

who enjoys but myself?<sup>f</sup> <sup>26</sup>To the man, namely; who pleases Him He has given <sup>g</sup>the wisdom and shrewdness to enjoy himself<sup>g</sup>; and to him who displeases, He has given the urge to gather and amass—only for handing on to one who is pleasing to God. That too is futile and pursuit of wind.

**3** A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A time for <sup>b</sup>being born<sup>b</sup> and a time for dying,

A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;

<sup>3</sup> A time for <sup>c</sup>slaying and a time for healing,<sup>c</sup>

A time for tearing down and a time for building up;

<sup>4</sup> A time for weeping and a time for laughing,

A time for wailing and a time for dancing;

<sup>5</sup> A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones,

A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;

<sup>6</sup> A time for seeking and a time for losing,  
A time for keeping and a time for discarding;

<sup>7</sup> A time for ripping and a time for sewing,  
A time for silence and a time for speaking;

<sup>8</sup> A time for loving and a time for hating;  
A time for war and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup>What value, then, can the man of affairs get from what he earns? <sup>10</sup>I have observed the business that God gave man to be concerned with: <sup>11</sup>He brings everything to pass precisely at its time; He also puts eternity

# קהלת ecclesiastes

2.26

<sup>26</sup> חַיִּים מִמֶּנּוּ: כִּי לְאָדָם שְׂשׂוּב  
לְפָנָיו נָתַן חֲכָמָה וְדַעַת  
וְשִׂמְחָה וְלִחְוֹשָׁא נָתַן עֵינָן  
לְאֶסְקָהּ וּלְבָנוֹס לְחַתּוּ לְטוֹב  
לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים נִסְיָהּ הַכֹּל  
וְרַעוּת רִיחַ:

**ג** <sup>1</sup> לְכָל זְמַן וְעַתָּה לְכָל-חַפְצֵי  
תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:

<sup>2</sup> עַתָּה לְלֵדָה וְעַתָּה לְמוֹת  
עַתָּה לְשִׂעָה וְעַתָּה לְעֶקֶר  
וְטָרֵעַ:

<sup>3</sup> עַתָּה לְהָרֹג וְעַתָּה לְרַפֹּא  
עַתָּה לְפָרוֹץ וְעַתָּה לְבָנוֹחַ:  
<sup>4</sup> עַתָּה לְבִבּוֹת וְעַתָּה לְשִׁחּוֹךְ  
עַתָּה סִפּוֹד וְעַתָּה רִקְדּוֹד:

<sup>5</sup> עַתָּה לְהַשְׁלִיד אֲבָנִים  
וְעַתָּה בָנוֹס אֲבָנִים  
עַתָּה לְחִבּוֹךְ  
וְעַתָּה לְרַחֵק מִחֻבֵּק:

<sup>6</sup> עַתָּה לְבַקֵּשׁ וְעַתָּה לְאֶבֶד  
עַתָּה לְשָׂמוֹר  
וְעַתָּה לְהַשְׁלִיד:

<sup>7</sup> עַתָּה לְקַרֹּעַ וְעַתָּה לְחַפּוֹר  
עַתָּה לְחַשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לְדַבֵּר:  
<sup>8</sup> עַתָּה לְאַהֲבָה וְעַתָּה לְשִׂנְאָה  
עַתָּה מִלְחָמָה וְעַתָּה שָׁלוֹם:

<sup>9</sup> מִהֲיִתְרוֹן הָעוֹשֶׂה בְּאִשָּׁר  
<sup>10</sup> הוּא עֵמֶל: רְאִיתִי אֶת-הָעֵינָן  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לְבִנֵי הָאָדָם  
<sup>11</sup> לַעֲנוֹת בּוֹ: אֶת-הַכֹּל עָשָׂה  
יָפָה בְּעֵתוֹ וְגַם אֶת-הָעֵלֶם נָתַן  
בְּלִבָּם מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִמָּצָא  
הָאָדָם אֶת-הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר-

<sup>f</sup> Some mss. and ancient versions read *mimmennu* "by His doing"

<sup>g-g</sup> Lit. "wisdom and knowledge and enjoyment"

<sup>a</sup> I.e. all human experiences are preordained by God; see v. 11

<sup>b-b</sup> Lit. "giving birth"

<sup>c-c</sup> Emendation yields "wrecking . . . repairing"; cf. I Ki. 18.30

in their mind,<sup>4</sup> but without man ever guessing, from first to last, all the things that God brings to pass. <sup>12</sup>Thus I realized that the only worth-while thing there is for them is to enjoy themselves and do what is good<sup>e</sup> in their lifetime; <sup>13</sup>also, that whenever a man does eat and drink and get enjoyment out of all his wealth, it is a gift of God.

<sup>14</sup>I realized, too, that whatever God has brought to pass will recur evermore:

Nothing can be added to it

And nothing taken from it—

and God has brought to pass that men revere Him.

<sup>15</sup> <sup>f</sup>What is occurring occurred long since,

And what is to occur occurred long since:  
and God seeks the pursued. <sup>16</sup>And, indeed,  
I have observed under the sun:

Alongside justice there is wickedness,

Alongside righteousness there is wicked-  
ness.

<sup>17</sup>I mused: "God will doom both righteous and wicked, for <sup>g</sup>there is<sup>g</sup> a time for every experience and for every happening."

<sup>18</sup> <sup>f</sup>So I decided, as regards men, to dis-associate them [from] the divine beings and to face the fact that they are beasts.<sup>h</sup> <sup>19</sup>For in respect of the fate of man and the fate of beast, they have one and the same fate: as the one dies so dies the other, and both have the same life-breath; man has no superiority over beast, since both amount to nothing. <sup>20</sup>Both go to the same place; both came from dust and both return to dust. <sup>21</sup>Who knows if a man's life-breath does rise upward and if a beast's breath does sink down into the earth?

# קהלת ecclesiastes

3.12

עֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים מֶלֶאשׁ וְעַד-  
<sup>12</sup> סוּף: יִדְעֹתִי כִּי אֵין טוֹב בָּם  
כִּי אִם-לְשֹׂמֹחַ וּלְעֲשׂוֹת טוֹב  
<sup>13</sup> בְּחַיָּיו: וְגַם כָּל-הָאָדָם  
שִׂיאָכָל וְשִׂתָּה וְרָאָה טוֹב  
בְּכָל-עֲמָלוֹ מִתַּת אֱלֹהִים  
<sup>14</sup> הִיא: יִדְעֹתִי כִּי כָל-אִשֶּׁר  
יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא יִהְיֶה  
לְעוֹלָם עָלָיו אֵין לְהוֹסִיף  
וּמִמֶּנּוּ אֵין לִגְרֹעַ וְהָאֱלֹהִים  
<sup>15</sup> עֲשֵׂה שִׁירָאוֹ מִלְפָּנָיו: מִזֶּה-  
שֶׁהִיהָ כְּבֹד הוּא וְאִשֶּׁר לְהִיוֹת  
כְּבֹד הִיָּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים יִבְקֹשׁ  
<sup>16</sup> אֶת-נִדְרָהּ: וְעוֹד רָאִיתִי  
תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ מְקוֹם הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
שָׁמָּה הָרָשָׁע וּמְקוֹם הַצֶּדֶק  
<sup>17</sup> שָׁמָּה הָרָשָׁע: אֲמַרְתִּי אֲנִי  
בְּלִבִּי אֶת-הַצִּדִּיק וְאֶת-  
הָרָשָׁע יִשְׁפֹּט הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי-  
עַתָּה לְכָל-חֹפֶץ וְעַל כָּל-  
<sup>18</sup> הַמַּעֲשֶׂה שָׁם: אֲמַרְתִּי אֲנִי  
בְּלִבִּי עַל-יְדִבֶּרֶת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם  
לְבָרֶם הָאֱלֹהִים וּלְרֹאוֹת  
<sup>19</sup> שֶׁהֵם-בִּהְמָה הֵמָּה לָהֶם: כִּי  
מִקְרָה בְּנֵי-הָאָדָם וּמִקְרָה  
הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִקְרָה אֶחָד לָהֶם  
כְּמוֹת זֶה בֶּן מוֹת זֶה וְרוּחַ  
אֶחָד לִכְלָם וּמוֹתָם הָאָדָם מוֹ-  
הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין כִּי הַכֹּל הַכֹּל:  
<sup>20</sup> הַכֹּל הוֹלֵךְ אֶל-מְקוֹם אֶחָד  
הַכֹּל הִיָּה מוֹד-הָעֶפֶר וְהַכֹּל  
<sup>21</sup> שָׁב אֶל-הָעֶפֶר: מִי יוֹדֵעַ  
רוּחַ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם הַעֹלָה הִיא  
לְמַעַלָּה וְרוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה

<sup>d</sup> I.e. He preoccupies man with the attempt to discover the times of future events; cf. 8.17

<sup>e</sup> I.e. what the author has already concluded (2.24) is good

<sup>f</sup> Meaning of parts of verse uncertain

<sup>g-g</sup> Shift of a diacritical point yields "He has set"

<sup>h</sup> Contrast Ps. 8.5-6

22 I saw that there is nothing better for man than to enjoy his possessions, since that is his portion. For who can enable him to see what will happen afterward?

**4** I further observed<sup>a</sup> all the oppression that goes on under the sun: the tears of the oppressed, with none to comfort them; and the power of their oppressors—with none to comfort them. <sup>2</sup>Then I accounted those who died long since more fortunate than those who are still living; <sup>3</sup>and happier than either are those who have not yet come into being and have never witnessed the miseries that go on under the sun.

<sup>4</sup>I have also noted that all labor and skillful enterprise come from men's envy of each other—another futility and pursuit of wind!

<sup>5</sup> [True,]

The fool folds his hands together<sup>b</sup>

And has to eat his own flesh.

<sup>6</sup> [But no less truly,]

Better is a handful of gratification

Than two fistfuls of labor which is pursuit of wind.

<sup>7</sup>And I have noted this further futility under the sun: <sup>8</sup>the case of the man who is alone, with no companion, who has neither son nor brother; yet he amasses wealth without limit, and his eye is never sated with riches. For whom, now, <sup>c</sup>is he amassing it while denying himself<sup>c</sup> enjoyment? That too is a futility and an unhappy business.

<sup>9</sup><sup>d</sup>Two are better off than one, in that they have greater <sup>e</sup>benefit from<sup>e</sup> their earn-

# קהלת ecclesiastes

3.22

הִיָּדְתָּ הִיא לְמִטָּה לְאָרֶץ:  
וְרֵאִיתִי כִּי אֵין טוֹב מֵאֲשֶׁר  
יִשְׁמַח הָאָדָם בְּמַעֲשָׁיו בִּי-  
הוּא חֵלְקוֹ כִּי מִי יבִיאֵנוּ  
לְרֹאוֹת בְּמָה שִׁהְיֶה אַחֲרָיו:

**ד** <sup>1</sup>וְשָׁבַתִי אֲנִי וְאָרָאָה אֶת-כָּל-  
הַעֲשָׂקִים אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשִׂים תַּחַת  
הַשָּׁמַיְמָה. וְדַמְעַת הַעֲשָׂקִים  
וְאֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם וּמִי  
עֲשִׂיהֶם כֹּה וְאֵין לָהֶם  
<sup>2</sup>מְנַחֵם: וְשָׁבַח אֲנִי אֶת-הַמָּוֶתִים  
שֶׁבָּבֶר מָתוּ מִן-הַחַיִּים אֲשֶׁר  
<sup>3</sup>הָמָּה חַיִּים עֲדָנָה: וְטוֹב  
מִשְׁנֵיהֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָדוֹן לֹא  
הָיָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-רָאָה אֶת-  
הַמַּעֲשֶׂה הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה  
<sup>4</sup>תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: וְרֵאִיתִי אֲנִי  
אֶת-כָּל-עֵמֶל וְאֵת כָּל-  
כְּשָׁרוֹן הַמַּעֲשֶׂה כִּי הָיָה  
קִנְיָתוֹ אִישׁ מִרְעֵהוּ גִם-יָה  
<sup>5</sup>הֶבֶל וְרַעוּת רוּחַ: הַבָּסִיל  
חֶבֶק אֶת-יָדָיו וְאָבֵל אֶת-  
<sup>6</sup>בְּשָׁרוֹ: טוֹב מְלֵא כֹף נַחַת  
מִמְלֵא חֲפָנִים עֵמֶל וְרַעוּת  
<sup>7</sup>רוּחַ: וְשָׁבַתִי אֲנִי וְאָרָאָה הֶבֶל  
<sup>8</sup>תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: יֵשׁ אַחֵר וְאֵין  
שֵׁנִי גַם בֶּן וְאָח אִין-לוֹ וְאֵין  
קָדָן לְכָל-עֲמָלוֹ גִם-עֵינָיו  
לֹא-תִשָּׁבַע עֹשֶׂר וּלְמִי אֲנִי  
עֵמֶל וּמַחְסֵר אֶת-נַפְשִׁי  
מִטּוֹבָה גִם-יָה הֶבֶל וְעֵינָיו רַע  
<sup>9</sup>הוּא: טוֹבִים הַשָּׁנִים מִן-  
הָאֶחָד אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁ-לָהֶם שָׂבֶר

<sup>a</sup> Cf. 3.16

<sup>b</sup> I.e. does not work; cf. Prov. 6.10; 24.33

<sup>c-c</sup> Lit. "am I amassing . . . myself"

<sup>d</sup> 4.9-5.8 consists of a series of observations of which each one is introduced by some slight association with what precedes. The theme of 4.4-8 is not resumed until 5.9

<sup>e-e</sup> Emendation yields "hope for"; cf. 2.20