

Ecclesiastes 6:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.

Analysis

Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing (גַּם־שֶׁמֶשׁ לֹא־רָאָה וְלֹא יָדָע, gam-shemesh lo-ra'ah velo yada)—the stillborn never experiences conscious life. Not seeing the sun means not experiencing earthly existence; not knowing anything means lacking consciousness entirely. **This hath more rest than the other** (נַחַת לָזֶה מִזֶּה, nachat lazeh mizeh)—the Hebrew nachat denotes rest, quiet, or repose. The stillborn has 'more rest' than the wealthy person who lives long, accumulates much, but finds no satisfaction.

This paradoxical claim—unconscious non-existence provides more rest than conscious life—forces readers to confront what makes existence worthwhile. The answer emerges throughout Ecclesiastes: life gains meaning not from accumulation, longevity, or achievement, but from receiving each day as God's gift, enjoyed in His fear and obeying His commandments (2:24-26; 12:13). Without this theological framework, even maximal blessings prove worse than never existing.

Historical Context

The concept of 'rest' held deep significance in Israelite theology. The Sabbath rest commemorated both creation (Exodus 20:11) and redemption (Deuteronomy 5:15). Promised Land was described as rest from enemies (Deuteronomy 12:9-10). The Preacher's claim that a stillborn has 'more rest' than a dissatisfied wealthy person subverts conventional wisdom—rest comes not from accumulation but from either non-existence or faithful enjoyment of God's gifts. Hebrews later develops this

theme: true rest comes through faith in Christ, not earthly achievement (Hebrews 4:1-11). The Puritans emphasized that rest is primarily spiritual—peace with God through Christ—not merely cessation of labor or accumulation of comfort.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that the unconscious stillborn has 'more rest' than the conscious but dissatisfied wealthy person?
2. How do you pursue rest—through accumulation and achievement, or through faithful enjoyment of God's gifts and trust in His providence?

Interlinear Text

גִּם	שֶׁן הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ	לֹא	כִּי רָאָה	וְלֹא	יָדָע	בְּחַת
H1571	the sun	H3808	Moreover he hath not seen	H3808	nor known	hath more rest
	H8121		H7200		H3045	H5183
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מְהֵרָה:		מְהֵרָה:				
any thing this		any thing this				
H2088		H2088				
