### Ecclesiastes

## Chapter 4

1‘Yes, I’ve turned and I’ve seen it all…  
 The extortions and other such things  
 That will happen to all under the sun.  
 I’ve seen power in the hands of extorters,  
 And I’ve seen the tears of the swindled…  
 Then, no one arrived to bring comfort.  
  
 2‘I’ve also praised the things of the dead;  
 For, more have died than have lived,  
 3And the best of these two is the one not yet born…  
 The one who has not seen the evil  
 In what will be done under the sun.  
  
 4‘I beheld all their efforts and acts of great courage…  
 Men’s rivalries with their companions.  
 And I see that it all is just foolish…  
 It’s all a huge waste of breath.  
  
 5‘The fool folds his hands… Then he eats his own flesh!  
 6But it’s better to enjoy a handful in peace  
 Than to have twice as much in distress;  
 For, this is also a waste of good breath.  
  
 7‘I turned and noticed man’s foolish ways…  
 All that he’s done under the sun.  
 8For, there are those who live all alone,  
 And who have had no dependents.  
 But, although they have no brothers or sons,  
 They deprive their lives of things that are good.  
 And indeed, this too is just folly…  
 It’s just a distraction from evil.  
  
 9‘Two are better than living alone,  
 For the efforts of two return a good wage…  
 10If he stumbles, his partner will lift him.  
 But, woe to the one who stumbles and falls,  
 And has no partner to raise him.  
  
 11‘When two share a bed, they’ll be warm…  
 But, one alone can’t keep himself warm.  
 12And a person alone can be beaten,  
 While two make a better defense…  
 Yet a three-corded rope is harder to break.  
  
 13‘It’s better to be a poor but wise child  
 Than a king who’s foolish and old…  
 One who no longer listens [to council].  
 14For he reigns within his own ‘prison,’  
 And in his own kingdom, has nothing.  
  
 15‘I’ve gazed upon all of the living  
 (All who are walking under the sun),  
 And I see the next generation  
 That will soon become their replacements.  
  
 16‘There’s no limit to all of the people,  
 Or to those who have come before.  
 And since the last take no joy in the first;  
 This too is foolish and a waste of good breath.