

Ecclesiastes 12:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

Analysis

And moreover, because the preacher was wise—after pronouncing 'all is vanity' (v. 8), the text shifts to third-person description of the Preacher (Qoheleth). The Hebrew yoter (וְיִתֵּר, moreover/besides) introduces additional information about the author. **He still taught the people knowledge**—despite life's frustrations and vanity, the wise Preacher fulfilled his calling to educate others. The verb limad (לִמַּד, taught) indicates systematic instruction. The phrase **yea, he gave good heed** (וְיָאֵן, listened/pondered carefully) shows the Preacher didn't speak carelessly but weighed matters thoughtfully. **And sought out, and set in order many proverbs**—he researched (chiqer, חִקֵּר), arranged methodically, and composed (tiqen, תִּקֵּן) numerous wisdom sayings.

This verse validates the Preacher's methods and message. Despite concluding that much is vanity, he fulfilled his teaching vocation carefully and systematically. His comprehensive investigation (seeking out) and methodical arrangement (setting in order) produced reliable wisdom worth heeding. The verse functions as ancient credentials—these aren't random musings but carefully researched, thoughtfully organized teachings from a qualified sage. This anticipates verse 10's affirmation that the words are 'upright' and 'truth.'

Historical Context

Solomon authored many proverbs (1 Kings 4:32—3,000 proverbs), giving him authority as wisdom teacher. The verse describes the scribal/wisdom tradition's methodology: careful listening, diligent research, systematic organization. Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature (Egyptian Instruction texts, Mesopotamian sayings) similarly emphasized careful compilation and arrangement. The shift to third-person suggests either Solomon writing about himself or (more likely) an editor adding a colophon describing the author. Post-exilic scribes valued this methodical approach to wisdom. The verse affirms that honest questioning and investigation (Ecclesiastes' method) is valid when conducted carefully and in service of truth. The New Testament similarly validates careful investigation (Luke 1:1-4) and systematic teaching (2 Timothy 2:15).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does knowing that the Preacher 'gave good heed' and 'sought out' carefully before writing affect your reception of Ecclesiastes' challenging message?
2. In what ways does this verse model faithful teaching: combining honest investigation with careful organization and commitment to truth?

Interlinear Text

וְיִתֵּן רַ	שֶׁהָיָה	קֵלָה לֵת	חָכָם	עוֹד	לְמַד
And moreover	H1961	because the preacher	was wise	H5750	he still taught
H3148		H6953	H2450		H3925
יְדַעַת	אֶת	הָעָם	וְאֵלַי	וַחֲקַר	וַתֵּקֶן
knowledge	H853	the people	H238	and sought out	and set in order
H1847		H5971	H2713	H8626	proverbs
					H4912
הַרְבֵּה:					
many					
H7235					

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 4:32 (Parallel theme): And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.