child, and accept my words,
that the years of your life may be many.
11 I have taught you the way of wisdom;
I have led you in the paths of uprightness.
12 When you walk, your step will not be hampered;
and if you run, you will not stumble.
13 Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;
guard her, for she is your life.
14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,
and do not walk in the way of evildoers.
15 Avoid it; do not go on it;
turn away from it and pass on.
16 For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong;
they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.

- ¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.
- ¹⁸ But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
- ¹⁹ The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know what they stumble over.
- ²⁰ My child, be attentive to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.
- ²¹ Do not let them escape from your sight;
keep them within your heart.
- ²² For they are life to those who find them,
and healing to all their flesh.
- ²³ Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.
- ²⁴ Put away from you crooked speech,
and put devious talk far from you.
- ²⁵ Let your eyes look directly forwards,
and your gaze be straight before you.
- ²⁶ Keep straight the path of your feet,
and all your ways will be sure.
- ²⁷ Do not swerve to the right or to the left;
turn your foot away from evil.

Warning against Impurity and Infidelity

- 5** My child, be attentive to my wisdom;
incline your ear to my understanding,
² so that you may hold on to prudence,
and your lips may guard knowledge.
- ³ For the lips of a loose woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
- ⁴ but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
- ⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to Sheol.
- ⁶ She does not keep straight to the path of life;

her ways wander, and she does not know it.

⁷ And now, my child, listen to me,
and do not depart from the words of my mouth.

⁸ Keep your way far from her,
and do not go near the door of her house;

⁹ or you will give your honour to others,
and your years to the merciless,

¹⁰ and strangers will take their fill of your wealth,
and your labours will go to the house of an alien;

¹¹ and at the end of your life you will groan,
when your flesh and body are consumed,

¹² and you say, 'Oh, how I hated discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!

¹³ I did not listen to the voice of my teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.

¹⁴ Now I am at the point of utter ruin
in the public assembly.'

¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.

¹⁶ Should your springs be scattered abroad,
streams of water in the streets?

¹⁷ Let them be for yourself alone,
and not for sharing with strangers.

¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,

¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe.

May her breasts satisfy you at all times;
may you be intoxicated always by her love.

²⁰ Why should you be intoxicated, my son, by another woman
and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?

²¹ For human ways are under the eyes of the LORD,
and he examines all their paths.

²² The iniquities of the wicked ensnare them,
and they are caught in the toils of their sin.

²³ They die for lack of discipline,
and because of their great folly they are lost.

Practical Admonitions

6 My child, if you have given your pledge to your neighbour,
if you have bound yourself to another,
² you are snared by the utterance of your lips,
caught by the words of your mouth.
³ So do this, my child, and save yourself,
for you have come into your neighbour's power:
go, hurry, and plead with your neighbour.
⁴ Give your eyes no sleep
and your eyelids no slumber;
⁵ save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter,
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

⁶ Go to the ant, you lazybones;
consider its ways, and be wise.
⁷ Without having any chief
or officer or ruler,
⁸ it prepares its food in summer,
and gathers its sustenance in harvest.
⁹ How long will you lie there, O lazybones?
When will you rise from your sleep?
¹⁰ A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
¹¹ and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want, like an armed warrior.

¹² A scoundrel and a villain
goes around with crooked speech,
¹³ winking the eyes, shuffling the feet,
pointing the fingers,
¹⁴ with perverted mind devising evil,
continually sowing discord;

¹⁵ on such a one calamity will descend suddenly;
in a moment, damage beyond repair.

¹⁶ There are six things that the LORD hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:

¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that hurry to run to evil,

¹⁹ a lying witness who testifies falsely,
and one who sows discord in a family.

²⁰ My child, keep your father's commandment,
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

²¹ Bind them upon your heart always;
tie them around your neck.

²² When you walk, they will lead you;
when you lie down, they will watch over you;
and when you awake, they will talk with you.

²³ For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light,
and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,

²⁴ to preserve you from the wife of another,
from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

²⁵ Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;

²⁶ for a prostitute's fee is only a loaf of bread,
but the wife of another stalks a man's very life.

²⁷ Can fire be carried in the bosom
without burning one's clothes?

²⁸ Or can one walk on hot coals
without scorching the feet?

²⁹ So is he who sleeps with his neighbour's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.

³⁰ Thieves are not despised who steal only
to satisfy their appetite when they are hungry.

³¹ Yet if they are caught, they will pay sevenfold;

they will forfeit all the goods of their house.

³² But he who commits adultery has no sense;
he who does it destroys himself.

³³ He will get wounds and dishonour,
and his disgrace will not be wiped away.

³⁴ For jealousy arouses a husband's fury,
and he shows no restraint when he takes revenge.

³⁵ He will accept no compensation,
and refuses a bribe no matter how great.

The False Attractions of Adultery

7 My child, keep my words

and store up my commandments with you;

² keep my commandments and live,
keep my teachings as the apple of your eye;

³ bind them on your fingers,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister',
and call insight your intimate friend,

⁵ that they may keep you from the loose woman,
from the adulteress with her smooth words.

⁶ For at the window of my house

I looked out through my lattice,

⁷ and I saw among the simple ones,

I observed among the youths,

a young man without sense,

⁸ passing along the street near her corner,

taking the road to her house

⁹ in the twilight, in the evening,

at the time of night and darkness.

¹⁰ Then a woman comes towards him,

decked out like a prostitute, wily of heart.

¹¹ She is loud and wayward;

her feet do not stay at home;
¹² now in the street, now in the squares,
and at every corner she lies in wait.
¹³ She seizes him and kisses him,
and with impudent face she says to him:
¹⁴ 'I had to offer sacrifices,
and today I have paid my vows;
¹⁵ so now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have found you!
¹⁶ I have decked my couch with coverings,
coloured spreads of Egyptian linen;
¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.
¹⁸ Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;
let us delight ourselves with love.
¹⁹ For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.
²⁰ He took a bag of money with him;
he will not come home until full moon.'

²¹ With much seductive speech she persuades him;
with her smooth talk she compels him.
²² Right away he follows her,
and goes like an ox to the slaughter,
or bounds like a stag towards the trap
²³ until an arrow pierces its entrails.
He is like a bird rushing into a snare,
not knowing that it will cost him his life.

²⁴ And now, my children, listen to me,
and be attentive to the words of my mouth.
²⁵ Do not let your hearts turn aside to her ways;
do not stray into her paths.
²⁶ for many are those she has laid low,
and numerous are her victims.
²⁷ Her house is the way to Sheol,

going down to the chambers of death.

The Gifts of Wisdom

8 Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
2 On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
4 'To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.
5 O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.
6 Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;
7 for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.
9 They are all straight to one who understands
and right to those who find knowledge.
10 Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;
11 for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.
12 I, wisdom, live with prudence,
and I attain knowledge and discretion.
13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.
14 I have good advice and sound wisdom;
I have insight, I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;
16 by me rulers rule,
and nobles, all who govern rightly.

¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.
¹⁸ Riches and honour are with me,
enduring wealth and prosperity.
¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
²¹ endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

Wisdom's Part in Creation

²² The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
²³ Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
²⁶ when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
²⁸ when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

³² 'And now, my children, listen to me:
happy are those who keep my ways.
³³ Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.
³⁴ Happy is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.
³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains favour from the LORD;
³⁶ but those who miss me injure themselves;
all who hate me love death.'

Wisdom's Feast

9 Wisdom has built her house,
she has hewn her seven pillars.
² She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,
she has also set her table.
³ She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls
from the highest places in the town,
⁴ 'You that are simple, turn in here!'
To those without sense she says,
⁵ 'Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
⁶ Lay aside immaturity, and live,
and walk in the way of insight.'

General Maxims

⁷ Whoever corrects a scoffer wins abuse;
whoever rebukes the wicked gets hurt.
⁸ A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you;
the wise, when rebuked, will love you.
⁹ Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will gain in learning.
¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

- ¹¹ For by me your days will be multiplied,
and years will be added to your life.
¹² If you are wise, you are wise for yourself;
if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

Folly's Invitation and Promise

- ¹³ The foolish woman is loud;
she is ignorant and knows nothing.
¹⁴ She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat at the high places of the town,
¹⁵ calling to those who pass by,
who are going straight on their way,
¹⁶ 'You who are simple, turn in here!'
And to those without sense she says,
¹⁷ 'Stolen water is sweet,
and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.'
¹⁸ But they do not know that the dead are there,
that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

10:1-22:16

Wise Sayings of Solomon

10The proverbs of Solomon.

- A wise child makes a glad father,
but a foolish child is a mother's grief.
² Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,
but righteousness delivers from death.
³ The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry,
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
⁴ A slack hand causes poverty,

but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
⁵ A child who gathers in summer is prudent,
but a child who sleeps in harvest brings shame.
⁶ Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
⁷ The memory of the righteous is a blessing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.
⁸ The wise of heart will heed commandments,
but a babbling fool will come to ruin.
⁹ Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but whoever follows perverse ways will be found out.
¹⁰ Whoever winks the eye causes trouble,
but the one who rebukes boldly makes peace.
¹¹ The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
¹² Hatred stirs up strife,
but love covers all offences.
¹³ On the lips of one who has understanding wisdom is found,
but a rod is for the back of one who lacks sense.
¹⁴ The wise lay up knowledge,
but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near.
¹⁵ The wealth of the rich is their fortress;
the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
¹⁶ The wage of the righteous leads to life,
the gain of the wicked to sin.
¹⁷ Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life,
but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray.
¹⁸ Lying lips conceal hatred,
and whoever utters slander is a fool.
¹⁹ When words are many, transgression is not lacking,
but the prudent are restrained in speech.
²⁰ The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;
the mind of the wicked is of little worth.
²¹ The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of sense.
²² The blessing of the LORD makes rich,
and he adds no sorrow with it.
²³ Doing wrong is like sport to a fool,

but wise conduct is pleasure to a person of understanding.

²⁴ What the wicked dread will come upon them,
but the desire of the righteous will be granted.

²⁵ When the tempest passes, the wicked are no more,
but the righteous are established for ever.

²⁶ Like vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes,
so are the lazy to their employers.

²⁷ The fear of the LORD prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be short.

²⁸ The hope of the righteous ends in gladness,
but the expectation of the wicked comes to nothing.

²⁹ The way of the LORD is a stronghold for the upright,
but destruction for evildoers.

³⁰ The righteous will never be removed,
but the wicked will not remain in the land.

³¹ The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but the perverse tongue will be cut off.

³² The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,
but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.

11 A false balance is an abomination to the LORD,
but an accurate weight is his delight.

² When pride comes, then comes disgrace;
but wisdom is with the humble.

³ The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.

⁴ Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death.

⁵ The righteousness of the blameless keeps their ways straight,
but the wicked fall by their own wickedness.

⁶ The righteousness of the upright saves them,
but the treacherous are taken captive by their schemes.

⁷ When the wicked die, their hope perishes,
and the expectation of the godless comes to nothing.

⁸ The righteous are delivered from trouble,
and the wicked get into it instead.

⁹ With their mouths the godless would destroy their neighbours,

but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.
¹⁰ When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices;
and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.
¹¹ By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.
¹² Whoever belittles another lacks sense,
but an intelligent person remains silent.
¹³ A gossip goes about telling secrets,
but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence.
¹⁴ Where there is no guidance, a nation falls,
but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety.
¹⁵ To guarantee loans for a stranger brings trouble,
but there is safety in refusing to do so.
¹⁶ A gracious woman gets honour,
but she who hates virtue is covered with shame.
The timid become destitute,
but the aggressive gain riches.
¹⁷ Those who are kind reward themselves,
but the cruel do themselves harm.
¹⁸ The wicked earn no real gain,
but those who sow righteousness get a true reward.
¹⁹ Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live,
but whoever pursues evil will die.
²⁰ Crooked minds are an abomination to the LORD,
but those of blameless ways are his delight.
²¹ Be assured, the wicked will not go unpunished,
but those who are righteous will escape.
²² Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman without good sense.
²³ The desire of the righteous ends only in good;
the expectation of the wicked in wrath.
²⁴ Some give freely, yet grow all the richer;
others withhold what is due, and only suffer want.
²⁵ A generous person will be enriched,
and one who gives water will get water.
²⁶ The people curse those who hold back grain,
but a blessing is on the head of those who sell it.
²⁷ Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favour,

but evil comes to the one who searches for it.

²⁸ Those who trust in their riches will wither,
but the righteous will flourish like green leaves.

²⁹ Those who trouble their households will inherit wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise.

³⁰ The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
but violence takes lives away.

³¹ If the righteous are repaid on earth,
how much more the wicked and the sinner!

12 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,

but those who hate to be rebuked are stupid.

² The good obtain favour from the LORD,
but those who devise evil he condemns.

³ No one finds security by wickedness,
but the root of the righteous will never be moved.

⁴ A good wife is the crown of her husband,
but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.

⁵ The thoughts of the righteous are just;
the advice of the wicked is treacherous.

⁶ The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush,
but the speech of the upright delivers them.

⁷ The wicked are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous will stand.

⁸ One is commended for good sense,
but a perverse mind is despised.

⁹ Better to be despised and have a servant,
than to be self-important and lack food.

¹⁰ The righteous know the needs of their animals,
but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.

¹¹ Those who till their land will have plenty of food,
but those who follow worthless pursuits have no sense.

¹² The wicked covet the proceeds of wickedness,
but the root of the righteous bears fruit.

¹³ The evil are ensnared by the transgression of their lips,
but the righteous escape from trouble.

¹⁴ From the fruit of the mouth one is filled with good things,

and manual labour has its reward.

¹⁵ Fools think their own way is right,
but the wise listen to advice.

¹⁶ Fools show their anger at once,
but the prudent ignore an insult.

¹⁷ Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence,
but a false witness speaks deceitfully.

¹⁸ Rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

¹⁹ Truthful lips endure for ever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

²⁰ Deceit is in the mind of those who plan evil,
but those who counsel peace have joy.

²¹ No harm happens to the righteous,
but the wicked are filled with trouble.

²² Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD,
but those who act faithfully are his delight.

²³ One who is clever conceals knowledge,
but the mind of a fool broadcasts folly.

²⁴ The hand of the diligent will rule,
while the lazy will be put to forced labour.

²⁵ Anxiety weighs down the human heart,
but a good word cheers it up.

²⁶ The righteous gives good advice to friends,
but the way of the wicked leads astray.

²⁷ The lazy do not roast their game,
but the diligent obtain precious wealth.

²⁸ In the path of righteousness there is life,
in walking its path there is no death.

13 A wise child loves discipline,

but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

² From the fruit of their words good people eat good things,
but the desire of the treacherous is for wrongdoing.

³ Those who guard their mouths preserve their lives;
those who open wide their lips come to ruin.

⁴ The appetite of the lazy craves, and gets nothing,

while the appetite of the diligent is richly supplied.

⁵ The righteous hate falsehood,
but the wicked act shamefully and disgracefully.

⁶ Righteousness guards one whose way is upright,
but sin overthrows the wicked.

⁷ Some pretend to be rich, yet have nothing;
others pretend to be poor, yet have great wealth.

⁸ Wealth is a ransom for a person's life,
but the poor get no threats.

⁹ The light of the righteous rejoices,
but the lamp of the wicked goes out.

¹⁰ By insolence the heedless make strife,
but wisdom is with those who take advice.

¹¹ Wealth hastily gained will dwindle,
but those who gather little by little will increase it.

¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

¹³ Those who despise the word bring destruction on themselves,
but those who respect the commandment will be rewarded.

¹⁴ The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
so that one may avoid the snares of death.

¹⁵ Good sense wins favour,
but the way of the faithless is their ruin.

¹⁶ The clever do all things intelligently,
but the fool displays folly.

¹⁷ A bad messenger brings trouble,
but a faithful envoy, healing.

¹⁸ Poverty and disgrace are for the one who ignores instruction,
but one who heeds reproof is honoured.

¹⁹ A desire realized is sweet to the soul,
but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

²⁰ Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise,
but the companion of fools suffers harm.

²¹ Misfortune pursues sinners,
but prosperity rewards the righteous.

²² The good leave an inheritance to their children's children,
but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.

²³ The field of the poor may yield much food,

but it is swept away through injustice.

²⁴ Those who spare the rod hate their children,
but those who love them are diligent to discipline them.

²⁵ The righteous have enough to satisfy their appetite,
but the belly of the wicked is empty.

14 The wise woman builds her house,

but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

² Those who walk uprightly fear the LORD,
but one who is devious in conduct despises him.

³ The talk of fools is a rod for their backs,
but the lips of the wise preserve them.

⁴ Where there are no oxen, there is no grain;
abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.

⁵ A faithful witness does not lie,
but a false witness breathes out lies.

⁶ A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain,
but knowledge is easy for one who understands.

⁷ Leave the presence of a fool,
for there you do not find words of knowledge.

⁸ It is the wisdom of the clever to understand where they go,
but the folly of fools misleads.

⁹ Fools mock at the guilt-offering,
but the upright enjoy God's favour.

¹⁰ The heart knows its own bitterness,
and no stranger shares its joy.

¹¹ The house of the wicked is destroyed,
but the tent of the upright flourishes.

¹² There is a way that seems right to a person,
but its end is the way to death.

¹³ Even in laughter the heart is sad,
and the end of joy is grief.

¹⁴ The perverse get what their ways deserve,
and the good, what their deeds deserve.

¹⁵ The simple believe everything,
but the clever consider their steps.

¹⁶ The wise are cautious and turn away from evil,

but the fool throws off restraint and is careless.
¹⁷ One who is quick-tempered acts foolishly,
and the schemer is hated.
¹⁸ The simple are adorned with folly,
but the clever are crowned with knowledge.
¹⁹ The evil bow down before the good,
the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
²⁰ The poor are disliked even by their neighbours,
but the rich have many friends.
²¹ Those who despise their neighbours are sinners,
but happy are those who are kind to the poor.
²² Do they not err that plan evil?
Those who plan good find loyalty and faithfulness.
²³ In all toil there is profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.
²⁴ The crown of the wise is their wisdom,
but folly is the garland of fools.
²⁵ A truthful witness saves lives,
but one who utters lies is a betrayer.
²⁶ In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence,
and one's children will have a refuge.
²⁷ The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
so that one may avoid the snares of death.
²⁸ The glory of a king is a multitude of people;
without people a prince is ruined.
²⁹ Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding,
but one who has a hasty temper exalts folly.
³⁰ A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh,
but passion makes the bones rot.
³¹ Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,
but those who are kind to the needy honour him.
³² The wicked are overthrown by their evildoing,
but the righteous find a refuge in their integrity.
³³ Wisdom is at home in the mind of one who has understanding,
but it is not known in the heart of fools.
³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.
³⁵ A servant who deals wisely has the king's favour,

but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.

15 A soft answer turns away wrath,

but a harsh word stirs up anger.

² The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge,
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

³ The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good.

⁴ A gentle tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

⁵ A fool despises a parent's instruction,
but the one who heeds admonition is prudent.

⁶ In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.

⁷ The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the minds of fools.

⁸ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

⁹ The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but he loves the one who pursues righteousness.

¹⁰ There is severe discipline for one who forsakes the way,
but one who hates a rebuke will die.

¹¹ Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD,
how much more human hearts!

¹² Scoffers do not like to be rebuked;
they will not go to the wise.

¹³ A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance,
but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.

¹⁴ The mind of one who has understanding seeks knowledge,
but the mouths of fools feed on folly.

¹⁵ All the days of the poor are hard,
but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

¹⁶ Better is a little with the fear of the LORD
than great treasure and trouble with it.

¹⁷ Better is a dinner of vegetables where love is
than a fatted ox and hatred with it.

¹⁸ Those who are hot-tempered stir up strife,

but those who are slow to anger calm contention.

¹⁹ The way of the lazy is overgrown with thorns,
but the path of the upright is a level highway.

²⁰ A wise child makes a glad father,
but the foolish despise their mothers.

²¹ Folly is a joy to one who has no sense,
but a person of understanding walks straight ahead.

²² Without counsel, plans go wrong,
but with many advisers they succeed.

²³ To make an apt answer is a joy to anyone,
and a word in season, how good it is!

²⁴ For the wise the path of life leads upwards,
in order to avoid Sheol below.

²⁵ The LORD tears down the house of the proud,
but maintains the widow's boundaries.

²⁶ Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD,
but gracious words are pure.

²⁷ Those who are greedy for unjust gain make trouble for their households,
but those who hate bribes will live.

²⁸ The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer,
but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil.

²⁹ The LORD is far from the wicked,
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

³⁰ The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,
and good news refreshes the body.

³¹ The ear that heeds wholesome admonition
will lodge among the wise.

³² Those who ignore instruction despise themselves,
but those who heed admonition gain understanding.

³³ The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom,
and humility goes before honour.

16 The plans of the mind belong to mortals,
but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

² All one's ways may be pure in one's own eyes,
but the LORD weighs the spirit.

³ Commit your work to the LORD,

and your plans will be established.

⁴ The LORD has made everything for its purpose,
even the wicked for the day of trouble.

⁵ All those who are arrogant are an abomination to the LORD;
be assured, they will not go unpunished.

⁶ By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for,
and by the fear of the LORD one avoids evil.

⁷ When the ways of people please the LORD,
he causes even their enemies to be at peace with them.

⁸ Better is a little with righteousness
than large income with injustice.

⁹ The human mind plans the way,
but the LORD directs the steps.

¹⁰ Inspired decisions are on the lips of a king;
his mouth does not sin in judgement.

¹¹ Honest balances and scales are the LORD's;
all the weights in the bag are his work.

¹² It is an abomination to kings to do evil,
for the throne is established by righteousness.

¹³ Righteous lips are the delight of a king,
and he loves those who speak what is right.

¹⁴ A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
and whoever is wise will appease it.

¹⁵ In the light of a king's face there is life,
and his favour is like the clouds that bring the spring rain.

¹⁶ How much better to get wisdom than gold!
To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

¹⁷ The highway of the upright avoids evil;
those who guard their way preserve their lives.

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.

¹⁹ It is better to be of a lowly spirit among the poor
than to divide the spoil with the proud.

²⁰ Those who are attentive to a matter will prosper,
and happy are those who trust in the LORD.

²¹ The wise of heart is called perceptive,
and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness.

²² Wisdom is a fountain of life to one who has it,

but folly is the punishment of fools.

²³ The mind of the wise makes their speech judicious,
and adds persuasiveness to their lips.

²⁴ Pleasant words are like a honeycomb,
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

²⁵ Sometimes there is a way that seems to be right,
but in the end it is the way to death.

²⁶ The appetite of workers works for them;
their hunger urges them on.

²⁷ Scoundrels concoct evil,
and their speech is like a scorching fire.

²⁸ A perverse person spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends.

²⁹ The violent entice their neighbours,
and lead them in a way that is not good.

³⁰ One who winks the eyes plans perverse things;
one who compresses the lips brings evil to pass.

³¹ Grey hair is a crown of glory;
it is gained in a righteous life.

³² One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and one whose temper is controlled than one who captures a city.

³³ The lot is cast into the lap,
but the decision is the LORD's alone.

17 Better is a dry morsel with quiet

than a house full of feasting with strife.

² A slave who deals wisely will rule over a child who acts shamefully,
and will share the inheritance as one of the family.

³ The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold,
but the LORD tests the heart.

⁴ An evildoer listens to wicked lips;
and a liar gives heed to a mischievous tongue.

⁵ Those who mock the poor insult their Maker;
those who are glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

⁶ Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,
and the glory of children is their parents.

⁷ Fine speech is not becoming to a fool;

- still less is false speech to a ruler.
- ⁸ A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of those who give it;
wherever they turn they prosper.
- ⁹ One who forgives an affront fosters friendship,
but one who dwells on disputes will alienate a friend.
- ¹⁰ A rebuke strikes deeper into a discerning person
than a hundred blows into a fool.
- ¹¹ Evil people seek only rebellion,
but a cruel messenger will be sent against them.
- ¹² Better to meet a she-bear robbed of its cubs
than to confront a fool immersed in folly.
- ¹³ Evil will not depart from the house
of one who returns evil for good.
- ¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water;
so stop before the quarrel breaks out.
- ¹⁵ One who justifies the wicked and one who condemns the righteous
are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
- ¹⁶ Why should fools have a price in hand
to buy wisdom, when they have no mind to learn?
- ¹⁷ A friend loves at all times,
and kinsfolk are born to share adversity.
- ¹⁸ It is senseless to give a pledge,
to become surety for a neighbour.
- ¹⁹ One who loves transgression loves strife;
one who builds a high threshold invites broken bones.
- ²⁰ The crooked of mind do not prosper,
and the perverse of tongue fall into calamity.
- ²¹ The one who begets a fool gets trouble;
the parent of a fool has no joy.
- ²² A cheerful heart is a good medicine,
but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.
- ²³ The wicked accept a concealed bribe
to pervert the ways of justice.
- ²⁴ The discerning person looks to wisdom,
but the eyes of a fool to the ends of the earth.
- ²⁵ Foolish children are a grief to their father
and bitterness to her who bore them.
- ²⁶ To impose a fine on the innocent is not right,

or to flog the noble for their integrity.

²⁷ One who spares words is knowledgeable;
one who is cool in spirit has understanding.

²⁸ Even fools who keep silent are considered wise;
when they close their lips, they are deemed intelligent.

18 The one who lives alone is self-indulgent,
showing contempt for all who have sound judgement.

² A fool takes no pleasure in understanding,
but only in expressing personal opinion.

³ When wickedness comes, contempt comes also;
and with dishonour comes disgrace.

⁴ The words of the mouth are deep waters;
the fountain of wisdom is a gushing stream.

⁵ It is not right to be partial to the guilty,
or to subvert the innocent in judgement.

⁶ A fool's lips bring strife,
and a fool's mouth invites a flogging.

⁷ The mouths of fools are their ruin,
and their lips a snare to themselves.

⁸ The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.

⁹ One who is slack in work
is close kin to a vandal.

¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
the righteous run into it and are safe.

¹¹ The wealth of the rich is their strong city;
in their imagination it is like a high wall.

¹² Before destruction one's heart is haughty,
but humility goes before honour.

¹³ If one gives answer before hearing,
it is folly and shame.

¹⁴ The human spirit will endure sickness;
but a broken spirit—who can bear?

¹⁵ An intelligent mind acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

¹⁶ A gift opens doors;

it gives access to the great.

¹⁷ The one who first states a case seems right,
until the other comes and cross-examines.

¹⁸ Casting the lot puts an end to disputes
and decides between powerful contenders.

¹⁹ An ally offended is stronger than a city;
such quarrelling is like the bars of a castle.

²⁰ From the fruit of the mouth one's stomach is satisfied;
the yield of the lips brings satisfaction.

²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruits.

²² He who finds a wife finds a good thing,
and obtains favour from the LORD.

²³ The poor use entreaties,
but the rich answer roughly.

²⁴ Some friends play at friendship
but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin.

19 Better the poor walking in integrity

than one perverse of speech who is a fool.

² Desire without knowledge is not good,
and one who moves too hurriedly misses the way.

³ One's own folly leads to ruin,
yet the heart rages against the LORD.

⁴ Wealth brings many friends,
but the poor are left friendless.

⁵ A false witness will not go unpunished,
and a liar will not escape.

⁶ Many seek the favour of the generous,
and everyone is a friend to a giver of gifts.

⁷ If the poor are hated even by their kin,
how much more are they shunned by their friends!

When they call after them, they are not there.

⁸ To get wisdom is to love oneself;
to keep understanding is to prosper.

⁹ A false witness will not go unpunished,
and the liar will perish.

- ¹⁰ It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury,
much less for a slave to rule over princes.
- ¹¹ Those with good sense are slow to anger,
and it is their glory to overlook an offence.
- ¹² A king's anger is like the growling of a lion,
but his favour is like dew on the grass.
- ¹³ A stupid child is ruin to a father,
and a wife's quarrelling is a continual dripping of rain.
- ¹⁴ House and wealth are inherited from parents,
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- ¹⁵ Laziness brings on deep sleep;
an idle person will suffer hunger.
- ¹⁶ Those who keep the commandment will live;
those who are heedless of their ways will die.
- ¹⁷ Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and will be repaid in full.
- ¹⁸ Discipline your children while there is hope;
do not set your heart on their destruction.
- ¹⁹ A violent-tempered person will pay the penalty;
if you effect a rescue, you will only have to do it again.
- ²⁰ Listen to advice and accept instruction,
that you may gain wisdom for the future.
- ²¹ The human mind may devise many plans,
but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established.
- ²² What is desirable in a person is loyalty,
and it is better to be poor than a liar.
- ²³ The fear of the LORD is life indeed;
filled with it one rests secure
and suffers no harm.
- ²⁴ The lazy person buries a hand in the dish,
and will not even bring it back to the mouth.
- ²⁵ Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence;
reprove the intelligent, and they will gain knowledge.
- ²⁶ Those who do violence to their father and chase away their mother
are children who cause shame and bring reproach.
- ²⁷ Cease straying, my child, from the words of knowledge,
in order that you may hear instruction.
- ²⁸ A worthless witness mocks at justice,

and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

²⁹ Condemnation is ready for scoffers,
and flogging for the backs of fools.

20 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler,
and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

² The dread anger of a king is like the growling of a lion;
anyone who provokes him to anger forfeits life itself.

³ It is honourable to refrain from strife,
but every fool is quick to quarrel.

⁴ The lazy person does not plough in season;
harvest comes, and there is nothing to be found.

⁵ The purposes in the human mind are like deep water,
but the intelligent will draw them out.

⁶ Many proclaim themselves loyal,
but who can find one worthy of trust?

⁷ The righteous walk in integrity—
happy are the children who follow them!

⁸ A king who sits on the throne of judgement
winnows all evil with his eyes.

⁹ Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean;
I am pure from my sin'?

¹⁰ Diverse weights and diverse measures
are both alike an abomination to the LORD.

¹¹ Even children make themselves known by their acts,
by whether what they do is pure and right.

¹² The hearing ear and the seeing eye—
the LORD has made them both.

¹³ Do not love sleep, or else you will come to poverty;
open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.

¹⁴ 'Bad, bad', says the buyer,
then goes away and boasts.

¹⁵ There is gold, and abundance of costly stones;
but the lips informed by knowledge are a precious jewel.

¹⁶ Take the garment of one who has given surety for a stranger;
seize the pledge given as surety for foreigners.

¹⁷ Bread gained by deceit is sweet,

but afterwards the mouth will be full of gravel.

¹⁸ Plans are established by taking advice;
wage war by following wise guidance.

¹⁹ A gossip reveals secrets;
therefore do not associate with a babbler.

²⁰ If you curse father or mother,
your lamp will go out in utter darkness.

²¹ An estate quickly acquired in the beginning
will not be blessed in the end.

²² Do not say, 'I will repay evil';
wait for the LORD, and he will help you.

²³ Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD,
and false scales are not good.

²⁴ All our steps are ordered by the LORD;
how then can we understand our own ways?

²⁵ It is a snare for one to say rashly, 'It is holy',
and begin to reflect only after making a vow.

²⁶ A wise king winnows the wicked,
and drives the wheel over them.

²⁷ The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD,
searching every inmost part.

²⁸ Loyalty and faithfulness preserve the king,
and his throne is upheld by righteousness.

²⁹ The glory of youths is their strength,
but the beauty of the aged is their grey hair.

³⁰ Blows that wound cleanse away evil;
beatings make clean the innermost parts.

21 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.

² All deeds are right in the sight of the doer,
but the LORD weighs the heart.

³ To do righteousness and justice
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

⁴ Haughty eyes and a proud heart—
the lamp of the wicked—are sin.

⁵ The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance,

but everyone who is hasty comes only to want.

⁶ The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapour and a snare of death.

⁷ The violence of the wicked will sweep them away,
because they refuse to do what is just.

⁸ The way of the guilty is crooked,
but the conduct of the pure is right.

⁹ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop
than in a house shared with a contentious wife.

¹⁰ The souls of the wicked desire evil;
their neighbours find no mercy in their eyes.

¹¹ When a scoffer is punished, the simple become wiser;
when the wise are instructed, they increase in knowledge.

¹² The Righteous One observes the house of the wicked;
he casts the wicked down to ruin.

¹³ If you close your ear to the cry of the poor,
you will cry out and not be heard.

¹⁴ A gift in secret averts anger;
and a concealed bribe in the bosom, strong wrath.

¹⁵ When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous,
but dismay to evildoers.

¹⁶ Whoever wanders from the way of understanding
will rest in the assembly of the dead.

¹⁷ Whoever loves pleasure will suffer want;
whoever loves wine and oil will not be rich.

¹⁸ The wicked is a ransom for the righteous,
and the faithless for the upright.

¹⁹ It is better to live in a desert land
than with a contentious and fretful wife.

²⁰ Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise,
but the fool devours it.

²¹ Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness
will find life and honour.

²² One wise person went up against a city of warriors
and brought down the stronghold in which they trusted.

²³ To watch over mouth and tongue
is to keep out of trouble.

²⁴ The proud, haughty person, named 'Scoffer',

acts with arrogant pride.

²⁵ The craving of the lazy person is fatal,
for lazy hands refuse to labour.

²⁶ All day long the wicked covet,
but the righteous give and do not hold back.

²⁷ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination;
how much more when brought with evil intent.

²⁸ A false witness will perish,
but a good listener will testify successfully.

²⁹ The wicked put on a bold face,
but the upright give thought to their ways.

³⁰ No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel,
can avail against the LORD.

³¹ The horse is made ready for the day of battle,
but the victory belongs to the LORD.

22 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favour is better than silver or gold.

² The rich and the poor have this in common:
the LORD is the maker of them all.

³ The clever see danger and hide;
but the simple go on, and suffer for it.

⁴ The reward for humility and fear of the LORD
is riches and honour and life.

⁵ Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse;
the cautious will keep far from them.

⁶ Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray.

⁷ The rich rules over the poor,
and the borrower is the slave of the lender.

⁸ Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,
and the rod of anger will fail.

⁹ Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor.

¹⁰ Drive out a scoffer, and strife goes out;
quarrelling and abuse will cease.

¹¹ Those who love a pure heart and are gracious in speech

will have the king as a friend.

¹² The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge,
but he overthrows the words of the faithless.

¹³ The lazy person says, 'There is a lion outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!'

¹⁴ The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit;
he with whom the LORD is angry falls into it.

¹⁵ Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy,
but the rod of discipline drives it far away.

¹⁶ Oppressing the poor in order to enrich oneself,
and giving to the rich, will lead only to loss.

22:17-24:22

Sayings of the Wise

¹⁷ The words of the wise:

Incline your ear and hear my words,
and apply your mind to my teaching;

¹⁸ for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.

¹⁹ So that your trust may be in the LORD,
I have made them known to you today—yes, to you.

²⁰ Have I not written for you thirty sayings
of admonition and knowledge,

²¹ to show you what is right and true,
so that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?

²² Do not rob the poor because they are poor,
or crush the afflicted at the gate;

²³ for the LORD pleads their cause
and despoils of life those who despoil them.

²⁴ Make no friends with those given to anger,

and do not associate with hotheads,
²⁵ or you may learn their ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.
²⁶ Do not be one of those who give pledges,
who become surety for debts.
²⁷ If you have nothing with which to pay,
why should your bed be taken from under you?
²⁸ Do not remove the ancient landmark
that your ancestors set up.
²⁹ Do you see those who are skilful in their work?
They will serve kings;
they will not serve common people.

23 When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
observe carefully what is before you,
² and put a knife to your throat
if you have a big appetite.
³ Do not desire the ruler's delicacies,
for they are deceptive food.
⁴ Do not wear yourself out to get rich;
be wise enough to desist.
⁵ When your eyes light upon it, it is gone;
for suddenly it takes wings to itself,
flying like an eagle towards heaven.
⁶ Do not eat the bread of the stingy;
do not desire their delicacies;
⁷ for like a hair in the throat, so are they.
'Eat and drink!' they say to you;
but they do not mean it.
⁸ You will vomit up the little you have eaten,
and you will waste your pleasant words.
⁹ Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,
who will only despise the wisdom of your words.
¹⁰ Do not remove an ancient landmark
or encroach on the fields of orphans,
¹¹ for their redeemer is strong;
he will plead their cause against you.

- ¹² Apply your mind to instruction
and your ear to words of knowledge.
- ¹³ Do not withhold discipline from your children;
if you beat them with a rod, they will not die.
- ¹⁴ If you beat them with the rod,
you will save their lives from Sheol.
- ¹⁵ My child, if your heart is wise,
my heart too will be glad.
- ¹⁶ My soul will rejoice
when your lips speak what is right.
- ¹⁷ Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but always continue in the fear of the LORD.
- ¹⁸ Surely there is a future,
and your hope will not be cut off.
- ¹⁹ Hear, my child, and be wise,
and direct your mind in the way.
- ²⁰ Do not be among winebibbers,
or among gluttonous eaters of meat;
- ²¹ for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
and drowsiness will clothe them with rags.
- ²² Listen to your father who begot you,
and do not despise your mother when she is old.
- ²³ Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.
- ²⁴ The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice;
he who begets a wise son will be glad in him.
- ²⁵ Let your father and mother be glad;
let her who bore you rejoice.
- ²⁶ My child, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe my ways.
- ²⁷ For a prostitute is a deep pit;
an adulteress is a narrow well.
- ²⁸ She lies in wait like a robber

and increases the number of the faithless.

²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaining?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?

³⁰ Those who linger late over wine,
those who keep trying mixed wines.

³¹ Do not look at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.

³² At the last it bites like a serpent,
and stings like an adder.

³³ Your eyes will see strange things,
and your mind utter perverse things.

³⁴ You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,
like one who lies on the top of a mast.

³⁵ 'They struck me', you will say, 'but I was not hurt;
they beat me, but I did not feel it.

When shall I awake?

I will seek another drink.'

24 Do not envy the wicked,

nor desire to be with them;

² for their minds devise violence,
and their lips talk of mischief.

³ By wisdom a house is built,
and by understanding it is established;

⁴ by knowledge the rooms are filled
with all precious and pleasant riches.

⁵ Wise warriors are mightier than strong ones,
and those who have knowledge than those who have strength;

⁶ for by wise guidance you can wage your war,
and in abundance of counsellors there is victory.

⁷ Wisdom is too high for fools;

in the gate they do not open their mouths.

⁸ Whoever plans to do evil
will be called a mischief-maker.

⁹ The devising of folly is sin,
and the scoffer is an abomination to all.

¹⁰ If you faint in the day of adversity,
your strength being small;

¹¹ if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death,
those who go staggering to the slaughter;

¹² if you say, 'Look, we did not know this'—
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?

Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it?
And will he not repay all according to their deeds?

¹³ My child, eat honey, for it is good,
and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.

¹⁴ Know that wisdom is such to your soul;
if you find it, you will find a future,
and your hope will not be cut off.

¹⁵ Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against the home of the righteous;
do no violence to the place where the righteous live;

¹⁶ for though they fall seven times, they will rise again;
but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

¹⁷ Do not rejoice when your enemies fall,
and do not let your heart be glad when they stumble,

¹⁸ or else the LORD will see it and be displeased,
and turn away his anger from them.

¹⁹ Do not fret because of evildoers.

Do not envy the wicked;
²⁰ for the evil have no future;
the lamp of the wicked will go out.

²¹ My child, fear the LORD and the king,
and do not disobey either of them;
²² for disaster comes from them suddenly,
and who knows the ruin that both can bring?

24:23-34

Further Sayings of the Wise

²³ These also are sayings of the wise:

Partiality in judging is not good.

²⁴ Whoever says to the wicked, 'You are innocent',
will be cursed by peoples, abhorred by nations;
²⁵ but those who rebuke the wicked will have delight,
and a good blessing will come upon them.

²⁶ One who gives an honest answer
gives a kiss on the lips.

²⁷ Prepare your work outside,
get everything ready for you in the field;
and after that build your house.

²⁸ Do not be a witness against your neighbour without cause,
and do not deceive with your lips.

²⁹ Do not say, 'I will do to others as they have done to me;
I will pay them back for what they have done.'

³⁰ I passed by the field of one who was lazy,
by the vineyard of a stupid person;
³¹ and see, it was all overgrown with thorns;
the ground was covered with nettles,
and its stone wall was broken down.
³² Then I saw and considered it;
I looked and received instruction.
³³ A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
³⁴ and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want, like an armed warrior.

25:1-29:27

Further Wise Sayings of Solomon

25 These are other proverbs of Solomon that the officials of King Hezekiah of Judah copied.

² It is the glory of God to conceal things,
but the glory of kings is to search things out.
³ Like the heavens for height, like the earth for depth,
so the mind of kings is unsearchable.
⁴ Take away the dross from the silver,
and the smith has material for a vessel;
⁵ take away the wicked from the presence of the king,
and his throne will be established in righteousness.
⁶ Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence
or stand in the place of the great;
⁷ for it is better to be told, 'Come up here',
than to be put lower in the presence of a noble.

What your eyes have seen

⁸ do not hastily bring into court;
for what will you do in the end,
when your neighbour puts you to shame?
⁹ Argue your case with your neighbour directly,
and do not disclose another's secret;
¹⁰ or else someone who hears you will bring shame upon you,
and your ill repute will have no end.

¹¹ A word fitly spoken
is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.

¹² Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold
is a wise rebuke to a listening ear.

¹³ Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest
are faithful messengers to those who send them;
they refresh the spirit of their masters.

¹⁴ Like clouds and wind without rain
is one who boasts of a gift never given.

¹⁵ With patience a ruler may be persuaded,
and a soft tongue can break bones.

¹⁶ If you have found honey, eat only enough for you,
or else, having too much, you will vomit it.

¹⁷ Let your foot be seldom in your neighbour's house,
otherwise the neighbour will become weary of you and hate you.

¹⁸ Like a war club, a sword, or a sharp arrow
is one who bears false witness against a neighbour.

¹⁹ Like a bad tooth or a lame foot
is trust in a faithless person in time of trouble.

²⁰ Like vinegar on a wound
is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

Like a moth in clothing or a worm in wood,
sorrow gnaws at the human heart.

²¹ If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat;
and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink;

²² for you will heap coals of fire on their heads,
and the LORD will reward you.

²³ The north wind produces rain,
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.

²⁴ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop
than in a house shared with a contentious wife.

²⁵ Like cold water to a thirsty soul,
so is good news from a far country.

²⁶ Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain
are the righteous who give way before the wicked.

²⁷ It is not good to eat much honey,
or to seek honour on top of honour.

²⁸ Like a city breached, without walls,
is one who lacks self-control.

26 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
so honour is not fitting for a fool.

² Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying,
an undeserved curse goes nowhere.

³ A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey,
and a rod for the back of fools.

⁴ Do not answer fools according to their folly,
or you will be a fool yourself.

⁵ Answer fools according to their folly,
or they will be wise in their own eyes.

⁶ It is like cutting off one's foot and drinking down violence,
to send a message by a fool.

⁷ The legs of a disabled person hang limp;
so does a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

⁸ It is like binding a stone in a sling
to give honour to a fool.

⁹ Like a thornbush brandished by the hand of a drunkard
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

¹⁰ Like an archer who wounds everybody
is one who hires a passing fool or drunkard.

¹¹ Like a dog that returns to its vomit
is a fool who reverts to his folly.

¹² Do you see persons wise in their own eyes?
There is more hope for fools than for them.

¹³ The lazy person says, 'There is a lion in the road!
There is a lion in the streets!'

¹⁴ As a door turns on its hinges,
so does a lazy person in bed.

¹⁵ The lazy person buries a hand in the dish,
and is too tired to bring it back to the mouth.

¹⁶ The lazy person is wiser in self-esteem
than seven who can answer discreetly.

¹⁷ Like somebody who takes a passing dog by the ears
is one who meddles in the quarrel of another.

¹⁸ Like a maniac who shoots deadly firebrands and arrows,
¹⁹ so is one who deceives a neighbour
and says, 'I am only joking!'

²⁰ For lack of wood the fire goes out,
and where there is no whisperer, quarrelling ceases.

²¹ As charcoal is to hot embers and wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.

²² The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.

²³ Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel
are smooth lips with an evil heart.

²⁴ An enemy dissembles in speaking
while harbouring deceit within;

²⁵ when an enemy speaks graciously, do not believe it,
for there are seven abominations concealed within;

²⁶ though hatred is covered with guile,
the enemy's wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

²⁷ Whoever digs a pit will fall into it,
and a stone will come back on the one who starts it rolling.

²⁸ A lying tongue hates its victims,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.

27 Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring.

² Let another praise you, and not your own mouth—
a stranger, and not your own lips.

³ A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty,
but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.

⁴ Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming,

but who is able to stand before jealousy?

⁵ Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

⁶ Well meant are the wounds a friend inflicts,
but profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

⁷ The sated appetite spurns honey,
but to a ravenous appetite even the bitter is sweet.

⁸ Like a bird that strays from its nest
is one who strays from home.

⁹ Perfume and incense make the heart glad,
but the soul is torn by trouble.

¹⁰ Do not forsake your friend or the friend of your parent;
do not go to the house of your kindred on the day of your calamity.

Better is a neighbour who is nearby
than kindred who are far away.

¹¹ Be wise, my child, and make my heart glad,
so that I may answer whoever reproaches me.

¹² The clever see danger and hide;
but the simple go on, and suffer for it.

¹³ Take the garment of one who has given surety for a stranger;
seize the pledge given as surety for foreigners.

¹⁴ Whoever blesses a neighbour with a loud voice,
rising early in the morning,
will be counted as cursing.

¹⁵ A continual dripping on a rainy day
and a contentious wife are alike;

¹⁶ to restrain her is to restrain the wind
or to grasp oil in the right hand.

¹⁷ Iron sharpens iron,
and one person sharpens the wits of another.

¹⁸ Anyone who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and anyone who takes care of a master will be honoured.

¹⁹ Just as water reflects the face,
so one human heart reflects another.

²⁰ Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied,
and human eyes are never satisfied.

²¹ The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold,
so a person is tested by being praised.

²² Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle
along with crushed grain,
but the folly will not be driven out.

²³ Know well the condition of your flocks,
and give attention to your herds;

²⁴ for riches do not last for ever,
nor a crown for all generations.

²⁵ When the grass is gone, and new growth appears,
and the herbage of the mountains is gathered,

²⁶ the lambs will provide your clothing,
and the goats the price of a field;

²⁷ there will be enough goats' milk for your food,
for the food of your household
and nourishment for your servant-girls.

28 The wicked flee when no one pursues,
but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

² When a land rebels
it has many rulers;

but with an intelligent ruler
there is lasting order.

³ A ruler who oppresses the poor
is a beating rain that leaves no food.

⁴ Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
but those who keep the law struggle against them.

⁵ The evil do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.

⁶ Better to be poor and walk in integrity
than to be crooked in one's ways even though rich.

⁷ Those who keep the law are wise children,
but companions of gluttons shame their parents.

⁸ One who augments wealth by exorbitant interest
gathers it for another who is kind to the poor.

⁹ When one will not listen to the law,
even one's prayers are an abomination.

- ¹⁰ Those who mislead the upright into evil ways
will fall into pits of their own making,
but the blameless will have a goodly inheritance.
- ¹¹ The rich is wise in self-esteem,
but an intelligent poor person sees through the pose.
- ¹² When the righteous triumph, there is great glory,
but when the wicked prevail, people go into hiding.
- ¹³ No one who conceals transgressions will prosper,
but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
- ¹⁴ Happy is the one who is never without fear,
but one who is hard-hearted will fall into calamity.
- ¹⁵ Like a roaring lion or a charging bear
is a wicked ruler over a poor people.
- ¹⁶ A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor;
but one who hates unjust gain will enjoy a long life.
- ¹⁷ If someone is burdened with the blood of another,
let that killer be a fugitive until death;
let no one offer assistance.
- ¹⁸ One who walks in integrity will be safe,
but whoever follows crooked ways will fall into the Pit.
- ¹⁹ Anyone who tills the land will have plenty of bread,
but one who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.
- ²⁰ The faithful will abound with blessings,
but one who is in a hurry to be rich will not go unpunished.
- ²¹ To show partiality is not good—
yet for a piece of bread a person may do wrong.
- ²² The miser is in a hurry to get rich
and does not know that loss is sure to come.
- ²³ Whoever rebukes a person will afterwards find more favour
than one who flatters with the tongue.
- ²⁴ Anyone who robs father or mother
and says, 'That is no crime',
is partner to a thug.
- ²⁵ The greedy person stirs up strife,
but whoever trusts in the LORD will be enriched.
- ²⁶ Those who trust in their own wits are fools;
but those who walk in wisdom come through safely.
- ²⁷ Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing,

but one who turns a blind eye will get many a curse.

²⁸ When the wicked prevail, people go into hiding;
but when they perish, the righteous increase.

29 One who is often reprov'd, yet remains stubborn,
will suddenly be broken beyond healing.

² When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice;
but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

³ A child who loves wisdom makes a parent glad,
but to keep company with prostitutes is to squander one's substance.

⁴ By justice a king gives stability to the land,
but one who makes heavy exactions ruins it.

⁵ Whoever flatters a neighbour
is spreading a net for the neighbour's feet.

⁶ In the transgression of the evil there is a snare,
but the righteous sing and rejoice.

⁷ The righteous know the rights of the poor;
the wicked have no such understanding.

⁸ Scoffers set a city aflame,
but the wise turn away wrath.

⁹ If the wise go to law with fools,
there is ranting and ridicule without relief.

¹⁰ The bloodthirsty hate the blameless,
and they seek the life of the upright.

¹¹ A fool gives full vent to anger,
but the wise quietly holds it back.

¹² If a ruler listens to falsehood,
all his officials will be wicked.

¹³ The poor and the oppressor have this in common:
the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

¹⁴ If a king judges the poor with equity,
his throne will be established for ever.

¹⁵ The rod and reproof give wisdom,
but a mother is disgraced by a neglected child.

¹⁶ When the wicked are in authority, transgression increases,
but the righteous will look upon their downfall.

¹⁷ Discipline your children, and they will give you rest;

they will give delight to your heart.

¹⁸ Where there is no prophecy, the people cast off restraint,
but happy are those who keep the law.

¹⁹ By mere words servants are not disciplined,
for though they understand, they will not give heed.

²⁰ Do you see someone who is hasty in speech?
There is more hope for a fool than for anyone like that.

²¹ A slave pampered from childhood
will come to a bad end.

²² One given to anger stirs up strife,
and the hothead causes much transgression.

²³ A person's pride will bring humiliation,
but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honour.

²⁴ To be a partner of a thief is to hate one's own life;
one hears the victim's curse, but discloses nothing.

²⁵ The fear of others lays a snare,
but one who trusts in the LORD is secure.

²⁶ Many seek the favour of a ruler,
but it is from the LORD that one gets justice.

²⁷ The unjust are an abomination to the righteous,
but the upright are an abomination to the wicked.

30:1-31:31

Sayings of Agur

30The words of Agur son of Jakeh. An oracle.

Thus says the man: I am weary, O God,
I am weary, O God. How can I prevail?

² Surely I am too stupid to be human;
I do not have human understanding.

³ I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.

⁴ Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of the hand?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is the person's name?
And what is the name of the person's child?
Surely you know!

⁵ Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

⁶ Do not add to his words,
or else he will rebuke you, and you will be found a liar.

⁷ Two things I ask of you;
do not deny them to me before I die:

⁸ Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that I need,

⁹ or I shall be full, and deny you,
and say, 'Who is the LORD?'

or I shall be poor, and steal,
and profane the name of my God.

¹⁰ Do not slander a servant to a master,
or the servant will curse you, and you will be held guilty.

¹¹ There are those who curse their fathers
and do not bless their mothers.

¹² There are those who are pure in their own eyes
yet are not cleansed of their filthiness.

¹³ There are those—how lofty are their eyes,
how high their eyelids lift!—

¹⁴ there are those whose teeth are swords,
whose teeth are knives,
to devour the poor from off the earth,

the needy from among mortals.

¹⁵ The leech has two daughters;
'Give, give,' they cry.

Three things are never satisfied;
four never say, 'Enough':

¹⁶ Sheol, the barren womb,
the earth ever thirsty for water,
and the fire that never says, 'Enough.'

¹⁷ The eye that mocks a father
and scorns to obey a mother
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley
and eaten by the vultures.

¹⁸ Three things are too wonderful for me;
four I do not understand:

¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a girl.

²⁰ This is the way of an adulteress:
she eats, and wipes her mouth,
and says, 'I have done no wrong.'

²¹ Under three things the earth trembles;
under four it cannot bear up:

²² a slave when he becomes king,
and a fool when gluttoned with food;

²³ an unloved woman when she gets a husband,
and a maid when she succeeds her mistress.

²⁴ Four things on earth are small,
yet they are exceedingly wise:
²⁵ the ants are a people without strength,
yet they provide their food in the summer;
²⁶ the badgers are a people without power,
yet they make their homes in the rocks;
²⁷ the locusts have no king,
yet all of them march in rank;
²⁸ the lizard can be grasped in the hand,
yet it is found in kings' palaces.

²⁹ Three things are stately in their stride;
four are stately in their gait:
³⁰ the lion, which is mightiest among wild animals
and does not turn back before any;
³¹ the strutting rooster, the he-goat,
and a king striding before his people.

³² If you have been foolish, exalting yourself,
or if you have been devising evil,
put your hand on your mouth.
³³ For as pressing milk produces curds,
and pressing the nose produces blood,
so pressing anger produces strife.

The Teaching of King Lemuel's Mother

31 The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

² No, my son! No, son of my womb!
No, son of my vows!
³ Do not give your strength to women,
your ways to those who destroy kings.
⁴ It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,

or for rulers to desire strong drink;
⁵ or else they will drink and forget what has been decreed,
and will pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
⁶ Give strong drink to one who is perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress;
⁷ let them drink and forget their poverty,
and remember their misery no more.
⁸ Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.
⁹ Speak out, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Ode to a Capable Wife

¹⁰ A capable wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
¹² She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
¹³ She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
¹⁴ She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from far away.
¹⁵ She rises while it is still night
and provides food for her household
and tasks for her servant-girls.
¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
¹⁷ She girds herself with strength,
and makes her arms strong.
¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
²⁰ She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the needy.

- ²¹ She is not afraid for her household when it snows,
for all her household are clothed in crimson.
- ²² She makes herself coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known in the city gates,
taking his seat among the elders of the land.
- ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them;
she supplies the merchant with sashes.
- ²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
- ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
- ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her happy;
her husband too, and he praises her:
- ²⁹ 'Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.'
- ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
- ³¹ Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the city gates.

Ecclesiastes 1-6

Reflections of a Royal Philosopher

- 1** The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.
- ² Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.
- ³ What do people gain from all the toil
at which they toil under the sun?
- ⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes,
but the earth remains for ever.

⁵ The sun rises and the sun goes down,
and hurries to the place where it rises.

⁶ The wind blows to the south,
and goes round to the north;
round and round goes the wind,
and on its circuits the wind returns.

⁷ All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they continue to flow.

⁸ All things are wearisome;
more than one can express;
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,
or the ear filled with hearing.

⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done;
there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said,
'See, this is new'?
It has already been,
in the ages before us.

¹¹ The people of long ago are not remembered,
nor will there be any remembrance
of people yet to come
by those who come after them.

The Futility of Seeking Wisdom

¹² I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, ¹³ applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with. ¹⁴ I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

¹⁵ What is crooked cannot be made straight,
and what is lacking cannot be counted.

¹⁶ I said to myself, 'I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.' ¹⁷ And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and

folly. I perceived that this also is but a chasing after wind.

¹⁸ For in much wisdom is much vexation,
and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow.

The Futility of Self-Indulgence

2 I said to myself, ‘Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself.’ But again, this also was vanity. ² I said of laughter, ‘It is mad’, and of pleasure, ‘What use is it?’ ³ I searched with my mind how to cheer my body with wine—my mind still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, until I might see what was good for mortals to do under heaven during the few days of their life. ⁴ I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; ⁵ I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶ I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house; I also had great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and of the provinces; I got singers, both men and women, and delights of the flesh, and many concubines.

9 So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹ Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and again, all was vanity and a chasing after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

Wisdom and Joy Given to One Who Pleases God

12 So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the one do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done. ¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness.

¹⁴ The wise have eyes in their head,
but fools walk in darkness.

Yet I perceived that the same fate befalls all of them. ¹⁵ Then I said to myself, ‘What happens to the fool will happen to me also; why then have I been so very wise?’ And I said to myself that this also is vanity. ¹⁶ For there is no enduring remembrance of the

wise or of fools, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How can the wise die just like fools? ¹⁷ So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me; for all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

18 I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to those who come after me ¹⁹—and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish? Yet they will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labours under the sun, ²¹ because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? ²³ For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity.

24 There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink, and find enjoyment in their toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God; ²⁵ for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Everything Has Its Time

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

² a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

⁵ a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

The God-Given Task

9 What gain have the workers from their toil? ¹⁰I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. ¹¹He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; ¹³moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. ¹⁴I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. ¹⁵That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.

Judgement and the Future Belong to God

16 Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, wickedness was there, and in the place of righteousness, wickedness was there as well. ¹⁷I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter, and for every work. ¹⁸I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them to show that they are but animals. ¹⁹For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. ²⁰All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. ²¹Who knows whether the human spirit goes upwards and the spirit of animals goes downwards to the earth? ²²So I saw that there is nothing better than that all should enjoy their work, for that is their lot; who can bring them to see what will be after them?

4 Again I saw all the oppressions that are practised under the sun. Look, the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power—with no one to comfort them. ²And I thought the dead, who have already died, more fortunate than the living, who are still alive; ³but better than both is the one who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from one person's envy of

another. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

⁵ Fools fold their hands
and consume their own flesh.

⁶ Better is a handful with quiet
than two handfuls with toil,
and a chasing after wind.

⁷ Again, I saw vanity under the sun: ⁸the case of solitary individuals, without sons or brothers; yet there is no end to all their toil, and their eyes are never satisfied with riches. 'For whom am I toiling', they ask, 'and depriving myself of pleasure?' This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

The Value of a Friend

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

¹³ Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who will no longer take advice. ¹⁴ One can indeed come out of prison to reign, even though born poor in the kingdom. ¹⁵ I saw all the living who, moving about under the sun, follow that youth who replaced the king; ¹⁶ there was no end to all those people whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Reverence, Humility, and Contentment

⁵ Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than the sacrifice offered by fools; for they do not know how to keep from doing evil. ² Never be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few.

³ For dreams come with many cares, and a fool's voice with many words.

⁴ When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it; for he has no pleasure in

fools. Fulfil what you vow.⁵ It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfil it.⁶ Do not let your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands?

7 With many dreams come vanities and a multitude of words; but fear God.

8 If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and right, do not be amazed at the matter; for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.⁹ But all things considered, this is an advantage for a land: a king for a ploughed field.

10 The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity.

11 When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes?

12 Sweet is the sleep of labourers, whether they eat little or much; but the surfeit of the rich will not let them sleep.

13 There is a grievous ill that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owners to their hurt,¹⁴ and those riches were lost in a bad venture; though they are parents of children, they have nothing in their hands.¹⁵ As they came from their mother's womb, so they shall go again, naked as they came; they shall take nothing for their toil, which they may carry away with their hands.¹⁶ This also is a grievous ill: just as they came, so shall they go; and what gain do they have from toiling for the wind?¹⁷ Besides, all their days they eat in darkness, in much vexation and sickness and resentment.

18 This is what I have seen to be good: it is fitting to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of the life God gives us; for this is our lot.¹⁹ Likewise all to whom God gives wealth and possessions and whom he enables to enjoy them, and to accept their lot and find enjoyment in their toil—this is the gift of God.²⁰ For they will scarcely brood over the days of their lives, because God keeps them occupied with the joy of their hearts.

6 There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy upon

humankind: ²those to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honour, so that they lack nothing of all that they desire, yet God does not enable them to enjoy these things, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous ill. ³A man may beget a hundred children, and live for many years; but however many are the days of his years, if he does not enjoy life's good things, or has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ⁴For it comes into vanity and goes into darkness, and in darkness its name is covered; ⁵moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything; yet it finds rest rather than he. ⁶Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to one place?

⁷All human toil is for the mouth, yet the appetite is not satisfied. ⁸For what advantage have the wise over fools? And what do the poor have who know how to conduct themselves before the living? ⁹Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire; this also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

¹⁰Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what human beings are, and that they are not able to dispute with those who are stronger. ¹¹The more words, the more vanity, so how is one the better? ¹²For who knows what is good for mortals while they live the few days of their vain life, which they pass like a shadow? For who can tell them what will be after them under the sun?

7-12

A Disillusioned View of Life

⁷A good name is better than precious ointment,
and the day of death, than the day of birth.

²It is better to go to the house of mourning
than to go to the house of feasting;

for this is the end of everyone,
and the living will lay it to heart.

³Sorrow is better than laughter,
for by sadness of countenance the heart is made glad.

⁴The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning;
but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

⁵It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise

than to hear the song of fools.

⁶ For like the crackling of thorns under a pot,
so is the laughter of fools;
this also is vanity.

⁷ Surely oppression makes the wise foolish,
and a bribe corrupts the heart.

⁸ Better is the end of a thing than its beginning;
the patient in spirit are better than the proud in spirit.

⁹ Do not be quick to anger,
for anger lodges in the bosom of fools.

¹⁰ Do not say, 'Why were the former days better than these?'
For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

¹¹ Wisdom is as good as an inheritance,
an advantage to those who see the sun.

¹² For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money,
and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to the one who possesses
it.

¹³ Consider the work of God;
who can make straight what he has made crooked?

¹⁴ On the day of prosperity be joyful, and on the day of adversity consider; God has
made the one as well as the other, so that mortals may not find out anything that
will come after them.

The Riddles of Life

¹⁵ In my vain life I have seen everything; there are righteous people who perish in
their righteousness, and there are wicked people who prolong their life in their
evildoing. ¹⁶Do not be too righteous, and do not act too wise; why should you
destroy yourself? ¹⁷Do not be too wicked, and do not be a fool; why should you die
before your time? ¹⁸It is good that you should take hold of the one, without letting
go of the other; for the one who fears God shall succeed with both.

¹⁹ Wisdom gives strength to the wise more than ten rulers that are in a city.

²⁰ Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning.

²¹ Do not give heed to everything that people say, or you may hear your servant

cursing you; ²² your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others.

23 All this I have tested by wisdom; I said, 'I will be wise', but it was far from me. ²⁴ That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out? ²⁵ I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know that wickedness is folly and that foolishness is madness. ²⁶ I found more bitter than death the woman who is a trap, whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters; one who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her. ²⁷ See, this is what I found, says the Teacher, adding one thing to another to find the sum, ²⁸ which my mind has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. ²⁹ See, this alone I found, that God made human beings straightforward, but they have devised many schemes.

Obey the King and Enjoy Yourself

8 Who is like the wise man?

And who knows the interpretation of a thing?

Wisdom makes one's face shine,

and the hardness of one's countenance is changed.

2 Keep the king's command because of your sacred oath. ³ Do not be terrified; go from his presence, do not delay when the matter is unpleasant, for he does whatever he pleases. ⁴ For the word of the king is powerful, and who can say to him, 'What are you doing?' ⁵ Whoever obeys a command will meet no harm, and the wise mind will know the time and way. ⁶ For every matter has its time and way, although the troubles of mortals lie heavy upon them. ⁷ Indeed, they do not know what is to be, for who can tell them how it will be? ⁸ No one has power over the wind to restrain the wind, or power over the day of death; there is no discharge from the battle, nor does wickedness deliver those who practise it. ⁹ All this I observed, applying my mind to all that is done under the sun, while one person exercises authority over another to the other's hurt.

God's Ways Are Inscrutable

10 Then I saw the wicked buried; they used to go in and out of the holy place, and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is

vanity. ¹¹Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the human heart is fully set to do evil. ¹²Though sinners do evil a hundred times and prolong their lives, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they stand in fear before him, ¹³but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will they prolong their days like a shadow, because they do not stand in fear before God.

14 There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people who are treated according to the conduct of the wicked, and there are wicked people who are treated according to the conduct of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. ¹⁵So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun.

16 When I applied my mind to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how one's eyes see sleep neither day nor night, ¹⁷then I saw all the work of God, that no one can find out what is happening under the sun. However much they may toil in seeking, they will not find it out; even though those who are wise claim to know, they cannot find it out.

Take Life as It Comes

9 All this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God; whether it is love or hate one does not know. Everything that confronts them ²is vanity, since the same fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to those who sacrifice and those who do not sacrifice. As are the good, so are the sinners; those who swear are like those who shun an oath. ³This is an evil in all that happens under the sun, that the same fate comes to everyone. Moreover, the hearts of all are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. ⁴But whoever is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. ⁵The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost. ⁶Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished; never again will they have any share in all that happens under the sun.

7 Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do. ⁸Let your garments always be white; do not let oil be lacking on your head. ⁹Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days

of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. ¹⁰Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

¹¹ Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to the skilful; but time and chance happen to them all. ¹²For no one can anticipate the time of disaster. Like fish taken in a cruel net, and like birds caught in a snare, so mortals are snared at a time of calamity, when it suddenly falls upon them.

Wisdom Superior to Folly

¹³ I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed important to me. ¹⁴There was a little city with few people in it. A great king came against it and besieged it, building great siege-works against it. ¹⁵Now there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. ¹⁶So I said, 'Wisdom is better than might; yet the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heeded.'

¹⁷ The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

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

Miscellaneous Observations

10 Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a foul odour; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honour.

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

³ Even when fools walk on the road, they lack sense, and show to everyone that they are fools.

⁴ If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your post, for calmness will undo great offences.

⁵ There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as great an error as if it proceeded from the ruler: ⁶folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. ⁷I have

seen slaves on horseback, and princes walking on foot like slaves.

⁸ Whoever digs a pit will fall into it;
and whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a snake.

⁹ Whoever quarries stones will be hurt by them;
and whoever splits logs will be endangered by them.

¹⁰ If the iron is blunt, and one does not whet the edge,
then more strength must be exerted;
but wisdom helps one to succeed.

¹¹ If the snake bites before it is charmed,
there is no advantage in a charmer.

¹² Words spoken by the wise bring them favour,
but the lips of fools consume them.

¹³ The words of their mouths begin in foolishness,
and their talk ends in wicked madness;

¹⁴ yet fools talk on and on.
No one knows what is to happen,
and who can tell anyone what the future holds?

¹⁵ The toil of fools wears them out,
for they do not even know the way to town.

¹⁶ Alas for you, O land, when your king is a servant,
and your princes feast in the morning!

¹⁷ Happy are you, O land, when your king is a nobleman,
and your princes feast at the proper time—
for strength, and not for drunkenness!

¹⁸ Through sloth the roof sinks in,
and through indolence the house leaks.

¹⁹ Feasts are made for laughter;
wine gladdens life,
and money meets every need.

²⁰ Do not curse the king, even in your thoughts,
or curse the rich, even in your bedroom;
for a bird of the air may carry your voice,
or some winged creature tell the matter.

The Value of Diligence

11 Send out your bread upon the waters,

for after many days you will get it back.

² Divide your means seven ways, or even eight,
for you do not know what disaster may happen on earth.

³ When clouds are full,
they empty rain on the earth;
whether a tree falls to the south or to the north,
in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.

⁴ Whoever observes the wind will not sow;
and whoever regards the clouds will not reap.

5 Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything.

6 In the morning sow your seed, and at evening do not let your hands be idle; for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

Youth and Old Age

7 Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun.

8 Even those who live for many years should rejoice in them all; yet let them remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

9 Rejoice, young man, while you are young, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Follow the inclination of your heart and the desire of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement.

10 Banish anxiety from your mind, and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

12 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 have no pleasure in them'; ²before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return with the rain; ³on the day when the guards of the house tremble,

and the strong men are bent, and the women who grind cease working because they are few, and those who look through the windows see dimly; ⁴when the doors on the street are shut, and the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low; ⁵when one is afraid of heights, and terrors are in the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails; because all must go to their eternal home, and the mourners will go about the streets; ⁶before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it. ⁸Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher; all is vanity.

Epilogue

⁹Besides being wise, the Teacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs. ¹⁰The Teachersought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly.

¹¹The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings that are given by one shepherd. ¹²Of anything beyond these, my child, beware. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

¹³The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Other Reading: