

Ecclesiastes 1-3, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33(New King James Version)

Ecclesiastes 1

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.

Ecclesiastes 2

The Vanity of Pleasure

¹ I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure”; but surely, this also *was* vanity. ² I said of laughter—“Madness!”; and of mirth, “What does it accomplish?” ³ I searched in my heart *how* to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.

⁴ I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. ⁵ I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. ⁷ I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* musical instruments^[b] of all kinds.

⁹ So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

¹⁰ Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.
I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,
For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;
And this was my reward from all my labor.

¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done
And on the labor in which I had toiled;
And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind.
There was no profit under the sun.

The End of the Wise and the Fool

¹² Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly;
For what *can* the man *do* who succeeds the king?—
Only what he has already done.

¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly

As light excels darkness.
¹⁴ The wise man's eyes *are* in his head,
But the fool walks in darkness.
Yet I myself perceived
That the same event happens to them all.

¹⁵ So I said in my heart,
"As it happens to the fool,
It also happens to me,
And why was I then more wise?"
Then I said in my heart,
"This also *is* vanity."

¹⁶ For *there is* no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever,
Since all that now *is* will be forgotten in the days to come.
And how does a wise *man* die?
As the fool!

¹⁷ Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun *was* distressing to me,
for all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

¹⁸ Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also *is* vanity. ²⁰ Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. ²¹ For there is a man whose labor *is* with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also *is* vanity and a great evil. ²² For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? ²³ For all his days *are* sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also *is* vanity.

²⁴ Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. ²⁵ For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I? ²⁶ For *God* gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to *him who is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

Ecclesiastes 3

Everything Has Its Time

¹ To everything *there is* a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:

² A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck *what 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;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
⁶ A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw away;
⁷ A time to tear,
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.

The God-Given Task

⁹ What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? ¹⁰ I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

¹² I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, 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 whatever God does,
It shall be forever.
Nothing can be added to it,
And nothing taken from it.
God does *it*, that men should fear before Him.

¹⁵ That which is has already been,
And what is to be has already been;
And God requires an account of what is past.

Injustice Seems to Prevail

¹⁶ Moreover I saw under the sun:

In the place of judgment,
Wickedness *was* there;
And *in* the place of righteousness,
Iniquity *was* there.

¹⁷ I said in my 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 my heart, “Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are *like* animals.” ¹⁹ For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all *is* vanity. ²⁰ All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. ²¹ Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?^[d] ²² So I perceived that nothing *is* better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that *is* his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

2 Corinthians 11

Reluctant Boasting

¹⁶ I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. ¹⁷ What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. ¹⁸ Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. ¹⁹ For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise! ²⁰ For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you*, if one takes *from you*, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. ²¹ To *our* shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

Suffering for Christ

²² Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ *in* weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the

churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation*?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. ³¹ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; ³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.