EDITION OF THE GREEK TEXT

The NETS translation is based on the edition of Alfred Rahlfs (Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes, 2 vols. [Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935]), since at present no fully critical text is available, though one is in progress.

In one case I have deviated from Rahlfs’ edition. In 1.17 Rahlfs has παραβολάς (“comparisons,” “analogies,” or “parables”), a reading supported by all Greek manuscripts (La = errores = a, cf. Vulg.). This is contrary, however, to the translation technique of the Greek translator. The Hebrew word being translated in 1.17 is הָרֶמֶשׁ (“madness”). This is rendered by περιφορά in 2.12 and 7.25 and also by περιφέρεια, a cognate noun, in 9.3. Similarly, הָרֶמֶשׁ (“madness”) is rendered by περιφέρεια in 10.13 and וְרֵמֶשׁ (“mad”) by περιφορά in 2.2. Conversely, the Greek translator uses παραβολή for the only occurrence of בְּרֵא (“comparison,” “proverb”) in 12.9. Therefore, the original text at 1.17 was probably περιφοράς for which παραβολάς represents an error of hearing and sight occurring so early that it dominated the textual tradition that has come down to us. Earlier proposals are περιφορά (Grabe) and παραφορά (R. Gordis, “Ecclesiastes 1.17—Its Text and Interpretation,” JBL 56 (1937) 323–330 = q / 248mg).

TITLE OF THE BOOK

The title for this book in NETS requires some explanation. In the English versions it is called “Ecclesiastes,” a title adopted from the Latin Vulgate and derived originally from the Greek Ἐκκλησίαστης. The title in Hebrew reads “The Words of Qoheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem,” or just “Qoheleth” (Eccl 1.1). “Qoheleth” occurs only seven times in the book and nowhere else in the canonical Hebrew writings. It may be construed as a feminine singular active participle of the verb ἱππαρ, which has the basic meaning of “assembling.” Analogous forms are found in the list of the “Servants of Solomon” in Ezra and Nehemiah to designate public officials. For example, “Hassophereth” in Ezra 2.55 and Nehemiah 7.57 may mean “Official Scribe,” and “Pokereth-Hazzebaim” in Ezra 2.55 and Nehemiah 7.59 may mean “Gazelle-Warden.” If this analysis is correct, Qoheleth could perhaps designate the “Officer of the Qahal” or “Master of Ceremonies of the Assembly,” a role similar to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Greek translator related this term to the noun ἐκκλησία, “assembly” and translated rather than transliterated the word by an agent noun in Greek which means “one who participates in a popular assembly.” Jerome interpreted this in Latin by the use of the term concionator, or “speaker before an assembly,” a meaning unattested in Greek prior to the Greek translation. It was from this meaning that the English concept of “Preacher” was derived. The English equivalent used here is Ecclesiast. Since the term is known in English, it is spelled here accordingly, though its intended meaning is “member of an assembly.”

TRANSLATION PROFILE OF THE GREEK

The Greek translation of Ecclesiast is characterised by extreme formal equivalence, so much so that scholars have suggested that it is the work of Aquila himself, a revisor of the Septuagint who flourished c. 120 CE. While the identity of the translator is still uncertain and undetermined according to the most recent research, the character of the translation reveals that in fact some patterns are identical to those considered classical Aquila, while others are clearly not Aquila.

The approach of the translator to his task is one where faithfulness is defined and measured by the degree of quantitative alignment between Greek translation and Hebrew original. As a result, the text is dif-

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1 This is not an appropriate forum to debate whether or not Ecclesiast represents the work of Aquila either as an early edition or an edition in final form, and in any case the most recent research suggests the verdict is non liquet. See John Jarick, “Aquila’s Koheleth,” Textus 15 (1990) 131–139 and bibliography in his footnotes for earlier contributions to the debate.
TO THE READER OF ECClesiAST

It is difficult to read in places and almost incomprehensible at times from the point of view of the native speaker of Hellenistic Greek who had no knowledge of or recourse to the source text. The attempt of the translator to align his translation with the source language and text affects both lexical and syntactic choices in Greek. Choosing the same lexeme in Greek for every occurrence of a particular lexeme in the Hebrew regardless of the contextual meaning results in a high degree of stereotyping. Few calques or isolate renderings, however, are to be found. Like Aquila, then, consistency and uniformity in Hebrew-Greek equivalents is extremely rigid. Unlike Aquila, however, we do not see a set of Hebrew-Greek equivalents that is so highly refined and specialized that distinct equivalents are employed for each Hebrew lexeme, nor does the translator attempt to represent the root system of Hebrew by forming a set of equivalents from a single Greek stem to be used for nouns and verbs derived from a single root. Even more than in lexical equivalents, it is in the morpho-syntactic structures that the attempt to align the Greek and the Hebrew is most apparent and also where the results are so awkward or even absurd. One obvious and outstanding example is the rendering of ἑαυτός by σου (1.14; 2.12, 17, 18; 3.10, 11bis, 17bis; 4.1, 2, 3, 4bis, 15; 5.3, 6; 7.14, 15, 18, 26, 29; 8.8, 9, 15, 17bis; 9.1bis, 15; 10.19, 20; 11.5, 7, 12.9, 14).² That σου is found with the dative in 9.11 is normal (σου παντί συντονίς); that it is found, however, with the genitive (9.15) or accusative (rel.) to mark the direct object is contrary to Greek grammar. This characteristic may be further illustrated. In 2.1 ἑαυτός is rendered by καί οί άνθρωποι. The verb τανύσεως followed by έν here is idiomatic, conveying the sense "to enjoy" (so NRSV). The Greek translator rigidly renders τανύσεως by είδον and συν normally contrasts the whole with the part.³ Yet in 3.17 τάνύσεως is rendered ότι καυρός τω παντί πράγματι (cf. 3.1; 4.8, 16). The article τοι is employed to represent the τοί; this effect creates difficulties for the Greek reader and skews the meaning of the Hebrew while attempting to represent it formally in all respects. Other cases are perhaps readable, but awkwardly so. Note, for example, that τάνύσεως τοί in 12.1 is rendered by ἐώς οί άνθρωποι ἡμερία τῆς κοινωνίας. With the negative μη, the result is awkward and not necessarily impossible Greek. Elsewhere the rigid approach of the translator is carried off more cleverly. Hebrew כָּל (1.17; 2.1, 7, 8, 14, 15bis, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26; 3.11; 4.4, 8tris, 11, 14, 16bis, 16; 5.9, 16, 18; 6.5, 9; 7.14, 21, 22bis; 8.10, 12, 14, 16; 9.1bis, 6bis, 12, 13; 10.20; 12.5) or כָּל is (1.1; 3.13; 5.15; 6.3, 7, 7.6, 18; 8.17; 9.3, 11tris; 10.3; 11.2) is always rendered by κοίτες except in a double translation in 7.22b where the equivalent is simply κοίτα. Nonetheless, the equivalence כָּל = κοίτες, while illustrating the spirit of the Greek translator, is unlikely to have originated with him. Here the translator extends and perpetuates a tradition. Clearly, then, the Greek translator of Ecclesiastes belongs to the so-called κοίτες tradition of translators.

THE NETS TRANSLATION

An attempt has been made to capture and represent in the NETS translation something of the approach, characteristics, and spirit of the Greek translation. Naturally, English that is ungrammatical is avoided. An attempt has been made to capture and represent in the NETS translation something of the approach, characteristics, and spirit of the Greek translation. The representation of formal equivalence, however, is frequently given higher priority than idiomatic English. Formal equivalence, however, is frequently given higher priority than idiomatic English.

In some cases, formal equivalence in the Greek vis-à-vis the Hebrew is possible or has been reproduced where the English would be ungrammatical. The representation of מִי by σου, for example, must be ignored in NETS. Another example is the frequent use of the independent pronoun מִי in the Hebrew where the verb is already marked for first person, carefully reproduced by εγώ in the Greek translation (1.12, 6bis; 2.1, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15tris, 18bis, 20, 24; 3.17, 18; 4.1, 2, 4, 7, 8; 5.17; 7.25, 26; 8.12, 15; 9.16). This has only been represented in NETS in 1.12. In cases like 2.1, discussed earlier, no attempt is made to represent rigidly the preposition in Greek with its formal equivalent in the English language, even though that is what the Greek translator has done in order to represent the Hebrew exactly.

The attempt to follow a model of translation similar to that of the Greek translator has occasionally created clashes with the NRSV. For example, in 5.9 NRSV has a dynamic and idiomatic rendering of the Hebrew: "But all things considered, this is an advantage for a land: a king for a plowed field." The Greek renders the same Hebrew in extreme literalism. The differences between NETS and NRSV are due partly to the fact that the Greek translation interprets the Hebrew differently but are also due partly to the fact that the literalism is reproduced in NETS.

Aligning NETS with NRSV has been difficult not only where NRSV is more dynamic than the Greek in rendering the same text. On occasion the gender inclusive language policy of NRSV must be abandoned.

² 2.12 and 9.11 are included against Ra; see J. Ziegler, "Die Wiedergabe der nota accusativi 'et, 'aet- mit su/n," ZAW 100 Sup (1988) 222–233. This, of course, does not affect the NETS translation.
in order to represent the Greek faithfully. For example, according to the approach of the Greek translator, all 49 instances of ἀνήρ are rendered by ἀνθρώπος and all 10 instances of Ἠμῶν are rendered by ἀνήρ. This translation technique enables the Greek reader to track the differences between ἀνήρ and Ἠμῶν in the parent text. In NETS, while gender inclusive renderings may be maintained for ἀνθρώπος, ἀνήρ must be rendered by “man” in English, even when Ἠμῶν functions as an indefinite pronoun, in order to represent properly the work of the Greek translator. There are also instances where gender inclusive language has been achieved by converting generic masculine singular pronouns and verbs to common gender plural pronouns and verbs or by altering active constructions to passive. Sometimes this practice so alters the formal equivalence between NRSV and the Hebrew that the formal equivalence between the Greek and the Hebrew cannot be fairly represented this way. Ecclesiast 4.14 and 8.12 may illustrate the attempt in NETS to represent the exact way in which the Greek reproduces the Hebrew text.

EDITORIAL POLICY
While the Greek translator does not always read the beginning and ending of sentences or connections between clauses in the Hebrew in the same way as NRSV, in essence the same versification is used. Differences can be indicated by different grammar and punctuation.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE
NETS is for the most part a fresh translation of the Greek adapted to NRSV. Occasionally, the translation of Brenton was consulted and found to be useful.

Peter J. Gentry
ECCLESIAST 2-3 651
deed, this was vanity. 2 Of laughter I said, “Mad-
ness,” and of enjoyment, “Why are you doing this?”
3 I looked about in my heart whether to draw my
flesh into wine—and my heart guided in wisdom—
and whether to lay hold on folly until I might see
what kind of thing is good for human beings to do
under the sun, the number of the days of their life.
4 I made my work great; I built houses for myself; I
planted vineyards for myself. 5 I made myself gar-
dens and parks, and I planted in them every fruit
tree. 6 I made myself pools of water to water from
them a grove sprouting trees. 7 I acquired male and
female slaves, and I had homebred; indeed, I had
great possessions of herds and flocks, more than all
who had been before me in Jerusalem. 8 I gathered
for myself, indeed, silver and gold and valued pos-
sessions of kings and of the territories; I got male
singers and female singers and the delights of
human beings, a cupbearer and pitchers. 9 And I be-
came great and increased more than all who were before me in Jerusalem; indeed, my
wisdom stood firm for me. 10 Anything for which
all who were before me in Jerusalem; indeed, my
heart rejoiced in all my toil and this was vanity and
preference of spirit.
11 I looked at all my works that my hands had done and at the toil
under the sun, the number of the days of their life.
12 And I looked to see wisdom and madness
and folly, for who is the person who will come to
follow the plan in as many things as he made it.
13 And I looked at all my works that my hands had done and at the toil
wherein I toiled to do it and see, all were vanity and preference of spirit, and there is no surplus
under the sun.
14 For everything there is a time, and a right time for every matter under heaven:
2 a right time to give birth, and a right time to
die;
3 a right time to plant, and a right time to
pluck up what is planted;
4 a right time to kill, and a right time to heal;
5 a right time to tear, and a right time to
sew;
6 a right time to seek, and a right time to
lose;
7 a right time to throw stones, and a right
time to build;
8 a right time to embrace, and a right time to
be far from embracing;
9 a right time to call and a right time to
be silent;
10 a right time to love, and a right time to
hate;
11 a right time to war, and a right time for
peace.
12 And I hated life, because the work that I am toiling
in is grievous to me, for all
things are vanity and preference of spirit.
13 Indeed, everyone who will eat and drink and
behold what his toil is for, it is a divine gift. 14 I
hated life, because the work that is done
under the sun was grievous to me, for all
things are vanity and preference of spirit.
15 And I hated life, because the work that is done
under the sun was grievous to me, for all
things are vanity and preference of spirit.
16 Moreover, I saw under the sun the place of
justice—the impious was there, and the place of

Possibly female cupbearers  bLacking in Gk  cOr counsel
humans than  dPerhaps nothing better for them
4 And I turned, and I saw all the extortions that take place under the sun. Look, the tear of the oppressed—and there is no one to comfort them! From the hand of those oppressing them is strength—and there is no one to comfort them. 2And I praised the dead, who have already died, more than the living who are living until now. 3And better than both is whoever has not yet been, who has not seen the grievous work that is done under the sun. 4And I saw all toil and all manliness of work, that it is a man’s envy of his companion. Indeed, this is vanity and preference of spirit. 5Fools folded their hands and consumed their own flesh. 6Better is a handful of repose than two handfuls of toil, and preference of spirit. 7And I turned and saw vanity under the sun: there is one, and there is no second; indeed, he has neither son nor brother, and there is no end to all his toil; indeed, his eye is not satisfied with riches. “For whom do I toil and deprive my life from goodness?” Even this is vanity and an unhappy preoccupation. 9Better are two than one, because they have a good reward in their toil. 10(For if they fall, the one will raise his partner up, and woe to the one, when he falls, and there should be no second to raise him up. 11Indeed, if two sleep, they also have warmth, and the one, how should he be warmed? 12Even if the one should prevail, two will stand against him. A threefold cord will not be quickly broken. 13Better a child poor and wise than a king old and foolish, who did not know to give heed any longer; 14for from the house of prisoners he will come out to reign, for, indeed, in his kingdom he was born poor. 15I saw all the living, who were walking about under the sun, with the second youth, who will stand in his place. 16There is no end to all the people, to all who were born before them; indeed, those who came later will not rejoice in him, for, indeed, this is vanity and preference of spirit. 17Guard your foot, whenever you go to the house of God and are near to hear. Above a gift of fools is your sacrifice, for they do not know how to do evil. 5(2)Never be in a hurry 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. 2(3)For a dream comes with a great amount of distraction, and a fool’s voice with a great quantity of words. 3(4)Whenever you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it, for there is no will in fools. Whatever you vow, pay up. 4(5)It is better that you do not vow than that you vow and do not pay up. 5(6)Do not allow your mouth to lead your flesh into sin, and do not say before God, “It is ignorance,” in order that God should not be angry at your utterance and destroy the works of your hands. 6(7)For with a great quantity of dreams are both vanities and many words; so fear God! 7(8)If you see in a territory the extortion of the poor and the snatching away of justice and right, do not be amazed at the matter, for there is a high one to watch over a high one and higher ones over them. 8(9)And the surplus of the land in everything is a king over the worked field. 9(10)One who loves money will not be satisfied with money, and who loved produce in a great quantity of them! Indeed, this is vanity. 10(11)With an abundance of goodness, eaters of it were increased. And what is manliness to him who has it, except to see with his eyes? 11(12)Sweet is the sleep of a slave, whether he eats little or much, and for the person filled full with being rich, there is no sending him away to sleep. 12(13)There is an illness that I saw under the sun: riches being kept by him who has them to his misfortune. 13(14)And those riches will be lost in an unhappy preoccupation, and he begot a child, and there is nothing in his hand. 14(15)Just as he came out from his mother’s womb naked, he will return to go as he came, and he will not take anything for his toil that may go in his hand. 15(16)Indeed, this is a grievous ill; for as he arrived, so also he will go away, and what is his surplus, at which he toils for wind? 16(17)Indeed, all his days are in darkness and mourning, and with much anger and sickness and bitterness. 17(18)See what I saw as good, what is fine: to eat and to drink and to see goodness in all his toil at whatever he toils under the sun, the number of the days of his life which God gave to him, for this is his portion. 18(19)Indeed, all to whom God has given to them wealth and possessions and they have authority over them to eat from it and to take

aPossibly breath  bPerhaps nothing better  cI.e. the child  dI.e. the king’s  eOr preoccupation  fOr resentment
6 There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it is great upon humankind: 2there is a man to whom God will give to him wealth and possessions and honor, and he is not lacking with respect to his soul from all things that he desires, and God does not give authority to him to eat from it, because a stranger will eat it. This is vanity and a grievous illness. 3If a man begets a hundred children and will live many years and a great number is what will be the days of his years and his soul will not be satisfied with goodness, indeed, he has no burial; I said: A miscarriagea is better than this is vanity and a grievous illness. 4For it came in vanity, and it goes in darkness, and in darkness its name will be covered; 5indeed, it did not see the sun and did not know; this one has more rest than he. 6Even if he lived recurrences of a thousand years and he did not see goodness—do not all things go to one place? 7All toil of humankind is for their mouth; indeed, their soul will not be satisfied. 8For what surplus has the wise over the fool, since the needy knows to walk before life? 9Better is the sight of the eyes than going on spiritb; indeed, this is vanity and the preference of spirit.

10 If anything has happened, it has already been named, and it is known what human beings are, and they will not be able to dispute with those stronger than they. 11For many words are multiplying vanity; what surplus has one? 12For who knows what is good for mortals in their life, the number of the days of their life of vanity, and they passed them in shadow? For who will tell them what will be after them under the sun?

7 A good name is better than good anointing-oil, and the day of death is better than the day of one’s birth.

2 It is better to go to a house of mourning than to that go to a house of drinking, because this is the end of everyone, and the living will give it to his heart.

3 Better is anger than laughter, for by a bad countenance the heart will be made good. 4The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, and the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. 5It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than a man hearing the song of fools. 6For as the sound of thorns under a cauldron, so is the laughter of fools; indeed, this is vanity. 7For extortion turns a wise person mad, and it will destroy his heart of courage.

8 Better is the end of words than its beginning; better is a patient person than one proud in spirit.

9 Do not be hasty in your spirit to become angry, for anger will restc in the bosom of fools. 10Do not say, “Why did it happen that the former days were better than these?” For it is not with wisdom you have asked concerning this.

11 Wisdom is good with distribution of land, and a surplus to those who see the sun. 12For wisdom, in its shade, is like the shade of money, and a surplus of knowledge of wisdom will give life to the one who has it.

13 Consider the works of God; who will be able to set in order whomever God has made crooked?

14 In a day of prosperity live in prosperity, and in a day of misfortune, consider; indeed, the one in proportion to the other God has made concerning speech so that mortals may not find anything after them.

15 I saw all things in my days of vanity; there are righteous people perishing in their righteousness, and there are impious people remaining in their wickedness. 16Do not be very righteous, and do not become excessively wise, lest you be horrified. 17Do not be very ungodly, and do not become hard so that you should not die when it is not your time. 18It is good that you hold on to the one; indeed, do not let your hand go from the other, for the one who fears God will go forth in all things.

19 Wisdom will give help to the wise more than ten having authority over those who are in the city.

20 For as to humanity, there is not a just person in the earth who will do good and will not sin.

21 Indeed, to all the words that people will speak do not give your heart so that you do not hear your slave cursing you, 22for frequently he will do you evil and many times he will bring hurt to your heart as, indeed, you have cursed others.

23 All these things I tested by wisdom; I said, “I will become wise,” 24and it was far from me, far beyond what was, and a deep depth, who will find it? 25—I—in fact my heart—went full circle to know and to examine and seek wisdom and a reckoning and to know the folly of the impious and hardness and madness. 26And I find more bitter than death the woman who is hunted prey, and her heart is hunting-nets; her hands are fetters; one who is good before God will be delivered from her, and one sinning will be taken by her. 27See, this I found, said the Ecclesiast, adding one to one to find the calculation 28which my soul still sought but did not find. One man from a thousand I found, and a woman among all these I did not find. 29Albeit, see, this I found what God made:
man upright. And they themselves have searched out many schemes.

8 Who knows the wise?
   And who knows the interpretation of what is said?
   A person’s wisdom will illuminate his face, and one without shame in his face will be hated.

2 Keep a king’s utterance, and do not be hasty about the expression of a sacred oath. 3From his presence you will go; do not stand still because of painful words, for all that he wants he will do. 4Just as a king will speak having authority, and who will say to him, “What will you do?” 5Whoever keeps a command will not know anything harmful, and the heart of the wise knows the right time of decision. 6For to every matter there is a right time and decision, for the knowledge of mortals is great upon them. 7For they do not know what is going to be, for who will tell them just how it will be? 8There is no one having authority over the spirit to restrain the spirit, and there is no authority over the day of death; there is no discharge from the battle, and impiety will not deliver those at home with it. 9All this I observed, and I gave my heart to every work that is done under the sun—things that one person exercised authority over another to hurt them.

10 Then I saw the impious carried into tombs; they went from the holy place, and they were praised in the city that they did so. Indeed, this is vanity. 11Because a refutation of those doing evil there does not happen quickly—on account of this the heart of humans was fully convinced in them there does not happen quickly—on account of this the heart of humans was fully convinced in them that poor man. 12And I said, “Better is a poor wise man, and he himself remembered that poor man. 16And I said, “Better is wisdom than might, and the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not being heard.”

9 For all this I gave to my heart, and my heart saw all this: how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God; indeed, love and, indeed, hate there is no person in the know; all things are before them; 2vanity is in all things. One eventuality is for the righteous and the impious, for the good and for the evil, for the clean and for the unclean, for the one who sacrifices and for the one who does not sacrifice. As are the good, so are the sinners; so are those who swear, just as those who fear an oath. 3This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that one eventuality is for all. Indeed, the heart of humans was filled with evil; madness is in their heart while they live, and after them they go to the dead. 4For who are they who have a part with all the living? There is hope, because a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5For the living will know that they will die, and the dead are not knowing anything; they have no more reward, because their memory is forgotten. 6Indeed, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they have no further portion forever in all that is done under the sun.

7 Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a good heart, for God has already approved your works. 8At every time let your garments be white; do let not oil be lacking upon your head. 9See life with the wife whom you loved, all the days of your life of vanity that are given to you under the sun—all your days of vanity, because it is your portion in your life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. 10Whatever your hand finds to do, as is your might, do! For there is no work and reasonings and knowledge in Hades, where you are going.

11 I turned, and I saw under the sun that the race is not to the nimble, nor the battle to the strong, nor, indeed, bread to the wise, nor, indeed, riches to the intelligent, nor, indeed, favor to those who are perceptive, because time and chance will happen to them all. 12For, indeed, no one knows their time. Like fish being taken with a pernicious net and like birds being caught in a snare, like them mortals are snared at a time of ruin, when it suddenly falls upon them.

13 Indeed, this I saw as wisdom under the sun, and it was great according to me. 14There was a little city and few men in it, and a great king would come against it and surround it and would build a great palisaded camp against it, 15and he would find in it a poor wise man, and he himself will deliver the city by his wisdom. And no one remembered that poor man. 16And I said, “Better is wisdom than might, and the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not being heard.”

The words of the wise in rest are heard above
Wisdom is better than instruments of war, and one sinner will destroy much good.

10 Deadly flies will make a preparation of aromatic oil give off a foul odor; a little wisdom is of more worth than honor derived from great folly.

2 The heart of the wise is to his right, and the heart of the fool is to his left.

3 Indeed, when a fool walks on the road, his heart will be lacking, and all he will consider is foolishness.

4 If the spirit of the one holding authority rises against you, do not leave your place, for healing will put a stop to great offenses.

5 There is an evil, which I saw under the sun, like an involuntary offense, which proceeded from the one in authority: a fool was allowed in great heights, and the rich will sit in a low place. I have seen slaves upon horses and rulers walking on the ground like slaves.

8 If the one digging a hole will fall into it, and the one who demolishes a wall—a snake will bite him.

9 One who lifts stones will be hurt by them; one who splits trees will be endangered by them.

10 If the iron tool fails, he himself has also troubled his face, and he will put power into his efforts, and the extra of being a man is skill.

11 If the snake bites when there is no whispering, in fact there is no surplus to the charmer.

12 The words of the mouth of the wise are grace, and the lips of the fool will plunge him into the sea.

13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the last of his speech is wicked madness, and the fool multiplies words. No one knows what has happened, and what will be after them who can tell them?

14 The toil of fools will weary them— one who did not know how to go into the city.

15 Alas for you, O city, whose king is young, and your rulers eat in the early morning!

16 Happy are you, O land, whose king is the son of freemen, and your rulers at the proper time will eat in strength, and they will not be ashamed.

17 Through hesitations the roofing will be debased; and in idleness of hands the house will drip.

18 They make bread for laughter; wine gladdens the living and will obey money in all respects.

19 Indeed, in your consciousness do not curse the king, and in your bedrooms do not curse the rich, for a bird of the sky will carry off your voice, and one having wings will bring back word.

20 Send out your bread upon the face of the water, for in a great number of days you will find it.

21 Give a portion to seven, indeed, to eight, for you do not know what bad condition will be upon the earth.

22 If the clouds are full of rain, upon the earth they will pour out; whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree will fall, there it will be.

23 One who watches the wind will not sow, and one who looks at the clouds will not reap.

24 When one does not know what the way of the spirit is, like bones in the belly of the pregnant woman, so you will not know the works of God, whatever he will do.

25 In the morning, sow your seed, and to the evening do not let your hand be slack, for you do not know what sort will fit, whether this or that and whether the two are good together.

26 Light is sweet, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun.

27 For even if a person will live many years, in them all he will be merry, and he will remember the days of darkness, because they will be many. All that is coming is vanity.

28 Rejoice, young man, in your youth, and let your heart do you good in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and by the sight of your eyes, and know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

29 Put away anger from your heart, and divert pain from your body, for youth and lack of understanding are vanity.

30 Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years arrive in which you will say, “I have no wish for them.” Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the
clouds return after the rain; 3 in the day when the guards of the house shake and the strong men are twisted, and the women who grind ceased working, because they are few, and those who look through the windows will be dimmed, 4 and they will lock the doors in the market, because of the weakness of the sound of the woman who grinds, and one will rise up at the sound of the sparrow, and all the daughters of song will be brought low. 5 Indeed, they will see from heights, and terrors will be in the road; when the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper becomes fat, and the caperberry is scattered, because mortals went to their eternal home, and the mourners circled in the market; 6 before the cord of silver is ruined and the blossom of gold is crushed and the pitcher is broken at the fountain and the wheel at the cistern races together 7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to the God who gave it. 8 Vanity of vanities, said the Ecclesiast; all is vanity.

9 Beyond the fact that the Ecclesiast was wise, he also taught the people knowledge, and an ear will track out an arrangement of parables. 10 The Ecclesiast sought many ways to find the words he wanted, even something written of straightforwardness, words of truth.

11 The words of the wise are like ox-goads and like nails firmly planted; those from the collections were given from one 11 shepherd and a surplus of them. 12 My son, 12 beware of making many books; there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 The end of the message; all is heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is every person. 14 For God will bring every work in judgment, in everything overlooked, whether good or whether evil.