

Read the Bible in A Year: Chronological

Proverbs 17-24; Ecclesiastes 1:1-6:12; Song of Solomon 1-8;
1 Kings 11; 2 Chronicles 9:29-31

Readings for May 31-June 6, 2020

This week's readings are largely taken from words of wisdom and poetry attributed to King Solomon. The little bit of history that is part of our readings is from 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. The 1 Kings reading will be in italic type and the 2 Chronicles reading will be in regular type. The wisdom and poetry will be center aligned and in different fonts to set them apart and references will be given. It is fascinating to see how these various pieces belong to one another when placed in their historical settings and authorship...

Proverbs 17-24

Words of Wisdom and Instruction Attributed to Solomon- for His Son

Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

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

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

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

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

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

Fine speech is not becoming to a fool; still less is false speech to a ruler.

A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of those who give it; wherever they turn they prosper.

One who forgives an affront fosters friendship, but one who dwells on disputes will alienate a friend.

A rebuke strikes deeper into a discerning person than a hundred blows into a fool.

Evil people seek only rebellion, but a cruel messenger will be sent against them.

Better to meet a she-bear robbed of its cubs than to confront a fool immersed in folly.

Evil will not depart from the house of one who returns evil for good.

The beginning of strife is like letting out water; so stop before the quarrel breaks out.

One who justifies the wicked and one who condemns the righteous
are both alike an abomination to the LORD.

Why should fools have a price in hand to buy wisdom, when they have no mind to learn?

A friend loves at all times, and kinsfolk are born to share adversity.

It is senseless to give a pledge, to become surety for a neighbor.

One who loves transgression loves strife; one who builds a high threshold invites broken bones.

The crooked of mind do not prosper, and the perverse of tongue fall into calamity.

The one who begets a fool gets trouble; the parent of a fool has no joy.

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

The wicked accept a concealed bribe to pervert the ways of justice.

The discerning person looks to wisdom, but the eyes of a fool to the ends of the earth.

Foolish children are a grief to their father and bitterness to her who bore them.

To impose a fine on the innocent is not right, or to flog the noble for their integrity.

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

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

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

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

When wickedness comes, contempt comes also; and with dishonor comes disgrace.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A gift opens doors; it gives access to the great.

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

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

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

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

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

He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.

The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly.

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

Better the poor walking in integrity than one perverse of speech who is a fool.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes.

Those with good sense are slow to anger, and it is their glory to overlook an offense.

A king's anger is like the growling of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.

A stupid child is ruin to a father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.

House and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

Laziness brings on deep sleep; an idle person will suffer hunger.

Those who keep the commandment will live; those who are heedless of their ways will die.

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD AND will be repaid in full.

Discipline your children while there is hope; do not set your heart on their destruction.

A violent tempered person will pay the penalty;
if you effect a rescue, you will only have to do it again.

Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.

The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established.

What is desirable in a person is loyalty, and it is better to be poor than a liar.

The fear of the LORD is life indeed; filled with it one rests secure and suffers no harm.

The lazy person buries a hand in the dish, and will not even bring it back to the mouth.

Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence;
reprove the intelligent, and they will gain knowledge.

Those who do violence to their father and chase away their mother
are children who cause shame and bring reproach.

Cease straying, my child, from the words of knowledge,
in order that you may hear instruction.

A worthless witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bread gained by deceit is sweet, but afterward the mouth will be full of gravel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to want

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life and honor.

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

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

The proud, haughty person named "Scoffer," acts with arrogant pride.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Those who love a pure heart and are gracious in speech will have the king as a friend.

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

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

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

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

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

The words of the wise: Incline your ear and hear my words and apply your mind to my teaching; for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the LORD, I have made them known to you today—yes, to you.

Have I not written for you thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge, to show you what is right and true, so that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?

Do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate;
for the LORD pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them.

Make no friends with those given to anger, and do not associate with hotheads,
or you may learn their ways and entangle yourself in a snare.

Do not be one of those who give pledges, who become surety for debts.
If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you?

Do not remove the ancient landmark that your ancestors set up.

Do you see those who are skillful in their work?
They will serve kings; they will not serve common people.

When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you,
and put a knife to your throat if you have a big appetite.

Do not desire the ruler's delicacies, for they are deceptive food.

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; be wise enough to desist.

When your eyes light upon it, it is gone;
for suddenly it takes wings to itself, flying like an eagle toward heaven.

Do not eat the bread of the stingy; do not desire their delicacies;

for like a hair in the throat, so are they.

"Eat and drink!" they say to you; but they do not mean it.

You will vomit up the little you have eaten, and you will waste your pleasant words.

Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, who will only despise the wisdom of your words.

Do not remove an ancient landmark or encroach on the fields of orphans, for their redeemer is strong;
he will plead their cause against you.

Apply your mind to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.

Do not withhold discipline from your children; if you beat them with a rod, they will not die.

If you beat them with the rod, you will save their lives from Sheol.

My child, if your heart is wise, my heart too will be glad.

My soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always continue in the fear of the LORD.

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

Hear, my child, and be wise, and direct your mind in the way.

Do not be among winebibbers, or among gluttonous eaters of meat;
for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe them with rags.

Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who begets a wise son will be glad in him.

Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.

My child, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.

For a prostitute is a deep pit; an adulteress is a narrow well.

She lies in wait like a robber and increases the number of the faithless.

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining?
Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?
Those who linger late over wine, those who keep trying mixed wines.
Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly.
At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.
Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind utter perverse things.
You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast.
“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.”

Do not envy the wicked, nor desire to be with them;
for their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of mischief.

By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established;
by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

Wise warriors are mightier than strong ones,
and those who have knowledge than those who have strength;
for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.

Wisdom is too high for fools; in the gate they do not open their mouths.

Whoever plans to do evil will be called a mischief-maker.
The devising of folly is sin, and the scoffer is an abomination to all.

If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength being small;
if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who go staggering to the slaughter;
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?

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

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.

Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against the home of the righteous;
do no violence to the place where the righteous live;
for though they fall seven times, they will rise again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and do not let your heart be glad when they stumble,
or else the LORD will see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from them.

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

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

These also are sayings of the wise: Partiality in judging is not good.

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

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

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

Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips.
Do not say, "I will do to others as they have done to me; I will pay them back for what they have done."

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

Ecclesiastes: Philosophical Reflections of King Solomon

The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem: Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?

The Futility of Life: A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow. All things are wearisome; more than one can express; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has already been, in the ages before us. 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: I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, 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. I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted. 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.” 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. For in much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow.

The Futility of Self-Indulgence: I said to myself, “Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself.” But again, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, “It is mad,” and of pleasure, “What use is it?” 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. I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. 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. 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. So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. 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. 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: 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. Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise have eyes in their head, but fools walk in darkness. Yet I perceived that the same fate befalls all of them. 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. 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? So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me; for all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

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—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. So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labors under the sun, 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. What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? 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.

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; for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? 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: For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what 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 throw 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 throw 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.

The God-Given Task: What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He 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. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.

Judgment and the Future Belong to God: 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. I 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. I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them to show that they are but animals. For 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. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth? So 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? Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced 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. And I thought the dead, who have already died, more fortunate than the living, who are still alive; but better than both is the one who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun. 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. Fools fold their hands and consume their own flesh. Better is a handful with quiet than two handfuls with toil, and a chasing after wind.

The Futility of the Solitary Life: Again, I saw vanity under the sun: the 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. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 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. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who will no longer take advice. One can indeed come out of prison to reign, even though born poor in the kingdom. I saw all the living who,

moving about under the sun, follow that youth who replaced the king; 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: 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. 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. For dreams come with many cares, and a fool's voice with many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfill it. 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?

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

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. But all things considered, this is an advantage for a land: a king for a plowed field. The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity. When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of laborers, whether they eat little or much; but the surfeit of the rich will not let them sleep. There is a grievous ill that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owners to their hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture; though they are parents of children, they have nothing in their hands. 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. 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. 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. 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. For they will scarcely brood over the days of their lives, because God keeps them occupied with the joy of their hearts.

The Frustration of Desires: There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy upon humankind: those to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, 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. A man may beget a hundred children, and live 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. For it comes into vanity and goes into darkness, and in darkness its name is covered; moreover it has not seen the sun or known anything; yet it finds rest rather than he. Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to one place? All human toil is for the mouth, yet the appetite is not satisfied. For what advantage have the wise over fools? And what do the poor have who know how to conduct themselves before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire; this also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Whatever 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. The more words, the more vanity, so how is one the better? ¹² For 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?

A Disillusioned View of Life: A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death, than the day of birth. It 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. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of countenance the heart is made glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools. For like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools; this also is vanity. Surely oppression makes the wise foolish, and a bribe corrupts the heart. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; the patient in spirit are better than the proud in spirit. Do not be quick to anger, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools. Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?” For it is not from wisdom that you ask this. Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun. 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. Consider the work of God; who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in 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: 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 evil-doing. Do not be too righteous, and do not act too wise; why should you destroy yourself? Do not be too wicked, and do not be a fool; why should you die before your time? It 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. Wisdom gives strength to the wise more than ten rulers that are in a city. Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning. Do not give heed to everything that people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you; your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others.

All this I have tested by wisdom; I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me. That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out? 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. 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. See, this is what I found, says the Teacher, adding one thing to another to find the sum, 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. See, this alone I found, that God made human beings straightforward, but they have devised many schemes.

Obey the King and Enjoy Yourself: 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. Keep the king’s command because of your sacred oath. Do not be terrified; go from his presence, do not delay when the matter is unpleasant, for he does whatever he pleases. For the word of the king is powerful, and who can say to him, “What are you doing?” Whoever obeys a command will meet no harm, and the wise mind will know the time and way. For every matter has its time and way, although the troubles of mortals lie heavy upon them. Indeed, they do not know what is to be, for

who can tell them how it will be? 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 practice it. 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: 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. Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the human heart is fully set to do evil. Though 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, but 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. 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. So 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. 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, then 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: 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 is 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. This 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. But whoever is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost. Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished; never again will they have any share in all that happens under the sun.

Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do. Let your garments always be white; do not let oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy 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. Whatever 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.

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 the skillful; but time and chance happen to them all. For 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: I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me. There was a little city with few people in it. A great king came against it and besieged it, building great siege works against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his

wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. So I said, “Wisdom is better than might; yet the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heeded.” The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouting of a ruler among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one bungler destroys much good.

Miscellaneous Observations: Dead flies make the perfumer’s ointment give off a foul odor; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of a fool to the left. Even when fools walk on the road, they lack sense, and show to everyone that they are fools. If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your post, for calmness will undo great offenses.

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as great an error as if it proceeded from the ruler: folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. I have seen slaves on horseback, and princes walking on foot like slaves.

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; and whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a snake. Whoever quarries stones will be hurt by them; and whoever splits logs will be endangered by them. If the iron is blunt, and one does not whet the edge, then more strength must be exerted; but wisdom helps one to succeed. If the snake bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage in a charmer.

Words spoken by the wise bring them favor, but the lips of fools consume them. The words of their mouths begin in foolishness, and their talk ends in wicked madness; yet fools talk on and on. No one knows what is to happen, and who can tell anyone what the future holds? The toil of fools wears them out, for they do not even know the way to town.

Alas for you, O land, when your king is a servant, and your princes feast in the morning! 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! Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks. Feasts are made for laughter; wine gladdens life, and money meets every need. 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: Send out your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will get it back. Divide your means seven ways, or even eight, for you do not know what disaster may happen on earth. 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. Whoever observes the wind will not sow; and whoever regards the clouds will not reap. 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. 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: Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. Even those who live many years should rejoice in them all; yet let them remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity. 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 judgment. Banish anxiety from your mind, and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity. 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”; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return with the rain; in 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; when 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; when 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; before 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, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher; all is vanity.

Epilogue: Besides being wise, the Teacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs. The Teacher sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly. The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings that are given by one shepherd. Of anything beyond these, my child, beware. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

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

The Song of Solomon: A Song of Love

The Bride and Her Friends Sing...

The Bride: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine, your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is perfume poured out; therefore the maidens love you. Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers.

Her Friends: We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you.

The Bride: I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has gazed on me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the

vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept! Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flocks of your companions?

Her Friends: If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents.

The Groom and the Bride Sing...

The Groom: I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots. Your cheeks are comely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels. We will make you ornaments of gold, studded with silver.

The Bride: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance. My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh that lies between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En-gedi.

The Groom: Ah, you are beautiful, my love; ah, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves. Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely. Our couch is green; the beams of our house are cedar, our rafters are pine.

The Bride: I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens. As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his intention toward me was love. Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love. O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me! I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready! The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. My beloved speaks and says to me:

The Groom:

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards— for our vineyards are in blossom.

The Bride:

My beloved is mine and I am his; he pastures his flock among the lilies. Until the day breathes and the shadows flee; turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on the cleft mountains.

Upon my bed at night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares. I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him but found him not. The sentinels found me, as they went about in the city. "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?" Scarcely had I passed them, when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

(She sees the Groom and his party approaching...)

What is that coming up from the wilderness, like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of the merchant? Look, it is the litter of Solomon! Around it are sixty mighty men of the mighty men of Israel,

all equipped with swords and expert in war,
each with his sword at his thigh because of alarms by night. King Solomon made
himself a palanquin from the wood of Lebanon. He made its posts of silver, its back
of gold, its seat of purple; its interior was inlaid with love.

(she calls to her friends to come and see...)

Daughters of Jerusalem, come out. Look, O daughters of Zion, at King Solomon, at
the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the
day of the gladness of his heart!

The Groom:

(he sees his bride waiting from afar...)

How beautiful you are, my love, how very beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your
veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth
are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear
twins, and not one among them is bereaved. Your lips are like a crimson thread, and
your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil.
Your neck is like the tower of David, built in courses; on it hang a thousand
bucklers, all of them shields of warriors. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins
of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies. Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, I
will hasten to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. You are
altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you.

Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; come with me from Lebanon.

Depart^[1] from the peak of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the
dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards.

You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! Your lips distill nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the scent of your garments is like the scent of Lebanon. A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed. Your channel is an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices—a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon.

The Bride: Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, that its fragrance may be wafted abroad. Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

The Groom: I come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gather my myrrh with my spice, I eat my honeycomb with my honey, I drink my wine with my milk.

Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love.

A Dream...

The Bride; I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen! my beloved is knocking.

The Groom: Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.

The Bride: I had put off my garment; how could I put it on again? I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them? My beloved thrust his hand into the opening, and my inmost

being yearned for him. I arose to open to my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and was gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but did not find him; I called him, but he gave no answer. Making their rounds in the city the sentinels found me; they beat me, they wounded me, they took away my mantle, those sentinels of the walls. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him this: I am faint with love.

The Bride and Her Friends Sing...

The Friends: What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us?

The Bride: My beloved is all radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven. His eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set. His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, distilling liquid myrrh. His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires. His legs are alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. His speech is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

The Friends: Where has your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Which way has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?

The Bride: My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to pasture his flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he pastures his flock among the lilies.

The Groom and the Bride Sing...

The Groom: You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away your eyes from me, for they overwhelm me! Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of ewes, that have come up from the washing; all of them bear twins, and not one among them is bereaved. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the darling of her mother, flawless to her that bore her. The maidens saw her and called her happy; the queens and concubines also, and they praised her, "Who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?"

The Bride: I went down to the nut orchard, to look at the blossoms of the valley, to see whether the vines had budded, whether the pomegranates were in bloom. Before I was aware, my fancy set me in a chariot beside my prince. Return, return, O Shulammitte! Return, return, that we may look upon you. Why should you look upon the Shulammitte, as upon a dance before two armies?

The Groom: How graceful are your feet in sandals, O queenly maiden!
Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master hand. Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, overlooking Damascus. Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks are like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses.

How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, delectable maiden! You are stately as a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its branches. O may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses like the best wine that goes down smoothly, gliding over lips and teeth.

The Bride: I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, and lodge in the villages; let us go out early to the vineyards, and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and over our doors are all choice fruits, new as well as old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved.

O that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at my mother's breast! If I met you outside, I would kiss you, and no one would despise me. I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, and into the chamber of the one who bore me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranates. O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me! I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

Homecoming- At Last

The Observer: Who is that coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?

The Groom: Under the apple tree I awakened you. There your mother was in labor with you; there she who bore you was in labor.

The Bride: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many

waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned.

We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister, on the day when she is spoken for? If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; but if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar. I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers; then I was in his eyes as one who brings peace.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he entrusted the vineyard to keepers; each one was to bring for its fruit a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard, my very own, is for myself; you, O Solomon, may have the thousand, and the keepers of the fruit two hundred!

O you who dwell in the gardens, my companions are listening for your voice; let me hear it. Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of spices!

Solomon's Errors: King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the Israelites, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you; for they will surely incline your heart to follow their gods"; Solomon clung to these in love. Among his wives were seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon followed Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not completely follow the LORD, as his father David had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who offered incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Then the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this matter, that he should not follow other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of your father David I will not do it in your lifetime; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. I will not, however, tear away the entire kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Adversaries of Solomon: Then the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal house in Edom. For when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the dead, he killed every male in Edom (for Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had eliminated every male in Edom); but Hadad fled to Egypt with some Edomites who were servants of his father. He was a young boy at that time. They set out from Midian and came to Paran; they took people with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, assigned him an allowance of food, and gave him land. Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him his sister-in-law for a wife, the sister of Queen Tahpenes. The sister of Tahpenes gave birth by him to his son Genubath, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house; Genubath was in Pharaoh's house among the children of Pharaoh. When Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his ancestors and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I may go to my own country." But Pharaoh said to him, "What do you lack with me that you now seek to go to your own country?" And he said, "No, do let me go."

God raised up another adversary against Solomon, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. He gathered followers around him and became leader of a marauding band, after the slaughter by David; they went to Damascus, settled there, and made him king in Damascus. He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, making trouble as Hadad did; he despised Israel and reigned over Aram.

Jeroboam's Rebellion: Jeroboam son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, rebelled against the king. The following was the reason he rebelled against the king. Solomon built the Millo and closed up the gap in the wall of the city of his father David. The man Jeroboam was very able, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. About that time, when Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Ahijah had clothed himself with a new garment. The two of them were alone in the open country when Ahijah laid hold of the new garment he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. He then said to Jeroboam: Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "See, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes. One tribe will remain his, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. This is because he has forsaken me, worshiped Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and has not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, as his father David did. Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom away from him but will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of my servant David whom I chose and who did keep my commandments and my statutes; but I will take the kingdom away from his son and give it to you—that is, the ten tribes. Yet to his son I will give one tribe, so that my servant David may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires; you shall be king over Israel. If you will listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you an enduring house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. For this reason I will punish the descendants of David, but not forever." Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam; but Jeroboam promptly fled to Egypt, to King Shishak of Egypt, and remained in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

Death of Solomon: Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did as well as his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon? The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all

Israel was forty years. Solomon slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father David; and his son Rehoboam succeeded him.

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not written in the history of the prophet Nathan, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of the seer Iddo concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat? Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. Solomon slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father David; and his son Rehoboam succeeded him.