

Ecclesiastes 4:7-16  
Isolation and Temporary Popularity  
Anomalies do not deny God's plan—3:16-4:16  
Understanding God's all-encompassing plan—3:1-5:20

- 1) Social loneliness does not deny God's plan—4:7-12
  - a) Working alone versus working with others—4:7-8
    - i) Observation—<sup>7</sup> *Then I turned again and I saw transition under the sun.* <sup>8</sup> *There is one and there is not a second, he has no son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eye is not satisfied with riches.*
    - ii) Rhetorical question—*“And for whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?”*
      - (1) Assumed negative answer
      - iii) Conclusion—*This also is illusory and a grievous task.*
  - b) Rugged individualism is dangerous—4:9-12
    - i) Better production when working with others—<sup>9</sup> *Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil.*
    - ii) Why?
      - (1) Illustrations of mutual assistance when vulnerable—4:10-11
        - (a) When traveling—<sup>10</sup> *For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who falls down when there is no one to lift him up.*
        - (b) When sleeping—<sup>11</sup> *Moreover, if two lie down together, they are warm; but how can one be warm by himself?*
      - (2) Illustration of mutual protection when vulnerable—4:12a
        - (a) <sup>12</sup> *Though one may overpower one person, two can resist him.*
    - iii) Three people are better than two—4:12b *And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
  - c) Cf. the example of Elijah in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19
- 2) Political revolution does not deny God's plan—4:13-16
  - a) Comparison of the revolutionary to the establishment—4:13-14
    - i) Time for political change—4:13 <sup>13</sup> *Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who does not know how to receive advice.* (cf. Job 32:9)
    - ii) Why is the current celebrity so popular?—4:14 <sup>14</sup> *For he came out of prison to the throne, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.*
  - b) Temporary popularity of the revolutionary—4:15-16a <sup>15</sup> *I saw all the living who walk about under the sun, as well as the second youth who would stand in his place.* <sup>16</sup> *There was no end to all the people, to all who were before them, yet those who came later will not rejoice in him.*
  - c) Conclusion—4:16b *This also is illusory and striving after wind.*
    - i) Ideal social justice must wait for the arrival of Yahweh Tsidkenu (cf. Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16; Matthew 6:33)