

## Chapter 1

# What to Expect From Life

## Solomon's Test

**H**e not only sought for and created proverbs of practical advice, but Solomon also delved deeply into philosophy. Most of his philosophical writing is found in the book of Ecclesiastes. In that book he tells how he sought answers to the great questions of life, such as: What is good and evil? What is the meaning and purpose of our existence? What is the true nature of the world? Solomon tells below how he was qualified to begin such a quest:

**I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven (Ecc. 1:12-13).**

**I communed with my own heart, saying, Lo, I have gotten for me great wisdom above all who were before me in Jerusalem. Yea, my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly (Ecc. 1:16-17).**

Solomon told how he experimented with his own life. He tried every kind of pleasure—the best food and drink, the best music and entertainment, the finest material goods. He had a thousand wives and concubines, and many servants. He took on great challenges, and he tried to improve everything around him. Solomon said he pursued happiness in many different ways to discover how best to live:

**I said in my heart, Come now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure. ... I searched in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine (my heart yet guiding *me* with wisdom), and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their life.**

**I made for me great works. I built for me houses. I planted for me vineyards. I made for me gardens and parks, and I**

planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit. I made for me pools of water, to water from there the forest where trees were reared. I bought men-servants and maid-servants, and had servants born in my house. I also had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all who were before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for me silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces. I got for me men-singers and women-singers, and the luxuries of the sons of men, *and* a wife and wives.

So I was great, and increased more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired I kept not from them. I did not withhold my heart from any joy. For my heart rejoiced because of all my labor, and this was my portion from all my labor (Ecc. 2:1, 3-10).

Solomon pursued happiness with as much zest, gusto, and vigor as any man. Certainly if any man was ever both wise enough and wealthy enough to succeed, it was Solomon. The Bible states that Solomon's glory—his wisdom, knowledge, riches, wealth, and honor—was unexcelled. Indeed, after Solomon asked God for wisdom and knowledge to lead Israel, God said to him, "... **wisdom and knowledge are granted to thee. And I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had who have been before thee, neither shall any after thee have the like**" (2Ch. 1:12).

## **Disappointment**

As king of Israel during its most prosperous time, Solomon had great personal resources for the pursuit of happiness. Yet he failed. He discovered that neither pleasure, nor possessions, nor anything else would bring lasting happiness:

**I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What does it do?**  
(Ecc. 2:2).

**Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do, and, behold, all**

**was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun (Ecc. 2:11).**

He pursued happiness but found frustration, disappointment, and emptiness. Ironically, his great quest for the way to happiness led him to hate life. Here is what he concluded:

**Then I said in my heart, As it happens to the fool, so it will happen even to me, and why then was I more wise? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For of the wise man, even as of the fool, there is no remembrance forever, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. And how the wise man dies even as the fool!**

**So I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous to me. For all is vanity and a striving after wind. And I hated all my labor in which I labored under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who shall be after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have rule over all my labor in which I have labored, and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.**

**Therefore I turned about to cause my heart to despair concerning all the labor in which I had labored under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, and with knowledge, and with skillfulness, yet he shall leave it to a man who has not labored in it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.**

**For what has a man of all his labor, and of the striving of his heart in which he labors under the sun? For all his days are *but* sorrows, and his travail is grief, yea, even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity (Ecc. 2:15-23).**

## **Incurable Vanity**

Solomon's failure to find lasting happiness was not a personal one. He failed because of the very nature of life. Alas! Vanity, Solomon discovered, is the nature of this world: "**Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity**" (Ecc. 1:2). He said, "**I have seen all the works that are done under the sun,**

**and, behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered”** (Ecc. 1:14-15).

Ours is a divided cosmos at war with itself. It is a world of order and disorder in continuous conflict, and there is no sure defense against its evils. Its best promises are only good probabilities. There are no absolute guarantees; all of its rules have exceptions.

Solomon gave many examples to illustrate the vanity of life; examples of sorrows from without and within; of the failure of riches, wisdom, even righteousness; of its pervasive injustice, evil, and folly. He saw hopeless oppressions:

**Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And, behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter. And on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter. Therefore I praised the dead who have long been dead more than the living who are yet alive. Yea, better than them both *is* him who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun** (Ecc. 4:1-3).

He saw self-imposed oppression:

**Then I returned and saw vanity under the sun. There is one man who is alone, and he has not a second, yea, he has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end of all his labor, nor are his eyes satisfied with riches. For whom then, *he says*, do I labor, and deprive my soul of good? This also is vanity, yea, it is a great travail”** (Ecc. 4:7-8).

He saw the failure of riches:

**There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches *were* kept by the owner of it to his hurt. And those riches perish in a bad venture. And if he has begotten a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his mother’s womb, naked shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a grievous evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he that he labored for the wind? All his days also he eats in gloom, and**

he is greatly troubled, and has depression and anger (Ecc. 5:13-17).

**There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy upon men: A man to whom God gives riches, wealth, and honor, so that he lacks nothing for his soul of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but an alien eats it. This is vanity, and it is an evil disease.**

**If a man begets a hundred sons, and lives many years so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not filled with good, and moreover he has no burial, I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. For it comes in vanity, and departs in darkness, and the name of it is covered with darkness. Moreover it has not seen the sun nor known it, this *one* has rest rather than the other. Yea, though he lives a thousand years twice told, and yet enjoys no good, do not all go to one place? (Ecc. 6:1-6).**

In this vain world he even saw the failure of righteousness:

**And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of justice, that wickedness was there, and in the place of righteousness, that wickedness was there (Ecc. 3:16).**

**All this I have seen in my days of vanity. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs *his life* in his evildoing (Ecc. 7:15).**

**There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked, again, there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity (Ecc. 8:14).**

He saw that the inevitable climax of every life is death. No matter how rich or poor, wise or foolish, good or bad, happy or miserable we may have been, death is the ultimate conclusion of all our efforts. And that itself disposes men to live selfish, desperate lives:

**All things come alike to all. There is one event to the righteous man and to the wicked man, to the good man, and to**

**the clean man, and to the unclean man, to him who sacrifices and to him who does not sacrifice, as is the good man, so is the sinner, *and* he who swears, as he who fears an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one event to all. Yea also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead (Ecc. 9:2-3).**

Solomon saw injustice everywhere in this sinful world:

**I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happens to them all. For man also does not know his time. As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falls suddenly upon them (Ecc. 9:11-12).**

He saw the power of wisdom despised:

**I have also seen wisdom under the sun this way, and it seemed great to me: There was a little city, and few men within it. And there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man. And he by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then I said, Wisdom is better than strength. Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard (Ecc. 9:13-16).**

He even saw the spectacle of folly exalted to power: **“There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as it were an error which proceeds from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in a low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and rulers walking like servants upon the earth” (Ecc. 10:5-7).**

Solomon found that the very best life in this material realm (under the sun) has many sorrows. It is a great tribulation, and we are hopelessly incapable of ever achieving permanent contentment and fulfillment. The whole of our mental being, like the waves of the sea tossed about, is ever filled with conflicting thoughts of dif-

ferent kinds and intensities from which there is no escape even in sleep. And we can no more achieve lasting inner peace than the waters of the oceans can remain still:

**Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of mirth is heaviness** (Pro. 14:13).

**All things are full of weariness, man cannot utter it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing** (Ecc. 1:8).

**It is a great tribulation that God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith** (Ecc. 1:13).

In my own personal observations I have seen the same kind of evils today. Pleasure and escape from pain are brief fleeting experiences that this modern generation desperately tries to prolong with drugs and entertainment. The more pleasure we get, the harder it is to keep, and those who get too much degenerate and risk an early death. Most of us suffer to pay many fold more than we get back in pleasure. We enter the world crying in protest, and we leave it surrounded by tears. Pain and discomfort is the normal experience. We simply learn to suppress or ignore the feelings most of the time.

I have heard some men describe the great euphoria they experienced under the influence of some pain suppressing drug. It is easy to see how a man can become quickly addicted to such things. Nevertheless, trying to run away from our normal feelings is a path that inevitably leads to degradation and death. It is a general rule that suffering strengthens, whereas pleasure weakens. A modern proverb of athletes says, "No pain, no gain." It is through "blood, toil, sweat and tears"<sup>1</sup> that we grow strong and succeed, whereas relaxation and play deplete resources.

There are countless evils that assail us as we live, evils from nature and evils from our fellow man. Injustice and frustration abound, and the innocent suffer as do the guilty. No time of life seems better than any other. Youth has strength and abundant energy, but lacks the money, power, and talent which the elderly have. Yet the

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1. Winston Churchill

elderly are cursed with worn-out bodies. And for the great majority of people the years in between are filled with too many burdens and responsibilities to remain at ease and play.

The beauty, strength, and glory of our youthful maturity lasts for only a fraction of our lives, a score, more or less, out of the three-score and ten that we live. The more we live and learn, the more disillusioned we tend to become. A vice of the young is naïveté; a vice of the old is cynicism. Whenever we think we have succeeded in life, that we “have it made,” that we “have arrived,” then we must struggle to keep it. All our benefits—money, knowledge, beauty, strength, power, popularity—are slippery things that keep us busy just hanging on to them. And, of course, at the end everything is lost. A false proverb of this adulterous generation says, “He who dies with the most, wins.” The truth is, he who dies with the most, loses the most.

It is a cruel system. The species may survive, but the individual never does. The individual is the perpetual and ultimate victim in this vain world. Life thrives on death, and death thrives on life. Eat-and-be-eaten is the nature of life in this world. It is a dog-eat-dog existence filled with competitive striving. Survival of the fittest is the siren song of evolutionists, but the individual never survives; each one ultimately succumbs.

Long ago I heard an interesting story from a young man who gained the audience of a wealthy man whom he hoped would give him money. The young man said he met the rich man in his penthouse apartment in New York City. The man was confined to a wheelchair and cared for by his servants. He had only a few months to live. The man gave him no money, instead he complained to him about the vanity of life. He was very bitter. He said he had spent most of his life fighting tooth and claw to acquire wealth, but now he was an invalid and about to die. He said life was a treacherous monster that mocks us.

Dear reader, neither God nor his word are treacherous. Had the man earlier studied the Bible he would have learned of the vanity of life before he set his hope on the wind. Remember what Solomon said: “**Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity**” (Ecc. 1:2). And Solomon found that every

generation must face the same hopeless vanity, because it is the nature of the system, and the system never changes. It is a fixed order:

**One generation goes, and another generation comes, but the earth abides forever. The sun also arises, and the sun goes down and hastens to its place where it arises. The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north. It turns around continually in its course, and the wind returns again to its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place from where the rivers come, there they go again (Ecc. 1:4-7).**

Change, it seems, is deceptive. Details and individuals always change, but the pattern remains. I am not the same today that I was yesterday. The chemicals that compose my body are ever changing. Everything is always new and different, if we only look at individual things. But the system never changes. It is a fixed order. The laws of nature are established, and the world operates with or without this individual or that. The system cycles up and down, around and around, with or without you and me.

Those who have utopian ideas that its nature will change are much deluded. And each generation, it seems, believes that its evils are worse than those of the past. We as individuals come and go, and do not live long enough to see the tiresome sameness of it all. For Solomon said,

**There is no remembrance of the former *things*, nor shall there be any remembrance of the latter that are to come, among those who shall come after (Ecc. 1:11).**

**Say thou not, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou do not inquire wisely concerning this (Ecc. 7:10).**

It is an incurably imperfect and vain cosmos. Remember, Solomon said, **“I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered”** (Ecc. 1:14-15). Considered in itself life on earth, he said, is a senseless exercise in futility, a conclusion he

found to be inescapable. Throughout the world in every age, more or less, life overall is an unhappy, frustrating experience. Those who claim otherwise are either lying or they have deluded themselves. No man can escape death, nor can he beat the system no matter how he may live. Solomon said, **“There is no man who has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, nor has he power over the day of death. And there is no discharge in war. Neither shall wickedness deliver him who is given to it”** (Ecc. 8:8).

Solomon expressed his conclusion about our earthly existence in the opening words of the book of Ecclesiastes: **“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit has man from all his labor in which he labors under the sun?”** (Ecc. 1:1-3).

The wisdom of Solomon teaches about the hopelessness of life here on earth. That is one reason why the greater wisdom of Jesus is called the good news (gospel). Jesus said, **“In the world ye have tribulation. But cheer up, I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33). True hope is for a better life—an eternal life—in a better world in another realm where peace and justice reign because God’s will is done.

## Happiness

Although Solomon was deeply disappointed by what he discovered about life, he still concluded that life is better than death. And indeed, in spite of all our suffering, almost everybody chooses life over death. He said,

**Because to him who is joined with all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything, nor have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. As well their love, as their hatred and their envy, has perished long ago, nor have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun** (Ecc. 9:4-6).

**Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. Yea, if a man lives many years, let him rejoice in them all. But let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that comes is vanity (Ecc. 11:7-8).**

Furthermore, God has given us compensations—joys to ease our sorrows. He has made the simple, common experiences of life the most reliable sources of happiness: the pleasure of our food and drink, satisfaction in our labors, enjoyment with the material goods that enrich our lives, the comforts of a wife. All of these things have God's approval, if they are not abused:

**There is nothing better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, without him? (Ecc. 2:24-25).**

**I know that there is nothing better for them, than to rejoice, and to do good as long as they live. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labor. *It* is the gift of God (Ecc. 3:12-13).**

**Therefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works, for that is his portion (Ecc. 3:22).**

**Behold, that which I have seen to be good and to be fitting is *for a man* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good in all his labor in which he labors under the sun all the days of his life which God has given him, for this is his portion. Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth, and has given him power to eat of it, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life, because God answers *him* in the joy of his heart (Ecc. 5:18-20).**

**Then I commended joy, because a man has no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be cheerful. For that shall abide with him in his labor *all* the days of his life which God has given him under the sun (Ecc. 8:15).**

**Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God has already accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white, and let not thy head lack oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou love all the days of thy life of vanity, which he has given thee under the sun, all thy days of vanity. For that is thy portion in life, and in thy labor in which thou labor under the sun (Ecc. 9:7-9).**

It is right, Solomon said, to partake of life and its activities, remembering that true survival comes from obedience to Jehovah: **“It is good that thou should take hold of this, yea, also from that withdraw not thy hand. For he who fears God shall come forth from them all”** (Ecc. 7:18). However, he also advised accepting our lot, and avoiding lust or excessive ambition, for the gains of this life are vanity. He said, **“For what advantage has the wise man more than the fool? What has the poor man, who knows how to walk before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire. This also is vanity and a striving after wind”** (Ecc. 6:8-9).

## **Inextricable Mystery**

Solomon went beyond the pursuit of happiness. He also sought the explanation and meaning of life. He tried to understand the world and find the reasons for its vanity and injustice. Yet in this effort he also failed. The world is just too massive, too complicated, too deep and mysterious for anybody to understand no matter how wise he may become. He said,

**Since there are many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he spends as a shadow? For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun? (Ecc. 6:11-12).**

**All this I have proved in wisdom. I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me. That which is, is far off and exceedingly deep. Who can find it out? (Ecc. 7:23-24).**

**Behold, I have found this, says the Preacher, *laying one thing to another, to find out the account, which my soul still seeks, but I have not found* (Ecc. 7:27-28).**

**When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth (for also there is he who sees sleep with his eyes neither day nor night), then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. Because however much a man labors to seek it out, yet he shall not find it. Yea moreover, though a wise man thinks to know it, yet he shall not be able to find it. (Ecc. 8:16-17).**

Solomon did discover that God created mankind to be a noble creature, but many have corrupted themselves. He said, **“Behold, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many contrivances”** (Ecc. 7:29). Moreover, Solomon found that God knows precisely what he is doing with the world. For he has his own lofty reasons for whatever happens, and he has deliberately limited our power to comprehend:

**I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men to be employed therewith. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also he has set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God has done from the beginning even to the end (Ecc. 3:10-11).**

**I know that, whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it. And God has done it that men should fear before him (Ecc. 3:14).**

**Consider the work of God. For who can make that straight, which he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider. Yea, God has made the one side by side with the other, to the end that man should not find out anything after him (Ecc. 7:13-14).**

**As thou know not what is the way of the wind, *nor* how the bones *grow* in the womb of her who is with child, even so thou know not the work of God who does all (Ecc. 11:5).**

## The Reason for the World's Vanity

There is actually an underlying logic and purpose in the apparent disorder and senselessness of life. And every stage in the cycle of life—whether for building or destroying, joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain—serves God's grand purpose. Solomon said,

**Jehovah has made everything for its own end, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (Pro. 16:4).**

**For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted, a time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to break down, and a time to build up, a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance, a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to seek, and a time to lose, a time to keep, and a time to cast away, a time to tear, and a time to sew, a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, a time to love, and a time to hate, a time for war, and a time for peace (Ecc. 3:1-8).**

**I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous man and the wicked man, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work (Ecc. 3:17).**

**For all this I laid to my heart, even to explore all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God. No man understands, either love or hatred. All is before them (Ecc. 9:1).**

Solomon revealed the incurable vanity of the world, but the New Testament writers were those who explained why it is that way. For example, Paul told the Roman Christians,

**For the creation was made subject to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope. Because the creation itself will also be freed from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation is groaning and travailing together until now. And not only so, but also ourselves who have the first fruit of the Spirit. And we**

**ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:20-23).**

Peter also wrote about these things, and he described how this vain world was going to end. He said the world in its present form is going to be dissolved by fervent heat, and replaced with a new heavens and a new earth, one without sin and evil:

**But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, during which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements, being intensely hot, will be disintegrated, and the earth and the works in it will be destroyed by fire. Therefore, all these things being disintegrated, what kind ought ye to be in holy actions and pieties, anticipating and hastening the coming of the day of God, by which the heavens, being made fiery hot, will be disintegrated, and the elements dissolve, being intensely hot? But we anticipate a new heavens and a new earth according to his promise, in which righteousness dwells (2Pe. 3:10-13).**

After describing the end of our world Peter said, **“Therefore, beloved, anticipating these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, without spot and blameless” (2Pe. 3:14).** That was a plea Jesus often made. Be ready, dear reader!

## **Judgment**

Every man needs to be ready, because we are all going to be judged. Hence, we need to keep the future in mind as we live our lives. There is a modern song (lovely but melancholy) that tells the tale of a young man who chased pleasure until old age caught up with him and payment became due. It is an old theme. Solomon warned the young to look ahead to the judgment, and not forget that death catches up with us all. And with that plea he gave a beautiful and poetic description of old age:

**Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from**

thy flesh, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity (Ecc. 11:9-10).

Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them, before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look out of the windows shall be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the street, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low, yea, they shall be afraid of height, and terrors *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goes to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets, before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, all is vanity (Ecc. 12:1-8).

*This is the end of the matter, all has been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether good or evil (Ecc. 12:13-14).*