

Ecclesiastes 10:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.

Analysis

Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby—this verse continues the theme of occupational hazards from verse 8. The Hebrew *massia avanim* (מַסִּיעַ אֲבָנִים, quarrying/removing stones) and *voqea etzim* (בּוֹקֵעַ עֵצִים, splitting wood) describe necessary but dangerous work. *Ye'atzev bahem* (יֵאָצֵב בָּהֶם, hurt/injured by them) and *yisachen bo* (יִשָּׁחֵן בּוֹ, endangered by it) warn of inherent dangers.

The Preacher moves from malicious pit-digging (v. 8) to legitimate labor, teaching that even necessary, productive work carries risks requiring wisdom and caution. Stone quarrying could cause crushing injuries; wood-splitting risked flying splinters or axe accidents. This realistic wisdom acknowledges life's dangers without counseling either reckless bravery or fearful paralysis. Verse 10 will emphasize that wisdom reduces risk by proper preparation—sharpening tools before use.

Historical Context

Ancient construction and fuel-gathering required dangerous manual labor. Solomon's massive building projects (Temple, palace, fortifications) involved extensive quarrying—cutting limestone blocks from bedrock, a hazardous process (1 Kings 5:15-18). Wood-splitting for cooking fires and construction was daily necessity. Accidents were common and often severe without modern safety equipment or medical care. The wisdom here teaches that understanding risks and

taking appropriate precautions (v. 10's sharpened tools) represents prudence, not paranoia. New Testament parallels include counting the cost before building (Luke 14:28-30) and being "wise as serpents" while remaining innocent (Matthew 10:16).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What legitimate but risky endeavors in your life require wisdom and proper preparation rather than either recklessness or fearful avoidance?
2. How does this verse balance acknowledgment of real dangers with confidence to proceed wisely rather than retreat fearfully?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------|---------------------|---------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| מִטָּיִעַ | אֲבָנֵי יָם | יִטְעַצַּב | בְּהָדָם | בְּזִיקָתוֹ |
| Whoso removeth | stones | shall be hurt | H0 | therewith and he that cleaveth |
| H5265 | H68 | H6087 | | H1234 |
| עֵץ יָם | יִטְעַצַּב | בְּזִיקָתוֹ | | |
| wood | shall be endangered | H0 | | |
| H6086 | H5533 | | | |
