

Ecclesiastes 5 Commentary

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THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

The Search for Significance
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| Exploration | | | Exhortation | | |
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| All is Vanity | Vanity of Doing | Vanity of Having | Vanity of Being | Using Life Well | Source of True Living |
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| Fickleness of Life Versus Fear of the Lord | | | | | |
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Ecclesiastes 5:1 Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

- thy foot: Ge 28:16,17 Ex 3:5 Lev 10:3 Jos 5:15 2Ch 26:16 Ps 89:7 Isa 1:12-20 1Co 11:22 Heb 12:28,29
- ready: Ac 10:33 17:11 Jas 1:19 1Pe 2:1,2
- give: Ge 4:3-5 1Sa 13:12,13 15:21,22 Ps 50:8-18 Pr 15:8 21:27 Isa 1:12-15 66:3 Jer 7:21-23 Ho 6:6,7 Mal 1:10,11 Heb 10:26

Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

Ray Stedman - Learn to let God be God; that is the first thing he declares to us. The lessons of life will fall into place when you learn that. God is in charge of life, let him be in charge; take these lessons from his hands. The place to learn that is in the house of God. When you go there, guard your steps, i.e., enter thoughtfully, expect to be taught something. In ancient Israel, of course, the house of God was the Temple in Jerusalem. There sacrifices were offered, and explanation was made to the people as to what they meant. There the law was read, and the wisdom of God about life was given to people; this marvelous Old Testament was unfolded, with its tremendous insights into the truth about life, about what humanity basically and fundamentally is. The Temple was the only place in the land where people could learn these things. In our day the house of God is no longer a building. We must be clear about that. You, the people, are the house of God. What the Searcher is saying is that when you gather together as the people of God, be expectant; there is something to be learned. Secondly, he says, listen carefully: ...to draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know that they are doing evil. (Ecclesiastes 5:1b RSV) A fool is somebody who glibly utters naive, ingenuous and usually false things. What the Searcher clearly has in mind here is our tendency to complain and murmur about what has been handed us in life. When we gripe and grouse about our circumstances we are really complaining against God. We are complaining about the choice God has made in his wonderful plan for our life. We will never learn to enjoy anything that way, not even our pleasures, let alone our pain. So he says, listen carefully, for among the people of God the truth of God is being declared; the wisdom of God is being set forth. Just this morning a man said to me, "I have been going through a painful experience this past week. I learned to see myself and it horrified me. I saw things in myself which I despise in others." That is encouraging. There is a man who is learning truth about himself.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.

- not rash: Ge 18:27,30,32 28:20,22 Nu 30:2-5 Jud 11:30 1Sa 14:24-45 Mk 6:23
- thing: or, word
- for: Ps 115:3 Isa 55:9 Mt 6:9, let thy , Ec 5:3,7 Pr 10:19 Mt 6:7 Jas 3:2

Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.

Stedman on God is in heaven - Almost everybody takes the phrase, "God is in heaven." to mean that God is off somewhere, high above the universe, watching the affairs of men, while we insignificant pygmies struggle along down here. But that is not what this is saying at all. Heaven is not some distant place. In the Bible, heaven always means the invisible world of reality, what is going on that we cannot see but yet is really there. God is in that realm, and that is why he sees much more than we do. As I look out on this congregation this morning I see your bodies. They reveal certain things -- some of you are interested, some of you are asleep. If I were to pray for you, however, there is no way I could understand the tremendous complexity and depth of struggle that many of you are going through. But God does. God not only sees you, he sees what is inside of you, what even you cannot see. He sees your heredity, your environment, your struggles. He sees every one of us that way. Remember that when you are dealing with God. When he speaks to you through his word, that word is so much more true than anything you can come up with as an explanation of life because God sees all of life, from beginning to end. He is in heaven and you upon earth, so for heaven's sake, don't start griping about what God has handed you. That is the Searcher's argument. The saints have had to learn this lesson from time immemorial. It is reflected in a hymn by William Cowper,

His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never ending skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.
You fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread,
are big with mercies, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.

- a fool's: Ec 10:12-14 Pr 10:19 15:2

For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.

Ecclesiastes 5:4 When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!

- vowest: Ge 28:20 35:1,3 Nu 30:2 De 23:21-23 Ps 50:14 76:11 119:106 Isa 19:21 Mt 5:33
- for: Ps 147:10,11 Mal 1:10 Heb 10:6
- pay: Ps 66:13,14 116:14,16-18 Jon 2:9

When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!

Ecclesiastes 5:5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

- De 23:22 Pr 20:25 Ac 5:4

It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

Ecclesiastes 5:6 Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

- thy mouth: Ec 5:1,2 Jas 1:26 3:2
- before: Or, "before the messenger," {hammalach,} the priest whose business it was to take cognizance of vows and offerings.
Lev 5:4,5 Ge 48:16 Ho 12:4,5 Mal 2:7 3:1 Ac 7:30-35 1Co 11:10 1Ti 5:21 Heb 1:14
- it was: Lev 5:4-6 27:9,10
- destroy: Hag 1:9-11 2:14-17 1Co 3:13-15 2Jn 1:8

Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands

Ecclesiastes 5:7 For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

- in the: Ec 5:3 Mt 12:36
- but: Ec 7:18 8:12 12:13 Pr 23:17 Isa 50:10,11

For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

Ecclesiastes 5:8 If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them.

- thou seest: Ec 3:16 4:1 Ps 12:5 55:9 58:11 Pr 8:17 Hab 1:2,3,13
- marvel: Zec 8:6 1Jn 3:13 Rev 17:6,7
- matter: Heb. will, or purpose, Isa 10:5-7,12 46:10,11 Hab 1:12 Ac 4:27,28 Ro 11:33
- for: Isa 57:15 Lu 1:32,35,76
- regardeth: 1Ki 21:19,20 Job 20:19-29 27:8-23 Ps 10:17,18 12:5 58:10,11 Ps 82:1 83:18 140:11,12 Isa 3:15 5:7 59:13-16 Jer 22:17-19 Eze 22:6-14 Am 5:12 6:2-6,12 8:4-7 Mic 2:1-3,9 3:1-4,9-12 Mic 6:10-13 Zec 7:9-13 Mal 3:5 Jas 2:13 5:2-7
- higher than they: 1Ch 21:15,16 Ps 95:3 Isa 37:36 Mt 13:41,42 Ac 12:7-10,23

If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them.

Ecclesiastes 5:9 After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.

- the profit: Ge 1:29,30 3:17-19 Ps 104:14,15 115:16 Pr 13:23 27:23-27 Pr 28:19 Jer 40:10-12
- the king: 1Sa 8:12-17 1Ki 4:7-23 1Ch 27:26-31

After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

- He that: The more he gets, the more he would get; for {Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit,} "The love of money increases, in proportion as money itself increases." Ec 4:8 6:7 Ps 52:1,7 62:10 Pr 30:15,16 Hab 2:5-7 Mt 6:19,24 Lu 12:15 1Ti 6:10
- this: Ec 1:17 2:11,17,18,26 3:19 4:4,8,16

He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 5:11 When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?

- **those who consume them:** Ge 12:16 13:2,5-7 1Ki 4:22,23 5:13-16 Ne 5:17,18 Ps 119:36,37
- **So what good:** Ec 6:9, Ec 11:9 Jos 7:21-25 Pr 23:5 Jer 17:11 Hab 2:13 1Jn 2:16

RICHES ATTRACT "ROACHES!"

When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?

Charles Swindoll - Solomon concluded that with increased money and possessions comes an accelerated number of people and worries. Wealth is a people magnet (Ecclesiastes 5:11). As people grow richer, they find themselves surrounded by a sudden "fan club." Everybody wants to be close to the one who can buy anything. They all want a piece of the pie, which, Solomon said, also brings more anxiety (Eccl 5:12). Worries linger over losing assets, attracting frivolous lawsuits, maintaining an upper-class lifestyle, or even catching the attention of thieves or greedy friends and relatives.

Ray Stedman on Ecc 5:11 - That is, you will soon discover that a crowd of parasites gather around you to spend your money for you; you get nothing out of them but expense. A second disadvantage to having money is that you worry about how to take care of your property (Ecc 5:12). You stay awake nights, worrying about how to keep what you have. There is still a third disadvantage (Eccl

5:13-14): You can lose your riches too. They can disappear overnight. A turn of the wheel, a drop in the Dow Jones Averages and your fortune is gone. Finally, riches will not survive death, but you will (Ecc 5:15-17) You can take absolutely nothing away with you. Life is empty and meaningless for so many people. They suffer from "Destination Sickness"; having arrived at where they always wanted to be, and having everything they always wanted to have, they do not want anything they've got.

Ecclesiastes 5:12 The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.

- Psalms 4:8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For Thou alone, O LORD, dost make me to dwell in safety.
- Psalms 127:2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.
- Proverbs 3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
- Jeremiah 31:26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

THE LABORING MAN CONTRASTED WITH THE LUCRATIVE MAN

The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.

This passage shows that when one works hard for what he has, then he is doing what is right. His sleep should be pleasant. Other reasons to work hard according to the New Testament passages are to share with those who have need and to help the weak. Believers are to work in order to take care of one another, to support those believers who are not able to provide for themselves. But if one is able to work, then he is not to be supported by the church, by other believers.

On the other hand the more you have, the more you have to worry about! In short, riches rob rest!

Warren Wiersbe comments on Eccl 5:12 - "There is no escaping the fact that we need a certain amount of money in order to live in this world, but money of itself is not the magic cure-all for every problem. John Wesley, co-founder of the Methodist Church, told his people, "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." Wesley himself could have been a very wealthy man, but he chose to live simply and give generously. The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much. But the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep." The late Joe Louis, world heavyweight boxing champion, used to say, "I don't like money, actually, but it quiets my nerves." But Solomon said that possessing wealth is no guarantee that your nerves will be calm and your sleep sound. According to him, the common laborer sleeps better than the rich man. The Living Bible expresses verse 12 perfectly: "The man who works hard sleeps well whether he eats little or much, but the rich must worry and suffer insomnia." More than one preacher has mentioned John D. Rockefeller in his sermons as an example of a man whose life was almost ruined by wealth. At the age of fifty-three, Rockefeller was the world's only billionaire, earning about a million dollars a week. But he was a sick man who lived on crackers and milk and could not sleep because of worry. When he started giving his money away, his health changed radically, and he lived to celebrate his ninety-eighth birthday! Yes, it's good to have the things that money can buy, provided you don't lose the things money can't buy. Do you think there is a direct correlation between having an abundance of money and an abundance of peace? Why? What do you think of Wesley's command to "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can"? To what extent do you think that worrying about money is a source of other problems in your life? In what ways?"

John Piper - When you work like this—no matter what your vocation is—you can have a sweet sense of peace at the end of the day. I don't think God has created us to be idle. Therefore, those who abandon creative productivity lose the joy of purposeful work. Ecclesiastes 5:12 says, "Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the surfeit of the rich will not let him sleep." People who spend their lives mainly in idleness or frivolous leisure are rarely as happy as those who work. Most of the retired people at Bethlehem know this, and so have sought creative, useful, God-honoring ways to stay active and productive in God's kingdom. And we should help each other in this, and with the whole problem of unemployment. It is not first an economic problem. It is first a theological problem. Human beings are created in the image of God and are endowed with traits of their creator that fit them for creative, useful, joyful work. Therefore, extensive idleness (when you have the ability to work) brings down the oppression of guilt and futility.

John Butler - We use to listen to a children's program in Chicago which in one of the programs showed how some foolishly and ignorantly envy of the rich. The narrator reminded the envious that the rich he so envied ate toast and milk because he could not eat a normal meal. Wealth does not have all the advantages. I once read of a man who owned millions in wealth but literally starved to

death. For many months before he died he was unable to digest any solid food. He gave great banquets, but he could not partake of the fine foods he provided for others. He could buy anything to eat he wanted, but he could not eat much of anything. Riches do not have to do that to you, but they often do. Our text contrasts the lucrative man and the laboring man. You may envy the wealthy as you labor long and hard every day, but the truth of the matter is that he may envy you. Do not begrudge your place in life. You may be without, but troubles have a way of pestering those with much. Our text contrasts the wealthy and the laborer. Folk envy the wealthy, but the laborer has what is important. - Sermon Starters - 7

The sleep of the working man is pleasant - Butler comments "Famous (and wealthy) people, such as movie stars, often die of sleeping-pill overdose. They cannot sleep because of their fame (and guilt) which they got by living the way of the flesh. They gained much in this world but lost the valuable entities such as sleep. You may flop into bed at night and be sound to sleep quickly because you are tired from your daily labor which you do to put food on the table and clothes on the back. Do not feel sorry for yourself. You have more than money can buy.

As someone has said we can see the work we do as either a problem or a privilege. And the truth of Ecclesiastes 5:12 should provide us a proper perspective of our "privilege."

Whether he eats little or much - This speaks of the fact that a working man does not usually have funds for excess or extravagant food. He eats beans rather than Bearnaise.

The full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep - George Pullman who made a fortune as inventor of the Pullman train car said that since he got rich he did not sleep as well. We do not wish poverty on anyone but neither do we wish the curse of wealth on anyone. Do not envy those who do not have to do hard manual labor daily.

Ralph Turnbull said that "There is a danger of doing too much as well as of doing too little. Life is not for work, but work for life, and when it is carried to the extent of undermining life or unduly absorbing it, work is not praiseworthy but blameworthy."

The Success Syndrome - The March 1991 issue of Omni magazine included an article about the *success syndrome*. Its victims suffer from the three A's: aloneness, adventure-seeking, and adultery. The article noted that the successful person snaps his Midas fingers and people jump. Yet, when a person seems to have it all, the castle comes crashing down and everything he or she touches turns to garbage. —Joel Gregory,

He Won the State Lottery - Bill Curry of the south Boston worked most of his life as a cafeteria cook for the Merit Food Company—modest income but he managed to provide for his wife and his son and his daughter. So when Bill Curry won the state lottery, 3.6 million dollars, his first thought was just to buy a Dalmatian puppy for the youngsters. That was the extent of the celebration. But then the parasites converged—the lawyers and the investment advisers, the accountants and the financial analysts—he was overwhelmed by them. And by people wanting handouts for all manner of charities. He returned to his job in the cafeteria, but even there financial advisers were everywhere. His nearest relative says there's no doubt about it, in the weeks since he won the lottery, it was not the money that caused his stress but it was all of those people who wanted to deal themselves in. Bill Curry has died of a heart attack at 37.

Today in the Word on Ecclesiastes 5:12 - Since the Sacagawea dollar was introduced in late January, the U.S. Mint has made hundreds of millions of the gold-colored coins. But these coins, which honor the Shoshone Indian woman who was an interpreter on the Lewis and Clark expedition, seem to be having circulation problems. A newspaper report in May said that relatively few people were using Sacagawea dollars, although 500 million had been minted by that time. The reason is that people are apparently collecting Sacagawears instead of using them--either because of their novelty or because people think the coins will be valuable someday. The problem of loving and hoarding money is not a new phenomenon. Some people who have a Sacagawea dollar or two will want to add them to their collection--just in case the coins become valuable. The result of this is summed up in verse 11. Solomon didn't have coin collecting in mind when he wrote these words, but the Sacagawea situation illustrates the problem. In fact, the government is worried that as more Sacagawea coins are put into circulation, more people will collect instead of use them. But the only benefit to the coin owners will be a stack of coins they can feast their eyes on. This part of Ecclesiastes isn't one of the book's summaries, and the writer doesn't offer any particular advice. But the beginning of verse 12 makes it clear that gaining real satisfaction and enjoyment from our work has nothing to do with what we have, but with what has us. God warns us against wearing ourselves out to accumulate money and the stuff it can buy not because He doesn't want us to enjoy ourselves. Solomon says repeatedly that God is the only source of true satisfaction. God warns us about loving money because it can replace our love for Him (Matt. 6:24), and devour the people who chase after it. We have heard this admonition before, but we still need to be reminded of it. Greed and contentment have nothing to do with the amount of money we have.

Kerby Anderson notes that

"The authors of the book *Affluenza* have been concerned that their meaning has sometimes been misapplied. They point out that writers often use their term *affluenza* with different emphases. Some use it to talk about the

spoiled children of the super-rich. Others apply it to what they call "sudden-wealth syndrome." However, the authors intend it to be applied to a much broader perspective. They say that the virus of affluenza "is not confined to the upper classes but has found its way throughout our society. Its symptoms affect the poor as well as the rich... Affluenza infects all of us, though in different ways." More wealth brings more worry. When your goods increase, Solomon says, the number of those who wish to consume them increases as well (Ecclesiastes 5:11). They go on to say that "the Affluenza epidemic is rooted in the obsessive, almost religious quest for economic expansion that has become the core principle of what is called the American dream."

Affluenza is rooted in a number of key concepts. First, it's rooted in the belief that the measure of national progress lies in the gross domestic product. Second, it's rooted in the idea that each generation must do better economically than the previous one. Thus, when economic realities should be restraining our spending (both as a nation and as individuals), we pursue a plan of "buy now and pay later" in order to expand economically.

Anyone looking at some of the social statistics for the U.S. might conclude that our priorities are out of whack. We spend more on shoes, jewelry, and watches than on higher education. We spend much more on auto maintenance than on religious and welfare activities. And three times as many Americans buy Christmas presents for their pets as buy presents for their neighbors.

Debt and waste also show skewed priorities. More Americans have declared personal bankruptcy than have graduated from college. Our annual production of solid waste would fill a convoy of garbage trucks stretching halfway to the moon. We have twice as many shopping centers as high schools.

And Americans seem to be working themselves to death in order to pay for everything they own or want to buy. We now work more hours each year than do the citizens of any other industrialized country, including Japan. And according to Department of Labor statistics, full-time American workers are putting in 160 hours more (essentially one month more) per year than they did in 1969. And 95 percent of our workers say they wish they could spend more time with their families.

Americans do recognize the problem and are trying to simplify their lives. A 2004 poll by the Center for a New American Dream showed a change in attitudes and action. The poll revealed that 85 percent of Americans think our priorities are out of whack. For example, nearly nine in ten (88 percent) said American society is too materialistic. They also found that most Americans (93 percent) feel we are too focused on working and making money. They also believed (91 percent) that we buy and consume more than we need. More than half of Americans (52 percent) said they have too much debt.

The poll found that many Americans were taking steps to work less, even if that meant reducing their consuming. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) said they had voluntarily made changes in their lives in order to get more time and have a less stressful life. This increase in the number of self-proclaimed "down-shifters" suggests the beginning of a national change in priorities.

Perhaps Americans are coming to the realization that more consumer goods don't make them happy. Think back to the year 1957. That was the year that the program *Leave It to Beaver* premiered on television. It was also the year that the Russians shot Sputnik into space. That was a long time ago.

But 1957 is significant for another reason. It was in that year that the percentage of Americans who described themselves as "very happy" reached a plateau. Since then there has been an ever-declining percentage of Americans who describe themselves that way... even though the size of the average home today is twice what it was in the 1950s, and these homes are filled with consumer electronics someone back then could only dream about." (Making the Most of Your Money)

As sleep is sweet to those who are wearied with labour and travail (Ecc 5:12), so also death is sweet and comfortable to the faithful, being wearied and turmoiled with sin, and with the manifold miseries of this life. (G. Petter.)

John Trapp - When some have a loss in their riches, it is, as it were, raked out of their bellies; a piece of their very heart goes with it, Job 20:15, and they are filled with unmedicinal sorrows, Ecc 5:12.

Solomon uses two words for sleep - shenah and yashen.

Sleep (08142) (shenah) describes a state of rest in which there is no physical activity (sure we all toss in bed and we all dream but essentially those functions are on "auto-pilot" so to speak). Sleep is a blessed gift of God to all men for it provides rest and refreshment for our body and our mind (but there seems to be a "special" blessing afforded to those who are His own children - Ps 127:2).

Sadly, Samson was asleep spiritually (morally) and so when he awoke from his physical sleep after Delilah had cut his hair, "he did

not know that the LORD had departed from him!" (Jdg 16:14, 20).

Brown-Driver-Briggs Expanded Definition - noun feminine sleep —

שָׁנָה Psalm 90:5 3t.; שָׁנָה Psalm 127:2; שָׁנָה Psalm 132:4 (Ges^s 80g, h.); construct שָׁנָה Jeremiah 51:39 3t.; שָׁנָה Genesis 31:40; Jeremiah 31:26, etc.; plural absolute שָׁנוֹת Proverbs 6:10; Proverbs 24:33; — **sleep** Genesis 28:16 (J), Judges 16:14,20; Proverbs 3:24; Proverbs 6:9; Proverbs 20:13; Ecclesiastes 5:11; Jeremiah 31:26; Zechariah 4:1; Proverbs 6:4 ("מַעַט שָׁנוֹת מַעַט תְּנוּמוֹת"; Proverbs 6:10 = Proverbs 24:33 (these two of sluggard עֲצֵל אִישׁ; see also Proverbs 6:9; Proverbs 20:13); note also שָׁנָה וַתֵּדַד מֵעֵינָי Genesis 31:40 (E) **and my sleep fled from mine eyes**; שָׁנָה הַמֶּלֶךְ Esther 6:1; אִם אֶתְּן שָׁנָה Ecclesiastes 8:16; שָׁנָה בְּעֵינָיו אִינוֹ רֹאֶה Daniel 2:1; וְשָׁנָה נְהִימָה עָלָיו Proverbs 4:16; וְנִגְזְלָה שָׁנָהּ Proverbs 4:16; שָׁנָה לְעֵינָי Psalm 132:4 (**all of lack of sleep**); יִתֵּן לְיָדָיו שָׁנָה Psalm 127:2 = **he giveth to his beloved in sleep**, compare Ges^s 118, 3; **of sleep of death** (so Arabic **وَسَن** Dozy ii. 806) Job 14:12; Psalm 90:5 (compare De Che); Song of Solomon , as accusative of congrate meaning with verb, Psalm 76:6; Jeremiah 51:39,57 (in these two שָׁנָה וְעוֹלָם).

John Hartley -

Sleep is a blessing; it provides rest and refreshment. One who works hard, though poor has sweet sleep; but the rich in their surfeit are denied this refreshment (Ec 5:12; cf Ps 3:5; 4:8). One is not to love sleep, for that will lead to poverty (Pr 6:10ff; 20:13). Neither is one to rob himself of rest to increase his wealth (Ps 127:2). Sleep, however, can afford the opportunity for an opponent to gain the advantage; e.g. Delilah robbed Samson of his strength during his sleep (Judges 16:20). In the new age Yahweh will make a new covenant of peace restoring harmony between man and nature once again. Then man may lie down to sleep in the woods unafraid of nature (Ezek 34:25). God may communicate a message during one's sleep; e.g. God caused Pharaoh to dream about the approaching famine (Ge 41:1-7). While Adam slept very deeply, the Lord took part of his side and created Eve (Gen 2:21ff). Sleep was a quality ascribed to pagan gods, e. g. Elijah's taunt concerning Baal's being asleep (1Ki 18:27). In contrast, the Psalmist says concerning Yahweh, "He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps 121:4). Amidst a polytheistic environment this confession possessed dramatic content. Yet figuratively sleep is attributed to Yahweh for his apparent inactivity by one who has heard about but not experienced his great deeds (Ps 44:23). Similarly Yahweh's bursting into action is described as his awaking from sleep (Ps 78:65ff). **Sleep** may stand as a euphemism for death (Ps 13:3; Ed: Frequently in NT to describe the death of God's children as "falling asleep" in Jesus!). In the last days Yahweh will raise up "those who sleep in the dust of the earth" (Da 12:2). Their new life will be one of either everlasting life or everlasting contempt. - Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Shenah - 24v - translated - asleep(1), sleep(22), sleep*(1). [Lxx](#) - hupnos ([5258](#)) (cf our Eng "hypnosis")

Genesis 28:16 Then Jacob awoke from his **sleep** and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."

Genesis 31:40 "Thus I was: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night, and my **sleep** fled from my eyes.

Judges 16:14 So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened it with the pin and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his **sleep** and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

20 (for context see Jdg 16:19) She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his **sleep** and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

Esther 6:1 During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

Job 14:12 So man lies down and does not rise. Until the heavens are no longer, He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep.

Psalm 76:5 The stouthearted were plundered, They sank into sleep; And none of the warriors could use his hands.

Psalm 90:5 You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; In the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew.

Psalm 127:2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.

Psalm 132:4 I will not give sleep to my eyes Or slumber to my eyelids,

Proverbs 3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
 Proverbs 4:16 For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.
 Proverbs 6:4 Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids;
 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?
 10 "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest "--
 Proverbs 20:13 Do not love sleep, or you will become poor; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with food.
 Proverbs 24:33 "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,"
 Ecclesiastes 5:12 The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.
 Ecclesiastes 8:16 When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night),
 Jeremiah 31:26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.
 Jeremiah 51:39 "When they become heated up, I will serve them their banquet And make them drunk, that they may become jubilant And may sleep a perpetual sleep And not wake up," declares the LORD.
 57 "I will make her princes and her wise men drunk, Her governors, her prefects and her mighty men, That they may sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake up," Declares the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.
 Daniel 2:1 Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.
 Zechariah 4:1 Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep.

Sleep (03462) (yashen) is a verb means to sleep, to go to sleep, to be asleep. In Leviticus 13:11 yashen refers to "chronic leprosy" which in the Niphal participle means "grown old", the idea being that the mark is "an old enduring skin disease that keeps on developing or recurring." (NET Note). In Lev 26:10 yashen refers to "the old supply" referring to produce, this phrase speaking of produce that has been stored away from previous harvests. Yashen is used in Psalm 44:23 figuratively of the Lord's apparent (apparent because He is always working behind the scenes if not overtly on the scenes) lack of activity on the part of Israel. In Pr 4:16 "they cannot sleep" is paired with doing evil, so even as sleep is absolutely necessary, so too is the doing of evil for such depraved men! In Jeremiah 51:39, 57 yashen is used in the phrase "**sleep** a perpetual sleep and not wake up" which is a metaphorical description of their death.

Brown-Driver-Briggs Expanded Definition of yashen - [יָשַׁן] **verb sleep** (Late Hebrew id.; Aramaic noun **ܫܢܐ** *sleep*; Arabic **وَسِنَ** *be sleepy*, **سِنَةٌ**, **وَسْنٌ** *sleep* Assyrian *šittiu, sleep*, Di^{HWB 246}, *šunatu, šuttu, dream*, Id^{ib}, Flood: iv. 22 Asrb Annals, v R. 2,97) —

Qal Perfect יָשַׁן Job 3:13; יָשַׁנו consecutive Jeremiah 51:39 2t.; **Imperfect** יִשְׁן Isaiah 5:27; Psalm 121:4; 1 יִשְׁן Kings 19:5, etc.; **Infinitive construct** לִישֹׁן Ecclesiastes 5:11; — *sleep, go to sleep, and be asleep*, Genesis 2:21 (J), Genesis 41:5 (E), Ezekiel 34:25; Job 3:13; Psalm 3:6; Psalm 4:9; Proverbs 4:16; Ecclesiastes 5:11, also 2 Samuel 4:6 5 We Dr Kit Bu, see חָמַשׁ; with לֹא, of Ass. army Isaiah 5:27 (נוֹם); of Baal 1 Kings 19:5; of 1 עוֹרָה לְמַה תִּישָׁן אֲדוֹנָי 1 Kings 44:24; 1 יִשְׁן Kings 12:14 (נוֹם); with accusative of cognate meaning with verb שָׁנַת עוֹלָם יִישׁוּ Jeremiah 51:39,57 (see יָשַׁן), of death, compare אִישׁוֹן הַמָּוֶת Psalm 13:4. **Niph`al** only in derivatives sense of *become inactive or stationary*; **Perfect** וְנִישָׁן consecutive Deuteronomy 4:25 *and ye be grown old* בְּצִרְיָךְ, i.e. (see Di Dr) have lost freshness of first impressions; of inanimate things, *be old, stale*, only **Participle** נִישָׁן Leviticus 26:10 (H), feminine צָרַעַת נִישָׁן Leviticus 13:11 = *old leprosy* (P); these possibly denominative from יָשַׁן.

Pi`el causat. **Imperfect** וַתִּישָׁנהוּ Judges 16:19 *and she made him sleep*.

Gesenius Definition of yashen

יָשַׁן fut. יִשְׁן, inf. יִשֹּׁן; Ecclesiastes 5:11, pr. to be languid, weary (fchlaff, müde fehn), hence

(1) of persons, to fall asleep, Genesis 2:21, 41:5 Ps. 4:9 to sleep, to be sleeping, Isaiah 5:27; 1 Kings 19:5. (Arab. وَسِنَ to begin to sleep, to slumber, [fchlummern; سِنَةٌ the beginning of sleep. As to sleep itself, they commonly use the verb نَامَ, which on the contrary is used in Hebrew of slumbering, see נוֹם). Persons are said, poetically, to sleep who are

(a) idle, doing nothing, whence ἄθροιστος, Psalms 44:24, "why sleepest thou, O Jehovah?" Psalms 78:65.

(b) dead. Job 3:13 concerning whom the idea is more fully expressed with an accus. following, יָשַׁן שָׁנַת

נִשָּׁן Jeremiah 51:39, 57 Jeremiah 51:57, and נִשָּׁן מָנוּחַ Psalms 13:4.

(2) used of inanimate things, to be flaccid, dried, hence to be old (opp. to fresh or new), compare נִבֵּל, גְּבִילָה.
So adj. נִשָּׁן, and

Niphal נִשָּׁן

(1) to be dry, used of old [last year's] corn, opp. to what is fresh. Leviticus 26:10.

(2) to be old, inveterate, of leprosy, Leviticus 13:11 of a person who has long dwelt in any country, Deuteronomy 4:25.

Piel, causat. of Kal No. 1, to cause to sleep, Judges 16:19.

The verb yashen is found in 20v translated chronic(1), fell asleep(1), remained long(1), sleep(10), sleeps(1), slept(5), supply(1).
Note most of uses are in Psalms.

Genesis 2:21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep (tardemah - Ge 2:21; 15:12; 1 Sa 26:12; Job 4:13; 33:15; Pr 19:15; Isa 29:10) to fall upon the man, and he **slept** (yashen); then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

Genesis 41:5 He **fell asleep** and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good.

Leviticus 13:11 it is a **chronic** leprosy on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.

Leviticus 26:10 'You will eat the old **supply** and clear out the old because of the new.

Deuteronomy 4:25 "When you become the father of children and children's children and have **remained long** ("have grown old in the land," i.e., been there for a long time.) in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger,

Judges 16:14 So while he **slept**, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened it with the pin and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

19 She made him **sleep** on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him.

1 Kings 19:5 He lay down and **slept** under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat."

Job 3:13 "For now I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have **slept** then, I would have been at rest,

Psalm 3:5 I lay down and **slept**; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me.

Psalm 4:8 In peace I will both lie down and **sleep**, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.

Psalm 13:3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will **sleep** *the sleep* of death,

Psalm 44:23 Arouse Yourself, why do You **sleep**, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever.

Psalm 121:4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor **sleep**.

Proverbs 4:16 For they cannot **sleep** unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.

Ecclesiastes 5:12 The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.

Isaiah 5:27 No one in it is weary or stumbles, None slumbers or **sleeps**; Nor is the belt at its waist undone, Nor its sandal strap broken.

Jeremiah 51:39 "When they become heated up, I will serve them their banquet And make them drunk, that they may become jubilant And may **sleep** a perpetual sleep And not wake up," declares the LORD.

57 "I will make her princes and her wise men drunk, Her governors, her prefects and her mighty men, That they may **sleep** a perpetual sleep and not wake up," Declares the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

Ezekiel 34:25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that

they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

God's gifts in sleep

I. **PROTECTION** (Ps 121:3-4; Ps 91:1; Ps 91:5; Psa 91:9-10).

II. **REFRESHMENT** (Ecc 5:12; Jer 31:26).

III. **ENLIGHTENMENT** (Gen 46:2; Dan 7:1; Act 16:9; Act 18:9). No one is foolish enough to think that there is a Providence--a voice from God--in all our dreams. Perhaps most of them are self-originated. But unquestionably there are gifts of God--revelations of God to His tried, and sorrowing, and faithful ones in sleep. There are, perhaps, few of His children who have not heard His voice in the night. He not only protects and refreshes us, but enlightens us. Let us not despise those good and perfect gifts which come from above in the hours of gloom and loneliness. Let us thank and bless God for all those precious things which He giveth to His beloved while they sleep. (A. G. Maitland)

Ecclesiastes 5:13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt.

- a sore: Ec 4:8 6:1,2
- riches: Ec 8:9 Ge 13:5-11 14:16 19:14,26,31-38 Pr 1:11-13,19,32 Pr 11:4,24,25 Isa 2:20 32:6-8 Zep 1:18 Lu 12:16-21 Lu 16:1-13,19,22,23 18:22,23 19:8 1Ti 6:9,10 Jas 2:5-7 5:1-4

There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt.

Ecclesiastes 5:14 When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him.

- those: Ec 2:26 Job 5:5 20:15-29 27:16,17 Ps 39:6 Pr 23:5 Hag 1:9 Hag 2:16,17 Mt 6:19,20
- and he: 1Sa 2:6-8,36 1Ki 14:26 Ps 109:9-12

CASH CLUTCHED CAN QUICKLY CRASH

When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him.

Money makes itself wings no matter how well we manage or hoard it. If we don't lose our assets in this life, we will definitely lose them when we die. As you've surely heard, there is never a "U Haul" trailer following a funeral hearse. When time becomes eternity, earthly riches are eternally lost. As my wife likes to say when I fret over something that breaks -- "It's all gonna burn someday anyway!" There is an exception clause and that is if we have been diligent in using our riches to store up for ourselves treasure in heaven, then as Jesus promised moth and rust will not destroy and thieves will not be able to break in and steal. This begs the question - Where is your treasure stored - in this present passing world or in God's eternal vault in heaven?

Ecclesiastes 5:15 As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.

- Job 1:21 Ps 49:17 Lu 12:20 1Ti 6:7

As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.

Ecclesiastes 5:16 This also is a grievous evil--exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?

- a sore: Ec 5:13 2:22,23
- what: 1Sa 12:21 Jer 2:8 Mk 8:36
- for: Ec 1:3 Pr 11:29 Isa 26:18 Ho 8:7 Joh 6:27

This also is a grievous evil--exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?

Ecclesiastes 5:17 Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.

- he eateth: Ge 3:17 1Ki 17:12 Job 21:25 Ps 78:33 102:9 127:2 Eze 4:16,17
- much: 2Ki 1:2,6 5:27 2Ch 16:10-12 24:24,25 Ps 90:7-11 Pr 1:27-29 Ac 12:23 1Co 11:30-32

Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.

Ecclesiastes 5:18 Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

- it is good and comely: Heb. there is a good which is comely, etc. Ec 2:24 3:12,13,22 8:15 9:7 11:9 1Ti 6:17
- the days: Heb. the number of the days
- it is his: Ec 2:10 3:22 Jer 52:34

Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

Ray Stedman (Ecc 5:18, 19) - Enjoyment does not come from possessions, or from riches. Nor does it come from companionship, from popularity and fame, from the approval and the admiration of others. Enjoyment comes by knowing the Living God and taking everything from his hand with thanksgiving, whether it be pain or pleasure. That is the gift of God, and that is the lesson of this great book.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

- to whom: Ec 2:24 3:13 6:2 De 8:18 1Ki 3:13
- this is: Ec 2:24-26

Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

Ecclesiastes 5:20 For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

- For he shall not much remember: or, Though he give not much, yet he remembreth, etc. Ps 37:16
- because: De 28:8-12,47 Ps 4:6,7 Isa 64:5 65:13,14,21-24 Ro 5:1,5-11

For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

Ray Stedman - Notice how the chapter closes:For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. (Ecclesiastes 5:20 RSV) Have you ever met people like that? They have lived a full life, but they never talk about the past. Some people live in the past. [William Randolph Hearst](#), who amassed one of the great fortunes of our time, ended his days amidst all the opulence and splendor of the castle which he built in Southern California, sitting in a basement, playing over and over again the movies of his paramour from Hollywood, in an effort to eke out a degree of enjoyment from the past. When

people discover the richness of life which God has provided they do not think of the past, or even talk about it. They do not talk about the future either because they are so richly involved with the savor of life right now. How good it is to know the Living God, to know that he controls what comes into your life. He expects you to make choices; Scripture always encourages that. But rejoice in the wisdom of a Father's heart, and richly enjoy what is handed you day-by-day; that is the secret of life. Such a one "will not much remember the days of his life" because God will keep him occupied "with joy in his heart."