

**4** <sup>1</sup> Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, but they have no comforter — <sup>[a]</sup> on the side of their oppressors *there is* power, but they have no comforter. <sup>2</sup> Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead, more than the living who are still alive. <sup>3</sup> Yet, better than both *is he* who has never existed, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

<sup>4</sup> Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. <sup>5</sup> The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh. <sup>6</sup> Better a handful *with* quietness than both hands full, *together with* toil and grasping for the wind.

<sup>7</sup> Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun: <sup>8</sup> There is one alone, without <sup>[b]</sup> companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet *there is* no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches. *But he never asks*, “For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?” This also *is* vanity and a <sup>[c]</sup> grave misfortune.

<sup>9</sup> Two *are* better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. <sup>10</sup> For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, for *he has* no one to help him up. <sup>11</sup> Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm *alone*? <sup>12</sup> Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

<sup>13</sup> Better a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. <sup>14</sup> For he comes out of prison to be king, although <sup>[d]</sup> he was born poor in his kingdom. <sup>15</sup> I saw all the living who walk under the sun; they were with the second youth who stands in his place. <sup>16</sup> *There was* no end of all the people <sup>[e]</sup> over whom he was made king; yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him. Surely this also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

#### Footnotes:

- a. Ecclesiastes 4:1 Lit. *At the hand*
- b. Ecclesiastes 4:8 Lit. *a second*
- c. Ecclesiastes 4:8 Lit. *evil task*
- d. Ecclesiastes 4:14 The youth
- e. Ecclesiastes 4:16 Lit. *to all before whom he was to be*