

Ecclesiastes 4

JPS [\[Online\]](#)

The Evil of Oppression

¹But 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. ²Wherefore I praised the dead that are already dead more than the living that are yet alive; ³but better than they both is he that hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

⁴Again, I considered all labour and all excelling in work, that it is a man's rivalry with his neighbour. This also is vanity and a striving after wind. ⁵The fool foldeth his hands together, And eateth his own flesh. ⁶Better is a handful of quietness, Than both the hands full of labour and striving after wind.

⁷Then I returned and saw vanity under the sun. ⁸There is one that is alone, and he hath not a second; yea, he hath neither son nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches: 'for whom then do I labour, and bereave my soul of pleasure?' This also is vanity, yea, it is a grievous business.

⁹Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. ¹¹Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone? ¹²And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

The Futility of Power

13Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who knoweth not how to receive admonition any more. **14**For out of prison he came forth to be king; although in his kingdom he was born poor. **15**I saw all the living that walk under the sun, that they were with the child, the second, that was to stand up in his stead. **16**There was no end of all the people, even of all them whom he did lead; yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.