傳道書 9:1-18 死亡與智慧

本章一開始繼續前一章的論述,講到關於義人和惡人的比較,特別強調二者最終的結局都相同,就是虚空。本章共提到 6 次『日光之下』,遍佈全章之中,可見整章都是傳道者從世界的角度來看人生。

我們前面查第六章的時候已經提過,然而盼望每次查考傳道書的時候仍然要再強調一次。就是日光之下乃是屬世界的,被撒但掌控的,是暫時的,不完全的。雖然因為神將『永恆』安置在世人心裏(3:11),讓人可以追求永恆的事物,如長生不死,流芳百世等,也可以藉著大自然窺見神創造的奇妙,以致於不能不承認神的永能和神性(羅1:19-20)。因此在傳道者的觀察和尋求中,我們可以看到,即使在日光之下,人也能夠看到神的作為,讓人興起敬畏之心,即使他觀察到的結論並不一定完全正確。例如1:13, 2:24, 2:26, 3:10-11,13-15,17-18, 5:1-2,6-7,18-20等。只有透過神的特別啟示(神的道)我們才能夠真的認識神。

因為他是從日光之下看事情,所以往往得到的結論就是虚空(沒有意義 meaningless)。本章共出現 2次『虚空』,可見一個沒有神的人生是一個虚空的人生,是一個沒有意義和價值的人生。在這樣的人生觀下來看事情,往往會得到很消極悲觀的結論。而我們因著有神的關係就有了不同的人生觀,因此就有了生活的意義和方向。我們在看傳道書的時候可以從這個角度來看,並且與那些活在日光之下的人所看到的事物作比較,可以更好的得到幫助。

1. 人人都有一死 (1-6)

- 9:1 我將這一切事放在心上,詳細考究(examining it all),就知道義人和智慧人,並他們的作為都在神手中(in God's hand);或是愛,或是恨,都在他們的前面,人不能知道。(no one knows whether love or hate awaits them)
- 9:2 凡臨到眾人的事都是一樣:義人和惡人都遭遇一樣的事;好人,潔淨人和不潔淨人, 獻祭的與不獻祭的,也是一樣。好人如何,罪人也如何;起誓的如何,怕起誓的也如何。 9:3 在日光之下所行的一切事上有一件禍患(evil),就是眾人所遭遇的(fate,
- destine)都是一樣,並且世人的心充滿了惡(evil);活著的時候心裏狂妄(madness).後來就歸死人那裏去了。
- 9:4 與一切活人相連的(is joined, among),那人還有指望,因為活著的狗比死了的獅子更強。
- 9:5 活著的人知道必死;死了的人毫無所知,也不再得賞賜;他們的名無人記念。
- 9:6 他們的愛, 他們的恨, 他們的嫉妒, 早都消滅了。在日光之下所行的一切事上, 他們 永不再有分了。
- 1『都在神手中 in God's hand』

被神掌管。傳道者詳細考究(examining it all)這一切的事,得到一個結論,就是不論是人還是人的工作,都被神掌管。換句話說,人的道路不是由自己而定。很多時候我們以為自己掌控了一切,所有的事情都是按照自己的計劃進行,卻不知其實都是神藉著人在行做萬事。參傳3:1『凡事都有定期,天下萬務都有定時。』

『人不能知道』

意即沒有人知道擺在他們前面的是什麼,可能是愛可能是恨。參雅4:14『其實明天如何,你們還不知道。你們的生命是甚麼呢?你們原來是一片雲霧,出現少時就不見了。』

2-3『都是一樣…如何…也如何…如何…也如何』

傳道者發現『凡臨到眾人的事都是一樣(It is the same for all)』。所有的人,不論是好人還是壞人(潔淨人和不潔淨人,好人和罪人),敬拜神的和不敬拜神的(獻祭的與不獻祭的),誠實人與說謊者(起誓的與怕起誓的)都有同樣的命運。這個命運就是死亡(後來就歸死人那裏去了)。

『有一件禍患(evil)』

他認為眾人遭遇同樣的命運(fate, destine)是一件禍患(邪惡 evil),即不是一件好事或美事。參 6:1。因為不論你在世上的時候如何努力,似乎都沒有用處。就如前面所說的,不論是好人還是壞人都有同樣的結局。這難免會讓人生出一種消極悲觀的心態: 我又何必努力經營一切事務呢? 甚至發展成一種享樂主義: 『今朝有酒今朝醉』, 『我們就吃吃喝喝吧!因為明天要死了』(林前 15:32)。

『世人的心充滿了惡(evil)』

他也發現人的邪惡,正如創 6:5 所說的:『耶和華見人在地上罪惡很大,終日所思想的盡都是惡。』雖然神造人的時候將良心(是非之心)放在人裡面(羅 2:15),但因為人的罪性,良心被污染,失去了功能,使得沒有人能在神面前稱義。人不但達不到神的標準,甚至還自高想和神一樣(參創 3:5 因為神知道,你們吃的日子眼睛就明亮了,你們便如神能知道善惡。)這導致人心裡有狂妄(瘋狂 madness),經常會做出一些非理性的事情來,最後就『歸死人那裏去了。』

4-6『死了的人毫無所知…早都消滅了』

對舊約時代的以色列人來說,人死後在陰間裡完全沒有知覺,就好像靈魂陷入沉睡一樣。 雖然他們有死人復活的觀念(參詩 71:20,賽 26:19,但 12:2等),但認為人死後就剩下 等候將來復活的審判,期間好像是空白的一樣。因此人只有在活著的時候(與一切活人相 連的)才有指望,死後就一無作為,所以『活著的狗比死了的獅子更強』。

『也不再得賞賜』

這是『死後無知』論者的必然結論。

• 對基督徒而言,死亡並不是結束,而是一個新的開始。我們知道一個基督徒雖然死了, 在將來復活之後有天上的賞賜等待我們。這賞賜取決於我們在世的時候是否盡心盡力愛 主、事奉主。所以我們的人生不是消極悲觀,而是有目標有盼望。而且在復活之前我們也不是毫無所知,因基督徒死了之後就到基督那裡與他永遠同在,這是好得無比的事 (腓1:23 我正在兩難之間,情願離世與基督同在,因為這是好得無比的)。

『他們的名無人記念』

古今中外似乎都認為名留後世是一件很重要的事。中國也有『立德立功立言』三不朽,或是『流芳百世』的追求。可惜真的能夠名傳千古的人實在太少了,絕大多數的人都是泯然眾人,如這裡所說的他們的名無人記念。

•對基督徒來說, 聖經裡面有許多的無名英雄如同雲彩圍著我們(來 12:1), 雖然我們不知道他們的名字, 但神卻記念他們, 這才是真正具有永恆的價值。

傳道者對萬事詳細考究的結果是什麼?人可以掌管自己的前途嗎?你認為眾人的結局都是一樣嗎?如果是,你覺得會有什麼結果?對基督徒而言,死亡是什麼?我們將來會得賞賜嗎?這賞賜取決於什麼?所以我們的人生應該如何?人死後是毫無所知嗎?我們死後會去哪裡?既然如此你還懼怕死亡嗎?你希望死後被人紀念嗎?你希望死後被神紀念嗎?如何才會被神紀念?

2. 生前所得之分(7-10)

- 9:7 你只管去歡歡喜喜吃你的飯,心中快樂喝你的酒,因為神已經悅納(approve)你的作為。
- 9:8 你的衣服當時常潔白, 你頭上也不要缺少膏油 (oil)。
- 9:9 在你一生虚空的年日,就是神賜你在日光之下虚空的年日,當同你所愛的妻,快活度日,因為那是你生前在日光之下勞碌(toil)的事上所得的分。
- 9:10 凡你手所當做的事要盡力 (with all your might) 去做;因為在你所必去的陰間沒有工作,沒有謀算,沒有知識,也沒有智慧 (working or planning or knowledge or wisdom)。

7「歡歡喜喜吃你的飯,心中快樂喝你的酒」

對於一個活在日光之下,沒有永生盼望的人來說,人生是虚空的(9),最好的事莫過於 在今生好好享福。因此傳道者認為人應當『歡歡喜喜吃你的飯,心中快樂喝你的酒』。他 認為如果你能夠如此享福的話,證明神已經認可(悅納)了你的作為。

8 [潔白…膏油]

舊約時代先知、祭司、君王被按立的時候都要澆膏油在頭上,因此『頭上也不要缺少膏油』代表尊貴的意思。從上下文『歡喜,快樂,快活度日』來看的話,衣服潔白,頭上有油代表一種尊貴高尚的生活。

9『日光之下勞碌(toil)的事上所得的分』

本節兩次提到日光之下,兩次提到虛空的年日,再度證明這些結論乃是從世界的角度來看人生,因此而得出的。傳道者呼應第7節的話,認為在虛空的人生之中,『同你所愛的妻,快活度日』乃是一個人為生活勞苦奔波(toil)之後應當得到的福分。

『神賜你在日光之下虛空的年日』

他知道人的生命(年日)從神而來,但他不明白為什麼神所賜的生命反而會成為一個虚空、沒有意義的生命。

- •對基督徒來說,雖然我們也承認我們的生命氣息都是神所賜的(徒 17:25 自己倒將生命、氣息、萬物,賜給萬人),但我們的生命並不是沒有意義的,因為我們和基督已經連結在一起,成為他身上的肢體。我們不是為自己活,乃是為那替我們死而復活的主活(林後 5:15)。換句話說,我們不再活在日光之下,乃是升到日光之上。
- 我們可以歡歡喜喜吃飯,心中快樂喝酒,同所愛的妻,快活度日,不是因為這世界虚空,只能無奈的享受肉身的快樂,乃是因為我們知道這一切都是神所賜的,我們按著神的旨意行事為人,就可以有平安喜樂,享受這一切的事物。

10「盡力 (with all your might) 去做 |

傳道者認為既然死了的人毫無所知(5),所以他們沒有工作,沒有謀算,沒有知識,也沒有智慧。因此人生唯一可能有意義的時候就是活著的時候,所以在我們所作的事情上要盡力去做。然而這也是虚空,因為死了之後就什麼都沒有了。

對基督徒來說,我們也是盡力去做我們的工作,因為我們知道我所做的一切都是為基督做的,所以都是有永恆的價值而非虛空。

你羨慕『歡喜吃飯,快樂喝酒』嗎?當你發現人生虛空的時候還會羨慕嗎? 我們的生命氣息從何而來?為什麼傳道者會認為是虛空? 基督徒會覺得生命沒有意義嗎?我們生命的意義在哪裡? 基督徒可以歡喜吃飯,快樂喝酒,與妻同樂嗎?跟世人有什麼不同? 我們對工作的看法是什麼?為什麼要盡力去做?

3. 智慧有何價值(11-18)

9:11 我又轉念(again I saw):見日光之下,快跑的(swift)未必能赢;力戰的(strong)未必得勝;智慧的未必得糧食;明哲的(intelligent)未必得資財;靈巧的(learned)未必得喜悅(favor)。所臨到眾人的是在乎當時的機會(but time and chance happen to them all)。

9:12 原來(for, moreover)人也不知道自己的定期(does not know his time)。魚被惡網(cruel net)圈住,鳥被網羅(snare)捉住,禍患(evil time)忽然臨到的時候,世人陷在其中也是如此。

- 9:13 我見日光之下有一樣智慧 (example of wisdom),據我看乃是廣大 (great),
- 9:14 就是有一小(small)城,其中的人數稀少,有大君王來攻擊,修築營壘(large siegeworks),將城圍困。
- 9:15 城中有一個貧窮的智慧人,他用智慧救了那城,卻沒有人記念(remember)那窮 人。
- 9:16 我就說,智慧勝過勇力(v14-15);然而那貧窮人的智慧被人藐視,他的話也無人 聽從(heed)。
- 9:17 寧可在安靜之中聽(heard in quiet)智慧人的言語,不聽掌管愚昧人(ruler among fools)的喊聲(shouting)。
- 9:18 智慧勝過打仗的兵器;但一個罪人能敗壞(destroy)許多善事。

11『未必』

本節提到5個『未必』。從人來看,跑得快的人應該比跑得慢的人先到終點,力量大的人應該勝過力量小的人。意即條件好的人應該比條件差的人佔優勢,但事實往往不是如此。就如世上這麼多聰明人,但只有少數人能夠脫穎而出。根據傳道者的觀察,這些勝出的人常常是由於當時的機會造成的,也就是中國人所說的『時勢造英雄』。例如 mRNA 的先驅,BioNTech 的副總裁 Katalin Karikó,若不是新冠疫情的危機,她可能仍然在為籌款研究 mRNA 而奮鬥勞碌,知道她的人寥寥無幾。如今卻因新冠疫情的緣故而一舉成名。

然而在工作中成功的人不一定比失敗的人更配得成功。舉個例子,微軟獲得了巨大的成功,主要是因為 IBM 臨時決定使用微軟的 DOS 操作系統,用於它的『個人電腦』的項目。比爾. 蓋茨後來回憶說,『我們抓緊時機設立第一家針對個人電腦的軟件公司是我們成功的關鍵。把握對了時機不完全是靠運氣,但如果不是好運氣,這一切都不會發生。』被問及爲什麼會在 IBM 正嘗試製作個人電腦之時就設立一家軟件公司,他回答說: 『我生在對的地方和對的時間。』這就是機會。

 從基督徒的觀點來看,機會不是所謂的命運造成的,乃是神所賜的。我們的生死、與 衰、成敗都在神手裡(9:1)。我們既然信靠神,就可以為一切所臨到我們的事情感謝 神。成功或失敗可能是由於機會,但這並不是說辛勤工作和聰明才智不重要,因為神往 往喜歡與人同工。努力和聰明裝備我們可以看出並利用生活中的時機,免得機會來臨的 時候都不知道。

12『人也不知道自己的定期(man does not know his time)』

就如第一節所說的,沒有人知道擺在他前面的是什麼。他什麼時候會成功,什麼時候會失敗,什麼時候高升,什麼時候降卑,都不在他的掌控之中。特別是禍患(evil time)臨 到的時候更是如此。就如魚被圈住,鳥被網住,都不在它們的意料之中。厄運臨到人的時候也是如此。

 基督徒知道誰掌管我們的前途,也知道我們將來的結局如何。活在世上的時候我們知道 應當依靠誰奔走前面的道路,因此當所謂的厄運臨到的時候,我們也不至於灰心喪膽, 反而激勵我們更加的尋求神。 13-16『日光之下有一樣智慧 (example of wisdom)』

本段傳道者以他所看見的例子來說明智慧的偉大,然而結局仍然是虛空,因為這是在日光之下所發生的事。這個例子中他用大跟小來強調智慧的用處。一個大君王(great king)修築大的營壘(large siegeworks)來攻打一個小城(small city)。從人來看這個小城岌岌可危,隨時會被攻陷。然而因城中一個貧窮智慧人的智慧,挽救了那城。這樣的智慧不能不說偉大,但這個貧窮人最後還是被人遺忘了。他的結論就是『智慧勝過勇力』,但人不見得都會尊敬智慧人,聽從他的教導。既然如此,智慧有什麼用處呢?參傳4:16他所治理的眾人就是他的百姓,多得無數;在他後來的人尚且不喜悅他。這真是虛空,也是捕風。

17-18『在安静之中聽 (heard in guiet) 智慧人的言語』

雖然如此,智慧本身還是很有價值的。當我們想到所羅門自己乃是世上最有智慧之人的時候,他說出這兩節的話也就不足為奇了。他再次用對比的方式來強調智慧的重要。例如『智慧人』對『愚昧人』,『安靜』對『吶喊 shouting』,『智慧』對『武器』。最後他也指出罪惡的可怕:一個罪人能敗壞(destroy)許多善事。

• 我們的主耶穌乃是智慧本身(參箴 8, 林前 1:24,30), 我們得著他就得了真智慧; 聖經也教導我們不要像愚昧人, 當像智慧人(弗 5:15); 人的智慧有限, 神的智慧無限, 所以我們在世為人不靠人的聰明, 乃靠神的恩惠(林後 1:12); 一個有真智慧的人必定是一個敬畏神的人(彌 6:9), 我們依靠這樣的智慧行事, 人生就不虛空。

11 節中有幾個『未必』?作者是要傳達什麼信息?你相信運氣嗎?我們所謂的運氣和機會有什麼分別?機會從何而來?你覺得『人定勝天』有道理嗎?辛勤工作和聰明才智重不重要?和機會有什麼關係?我今天如果碰到挫折或失敗,會有什麼反應?會覺得很倒霉還是會感謝神?我真知道並相信誰掌管明天嗎?我知道我將來的結局如何嗎?真正的智慧是什麼?從何而來?(參雅3:13-18)我是一個智慧人嗎?如何證明?我要如何做一個智慧人?今天的查經對我有什麼提醒和鼓勵嗎?我願意在那些方面有所改進?

和合本

- 9:1 我將這一切事放在心上,詳細考究,就知道義人和智慧人,並他們的作為都在神手中;或是愛,或是恨,都在他們的前面,人不能知道。 (no one knows whether love or hate awaits them)
- 9:2 凡臨到眾人的事都是一樣: 義人和惡人都遭遇一樣的事; 好人, 潔淨人和不潔淨人, 獻祭的與不獻祭的, 也是一樣。好人如何, 罪人也如何; 起誓的如何, 怕起誓的也如何。
- 9:3 在日光之下所行的一切事上有一件禍患(evil),就是眾人所遭遇的(fate, destine)都是一樣,並且世人的心充滿了惡(evil);活著的時候心裏狂妄(madness),後來就歸死人那裏去了。
- 9:4 與一切活人相連的(is joined, among),那人還有指望,因為活著的狗比死了的獅子更強。
- 9:5 活著的人知道必死;死了的人毫無所知,也不再得賞賜;(因為 for)他們的名無人記念。
- 9:6 他們的愛, 他們的恨, 他們的嫉妒, 早都消滅了。在日光之下所行的一切事上, 他們永不再有分了。
- 9:7 你只管去歡歡喜喜吃你的飯,心中快樂喝你的酒,因為神已經悅納 (approve) 你的作為。
- 9:8 你的衣服當時常潔白, 你頭上也不要缺少膏油 (oil)。
- 9:9 在你一生虚空的年日,就是神賜你在日光之下虚空的年日,當同你所愛的妻,快活度日,因為那是你生前在日光之下勞碌(toil)的事上所得的分。
- 9:10 凡你手所當做的事要盡力(with all your might)去做;因為在你所必去的陰間沒有工作,沒有謀算,沒有知識,也沒有智慧(working or planning or knowledge or wisdom)。
- 9:11 我又轉念 (Again I saw): 見日光之下, 快跑的 (swift) 未必能贏; 力戰的 (strong) 未必得勝; 智慧的未必得糧食; 明哲的 (intelligent) 未必得資財; 靈巧的 (learned) 未必得喜悅 (favor)。所臨到眾人的是在乎當時的機會 (but time and chance happen to them all)。
- 9:12 原來人也不知道自己的定期 (does not know his time)。魚被惡網 (cruel net) 圈住,鳥被網羅 (snare) 捉住,禍患 (evil time) 忽然臨到的時候,世人陷在其中也是如此。
- 9:13 我見日光之下有一樣智慧(example of wisdom),據我看乃是廣大(great),
- 9:14 就是有一小城,其中的人數稀少,有大君王來攻擊,修築營壘(large siegeworks),將城圍困。
- 9:15 城中有一個貧窮的智慧人,他用智慧救了那城,卻沒有人記念 (remember) 那窮人。
- 9:16 我就說,智慧勝遇勇力(v14-15);然而那貧窮人的智慧被人藐視,他的話也無人聽從。
- 9:17 寧可在安靜之中聽(heard in quiet)智慧人的言語,不聽掌管愚昧人(ruler among fools)的喊聲(shouting)。
- 9:18 智慧勝過打仗的兵器;但一個罪人能敗壞 (destroy) 許多善事。

concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them. ² All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad,[a] the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good, so with the sinful; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them. ³This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while

they live, and afterward they join the

dead.

NIV

¹So I reflected on all this and

¹ But 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, man does not know; both

ESV

and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. ² It is the same for all, since the

- same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, at the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath.
- ³ This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

NASB

- ¹ For I have taken all this to my heart and explain [a] it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether *it will be* love or hatred; anything [b] awaits him.
- ² It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who [c] is afraid to swear.
- ³ This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they *go* to the dead.

- ⁴ Anyone who is among the living has hope^[b]—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!
- ⁵ For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten.
- ⁶ Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun. ⁷ Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.
- ⁸ Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. ⁹ Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.
- ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.
- ¹¹ I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned:

but time and chance happen to them all.

- ¹² Moreover, no one knows when their hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.
- ¹³ I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me:
- ¹⁴There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siege works against it.
- ¹⁵ Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man.

- ⁴ But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.
- ⁵ For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.
- ⁶ Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.

 ⁷ Go, eat your bread with joy, and
- drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.
- ⁸Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.
- ⁹ Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain^[b] life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.
- ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, ^[c] 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 favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.
- ¹² For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.
- ¹³ I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me.
- ¹⁴ There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it.
- ¹⁵ But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.
- ¹⁶ But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's

- ⁴ For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.
- ⁵ For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten.
- ⁶ Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.
- ⁷ Go *then*, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.
- ⁸Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.
- ⁹ Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your ^[d]fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun^[g]; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.
- ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.
- ¹¹ I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all.
- ¹² Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.
- ¹³ Also this I came to see as wisdom under the sun, and ^[f]it impressed me.
 ¹⁴ There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it.
- ¹⁵ But there was found in it a poor wise man and he ^[g]delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.
- ¹⁶ So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the wisdom of the poor

- ¹⁶ So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded.
- ¹⁷ The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.
- ¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

Footnotes:

a. Ecclesiastes 9:2 Septuagint (Aquila), Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew does not have *and the bad*. b. Ecclesiastes 9:4 Or What then is to be chosen? With all who live, there is hope

wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

- ¹⁷ The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.
- ¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

Footnotes:

- a. Ecclesiastes 9:2 Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *and* the evil
- b. Ecclesiastes 9:9 The Hebrew term *hebel* can refer to a "vapor" or "mere breath" (see note on 1:2)
- c. Ecclesiastes 9:10 Or finds to do with your might, do it

man is despised and his words are not heeded.

- ¹⁷ The words of the wise heard in quietness are *better* than the shouting of a ruler among fools.
- ¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

Footnotes:

- a. Ecclesiastes 9:1 Lit all this
- b. Ecclesiastes 9:1 Lit is before them
- c. Ecclesiastes 9:2 Lit fears an oath
- d. Ecclesiastes 9:9 Lit life of vanity
- e. Ecclesiastes 9:9 Heb adds all the days of your vanity
- f. Ecclesiastes 9:13 Lit great it was to me
- g. <u>Ecclesiastes 9:15</u> Or might have delivered