

# Ecclesiastes 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

## Analysis

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**I considered all the living which walk under the sun** (כָּאֵיתִי אֶת-כָּל-הַמְּהִימִים הַמְּמֻלְכִים) —the Preacher's empirical survey of humanity. **With the second child that shall stand up in his stead** (עַמְּמַלֵּד הַשְׁנִי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹד תְּחִלְלֵי) —'the second youth who stands in his place,' referring to the successor who replaces the old king.

Qoheleth now broadens the lens from the specific parable to universal observation: populations gravitate toward new leadership, abandoning the previous generation. The 'second child' represents fresh hope, the promise of change that each generation invests in its successors. Yet verses 13-16 form a cycle: today's celebrated reformer becomes tomorrow's obsolete ruler. This captures the fickleness of public opinion and the transitory nature of political power. No earthly kingdom endures through human leadership alone—only the eternal kingdom where Christ's throne is established forever (Luke 1:33) breaks this cycle.

## Historical Context

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The rapid succession of Israelite and Judean kings after Solomon's death (Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Abijam, Asa, Nadab, etc.) within decades illustrates this pattern of rise and fall, popular support and abandonment.

## Related Passages

## 1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

## **John 15:13 — Greatest form of love**

## Study Questions

1. How does this verse guard against investing ultimate hope in political leaders or movements?
2. What does the recurring pattern of generational replacement teach about seeking lasting legacy?
3. How should Christians balance civic engagement with recognition that earthly kingdoms are temporary?

## Interlinear Text

בָּשָׂר מֶשֶׁךְ	בְּמַהְלָכָם	בְּחַיִם	כָּל	אַתָּה	בָּאִיתִי
I considered	H853	H3605	all the living	which walk	H8478

כִּי לְדֹבֶר	בְּשַׁנְּתִי	אֲשֶׁר	יִעַמְּדֶה	תִּחְפֹּזֶה
H5973	<b>child</b>	<b>with the second</b>	H834	<b>that shall stand up</b>
H3206		H8145		H5975

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