

Government Corruption (vv. 8-9)

VERSE 8 If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province (אִם-עֵשֶׂק רָשׁ וְגִזְלֵי מִשְׁפָּט וְצָדֵק תִּרְאֶה בְּמִדְיָנָה) [part *im* if + noun *m.s.constr.* *osheq* oppression, extortion + *Qal part.m.s.abs.* *rish* be poor + *waw w/noun m.s.constr.* *gazel* robbery; “denial” + noun *m.s.abs.* *mishpat* justice + *waw w/noun m.s.abs.* *tsadiq* righteousness + *prep beth w/d.a.w/noun f.s.abs.* *midinah* province], **do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them** (עַל-הַחֹפֶץ כִּי גְבוּהַ מֵעַל גְבוּהַ שֹׁמֵר וְגְבוּהֵימ עֲלֵיהֶם) [adv *al* not + *Qal impf.2m.s.* *tamah* be amazed + *prep al* above + *d.a.w/noun m.s.abs.* *chepetz* delight “the sight” + *part for* + *adj.m.s.abs.* *gaboah* high; “one official” + *prep min w/part al* “over” + *adj.m.s.abs.* *gaboah* “another official” + *Qal part.m.s.abs.* *shamar* guard “watches” + *waw w/adj.m.p.abs.* *gaboah* “higher officials” + *prep. al w/3m.p.suff.* *al* “over them”]).

VERSE 9 After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land (וַיִּתְרוֹן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל (הִיא) [הוּא] מֶלֶךְ לְשָׂדֵה נֹעֲבֵד) [*waw w/noun m.s.abs.* *yitron* “an advantage” + noun both *s.abs.* *eretz* earth, land, ground: “the land” + *pro.3m.s.* *hu* he + noun *m.s.abs.* *melek* king + *prep lamed w/noun m.s.abs.* *sadeh* field + *Niphal perf.3m.s.* *abad* work, serve; “cultivates”]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 8-9

1. The focus here shifts from what takes place in the temple to things that take place in the province.
2. The 2nd person singular continues in this brief example (“If you see”).
3. This is the second example of the social oppression of the lower classes (cf. 4:1-3).
4. The use of the term “province” (*medinah*) points to governmental administration.
5. The ‘oppression’ of government ‘officials’ within a ‘province’ is a social ill that robs “the poor...of justice and righteousness.”

6. The term “oppression” (*osheq*) has the connotation ‘to defraud’, and hence, ‘to do violence’ (vb. *ashaq*).
7. If one happens to observe “the oppression of the poor” resulting in a “denial of justice and righteousness” one should “not be shocked” says the Preacher.
8. The noun “denial” (*gazel*) is cognate to the verb *gazal* which means ‘to tear off’ or ‘take away by force’ or ‘to rob.’
9. The reason one should not be shocked when confronted with a miscarriage of justice is presented as: “for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them.”
10. The adjective translated “officials” (*gaboah* from *gabah* ‘to be high’) along with the presentation of a tiered bureaucracy further highlights a governmental setting.
11. The situation envisaged here is that of government officials who are more concerned about maintaining their own status, than they are about serving the rights of the people.
12. Self-interest takes precedence over justice.
13. Injustice is endemic to most, if not all, bureaucracies.
14. This oversight (“watches”), of one official over another official, results in either seeking to please a superior, or manipulating an underling.
15. This works its way up the ladder to the king.
16. And that brings us to verse 9, and the two diverse views as to its interpretation.
17. One thing that is fairly clear is that the type of society envisaged here is agrarian, where crops are the mainstay of the economy.
18. One view sees this verse as extolling the virtues of agriculture as the basis for national prosperity, because even the king is dependant on the soil.
19. This view understands verse 9 as a corrective to the abuses of verse 8.
20. A translation supporting this is: “the advantage for the people is, that it extends to all, even the king is subject to the field.”
21. Another reads: “but an advantage to land for everyone is: a king over cultivated land.”
22. Yet another that takes this verse in a positive way reads: “and the profit of a land is taken by all officials; a king is for cultivated fields.”
23. The word “all” (*bakol* d.a.w/prep beth w/noun ‘all’) refers to the officials in verse 8.
24. The NAS “After all” is to be rejected.
25. The negative view (one advocated here) holds the king accountable for misrule as he is also “served by the cultivated fields.”
26. I translate: “So, an advantage *is the* land for all, *even* a king who is served (Niphal perf. *abad* work, serve) by the field.”
27. The negative view is in sync with the way political power has been presented in thus far by Qohelet (Preacher).

28. Verses dealing with the poor from Proverbs: 10:4 “Poor is who works with a negligent hand. But the hand of the diligent makes rich.”; 13:7-8 “There is one who pretends to be rich, but has nothing. Another pretends to be poor, but has great wealth.”; 13:23 “Abundant food is on the fallow ground of the poor. But it is swept away by injustice.”; 14:20 “The poor is hated even by his neighbor. But those who love the rich are many.”; 17:5 “He who mocks the poor taunts his Maker; He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.”; 18:23 “The poor man offers supplications. But the rich man answers roughly.”; 19:1 “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity, than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.”; 19:22 “What is desirable in a man is his kindness. And it is better to be a poor man than a liar.”; 22:2 “The rich and the poor have a common bond. The LORD is the maker of them all.”; 28:8 “Better is the poor man who walks in his integrity, than he who is crooked though he be rich.”; 28:27 “He who gives to the poor will never want. But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.”; 29:13 “The poor and the oppressor have this in common. The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.”

Unfulfilled Expectations of Wealth (vv. 10-6:9)

VERSE 10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves

abundance with its income אָהַב כֶּסֶף לֹא־יִשְׂבַע כֶּסֶף וּמִי־אֲהַב בְּהַמּוֹן לֹא תִבּוֹאֶה

[*Qal part.m.s.abs. aheb love + noun m.s.abs. kesep silver; “money” + neg lo + Qal impf.3m.s. sabea be satisfied + noun m.s.abs. kesep + waw w/pro. mi who + Qal part.m.s.abs. aheb love + d.a.w/prep beth w/noun m.s.abs. hammon abundance + neg lo + noun f.s.abs. tebu-ah produce; income; “income”*]).

This too is vanity גַּם־זֶה הַבָּל [conj gam also + adj.m.s.abs. zeh this + noun m.s.abs. chebel vanity]).

VERSE 11 When good things increase, those who consume them increase

בְּרַבּוֹת הַטּוֹבוֹת רַבּוּ אוֹכְלֵיהֶן [prep beth w/Qal infin.constr. rabah be(come) great; “increase” + d.a.w/noun f.s.abs.tob “good things” + Qal perf.3p. rabah “increase” + Qal part.m.p.constr.w/3f.s.suff. akal eat; “consume”)].

So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on (רְאִיתָ) [רְאוּתָ] עֵינַיִךְ)

וּמַה־כִּשְׁרוֹן לְבַעַלְיָהּ כִּי אִם [wawk w/interrog. mah what? + noun m.s.abs. kishron success; advantage + prep lamed w/noun m.p.constr.w/3f.s.suff. ba-al owner + part ki + part if = “except” + noun m.s.abs.re-uth look on; only here + noun f. dual constr.w/3m.s.suff. eye]?)

VERSE 12 The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or

much מִתּוֹקָה שְׁנַת הָעֵבֶד אִם־מְעַט וְאִם־הַרְבֵּה יֹאכַל [adj.f.s.abs. matoq sweet; “is pleasant” + noun f.s.constr. yashen sleeping + d.a.w/Qal part.m.s.abs. abad work + part if whether + adj.m.s.abs. me-at little + waw w/part. im or + Hiphil infin.constr. rabah be much + Qal impf.3m.s. akal eat]; **but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep** [וְהַשָּׂבַע לְעָשִׂיר אֵינָנוּ מְנִיחַ לוֹ לִישׁוֹן] [waw w/d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. shaba- plenty; “full stomach” + prep lamed w/adj.m.s.abs. ashir rich man + adv ayin not + Hiphil part.m.s.abs. nuach rest + prep lamed w/3m.s.suff.+ prep lamed w/Qal infin.constr. yashen sleep]).

VERSE 13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being

hoarded by their owner to his hurt (רָאִיתִי תַחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עֲשֶׂר שְׂמוֹר לְבַעֲלָיו לְרַעַתוֹ)

יֵשׁ רָעָה חוֹלָה [part yesh there is + adj.f.s.abs. ra-ah evil + Qal part.f.s.abs. chalah be sick;

“grievous” + Qal perf.1s. ra-ah see + part tachath under + d.a.w/noun both s.abs. shemesh sun

+ noun m.s.abs. ashir rich man + Qal pass.part.m.s.abs. shanath keep “being hoarded” + prep

lamed w/noun m.p.constr.w/3m.s.suff. ba-al owner + prep lamed w/noun f.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff.

ra-ah “hurt”]).

VERSE 14 When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had

fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him (בֶּן יָאִין בְּיָדוֹ מְאוּמָה)

וְאָבֵד הָעֵשֶׂר הַהוּא בְּעֵינָיו רָע וְהוֹלִיד [waw w/Qal perf.3m.s. abad be destroyed; “were

lost” + d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. osher riches + d.a.w/pro.3m.s. hu him + prep beth w/noun

m.s.constr. inyan task; “investment” + adj.m.s.abs. rab bad + waw w/Hiphil perf.3m.s. yalad

beget; “fathered a son” + prep beth w/noun f.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. yad hand + noun m.s.abs.

me-umah anything]).

VERSE 15 As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he

came (כַּאֲשֶׁר יָצָא מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם יָשׁוּב לְלֶכֶת כְּשָׂבָא) [*prep kaph w/rel.pro. asher* “As he” + *Qal perf.3m.s. yatsa* “come...from” + *prep min w/noun f.s.abs. beten womb* + *noun f.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. em mother* + *adj.m.s.abs. arom naked* + *Qal impf.3m.s. shub return* + *prep lamed w/Qal infin.constr. halak walk*; “as he came”]). **He will take nothing from the**

fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand (וּמֵאוּמָה לֹא־יִשָּׂא בְעִמְלוֹ שְׂיִלֵךְ בְּיָדוֹ) כְּשָׂבָא [*prep kaph w/rel.pro. asher w/Qal perf.3m.s. bo go*; “take” + *waw w/noun m.s.abs. me-umah nothing* + *neg lo* + *Qal impf.3m.s. nasha lift*; “take” + *prep beth w/noun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. amal labor*; “fruit of his labor” + *rel.pro. asher w/Hiphil impof.3m.s. halak* “carry” + *prep beth w/noun f.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. hand*]).

VERSE 16 This also is a grievous evil -- exactly as a man is born, thus will he die

(וְגַם־זֶה רָעָה חוֹלָה כָּל־עֲמֹת שָׂבָא כֵּן יֵלֵךְ) [*waw w/part gam also w/adj.f.s.abs. zoth this* + *adj.f.s.abs. ra-ah evil* + *Qal part.f.s.abs. halah be sick*; “grievous” + *noun m.s.constr. kol all*; “exactly” + *prep ummah as* + *rel.pro. asher w/Qal perf.m.s. bo go*; “is born” + *part ken thus* + *Qal impf.3m.s. halak walk*; “will he die”]).

So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind (יִתְרוֹן לוֹ שְׂיַעֲמֹל לְרוּחַ) וְיָמָה

[*waw w/interrog. mah what?* + *noun m.s.abs. yitron advantage* + *prep lamed w/3m.s.suff. “to him”* + *rel.pro. asher w/Qal impf.3m.s.s amal labor* + *prep lamed w/noun both s.abs. ruach wind*])?

VERSE 17 Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation,

sickness and anger (גַּם כָּל־יָמָיו בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יֹאכַל וְכַעַס הָרַבָּה וְחַלְיוֹ וְקִצְפָּה) [*conj. gam also + noun m.s.constr. kol all + noun m.p.constr.w/3m.s.suff. yom day; “his life” + d.a.w/prep beth w/noun m.s.abs. choshek darkness + Qal impf.3m.s. akal eat + waw w/Qal perf.3m.s.s ka-as be grived, vexed, angry + Hiphil infin.constr. rabah be great; “great” + waw wnoun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. halah be sick; be sorry + waw w/noun m.s.abs. qetseph wrath*]).

VERSE 18 Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting (אֲנִי טוֹב אֲשֶׁר־יָפָה)

הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי [*interj. hinneh behold; “Here” + rel.pro. asher + Qal perf.1s. ra-ah see + pro.1s. ani I + adj.m.s.abs. tob good + rel.pro. asher + adj.m.s.abs. yapheh beautiful; “fitting”*]:

to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun

during the few years of his life which God has given him (אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים)

וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ שִׁיעֵמַל תַּחַת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ מִסְפָּר יָמֵי־חַיָּו) [חַיָּו]

לֶאֱכוֹל [*prep lamed w/Qal infin.constr. akal eat + waw w/prep lamed w/Qal infin.constr.*

shathah drink + waw w/prep lamed w/Qal infin.constr. ra-ah see; “to enjoy” + noun f.s.abs. tob

“onself” + prep beth w/noun m.s.constr. kol + noun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. amal + rel.pro. asher

w/Qal impf.3m.s. amal to labor; “he toils” + part tabath under + d.a.w/noun both s.abs.

shemesh + noun m.s.constr. misepar number; “few” + noun m.p.constr. yom day; “years” +

noun m.p.constr.w/3m.s.suff. chayyim life + rel.pro. asher + Qal perf.3m.s. nathan give + prep

lamed w/3m.s.suff. + d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. Elohim]; for this is his reward (כִּי־הוּא חֶלֶקוֹ)

[*part ki for + pro.3m.s. hi this + noun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. chelaq portion; “reward”*]).

VERSE 19 Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and

wealth (גַּם כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׁר וְנִכְסִים) [conj gam also + noun

m.s.constr. kol all; “every” + d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. adam man + rel.pro. asher + Qal perf.3m.s.

nathan give + prep lamed w/3m.s.suff. + d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. Elohim + noun m.s.abs. osher

*riches + waw w/noun m.p.abs. nekes wealth; only here and in Joh. 22:8]), **He has also***

empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his

labor (וְהִשְׁלִיטוּ לְאָכַל מִמֵּנּוּ וּלְשִׂאת אֶת־חֶלְקוֹ וּלְשִׂמְחָה בְּעֵמְלוֹ) [waw w/Hiphil

perf.3m.s.w/3m.s.suff. shalat exercise power; “empowered him” + prep lamed w/Qal

infin.constr. akal eat + prep min w/3m.s.suff. “from them” + Qal infin.constr. nasha lift; “to

receive” + d.o. + noun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. heleq share; “reward” + waw w/prep lamed

w/Qal infin.constr. shamach rejoice + prep beth w/noun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. amal labor];

this is the gift of God (זֶה מַתַּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא) [adj.f.s.abs. zeh this + noun f.s.constr.

mattath gift + noun m.p.abs. Elohim + pro.3f.s. hu it]).

VERSE 20 For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps

him occupied with the gladness of his heart (חַיְיוֹ כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים מְעִנֶה בְּשִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ)

(כִּי לֹא הָרְבָה יִזְכֵּר אֶת־יָמָיו) [part ki for + neg lo + Hiphil infin.constr. rabah be much;

“he...often” + Qal impf.3m.s. zakar think (about); meditate + d.o. + noun m.p.constr. yom day,

year + noun m.p.constr.w/3m.s.suff. chayyim life + part ki for + d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. Elohim +

Hiphil part.m.s.abs. anah answer; “keeps him occupied” + prep beth w/noun f.s.constr.

shimchah gladness, mirth + noun m.s.constr.w/3m.s.suff. leb heart]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 10-20

1. This section, and the one that follows in chapter six verses 1-6, deals with the subject of the pursuit of wealth.
2. The focus centers on the assertion by Qohelet that the quest to acquire more and more wealth does not satisfy people.
3. Two example stories are presented in 5:13-17 and 6:1-6 to demonstrate the topic of unfulfilled desires.
4. These two example stories are centered in Qohelet's advice in another call to enjoyment of the simple pleasures of life (5:18-20).
5. The opening section (5:10-12) asserts that wealth does not secure lasting satisfaction by using three wisdom sayings.
6. The first saying in verse 10 has as its focus the statement, that if anyone pursues wealth/money, that individual will never achieve contentment.
7. If someone "loves money" (silver) that individual "will not be satisfied" with it, or its "income/increase."
8. The more an individual has, the more that person wants.
9. Qohelet adds a "vanity" statement here, and one at the end of this topic (as in 1:14; 2:1).
10. So, the path to accumulating more and more wealth is an exercise in futility as a means to gain satisfaction.
11. Qohelet proceeds with the second wisdom saying in verse 11 to illustrate the assertion of verse 10.
12. "When good things increase" refers to the accumulation of capital gains which brings with it "those who consume them increase."
13. The person of increasing wealth is like a magnet drawing more and more people into his life.
14. An increase of goods does not bring an increase in enjoyment, but rather an increase of hassle, especially if those who "consume" them are 'hangers-on,' relatives, and new found friends.
15. Or, an increase in goods could mean an increase of responsibility, especially if those who consume the wealth are servants needed to manage the assets.
16. In other words, when wealth increases, so do expenses.
17. Verse 11 ends with a rhetorical question: "So what is the advantage that *comes* to their owners, except to look on?"
18. The idea seems to be that the owners of wealth cannot enjoy what their eyes see, because they are continually faced with the specter of others consuming their possessions.
19. The point is that the enjoyment of wealth is fleeting and limited, due to concerns with regards to those who are consuming the profits of the rich man.
20. Wealth brings with it unfulfilled expectations.
21. Verse 12 provides yet another reason to support the contention that wealth does not bring satisfaction.
22. In this saying there is a contrast between the sleep of the manual laborer and the sleep of the rich man.
23. This pleasant sleep of the hard-working man is his whether he has a full or empty stomach.
24. The hard work of labor tires him out so that sleep is not a problem.
25. The greedy rich man on the other hand, goes to bed with a full stomach, but cannot find sleep, as he goes to bed with worries and concerns.
26. Having less leads to less worry and stress.

27. The troubles associated with wealth are further demonstrated in the example story of verses 13-17.
28. The phrase “grievous evil” (of ‘sickening tragedy’) is used twice (vv. 13 & 16).
29. The phrase refers to something that is deeply hurtful and very painful to observe.
30. It shows how much Solomon is bothered by the unfulfilled expectations that accompany wealth when it is achieved the wrong way.
31. He ought to know!
32. The first miserable observation is when “wealth is guarded by its owner to his hurt.”
33. This harm is the anxiety wealth brings to its owner who has to continually keep an eye on things so as to prevent loss due to theft and pilfering and bad investments.
34. If the idea here is ‘hoarding’ (NAS) wealth rather than protection of possessions, then “his hurt” could refer to a bad investment or some misfortune that could wipe out his wealth.
35. The point is that wealth disappoints because it can be lost.
36. This is illustrated in verse 14.
37. A risky investment designed to hoard more wealth, goes sour, and this is compounded by the fact that the father has nothing to leave his son, leaving the son destitute.
38. An inheritance is considered a good thing (Prov. 15:22), but because wealth is uncertain, both father and son find themselves suddenly in the poor house.
39. This is how things work on a universal scale declares Qohelet in verse 15.
40. Just as a person comes into the world “naked” so shall a person “return as he came” into the world.
41. Wealth can be lost in this life, but any wealth acquired through labor will remain in this life upon the death of its owner.
42. Wealth is of no benefit to a person when this life ends.
43. The disappointing and frustrating nature of temporal wealth brings Qohelet to reflect on the disadvantages of wealth in verses 16 & 17.
44. In verse 16 he restates the observation of v. 15 applying it to humanity throughout human history.
45. Here he mentions death as the thief that takes whatever a person has accumulated; a little or a lot.
46. “Profit” (*yitron*) is the term used in the question that began the book in 1:3.
47. He answered the question in 2:11-12 by asserting that there is no lasting profit to labor.
48. Nothing thus far in the book has changed that assertion which is reaffirmed in the rhetorical question of v. 16b.
49. The words “who labor for the wind” refers to that which is unattainable.
50. It is a variation on: “chasing after the wind” (only here).
51. If the loss of wealth through circumstance of death were not enough, there is even more bad news regarding its acquisition (see v. 17).
52. The pursuer of wealth is subject to miseries that money cannot cure.
53. “Eat in darkness” is figurative language isolation and loneliness.
54. This misery of darkness is expressed in the words, “great vexation, sickness, and anger/frustration.”
55. “Sickness” may refer mental health which can result in various physiological disorders.

56. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:9, 10 “But those (believers) who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith (doctrine) and pierced themselves with many griefs.”; Heb. 13:5 “*Make sure* that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have, for He Himself has said: ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I FORSAKE YOU.’”; Prov. 23:4-5 “Do not worry yourself to gain wealth. Cease from your consideration *of it*. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings. Like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens.”
57. Howard Hughes is a prime example to illustrate this. He went from being one of the wealthiest men in America. He died alone on a plane from Mexico to the United States. He became a recluse, addicted to drugs. His hair, beard, and fingernails had grown long. His once strapping 6’ 4” inch frame weighed a mere 90 lbs. He had developed a obsessive-compulsive behavior. He stored his urine in jars, wore Kleenex boxes as shoes and picked up objects with paper towels to avoid germs. He was paranoid, alone and sick.

Advice for Humanity (vv. 18-20)

58. Qohelet offers advice in regards to the unfulfilled expectations associated with pursuing wealth.
59. This call to enjoyment follows along the same lines as in 2:24-26; 3:12-13, and 3:22.
60. Here he mentions eating, drinking, and enjoying the good that comes from labor.
61. The advice here is limited to the temporal realm, which is reinforced with the phrase “*during* the few years of his life.”
62. The life on the individual is something “God has given him.”
63. The basic pleasures of human life are “his reward” for his labor “under the sun.”
64. In this call to enjoyment, there is a twist.
65. In verse 19 he applies his advice to a rich man, that God has made rich.
66. But the difference between the man of wealth here, and the one who experiences miseries and unfulfilled expectations, is that this is a person “to whom God has given riches and wealth.”
67. The wealth here is “the gift of God” versus wealth based on crass greed.
68. This assumes the attitude of the possessor is in stark contrast to that of the person envisaged previously.
69. “He [God] has empowered him to eat from them, and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor” follows the language in 3:11 referring to the average person.
70. For the individual whom God has made rich, along with its enjoyment, this is “his reward.”
71. Both the average laborer, who enjoys the fruit of his labor, and the person made rich by God through his labor, are viewed alike.
72. If one can enjoy what God gives, one can achieve a measure of genuine contentment in life.
73. He takes things a step further in verse 20.
74. These gifts given by God are so that the rich person “will not often ponder the years of his life.”
75. This expresses a notion of distraction.
76. The reason stated is: “because God keeps his occupied with the gladness of his heart.
77. This distraction of eating, drinking, and enjoying earthly pleasures, is a cushion against all the miseries and sorrows of the temporal realm.

78. This falls short of boundless enthusiasm, but it is the best that can be had, apart from a relationship with the Source of temporal pleasure.
79. In vv. 18-20 God's role is highlighted.
80. God is the source of the good things people receive in this life.
81. God grants to each person "the few days of life" on earth.
82. God gives "riches and wealth" to some.
83. God gives a person the ability "to accept one's portion" as well as the rationale for all that God gives.
84. And finally, these gifts are given so that a person "will not greatly ponder the days of his life."

END: Ecclesiastes Chapter Five
December, 2018
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