

# Ecclesiastes 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

## Analysis

**There is no end of all the people** (אין קץ לְכֹל־הָעָם, ein qets lekhol-ha'am)—'no limit to all the people,' describing vast multitudes. **They also that come after shall not rejoice in him** (גַּם־הָאַחֲרוֹנִים לֹא יִשְׂמְחוּ־בּוֹ, gam-ha'achronim lo yismchu-vo)—future generations will not delight in him. **Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit** (כִּי־גַם־זֶה הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ, ki-gam-zeh hevel ure'ut ruach)—the book's refrain, 'vapor and striving after wind.'

The cycle completes: despite enormous popularity (ein qets, 'no end' to supporters), even the wisest leader who rose from prison will eventually be forgotten and unappreciated by subsequent generations. This isn't cynicism but realism about human nature and temporal glory. The Hebrew re'ut ruach (literally 'feeding on wind') emphasizes futility—you cannot nourish yourself on air, just as human fame cannot satisfy eternal hunger. Only the leader who is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever' (Hebrews 13:8) deserves ultimate allegiance. All earthly glory is hevel, but 'the word of the Lord endures forever' (1 Peter 1:25).

## Historical Context

This reflects Solomon's own experience—once celebrated as Israel's wisest and wealthiest king, yet his later apostasy led to national division immediately after his death. Few remembered his glory with joy; most recalled the heavy taxation and forced labor.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does recognizing the vanity of human fame free you to serve without needing recognition?
2. What difference does it make to labor for Christ's eternal kingdom rather than temporal legacy?
3. In what ways might you be 'feeding on wind' by pursuing fleeting approval?

## Interlinear Text

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אֵין	קֵץ	לְכָל	הָעָם	לְכָל	אֲשֶׁר	הָיָה
H369	<b>There is no end</b>	H3605	<b>of all the people</b>	H3605	H834	H1961
	H7093		H5971			
	לְפָנֶיהָ	גַּם	הָאֲחֵרֹנִים	לְ		
	<b>even of all that have been before</b>	H1571	<b>them they also that come after</b>			H3808
	H6440		H314			
יִשְׁמְחוּ	בּוֹ	כִּי	גַם	זֶה	בְּ	הוּא
<b>shall not rejoice</b>	H0	H3588	H1571	H2088	<b>in him Surely this also is vanity</b>	
H8055					H1892	
וְרִעִי	רוּחַ					
<b>and vexation</b>	<b>of spirit</b>					
H7475	H7307					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 1:14** (Spirit): I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

**Ecclesiastes 2:17** (Spirit): Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

**1 Kings 1:40** (Parallel theme): And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

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