

1 Hear this, all you peoples; □

listen, all you that dwell in the world,

2 You of low or high degree, □

both rich and poor together.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom □

and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

4 I will incline my ear to a parable; □

I will unfold my riddle with the lyre.

5 Why should I fear in evil days, □

when the malice of my foes surrounds me,

6 Such as trust in their goods □

and glory in the abundance of their riches?

7 For no one can indeed ransom another □

or pay to God the price of deliverance.

8 To ransom a soul is too costly; □

there is no price one could pay for it,

9 So that they might live for ever, □

and never see the grave.

10 For we see that the wise die also;

with the foolish and ignorant they perish □

and leave their riches to others.

11 Their tomb is their home for ever,

their dwelling through all generations, □

though they call their lands after their own names.

12 Those who have honour, but lack understanding, □

are like the beasts that perish.

13 Such is the way of those who boast in themselves, □

the end of those who delight in their own words.

14 Like a flock of sheep they are destined to die;

death is their shepherd; □

they go down straight to the Pit.

15 Their beauty shall waste away, □

and the land of the dead shall be their dwelling.

16 But God shall ransom my soul; □

from the grasp of death will he take me.

17 Be not afraid if some grow rich □

and the glory of their house increases,

18 For they will carry nothing away when they die, □

nor will their glory follow after them.

19 Though they count themselves happy while they live □

and praise you for your success,

20 They shall enter the company of their ancestors □

who will nevermore see the light.

21 Those who have honour, but lack understanding, □

are like the beasts that perish.

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