

Ecclesiastes 1

New King James Version (NKJV)

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The Vanity of Life

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 “Vanity[a] of vanities,” says the Preacher;

“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

3 What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he toils under the sun?

4 One generation passes away, and another generation
comes;

But the earth abides forever.

5 The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,
And hastens to the place where it arose.

6 The wind goes toward the south,
And turns around to the north;
The wind whirls about continually,
And comes again on its circuit.

7 All the rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea is not full;
To the place from which the rivers come,
There they return again.

8 All things are full of labor;
Man cannot express it.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 That which has been is what will be,

That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which it may be said,

“ See, this is new”?

It has already been in ancient times before us.

11 There is no remembrance of former things,

Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to
come

By those who will come after.

The Grief of Wisdom

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

13 And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom
concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome
task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may
be exercised. 14 I have seen all the works that are done
under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the
wind.

15 What is crooked cannot be made straight,
And what is lacking cannot be numbered.

16 I communed with my heart, saying, “Look, I have
attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all
who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood
great wisdom and knowledge.” 17 And I set my heart to
know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived
that this also is grasping for the wind.

18 For in much wisdom is much grief,
And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.