

Ecclesiastes

Chapter 1

The vanity of worldly things

1 The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem:

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

3 What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?

4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down and hasteth to his place where he arose.

6 The wind goeth toward the south and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

7 All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

8 All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun.

10 Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.

11 There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

12 I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven; this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

16 I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

18 For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

Chapter 2

Vanity of worldly striving

1 I said in mine heart, Go to now; I will prove thee with mirth; therefore, enjoy pleasure; and behold, this also is vanity.

2 I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?

3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards;

5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits;

6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.

7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me.

8 I gathered me also silver, and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; I gat me men singers, and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments--and that of all sorts.

9 So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me.

10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly. For what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which hath been already done.

13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness; and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me. And why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity.

16 For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? As the fool.

17 Therefore, I hated life because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

18 Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.

20 Therefore, I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor which I took under the sun.

21 For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not labored therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.

22 For what hath man of all his labor and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun?

23 For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

24 There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

25 For who can eat or who else can hasten hereunto more than I?

26 For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Chapter 3

A time for everything--Mortality of man

1 To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth?

10 I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it.

11 He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

12 I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life,

13 And also that every man should eat, and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor; it is the gift of God.

14 I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

16 And, moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.

17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

18 I said in mine heart, concerning the estates of the sons of men, that God might manifest them and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity.

20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

22 Wherefore, I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his portion. For who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Chapter 4

Vanity and vexation--Trials are lessened by mutual support

1 So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.

2 Wherefore, I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive.

3 Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

4 Again, I considered all travail and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbor. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

5 The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh.

6 Better is a handful with quietness than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

8 There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labor; neither is his eye satisfied with riches. Neither saith he, For whom do I labor and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity; yea, it is a sore travail.

9 Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor.

10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat. But how can one be warm alone?

12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king who will no more be admonished.

14 For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

16 There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them; they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Chapter 5

Traits of fools--Justice and equity

1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil.

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore, let thy words be few.

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed.

5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel that it was an error. Wherefore should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thine hands?

7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities; but fear thou God.

8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.

9 Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the field.

10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity.

11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them. And what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

13 There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

14 But those riches perish by evil travail; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

15 As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand.

16 And this also is a sore evil--that in all points as he came, so shall he go. And what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?

17 All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

18 Behold that which I have seen; it is good and comely for one to eat, and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion.

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor--this is the gift of God.

20 For he shall not much remember the days of his life because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

Chapter 6

Vanity of riches and worldly success

1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honor, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it; this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

3 If a man beget a hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial, I say that an untimely birth is better than he.

4 For he cometh in with vanity and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

5 Moreover, he hath not seen the sun nor known anything; this hath more rest than the other.

6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good. Do not all go to one place?

7 All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? What hath the poor that knoweth to walk before the living?

9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire; this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man; neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?

12 For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

Chapter 7

Excess merriment decried--Value of wisdom

1 A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

2 It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

3 Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools;

6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool; this also is vanity.

7 Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.

8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance; and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

12 For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense; but the excellency of knowledge is that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

13 Consider the work of God. For who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider. God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

15 All things have I seen in the days of my vanity; there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.

16 Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise. Why shouldest thou destroy thyself?

17 Be not overmuch wicked; neither be thou foolish. Why shouldest thou die before thy time?

18 It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand; for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

19 Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.

20 For there i