

Ecclesiastes 6:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?

Analysis

Seeing there be many things that increase vanity (כִּי יִשְׁדָּבְרִים הַרְבֵּה מְרֻבִּים הַבָּל) —The Hebrew structure emphasizes multiplication: 'many words multiplying vapor.' More talking, philosophizing, and human effort only compounds futility. **What is man the better?** (מַה־יֵּתֵר לָאָדָם)—Again the question of yōtēr, 'profit' or 'advantage.'

This anticipates Jesus's warning: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt 7:21). Mere words—even religious words—profit nothing without divine grace. James 1:22 similarly warns against being 'hearers only' who multiply words without obedient action.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom valued concise, memorable sayings (as in Proverbs). The Preacher's critique of multiplied words reflects frustration with verbose philosophy that obscures rather than reveals truth. Greek philosophy, which later dominated the Mediterranean world, would prove his point.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What 'many words' in your spiritual life might be multiplying vanity instead of producing fruit?
2. How does Jesus, the living Word (John 1:1), cut through futile religious verbosity to offer true life?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	יש	דְּבַר	מְרֹב	מְרֹב	הַ כָּל	מֵה	יֵתֵר
H3588	Seeing there be	things	many	many	vanity	H4100	the better
	H3426	H1697	H7235	H7235	H1892		H3148

לְאָדָם:

what is man
H120

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 4:16 (Parallel theme): 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.

Ecclesiastes 5:7 (Parallel theme): For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.