

Ecclesiastes 6

The vanity of long life (chapter 6)

Some cannot enjoy their profit (v. 1–2)

Qohelet now continues his observations on wealth. He talks about an "evil" thing, that is, that man works hard and gets wealth, but he cannot enjoy it. We do not know what the circumstances are that prevent him from enjoying his wealth, but we know that for some reason it is given to another to enjoy.

Long life does not guarantee happiness (v. 3–6)

Long life (Prov. 3:2) and many children (Psalm 127:4) were considered great blessings in ancient Israel, but Qohelet says that even these cannot bring rest to a weary life. He says that the stillborn baby who has never known life is better than the person who has long life. He says this because the stillborn does not have to face the troubles of life.

Appetite is never satisfied (v. 7)

We work hard for food, and then we eat it. Afterward we are hungry again.

Wisdom is better than foolishness (v. 8–9)

Conclusion to the search for meaning (v. 10–12)

These verses conclude Qohelet's search for meaning. "Here he leaves his explicit search for meaning and in the second half of the book focuses on advice and commentary about the future." [1] Verse 10 says "that which hath been is named already," and it is repeating the idea that there is nothing new under the sun (3:15).

[1] Longman, T. (1998). The Book of Ecclesiastes (p. 176). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.