

# Ecclesiastes

## Part 2

### **Ecclesiastes 2: Pleasures Are Meaningless**

<sup>1</sup> I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. <sup>2</sup> "Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?" <sup>3</sup> I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

<sup>4</sup> I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. <sup>5</sup> I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. <sup>6</sup> I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. <sup>7</sup> I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. <sup>8</sup> I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. <sup>9</sup> I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

<sup>10</sup> I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my labour, and this was the reward for all my toil.

<sup>11</sup> Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

### **Wisdom and Folly Are Meaningless**

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly.

What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done?

<sup>13</sup> I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness.

<sup>14</sup> The wise have eyes in their heads, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

<sup>15</sup> Then I said to myself, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also.

What then do I gain by being wise?" I said to myself, "This too is meaningless."

<sup>16</sup> For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered; the days have already come when both have been forgotten. Like the fool, the wise too must die!

<sup>24</sup> A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup> for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

<sup>26</sup> To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

1. What is the big question Solomon is trying to answer in Ecclesiastes?
2. In verse 2, what is his new approach to this question?
3. What are all the ways he seeks happiness? Verses 3-8
4. How does our world seek happiness? Is our society a happy one?
5. How does Solomon feel after he has "tested himself with pleasure"? Verses 10-11
6. Do you think people in this world feel the same about their attempts to find happiness?
7. What does he conclude about folly vs wisdom? Verses 12-14
8. What is his conclusion about life with God? Verses 24-26
9. Is this right do we find contentment in life with God?
10. How do we reconcile this to all the Christians with a lot of hardship in their lives?