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Rules applied during the translation:

The translation preserved the paragraph structure published in the contemporary Hungarian transcript.

Bible book, chapter and verses indicated in parenthesis are additions from the transcription process. These additions allow the reader to immerse themselves into the Bible passages Enyedi György mentioned in the sermon. All Bible quotations use the English of the King James Bible, 1611 edition (KJV).

The abbreviated Bible quotes Enyedi György closed with the word "etc." are expanded to their full length, as the verses were most likely delivered as full-length in his sermons.

The Latin and Greek phrases used by Enyedi György are preserved, and the English translation is provided in parenthesis right after the original phrase.

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* The Book of Ecclesiasticus (also called Book of Sirach) was published in the 1611 edition of KJV as part of the apocrypha, positioned between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The apocrypha books were removed from the KJV in 1885.

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"Concio. Eccl. Cap. X."

"A wise judge will instruct his people; and the government of a prudent man is well ordered."

Ecclesiasticus 10:1 KJV^{*}

There is an old saying: “Magistratus virum declarabit” (Being in command reveals the man). The truth in that saying not only expresses that the fulfillment of the duties of a judge brings encounters with many types of difficulties and rules, thus the post demands every skill and capability one can bring forth, but also expresses that the actions of a judge cannot stay hidden. After all, very few know the morals and behaviors of ordinary people who keep to themselves.

In contrast, the people placed into a high position appear visible like a city on the top of the hill, like a candle burning on the top of a table. Everyone can see it, and it catches the eye of everyone. Consequently, if that person commits an error then everyone will see it, and may condemn that person. They don't say without a reason that we find out just what people are made of when they are in high position. It is too late to prepare someone for a high position when they already occupy the office and need to use all their abilities. It follows, then, that it is better to contemplate the duties of office holders, and to ponder their personal attributes before their election happens.

Let us examine, then, what the wise man teaches us in the words of our passage. First, it explains what attributes we should expect of the just and fair office holders. In other words, what attributes people ought to have to qualify for holding the position and for wielding the power of a ruler. Second, it explains just how enormous is the power and the influence of the morals and personal behaviors of the person selected for the post of the ruler. Third, it explains what are the fruits, the consequences of the governance of an unwise ruler, and of the prudent ruler. Thus, the words of the wise man (Ecclesiasticus 10:1): “A wise judge will instruct his people; and the government of a prudent man is well ordered.”

First part:

Our passage describes the duties of the just prince as instructing and maintaining order, and explains how a prince may carry out those duties by being wise and prudent. In order to better understand all that, let us discuss them in detail. While in the Scripture, in writings of pagans, and in common usage, the meaning and interpretation of wisdom and prudence are considered identical, if we examine them closely, we see that they differ from each other. Wisdom is manifested in a sharp mind whether used in contemplative thinking, or in comprehending the details of different scholarly subjects. Prudence, however, is manifested in upright morality, respectable personal behavior, and honorable actions.

Wisdom is manifested in the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Truthfulness is manifested in distinguishing truth from falsehood. Wise men are well suited to the governing of cities, as many wise men have ruled human communities during the course of history. Solon was an Athenian expert of the law; Chilo was the ruler of Lacedaemon; Periander ruled Corinth. Even Plato writes that a society reaches happiness either when rulers think wisely, or when wise men rule. From all that we can

conclude not only that we ought not deliberately separate wisdom from governing, but, to the contrary, without wisdom governance is not feasible. That is why we frequently see the two connected in the book of God. In Gen. 41 (Genesis 41: 33) we read that after Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream, Joseph explains this way how Pharaoh might prevent the impending disaster: "Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt." Similarly, Solomon prays for God to give him wisdom so he could judge his people with an upright heart.

The wise man who wrote our verse also states this, that an office holder ought to be both wise and prudent. He explains very clearly both attributes: wisdom is used for instruction, and prudence is used to keep order in the community. He writes: "A wise judge will instruct his people; and the government of a prudent man is well ordered."

The rulers must instruct their subjects, because sometimes office holder have to provide a detailed explanation of their decision. In other words, office holder have to state their admonishments with logic and kindness, and those will help to convince others as well to accept those decisions. It is more respectful when they use kind words to instruct them, as opposed to coercing them with force. However, when office holder don't have wisdom or prudence, then they cannot explain their decision, and cannot convince others to accept those decisions. That is why wisdom is required of judges. In addition, it is required that they keep order in the community, and govern it; otherwise, the community will cease to exist. And that is where prudence is needed, as the wise man said: ". . . and the government of a prudent man is well ordered."

When it comes to governing, not only contemplating and speaking are needed, but effort and actions are needed as well, because the ruler who thinks and explains wisely will now have to carry out the decisions. Those princes who consistently practice both wisdom and prudence will be fulfilling their duties, and providing a good example for others. That is what the wise man writes about the attributes of the person who is suitable to be a prince.

From this first part, let us learn two things. First, those who desire to be a ruler or serve at a high office are desiring a good thing - as Saint Paul states that about becoming a bishop - because holding an office is ordained by God, and, as I will elaborate below, without office holders, human communities would be wretched, and incapable of lasting existence. Consequently, those people who desire to be rulers must deeply examine themselves and contemplate whether they have the wisdom needed for instruction and the prudence to maintain order. As you just heard both of those attributes are required of rulers. It impresses on us when we observe signs of respect, like when many people take their hats off in front of someone, or when someone's command is swiftly executed - quickly made to happen. However, it is not easy to garner a level of respect like that, and not everyone is suited to fulfill the duties of high office.

I read from Socrates that when he learned that some people strongly desired to become office holders - or members of the council - they would engage them in

conversations, and ask them simple questions to demonstrate to those candidates that they knew so very little and comprehended next to nothing about the office they aspired to. Subsequently, the candidates either completely abandoned their efforts to gain the post, or they delayed their attempt until such time that they became more competent for the post.

Let us act likewise, and let us contemplate seriously just how far our blanket reaches, how far our prudence goes, and then direct our desire toward a position for which we are adequate. Let us take from that a second helpful hint: when we elect office holders we ought not be influenced by the fabulous robe of the candidates or by their wealth or family name - or by the names of their friends - but let us be influenced only by their wisdom, their prudence, and righteousness of their soul. Because wisdom and prudence are so powerful attributes that, even for offices where seemingly the main necessity is strong will, wisdom is more useful. For example, when leading an army, it would seem that assertiveness and not prudence is needed, but, even in that circumstance, prudence is useful.

Indeed, there are many prudent generals who defeated their enemy with their astuteness, rather than by weapons. That is why General Chabrias stated that an army of elks commanded by a lion is more fearsome than an army of lions commanded by a donkey. Seemingly, the former is possessing more strength than the latter. When it comes to rowing a ship, it would seem that the more power we put into it, the faster it would go; however, the wise poet Titinus said: "Sapientia gubernator torquet navim, non valentia. (A wise leader steers the ship, not strength)." If in these examples wisdom is of primary importance, then it is much more so for governing a community.

I don't mean to say that a wealthy person or someone with famous ancestry could not be an office holder, because those attributes can be very helpful for an office holder, as a poor person may not accomplish as much as a wealthy person could, or one with famous ancestors. What I am saying is that we ought to consider primarily the prudence and wisdom of the office holder, and if, in addition, there is wealth or a famous ancestor, that is well. However, if the wisdom and prudence are missing, a person of wealth or famous ancestry does not deserve to hold office. It is better to have a wise, poor person holding an office than an uncultivated wealthy person. To this you might say with glee that you have been seeking the kind of person I described, but when you couldn't find it you gave up. Well now, no one ought to assume that we will find someone who is without flaw. Nonetheless, if we cannot find someone who has the attributes we seek, let us then find a person with the least amount of imperfection. As a pagan sage said: "Nemo sine crimine vivit" (No one lives without misdeeds). We see this in our fallen world where one person may be less unjust than some others, and those others, in turn, may be less unjust than the worse people.

Let us look then in both directions, and when we find someone who walks closest to truthfulness, whom God has blessed with a cleanest conscience, and the most wisdom and prudence, then let us elect that person for office, and not an uncultivated

person who has no experience in governing. We are not such disliked kind of children of God that no one among us would be qualified to hold office when we ignore the outward appearance of the candidate.

Second part.

In the second verse of the quote from the wise man (Ecclesiasticus 10:2), we read: "As the judge of the people is himself, so are his officers; and what manner of man the ruler of the city is, such are all they that dwell therein."

Similarly, Solomon states in Pro. 29 (Proverbs 29:12): "If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked." Cicero wrote in lib. 3 of his *De Legibus* that the character of a community is like the character of its leaders, the people in the highest positions. Those wicked leaders are not only harmful through their own evil deeds, because they pervert other people through their actions, and that latter may cause greater harm than the original evil deeds. It is written that "Totus ad exemplum regis componitur orbis." (The king's example bears such a sway that all people go that way.) People believe that when a ruler behaves in any particular way, it is right to follow their example.

What could we conclude from this? Now that we understand that the morals of the princes and the office holders are so influential, so contagious, we better look both directions to examine all our options when we elect a ruler, so we give that post to someone whose morals we want to see spread and, thus, influence the entire town or the entire country. It is desirable, on one hand, for a ruler to be wise and prudent, but if his morals or personal conduct are inappropriate, he should be unsuitable to be a leader because of all that will influence the entire nation. I ask you: What turned the entire nation of Israel into idolators? Was it not that the nation was burdened by a heavy yoke, and then angered by the harsh response from Rehoboam, so they then elected Jeroboam as the king. Jeroboam then led the nation away from the true commands of God, and that became the reason for their subsequent calamities.

I wish that we could know of such examples only through reading about the troubles of others and not through our own experience. If someone spoke to you the word "jesuit" just twenty years ago, you would not know if it meant the name for devil, a bird, or a river. There are many of us who, during our childhood, never saw a monk, heard about mass, saw holy water, or any idol worship similar to these. Today, on the other hand, not only do we see these, but our youth is experiencing them and learning about them, because they believe they will obtain an advantage in gaining a high-ranking office, or in being granted nobility. That is how powerful the example of the ruler is. What we see in the ruler of the country appears in the towns as well. That is why the peoples of the country, the towns, and all the territories ought to elect an office holder whose personal conduct, morals, prudence, and thinking are appropriate.

Because once you have elected a person to be the prince or an office holder, you better believe that you will have to dance to the tune of the reed the prince and the

office holder is blowing, and by then, it will be too late to regret your choice, because it will be irreversible. These points show us that we ought to be careful electing a prince or an office holder. We ought not just stumble into our vote, but let us think about it thoroughly and seriously, including the consequences of what might happen when we lift up this or that person into an office. Let us examine if that person is prudent and wise, and whether his good personal conduct would be a positive influence over the community or the country. Believe me, the election of office holders is neither a game or an act of wishing; and if God has called you to be among the electors, then search your conscience, consult God, and pray and supplicate in earnest that He enlighten your mind and your thoughts, so your vote will be cast for someone who stands up for the common good, for peaceful living, and, most importantly, for someone who practices and likes praising God's name and honor. If you elect anyone different, then God will vex you, and later you will loudly wail because of your foolishness.

Third part.

Next is the third part of my sermon. The wise man said (Ecclesiasticus 10:3): "An unwise king destroyeth his people; but through the prudence of them which are in authority the city shall be inhabited."

With those words, the wise man brings to us the consequence and the fruit of the reign of an unwise and a prudent prince. Keep in mind that there are numerous consequences of the governance by an unwise or a prudent prince, but here the son of Sirach describes the most important consequences. In order to better understand his words, we have to remember that princes are compared to shepherds and sometime directly called shepherds both in the writings of pagans and in the Scripture: "ποιμένας λαών" (the shepherd of the people). Our Lord God frequently calls prophets, such as David and Ezekiel, the shepherds of the people. In addition, Christ our Lord in Jo.10 (John 10:11) calls himself a shepherd.

It follows that as the duties of a good shepherd are to protect the flock, and to bring it to the best location to graze, the duties of a good prince are to protect his subjects, to feed them, to improve their prosperity, to increase their numbers, and not to weaken the country. A prince or an office holder can commit no bigger sin than acting in opposition to those duties, such as harming their subjects, to impoverish and to diminish them. Therefore, whenever you see a nation that is not improving, not increasing in wealth, but diminishing, understand that there the prince, the lords and office holders are unwise. Now it is easy to understand the second part of this verse: ".... but through the prudence of them which are in authority the city shall be inhabited."

Because if foolishness brings about destruction, then prudence brings about prosperity. Under the governance of prudent rulers, the wealthy do not dare oppress the poor, and the powerful does not dare oppress the weak. The unrighteous are punished, but the righteous are respected and held in high-regard. You can see this for yourself

when you look at a town or country that had a prudent ruler, and the people prospered. I read that in the town of Athens there were over ten thousand houses during the time of prudent councils and caretakers. Today, on the other hand, you can't find that many houses in the entire country of Greece (now that it separated from Constantinople). Back then a single town had more. I could bring other examples from Hungary, but they are not needed here.

In summary, the prosperity or the deprivation of a country depends on, after God, the prince and the judges, as I previously explained. From all that, we can derive the most important conclusion: it is the sign of God's good favor towards us when He allows the election of a prince and office holders whom we approve. Let us understand that we ought not to toy with such a gift from God, but rather use it well during the election of the prince and judges, because through such elections we may bring onto ourselves prosperity or deprivation. Let us remember how the word of God directs the election of rulers and judges who are wise and prudent. Therefore, let us contemplate who we elect, because the morals of the elected, either the unrighteous or the righteous, will spread widely. Let us then look both ways, consider our options while the reins are still in our hands, while we are still at liberty to make a decision about what we ought to do. Amen.