

Ecclesiastes.

Excerpted from The Latin Testament Project Bible,

Translated by John G. Cunyus.

© 2025, John G. Cunyus,
All Rights to the English translation Reserved,
www.JohnCunyus.com.

Ecclesiastes 1.

Words of the proclaimer,

son of David, King in Jerusalem.

“Vanity of vanities,” the Proclaimer said,

“Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.”

What more does man have from all his labor
at which he labors under the Sun?

A generation goes and a generation comes.

Earth, truly, stands in eternity.

The sun rises and sets, and returns to his place,
from there rising again.

The wind turns with the south

and is turned to the north, passing all.

Wind goes by circuit, and, in its circles, returns.

All rivers enter the sea,

and the sea does not overflow.

To the place where they leave rivers are returned,
that they may flow again.

All things are difficult.

Man cannot explain them by word.

The eye is not satisfied with sight,
nor the ear filled by hearing.

What exists? What was is the same as what will be.

What exists? What was done is the same

as what will be done.
Nothing under the sun is new,
nor is anyone truthful who says, “Look! This is recent” –
for it already preceded us
in the ages which were before us –
neither does a memory of the former exist,
nor will one be recorded with any of them
who will be afterward, in the future, to the end.
I, the Proclaimer, was King of Israel in Jerusalem,
and proposed in my soul
to question and investigate wisely
from all that is done under the sun.
God gave this dismal occupation to men’s sons,
that they be overtaken by it.
I saw all that was done under the sun,
and, look! All is vanity and affliction of spirit.
The lawless are corrected with difficulty,
and the number of fools is infinite.
I spoke in my heart, saying,
Look! I have become very powerful
and exceeded in wisdom
all who came before me in Jerusalem.
My mind has contemplated many things by wisdom
and I have learned.
I gave my heart to know prudence and learning,
and even errors and foolishness,
and I knew that in this also
was labor and affliction of spirit,
for this reason: because in much wisdom
is also much outrage,

and who acquires knowledge acquires also labor.

Ecclesiastes 2.

I said in my heart,

“Let me go and abound in pleasure

and delight in attractive things,”

and I saw that this also was vanity.

I considered laughter an error

and sensual delight, I said, deceives in vain.

I decided in my heart to keep my body from wine,

that my soul might go to wisdom,

and I might avoid foolishness,

until I could consider what was useful to a man’s

son,

what work was necessary under the sun,

the number of the days of his life.

I magnified my works.

I built myself homes. I planted vineyards.

I made gardens and orchards,

and planted them with all species of trees.

I built for myself pools of water,

that I might irrigate a forest of seedling trees.

I possessed male and female slaves,

and a large family.

I had herds and great flocks of sheep,

more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.

I heaped up for myself silver, gold,

substances of kings and of provinces.

I acquired for myself male and female singers

and the delights of men’s children:

goblets and pitchers made for serving wine.
I exceeded in riches
all who were before me in Jerusalem,
and yet wisdom remained with me.
All that my eyes desired I did not deny them,
nor did I keep the heart from enjoying every desire
and amusing itself in that which I had provided.
I have considered my portion of these,
whether I might enjoy my work.
I turned to all the works which my hands had done,
and to the labors in which I sweat to no purpose.
I saw in all vanity and affliction of soul,
and nothing endured under the sun.
I turned to contemplate
wisdom, errors, and foolishness,
saying, "What is man that he can pursue
the King his maker?"
I saw that wisdom only exceeds foolishness
to the degree light dispels darkness.
There is an eye in the head of the wise.
A fool walks in darkness.
Yet I knew that one is destroyed like the other.
I said in my heart,
If one death will befall both a fool and me,
what does it matter that I gave myself more
to a work of great wisdom?
Speaking with my mind,
I understood that this too is vanity –
for there will be no more memory
of the wise in eternity than of the fool,
and in future time together equally

they will be covered up in oblivion.
The learned die just like the unlearned.
For this, my life wearied me,
seeing all to be harmful under the sun,
and altogether vanity and affliction of spirit.
In return I detested all my hard work
at which I labored so studiously under the sun,
having an heir after me
whom I do not know.
Whether in the future he be wise or foolish,
yet he will have dominion in my labors,
over which I sweat and was anxious –
and this is utterly vain.
From this I gave up, and my heart renounced
further labor under the sun –
for when one works
in wisdom, learning, and anxiety,
he leaves his acquisitions to an idle man,
and this, therefore, is vanity and great harm.
What benefit will there be for man
from all his labor and affliction of spirit
by which he is tortured under the sun?
All his days are full of pains,
and hardships are abundant.
Not even at night does the mind rest,
and is this not vanity?
Is it not best to eat and drink
and demonstrate the good of his labors to his soul?
This is from God's hand.
Who thus will eat
and quietly pursue pleasures as I?

To a man good in His sight,
God gave wisdom, understanding, and happiness.
But to the sinner he gave affliction and needless
care,
that he may add and gather
and hand it over to one who pleases God.
Yet even this is vain and a wicked anxiety of mind.

Ecclesiastes 3.

All things have a time,
and pass through their intervals under the sky:
time to be born and time to die;
time to plant and time to pluck up what is planted;
time for killing and time for healing;
time for destroying and time for building;
time for weeping and time for laughing;
time for bitter grieving and time to leap for joy;
time for scattering rocks and time for gathering;
time for embracing and time to hold back
from embracing;
time for acquiring and time for losing;
time for caring and time for casting aside;
time for cutting apart and time for sewing together;
time for keeping silent and time for speaking;
time to delight and time to hate;
time to make war and time for peace.
What more does man have from his labor?
I saw the affliction
which God gave to men's children,
that they be stretched out in it.

He made everything good in its time,
yet handed the world over to their disputation,
that man may not discover the work God has done
from beginning even to end.

I understood that nothing is better or happier
than to do good in one's life.

Every man who eats and drinks
and sees good from his labor –
this is a gift from God.

I learned that all the works
which God made endure forever.

We cannot add or take away anything
from these which God made,
that God may be feared.

What was made, this endures,
what things will be in the future already were,
and God restores that which passes away.

I saw under the sun
in the place of judgment, lawlessness,
and in the place of righteousness, iniquity.

I said in my heart,
“God will judge the righteous and the lawless,
and a time will be then for all these things.”

I said in my heart of men's children
that God will prove them
and show that they are like beasts,
because one destruction exists for men and beasts,
and their condition is equal.

As man dies, so they die.

All likewise breathe,
and man has nothing more than beast.

Together they lie exposed as vanity.
All go to one place.
They are made of dirt,
and equally will return to dirt.
Who knows if the breath
of Adam's children ascends above,
or if the breath of beasts descends below?
I recognized nothing to be better for a man
than to be happy in his work.
His portion is this.
Who can show him that
after him the future may know?

Ecclesiastes 4.

I turned myself to another way,
and saw the lies which are carried on under the sun,
and the tears of the innocent, and they have no
comforter,
nor can they resist their violence,
entirely destitute of help.
I praised more the dead than the living,
and I judged happier than both
one who is as yet unborn,
and has not seen the harms which are done under
the sun.
Again contemplating all the labors of men,
I noticed their hard work
laid bare to a neighbor's hatred.
In this, therefore, is vanity and needless care.

A fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh,
saying,
“Better is a handful with respite
than two full hands with labor and affliction of
spirit.”

Considering, I have found
yet another vanity under the sun:
One is alone, and has no second,
neither child, nor brother.
Even so he does not stop laboring,
nor are his eyes satisfied with riches,
nor does he reflect, saying, ‘For whom am I
working
and defrauding my soul of good?’
In this as well is vanity and dismal affliction.
Therefore, two together are better than one,
for they have the comfort of their companionship.

4:10 If one should fall,
she will find support from the other.

Woe to one alone!

She has none to lift her up when she falls.
If two sleep together, they warm each other.

How can one alone be warmed?
Should someone prevail against one,
two will resist him.

A three-fold cord is broken with difficulty.
Better is a poor but wise youth
than an old and foolish King,
who does not know how to provide for the future,
because, sometimes someone comes
to kingship even from prison and chains,

while another, born to kingship, is consumed by poverty.

I saw all the living who walk under the sun with a younger follower, who rises up before them.

The number is infinite

of all the people who were before him,

and those who will be after him do not love him.

Yet this, also, is vanity and affliction of spirit.

Guard your step going into God's house,

for obedience is much better than the offerings of fools,

who do not realize what they are doing wrong.

Ecclesiastes 5.

Do not speak rashly,

nor let your heart be quick to offer words before

God,

for God is in the sky and you are on the earth.

Therefore, let your words be few.

Dreams follow many cares,

and foolishness is revealed in many words.

If you have promised something to God,

do not be slow to deliver,

for unfaithful and foolish promises displease Him.

Whatever you promise, pay!

Much better, rather, not to promise,

than not to pay after making a promise.

Don't let your mouth make your body sin,

nor say before a messenger "There is no providence,"

lest by chance God, provoked by your talk,
scatter all the works of your hands.
Where dreams are many,
there are many vanities and innumerable words.
You, instead, fear God.
If you see oppressions against the poor,
violent judgment, and subverted justice in a
province,
don't be amazed at this business,
because over the high authority is one who is higher
still,
and over those, others who are still more eminent;
and over the whole land
a king commands his servants.
A greedy person will not be filled by money,
and one who loves riches will not capture fruit from
them.
This, therefore, is vanity.
Where there are many riches,
there are also many who eat them,
and what value does the possessor have,
other than to sift riches with his eyes?
A laborer's sleep is sweet
whether he eats little or much,
but the satisfaction of a rich man
will not allow him to sleep.
There is another grim infirmity
which I saw under the sun:
riches conserved to their owner's harm.
The riches perish in dismal affliction. The rich man
has a child who will be in utter poverty.

Just as he came out naked
from his mother's womb, so he will return,
and will carry nothing with him from his labor.
A most miserable sickness!
As he came out, so he will return.
What, then, does it benefit him
that he labored in the wind?
All his life's days he eats in shadows
and in many cares, in toil, and even in sadness.
So this, to my sight, is good:
that someone eat and drink
and love happiness from his labor,
which he himself performed under the sun,
all the days of the life which God gave him.
This is his portion.
Every man to whom God gave riches and substance,
and gave also power to him that he may eat from
them
and enjoy his portion, and delight in his labor,
this is a gift from God –
for he will not remember enough the days of his
life,
because God occupied his heart with pleasures.

Ecclesiastes 6.

There is yet another harm
which I have seen under the sun,
and which is frequent among men:
a man to whom God gave
riches, substance, and honor,

and nothing lacking to his soul of all that he desired.
Yet God did not grant him power
that he might eat from it,
but a stranger will consume it.
This is vanity and great misery.
If someone should reach the age of a hundred,
see many years and have many days of life,
yet his soul does not enjoy the pleasure of his
substance,
and he lacks also a burial,
from this I say that an aborted child is better than
him,
for it came to no purpose, and it goes to shadows,
and its name will be forgotten in oblivion.
It has not seen the sun
or known the distance between good and harm.
Even if he sees two thousand years,
but does not manage to enjoy good things,
do all not hurry to one place?
All man's labor goes to fill his mouth,
yet his soul is not filled.
What more does the wise have than the fool,
or what does a poor person,
except that he goes there, where life is?
It is better to see what you want,
than to long for what you do not know –
yet even this is vanity and presumption of spirit.
Who will be in the future?
His name already is spoken.
What man can be is known,
and he cannot contend in judgment

against those mightier than him.

There are many meaningless words in arguments.

Ecclesiastes 7.

Why is it necessary that man question
things greater than himself,
when he does not know what benefits him
in the days of his pilgrimage,
and time passes like a shadow?

Who can tell him what will happen
under the sun after him, in the future?

A good name is better than precious ointment,
and the day of death than the day of birth.

It is better to go to the house of mourning
than to the house of feasting,
for in it is the end of all men.

It admonishes a man, and, yet living,
he considers what the future might be.

Anger is better than laughter,
because by sadness of outlook
the straying mind is corrected.

The heart of the wise abides where sadness is,
but the heart of a fool where happiness.

Being rebuked by the wise
is better than being deceived by the praise of fools,
because as the sound of thorns burning under a pot,
thus is a fool's laughter, and this is vanity.

Oppression disturbs the wise,
and he loses the resolve of his heart.

The end of a speech is better than the beginning.

The patient is better than the arrogant.
Don't be quick to anger,
because anger rests in the innards of a fool.
Don't say, "What do you think the reason is
earlier times were better than today,"
for it this type of question is foolishness.
Wisdom is more useful than riches,
and it greatly helps those seeing the sun,
for just as wisdom protects, money also protects.
Yet learning and wisdom have this more:
that they give life to one possessing them.
Consider God's work, because no one can reclaim
someone God has disdained.
In a good day, delight in good things,
and guard against a bad day!
Just as God made one, thus also the other,
that man might not find
justifiable complaints against him.
This also I saw in the days of my vanity:
an honest person dies in his honesty
and a liar lives a long time in his lie.
Don't be too righteous,
or wiser than is necessary. Don't be stupid.
Don't carry on much lawlessly, and don't be a fool,
so that you do not die at a time not meant for you.
It's good to sustain the honest,
but don't take your support away from him,
because one who fears God ignores nothing.
Wisdom will strengthen the wise
more than ten princes a city,
yet there is not a righteous man on earth

who does good and does not sin.
Nevertheless, do not adjust your heart
to fit all the words which others say.
You might hear your slave cursing you.
Your conscience knows
that you cursed others too.
I tested all by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise!"
Yet it withdrew further from me,
much more than it was,
and at a great depth. Who can find it?
I passed through all in my soul,
that I might know and consider
and seek wisdom and reason,
and that I might know a fool's lawlessness
and the error of the imprudent.
I found more bitter than death
a woman who is a hunter's snare,
her heart a drag-net, her hands chains.
Who pleases God avoids her,
but a sinner is captured by her.
"Look! I found this," said the Proclaimer,
"one after another, that I may find reason,
which until now my soul seeks and I did not find.
I have found one man in a thousand.
I did not find one woman at all.
I only found this:
that God made man upright,
but he stirred up for himself endless questions."
Who is like the wise,
and who has known a solution to the word?

Ecclesiastes 8.

The wisdom of a man shines in his face,
and the mightiest has changed his expression.

I watch the mouth of Kings
and the precepts of God's laws.

Don't hurry to withdraw from his presence,
and don't stay in harmful works,
because everything he desires, he does!

His word is full of power.

No one can say to him, "Why do you act so?"

Who keeps a precept
does not experience any punishment.

The wise heart understands the time and response.

To every activity there is time and opportunity,
and much affliction to men.

Because he ignores past and future,
he won't understand anything by a messenger.

There is no authority in man to stop the breath,
nor does he have power in the day of death,
nor is he permitted to remain uninvolved

when war threatens,
nor will a lie save a liar.

All these I considered,
and gave my heart to all works
which are done under the sun.

Sometimes man rules man to his harm.

I saw liars buried who,
even when they were still alive,
were in the holy place,
and were praised in the city

as if of righteous works.

Yet this too is vanity.

Because judgment is not
pronounced quickly against wrongdoers,
men's children do harm without any fear.

Nevertheless, though a sinner
do harm a hundred times and is borne with
patiently,

I knew that it will be good for those fearing God,
who respect His presence.

May it not be well for a liar,
nor let his days be prolonged,
but like a shadow may they who do not
fear the presence of God pass away!

There is another vanity which is done on earth:
many are decent,

whose works have results as if done by liars;
and there are liars who are as secure as if their
works

had been done righteously.

I consider this utterly vain.

I praised happiness, as a result,
because what else could be good for man under the
sun,

except that he eat, drink, and even rejoice,
and this only he might carry with him from his labor
in his life's days which God gave him under the
sun.

I set my heart that I know wisdom
and understand a spasm which writhes on earth:
a man whose eyes capture no sleep day and night.

I understood that a man
can find no reason for every work of God,
for those which are done under the sun.
The more he labors in seeking, the less he finds.
Even if the wise claims himself to know,
he won't be able to find out.

Ecclesiastes 9.

All this I examined in my heart,
that, by curiosity, I might understand.
The fair-minded are wise,
and their works are in God's hand.
Nevertheless, man does not know
whether another deserves love or hatred.
All serve the uncertain in the future,
because all turn out the same:
to the truthful and the liar, the good and the bad,
the clean and the unclean,
the one burning offerings,
and the one condemning sacrifices.
As with the good, so it is with the sinner,
as with the perjurer, thus with one who swears
truthfully.
This is worst among all things
which are done under the sun,
because these come to all together.
From which, even the hearts of men's children
are filled with malice and contempt in their life,
and after them they are sucked down to the dead.
No one exists who lives forever,

and who has confidence in this thing.
A living dog is better than a dead lion,
for the living know themselves to be dying.
The dead, in truth, know nothing more,
nor do they have a further reward,
because their memory is handed over to oblivion.
Their love and even hatred and envy perish
together,
nor do they have part in this time,
and in the work which is done under the sun.
Hurry, therefore!
Eat your bread in happiness,
and drink your wine with rejoicing,
because your works are pleasing to God!
At all times let your clothing be beautiful,
and do not lack ointment for your head.
Enjoy life with a wife whom you love
all the days of your unstable life,
which are given you under the sun,
all the time of your vanity,
for this is your portion in life,
and in your labor at which you labor under the sun.
So, whatever your hand is able to do, do it quickly,
because neither work, nor reason,
nor understanding, nor wisdom
are with the dead, where you are hurrying.
I turned myself to another topic,
and saw also under the sun,
that the race is not to the swift
nor the battle to the strong,
nor bread to the wise,

nor riches to the learned,
nor popularity to the skilled,
but time and chance work in all.
Man does not know his end,
but as fish are captured by a hook,
and as birds are trapped by a snare,
thus men are captured by a harmful time,
immediately, when it comes upon them.
I also saw this wisdom under the sun,
and I proved it greatly:
a small city and few men in it.
A great king came against it, and surrounded it,
and piled up weapons by turn, and the siege was
total.
But a wise and poor man was found in it,
who freed the city by his wits,
and nothing thereafter was recorded of this poor
man.
I said, "Wisdom is better than strength.
How is it, then, a poor man's wisdom is despised,
and his words are not heard?"
The wise ones' words are heard more in silence
than in the shouting of a prince among fools.
Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
and a person who sins in one thing
will lose many good things.

Ecclesiastes 10.

Dying flies ruin the ointment's smoothness.
Wisdom and glory are more precious

than a brief moment of foolishness.
The heart of the wise is in his right,
but the heart of a fool in his left,
yet even a fool walking in the way
considers all fools because he is a fool.
If a spirit having power should ascend over you,
do not give up your place,
because planning will make great sins cease.
A harm which I saw under the sun
is going out as if by mistake from the presence of a
prince.
A fool is placed in sublime dignity,
and the rich set below him.
I saw slaves on horseback,
and princes walking on the ground like slaves.
Who digs a pit will fall in it,
and a snake will bite one who tears down a fence.
Who moves rocks will be hurt by them,
and who splits trees will be wounded by them.
If iron is blunted and is not as it was before,
but is made blunt,
it will be sharpened by much labor,
and wisdom will follow after the work.
If a snake bites in silence,
he does nothing less who disparages in secret.
Words from the mouths of the wise are pleasing,
and the lips of fools will throw them down
headlong.
The beginning of his words is foolishness,
and the end of his speech a grave error.
A fool multiplies words.

Man does not know what was before him,
and who can tell him what will be after in the
future?

The labor of fools will afflict those
who do not know how to go to the city.
Woe to you, land whose king is a boy,
and whose leaders feast in the morning!
Happy the land whose king is noble,
and whose leaders eat in their time,
for replenishment, and not for luxury.
By laziness, the upper floors will fall,
and by a slack hand a house leaks.
In laughter, they make bread and wine
that the living may dine sumptuously,
and all obey money.

Do not disparage the King even in your thought,
and do not speak ill of the rich even in your bed in
secret,
because a bird of the air will carry your voice,
and the one who has feathers will tell your opinion.

Ecclesiastes 11.

Send your bread over passing waters,
because after a long time you will find it.
Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,
because you do not know
what future harm may be on the earth.
If clouds are full,
they will pour out rain over the earth.
If a tree falls to the south or to the north,

in whatever place it fell, there it will be.
Who watches the wind does not sow,
and who considers the clouds will never reap.
Just as you do not know
which is the way of the wind,
or by what understanding
bones are formed in a pregnant womb,
even so you do not know God's works, who made
all.

In the morning, sow your seed,
and in the evening do not cease your work,
because you do not know which is better.
This may spring up, or that,
or even both together at the same time will be best.

Light is sweet,
and it is delightful for eyes to see the sun.

If a man lives many years
and has happiness in all of them,
he must remember the gloomy time,
and many days which, when they come,
arguing about the past will be pointless.

Be happy, therefore, young person, in your youth!

Let your heart dwell in the good
in the days of your youth.

Walk in the strength of your heart
and in the intuition of your eyes!

Yet know that for all these
God will bring you to judgment.

Put away anger from your heart
and remove malice from your flesh,
for youth and lust are vain.

Ecclesiastes 12.

Remember your creator
in the days of your youth,
before times of affliction come,
and years draw near of which you say,
“They do not please me” –
before the sun is darkened
and the light and the moon and the stars;
and clouds return after the rain;
when the keepers of the house are moved;
and the strongest men give way;
and the grinders will be idle, being diminished in
number;
and the ones peering through the opening are
obscured;
and they shut the doorways
to the street at the weakness of the grinder’s voice;
and they are startled at the voice of a bird;
and all the daughters of song become deaf;
and they will fear greatly and be afraid in the way;
the almond will flourish and the locust be fattened;
and the caper plant will be scattered;
because man will go to his eternal home,
and mourners will go about in the street;
before the silver bowl is broken,
and the golden band returns,
and the water pot crumbles over the spring,
and the rotor is broken over the well,
and dust returns to its earth, where it was,

and breath returns to God who gave it.
“Vanity of vanities,” the Proclaimer said,
“all is vanity.”

Along with being most wise,
the Proclaimer taught the people
and recorded what he had done.
Investigating, he composed many parables,
He sought useful words
and wrote most accurate words and full of truth.
The words of a wise man are like goads,
and like nails fastened high up,
which by the council of teachers
are given by one shepherd.

More than these, my son, do not require.
Of the making of many books there is no end,
and frequent meditation is an affliction to the body.
The end of speaking: all is finished. Let us hear.
Fear God and observe His commands,
for this is all to a man!
God brings to judgment all things that are done,
whether they be good or harm, on behalf of all.