

# Ecclesiastes 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

## Analysis

**There is an evil which I have seen under the sun** (בְּעָה אֲשֶׁר בָּאֵיתִ תִּחְתַּת הַשְּׁמֶשׁ) —the Preacher introduces another troubling observation in his comprehensive investigation of life 'under the sun.' The Hebrew *ra'ah* denotes not moral evil but calamity, misfortune, or oppressive hardship. **And it is common among men** (רַבָּה הִיא עַל-הָאָדָם) —literally 'heavy it is upon mankind,' indicating this evil weighs heavily and affects many.

This opening formula (similar to 5:13) signals Qoheleth's empirical methodology: he observes, analyzes, and reports disturbing patterns in fallen creation. The verse prepares readers for an examination of wealth's peculiar torment—when God grants riches but withholds the capacity to enjoy them (6:2). This anticipates Jesus's parable of the rich fool who accumulated wealth but died before enjoying it (Luke 12:16-21) and James's warning to rich oppressors (James 5:1-6).

## Historical Context

Ancient societies exhibited extreme wealth disparities. Solomon's era saw unprecedented prosperity for Israel's elite (1 Kings 10:14-29) while many remained poor. The Preacher's observation that wealth without enjoyment constitutes a 'common' evil suggests this pattern appeared frequently—then as now, accumulation doesn't guarantee satisfaction. The covenantal framework of Deuteronomy promised blessings including the ability to enjoy wealth as God's gift (Deuteronomy 28:1-14), making the inability to enjoy provision particularly

grievous—it suggests divine discipline or curse rather than blessing. Post-exilic readers, having lost material prosperity in exile, found this verse validating: better to have little with God's blessing than riches without His favor.

## Related Passages

---

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

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

---

1. What 'common evils' do you observe in contemporary culture where people possess material abundance yet lack genuine satisfaction or joy?
2. How does this verse challenge the assumption that acquiring wealth solves life's problems or guarantees happiness?

## Interlinear Text

---

וְאֵשׁ	רַע	רָאַשׁ	הַנְּעָשֶׂה	בָּאִתָּי	תַּחַת	בְּשָׂמֶחֶת
<b>There is</b>	<b>an evil</b>	H834	<b>which I have seen</b>	H8478	<b>under the sun</b>	H8121
H3426	H7451		H7200			

  

וְאֵשׁ	רַע	רָאַשׁ	הַנְּעָשֶׂה	בָּאִתָּי	תַּחַת	בְּשָׂמֶחֶת
<b>and it is common</b>		H1931	H5921	<b>among men</b>	H120	
H7227						

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Ecclesiastes 5:13** (Evil): There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.