

Ecclesiastes: The Philippians of the Old Testament

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Chapter 12

Life Under a Setting Sun

In **conclusion**, the Preacher **determines to fear God, obey God, and enjoy life**
(9:1–12:14)

Continuing the book's **grand finale (11:9–12:7)**, Solomon transitions from the enjoyment of "seeing the sun" to the approach of death. Assuming temporal existence for mankind "under the sun," "he broadens the range of his observation to include God, who is above the sun, and death, which is beyond the sun."¹ When the wise contemplate death, they find all aspirations to grandeur and gain exposed as illusory visions of their own arrogance. Brown says of such contemplation, that it "purges the soul of all futile striving and, paradoxically, anxiety. . . . The eternal sleep of death serves as a wake-up call to live and welcome the serendipities of the present."² Just as the setting sun signals the end of a day, so aging signals the approach of the close of one's life. **Preparation for the end of life must begin even in youth.**

"**Before**" in verses **1, 2, and 6** sets up a time-oriented series of statements that favor understanding the text as a description of **the time of death**, rather than merely a depiction of the process of aging.³ The first seven verses of this chapter comprise one long sentence.⁴ If someone were to read it aloud as one sentence, he or she would be "'out of breath' by the end"⁵—a play on the key word *hebel*, which can also mean "breath," as well as "vanity," "futility," or "fleeting." However, the interpreter would be remiss to focus too much upon death in this section. Both preceding (11:9) and

¹ Daniel J. Estes, *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 373.

² William P. Brown, *Ecclesiastes*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2000), 108.

³ Michael V. Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 71 (Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1989), 286.

⁴ R. N. Whybray, *Ecclesiastes*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 167.

⁵ Elizabeth Huwiler, "Ecclesiastes," in *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, by Roland E. Murphy and Elizabeth Huwiler, New International Bible Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 215.

subsequent (12:14) contexts identify **God’s judgment as the real focus.**⁶

Solomonic Advice (vv. 1–7)

Just when one might expect either “Remember death” or “Remember darkness,” Solomon surprises readers with **“Remember your Creator.”**⁷ “Creator” is actually a plural form in the Hebrew—a typical means of expressing majesty and superiority. Solomon’s choice of this title “is not by accident. It both looks back to the creation narrative, which plays so prominent a role in *Ecclesiastes*, and maintains the perspective of wisdom that a joyful life is found through adherence to the principles built into the creation.”⁸ What Solomon has to say in these verses is for **every man, woman, and child** on the planet.

Before one can “remember” the Creator, he or she must believe that “there *is* a Creator who made us, not some naturalistic process of evolution.”⁹ The Hebrew word for “Creator” involves a root that never takes a human being as the subject. **Only God creates**, as far as the Old Testament writers are concerned. Remembering one’s Creator involves more than mere memory or acknowledgment. For the Hebrew writers, **“remember” involves action**,¹⁰ or allowing the objects of remembrance to “shape one’s perspective in the present.”¹¹ First, we must “drop our pretence of self-sufficiency and commit ourselves to Him.”¹² If an individual neglects serving the Creator in intentional obedience to His Word, “the capacity for joy will be lost.”¹³

“Before the evil days come” (v. 1) relates to the previous mention of “the days of darkness” in 11:8 and stands in contrast to “the days of your youth” (12:1a). Both refer to **times of misery and trouble**. The previous reference deals with the bad times throughout one’s lifetime; the second refers to the end of life. The threefold occurrence of “before” (vv. 1, 2, 6) in these concluding verses of *Ecclesiastes* emphasizes **the brevity of life and the finality of death.**¹⁴

No commentator convincingly explains these verses by means of a single consistent figure, metaphor, or allegory.¹⁵ Regardless of all the difficulties involved in this passage,

⁶ Michael Kelley, *The Burden of God: Studies in Wisdom and Civilization from the Book of Ecclesiastes* (Minneapolis, MN: Contra Mundum Books, 1993), 142.

⁷ Norbert Lohfink, *Qoheleth*, trans. by Sean McEvenue, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 137.

⁸ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, New American Commentary 14 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993), 340 footnote 232.

⁹ Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Wisdom of Solomon: Ancient Insights from the Song of Solomon, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2001), 227.

¹⁰ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Ecclesiastes: Total Life*, Everyman’s Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 118.

¹¹ Craig G. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 346.

¹² Derek Kidner, *A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance: Ecclesiastes & the Way of the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 100.

¹³ Michael A. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), 148.

¹⁴ Daniel C. Fredericks, “Ecclesiastes,” in *Ecclesiastes & The Song of Songs*, by Daniel C. Fredericks and Daniel J. Estes, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 16 (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2010), 238.

¹⁵ Cf. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 147.

it is not “a laboured cryptogram.”¹⁶ Exercising a little common sense and a tendency toward literal interpretation will avoid “the vagaries to which excessive zeal for anatomical identification has led.”¹⁷

The Gathering Storm (v. 2)

The second “before” (v. 2) speaks of “the sun and the light, the moon and the stars” being darkened. Mention of “**light**” causes confusion for some interpreters, but in the creation account “the light” (Gen 1:3–5) existed separate from sun, moon, and stars (vv. 14–16). Thus Solomon demonstrates his awareness of the Genesis account and puts some of its concepts to work for him in speaking of the Creator and the approaching death of a human being, one of the Creator’s creatures. Whether a reader understands the verse as a description of a storm or the coming of death, the context inevitably links the text to death. A gathering storm might depict the suddenness of death, “setting forth the fear, melancholy and desolation which grip a household upon which death has cast its shadow.”¹⁸ The returning clouds might symbolize the repetitive occurrences of calamities and sorrows.¹⁹

The Household of the Deceased (vv. 3–4)

In verses 3 and 4, Solomon seems to depict **a great house either in decline or anticipating the death of its master**. The picture not only describes happenings within the house, but extends to the village and ultimately becomes a metaphor of death itself. According to verse 3, **four classes of people** experience the fear and anxiety created by the proximity of death within the household. The “**watchmen**” represent the male servants who are responsible for protecting the household. “**Mighty men**” depict the freemen, the landowners, the family members of the estate or the heads of nearby estates. Following the two groups of men come two groups of women: the **maidservants who grind the grain** and the **freewomen**, the mistresses of the estate, who avoid the public eye in their grief.

“**Those who look through the windows**” most naturally refers “to the women of the household who, according to Middle Eastern custom, were not allowed to mingle with the men in the business of the household, so they peered through the lattice-work of the house.”²⁰ Other biblical examples of women looking out from a house include Sisera’s mother (Judg 5:28) and David’s wife Michal (2 Sam 6:16–23). Whether due to death in the house, calamity in the village, or the arrival of a severe winter storm, these women have become more isolated from the life they once knew.

Verse 4 continues the description of the stricken household and, perhaps, its village. “**Doors**” literally means “two doors.” However, most houses in ancient Israel possessed but one door. The dual number favors a reference to a city gate through which people would enter the bazaar and the nearby judgment seat where the elders of the city held

¹⁶ Kidner, *A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance*, 101.

¹⁷ George Aaron Barton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes*, International Critical Commentary (1908; reprint, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1971), 186.

¹⁸ Michael Leahy, “The Meaning of Ecclesiastes 12:1–5,” in *Reflecting with Solomon: Selected Studies on the Book of Ecclesiastes*, ed. by Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 378.

¹⁹ Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 148.

²⁰ Barry C. Davis, “Death, an Impetus for Life, Ecclesiastes 12:1–8,” in *Reflecting with Solomon: Selected Studies on the Book of Ecclesiastes*, ed. by Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 358.

court. **“The sound of the grinding mill is low”** thus indicates a decrease in the normal economic and commercial activities common to everyday life. The village activities slow nearly to a halt for the death of a key citizen and his funeral. **Rising at the sound of a bird** may refer either to being startled to action by the sound of a bird through the silent streets or to the hooting or cooing of birds viewed as harbingers of death. **“Daughters of song”** could refer to the women whose function involves singing laments for the dying master.

Aging: The Ultimate Harbinger of Death (v. 5)

Fear of either climbing heights (which might result in a heart attack or stroke—at least being left with belabored breathing) or moving about in crowded streets characterize the elderly. **The blossoms of the almond tree** come toward the end of winter before the leaves even sprout. The white color of the blossoms crowning the whole tree reminds one of the white hair of the aged. A **locust or grasshopper**, when no longer able to hop about with youthful vigor, drags itself along as though burdened—much like the awkward gait of old men and women. The ancient peoples in the Near East prized the **caperberry** for stimulating appetite or sexual desire. In the advanced years, however, the caperberry no longer acts as an effective stimulant.

Indeed, all of these characteristics of the aging indicate that they are on their final journey to their **“eternal home.”** Jewish communities still refer to their cemeteries as *Beth Olam*, the same phrase as used here. Readers of the New Testament readily associate the description with a similar concept in **2 Corinthians 5:1**. Granted, Solomon does not refer to a heavenly habitation and Paul does not refer to the grave or the netherworld of departed spirits of Old Testament times. However, both texts speak of the state of existence following life “under the sun” as a “house”—a place of habitation. The reference to **“mourners”** going about the street (Eccl 12:5) fits the ancient Hebrew custom of mourning the death of an Israelite (Amos 5:16–20; Jer 9:17–22; 22:18; 34:5).

Death: Returning to God (vv. 6–7)

The third “before” (v. 6) introduces the end of life when the opportunities to enjoy God’s gifts cease and the individual meets his or her Creator. The **“golden bowl”** might depict a lamp like that in Zechariah 4:2–3. The lamp befits the description of death, since texts like Proverbs 13:9 speaks of “the lamp” of an individual being put out at death (cp. Job 18:5–6; 21:17; Prov 20:20; 24:20). The **silver cord** could be the means of hanging the golden lamp, filled with oil. Putting fire to the wicks in the oil would give light as the oil in the wicks burned. If someone cuts the cord or it breaks, the lamp of oil crashes to the stone floor and the oil is spilled. Likewise, the **pitcher** that holds life-giving water drawn from a well or cistern cannot serve its task if the pitcher breaks. Crenshaw explains that, “The picture of a fountain in disrepair suggests that the water of life can no longer be drawn, and the end has come.”²¹

The **“wheel”** could be a pulley used to lower a pitcher into the depths of a well and to draw it back up when it is filled. Twice **“crushed”** occurs with the golden bowl as an object and then with “the wheel.” Interestingly, Hebrew derives its words for **“bowl”** and

²¹ James L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia, Penn.: Westminster Press, 1987), 188.

for “wheel” from the same root word meaning “roll” or “round.”²² Solomon might be depicting a violent death from a crushed skull and the failure of the destroyed cranium to retain the contents of the brain.

Although **verse 7** does not specifically identify an afterlife, other texts in the Old Testament make the concept more explicit (cf. Ps 49; Dan 12:2). Elsewhere, the reference to human beings returning to the dust out of which they came (Job 34:14–15; Ps 104:29) make it clear that the biblical prophets and sages clearly understood the historical record of mankind’s creation (cp. Gen 2:7; 3:19).

Only by **accepting the reality and naturalness of death**, can a person face life with the kind of joy that Solomon encourages in the enjoyment passages (cp. 9:2–10 and 11:7–10). For the wise believer, **contentment with the brevity of life** produces a freedom for living the life God gives in His service and for His glory. Ryken reminds his readers that aging and death consist of “some of the hardest experiences in life. The Bible is honest about this, but not bitter.”²³ The psalmist speaks of the death of God’s saints as precious in His estimation (Ps 116:15).

Swindoll offers three pieces of **practical advice** in the light of verses 1–7:

1. I must face the fact that I’m not getting any younger.
2. God has designed me to be empty without Him.
3. Now is the time to prepare for eternity.²⁴

The Epilogue to Ecclesiastes (vv. 8–14)

Most commentators hold that an editor added these final verses. A Jewish tradition attributes them to Hezekiah’s men who penned them as a conclusion to all canonical Solomonic writings.²⁵ Some, like Longman, believe that the final editor added verses 8–14 in order to express a positive and orthodox theology, because the editor was unhappy with the ultimate conclusion of the book as a whole.²⁶ Such a viewpoint finds little support from a careful reading of Ecclesiastes. Concepts of divine judgment, human accountability, and divine demands or imperatives surface throughout the book (cp. 2:26; 3:1, 17; 5:1, 2, 4–7; 7:29; 8:12, 13; 9:7–10; 11:9; 12:14).

Crenshaw states that the presence of **the refrain** (“Vanity of vanities, . . . all is vanity”) **in verse 8** “refutes the claim that Qohelet hoped for immortality of the soul.”²⁷ Such a negative treatment of the teachings of Solomon languishes for adequate support. **(1)** Elsewhere in the book, Solomon speaks clearly of **future judgment** (11:9; 12:14; cp. 1 Cor 4:5; Heb 9:27). **(2)** Crenshaw’s declaration that the writer “hoped” for immortality rests upon an unknowable—the writer himself must specifically identify his hopes in order for later readers to claim their existence. **(3)** The fact that **the spirit returns to God speaks of hope**—implies that the spirit does not cease existence with the dissolution of

²² Provan, *Ecclesiastes*, 218. The Hebrew name Golgotha (meaning “place of the skull”; Matthew 27:33) comes from the same root.

²³ Philip Graham Ryken, *Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 271.

²⁴ Charles R. Swindoll, *Living on the Ragged Edge: Coming to Terms with Reality* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 385.

²⁵ Victor E. Reichart and A. Cohen, “Ecclesiastes,” in *The Five Megilloth*, 2 vols., ed. by A. Cohen, rev. by A. J. Rosenberg (London: Soncino Press, 1984), 2:109.

²⁶ Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 284.

²⁷ Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 189.

the body in the grave.²⁸ Ryken cites a set of syllogisms: “If there is no God, then there is no Judge. If there is no Judge, then there will be no Final Judgment. If there is no Final Judgment, there is no ultimate meaning to life. Nothing matters.”²⁹ But, **“The final message of Ecclesiastes is not that nothing matters but that *everything* does.”**³⁰ In other words, Solomon’s argument goes this way:

- God exists—He is the Creator.
- Since God is the Creator, He is also the Judge.
- If God is the Judge, there will be a final judgment.
- Since there will be a final judgment, everything we do (how we live) matters.
- Therefore, even though life is but a fleeting breath, it is not futile and insignificant.

All things continue as they were from the beginning. From the fall of man (cp. 7:29), vanity or futility entered the creation through mankind’s sins. Death came because of sin (Rom 5:12). Because of death, life is fleeting. The use of *hebel* (“vanity” or “breath”) in verse 8 follows the mention of “spirit” in verse 7 so closely that the text seems to indicate that **“Human breath is the metre not only of one’s life but of the duration of all that is done under the sun.”**³¹

Verses 9–10 give implicit, if not explicit, testimony to the reality of **the writer’s historical existence.**³² **Verse 9**, even if written by an editor, seems to point to the book of Proverbs, which the writer attributes to “the Preacher.” That implies that the author of Proverbs is the same as “the Preacher.” Solomon’s pursuit of wisdom displays a pastoral tone more than an academic or professional tone.³³ “Pondered,” “searched out,” and “arranged” all reflect Solomon’s knowledgeable pursuit of wisdom and the issues involved in life “under the sun.” **“Pondered”** (literally, “weighed”) “points to careful evaluation, indicating his honesty, caution and balance”;³⁴ **“searched out”** implies his “thoroughness and diligence”;³⁵ and, **“arranged”** points to orderliness and an artistic skill in his presentation (cp. 1 Kgs 4:32).³⁶ The description of the author reminds readers of the introduction to the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:1–4) and of the various inscriptions found in the Book of Proverbs (24:23; 30:1; 31:1). All are a straightforward account of how the respective book or collection (in Proverbs) came to be written.

Solomon attributes both **delightfulness** (cf. Prov 25:11) **and dependability** to the words that he sought (**Ecc 12:10**). These two characteristics of instruction in Ecclesiastes reveal a balance. “To be upright but unpleasant is to be a fool; to be pleasant but not upright is to be a charlatan.”³⁷ The positive message of Ecclesiastes as presented in the enjoyment passages and in the book’s closing exhortations argue against a pessimistic approach to the teachings of the book. Kaiser concludes, “In no way can that be a

²⁸ Cf. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes*, 352–53.

²⁹ Ryken, *Ecclesiastes*, 273.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 281 (emphasis his).

³¹ Cf. Fredericks, “Ecclesiastes,” 240.

³² Cp. Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 316–17, who argues that this might be a common literary device to cause readers to “suspend disbelief” in order to accept the book itself as credible.

³³ Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 153.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

description of the work of a pessimist, nihilist, or Epicurean with an ‘eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die’ mentality.”³⁸

Interpreters variously take the **“one Shepherd”** as either Solomon, wisdom writers in general, or God (v. 11). Since the book addresses the author as “the Preacher,” it seems better to understand “Shepherd” as a title of deity rather than another title for the human author. This title for God in this context implies a doctrine of divine superintendence in the writing of Scripture (cp. 2 Pet 1:21).³⁹ **“Shepherd” refers to God** who “is the real source of the words of this book; not cynicism, not skepticism, not worldliness.”⁴⁰ The agricultural reference to **goads** (cf. 1 Sam 13:21) provides a vehicle for saying that “Words and goads are tools to guide people on the right path, though making them uncomfortable in doing so.”⁴¹ The **“well-driven nails”** appear to be something like tent pegs for the herdsman’s tents or pegs driven into beams for use in hanging utensils from them. The two figures represent **the stimulation and the steadying effects of wise words**, or, as Kidner notes, “they spur the will and stick in the memory.”⁴²

In verses 12–13, the **imperatives** fill the air with a sense of urgency.⁴³ **Verse 12** provides the only occurrence of the phrase **“my son”** in *Ecclesiastes*. Some commentators apply the nomenclature to students, rather than to actual sons.⁴⁴ The context does not resolve the meaning for the reader. Either interpretation might be correct.

One commentator takes the position that **“the writing of many books is endless”** means “‘Making many books is a thing of no purpose’. Writing is praiseworthy, but there is no point in overdoing it.”⁴⁵ Another sees the statement as a warning about the many pagan writings from other nations that claim to offer wisdom.⁴⁶ Understanding it as a warning, another identifies it with “poring over unsuitable literature,” which will only weary and do harm.⁴⁷ In other words, **the writer intends more the “use” of books than the writing of them.**⁴⁸

Verses 13–14 form the ultimate conclusion of *Ecclesiastes*. The Masoretes, preservationists of the ancient Hebrew text from around 700–1200 A.D., instruct the public reader to repeat verse 13 after 14 so that the reading does not end upon a negative note. Ending with verse 14 makes “evil” the final (and ominous) word of *Ecclesiastes*.⁴⁹

The Hebrew text in **verse 13 emphasizes “God” and “commandments.”**⁵⁰ The logical order of the two imperatives (**“fear” and “obey”**) supplies additional significance. As Eaton explains, **“Conduct derives from worship.** A knowledge of God

³⁸ Kaiser, *Ecclesiastes*, 123.

³⁹ Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 154.

⁴⁰ Kaiser, *Ecclesiastes*, 124–25.

⁴¹ Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 326.

⁴² Kidner, *A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance*, 106.

⁴³ Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 190.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁴⁵ Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 327.

⁴⁶ Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 155.

⁴⁷ Whybray, *Ecclesiastes*, 173. Jewish commentators sometimes make the clause a reference to the “Oral Law”—that is, “it would be impossible to commit the entire Oral Law to writing”; Reichart and Cohen, “*Ecclesiastes*,” 2:110.

⁴⁸ Fredericks, “*Ecclesiastes*,” 244.

⁴⁹ Reichart and Cohen, “*Ecclesiastes*,” 2:111.

⁵⁰ Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 156.

leads to obedience; not vice versa.”⁵¹ The teaching in these final verses reflects instructions in the book of Deuteronomy (4:6, 10; 6:2, 24; 8:6; 10:12–13).

“**Every person**” (literally, “**the whole of man**”; Eccl 12:13) occurs also in 3:13 and 5:19. According to Greidanus, “The Hebrew does not have the word ‘duty,’ so it reads literally that fearing God and keeping his commandments ‘is the *whole* of everyone.’ It’s not just our duty, it’s our *essence*.”⁵² In Psalm 109:4 the psalmist uses a similar construction to indicate that he is characterized by prayer: “I am prayer.” The same type of construction appears also in Psalm 120:7 (“I am peace”) and Job 8:9 (“we are yesterday”). The point is that the attribute is the defining essence of the person or persons to which it is ascribed. Thus, **it is mankind’s very essence to fear God and obey Him**. The truths of Ecclesiastes apply to everyone (cp. Rom 2:14–16). **Here is the answer to the opening question** (1:3, “What advantage [or, profit] does man have in all his work which he does under the sun?”): “He gets the living God! And his whole profit consists of fearing Him and obeying His Word.”⁵³ Or, as Estes puts it, the advantage “resides not in human achievement apart from God, but rather in human connection with God.”⁵⁴

Solomon’s pursuit of wisdom and investigation of mankind’s condition “under the sun” results in “an incitement to true piety. The insignificance of all that is done under the sun leaves him awestruck and silent before God.”⁵⁵ The reader’s course is clear:

- **Remember God, the Creator** (12:1).
- **Fear God, the Creator** (3:14; 5:7; 8:12; 12:14).
- **Keep the commandments of God** (12:14).
- **Enjoy the life God gives** (9:7–10).
- **Prepare for leaving life “under the sun”** (12:1).
- **Prepare to stand before God in a future judgment** where we will be held accountable for enjoying what He has given and for living in accord with His commands (11:9; cf. Rom 2:16; Heb 9:27).

Questions for study:

- What does it mean to “Remember your Creator”? How can we do that?
- Why is death sometimes very unpleasant and even frightening?
- What are the characteristics of aging for most people?
- How should we prepare ourselves for old age and death?
- Explain the reasons for believing that the text of Ecclesiastes actually hints strongly at a life beyond the sun?
- How does the writer of 12:9–11 describe the book of Ecclesiastes? How does that compare to a pessimistic or skeptical approach to the book?

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 309–10 (emphasis his).

⁵³ Kaiser, *Ecclesiastes*, 125.

⁵⁴ Estes, *Handbook on the Wisdom Books*, 378.

⁵⁵ Garrett, *Ecclesiastes*, 345.