

Ecclesiastes 2:1-13

Ecclesiastes 1:16 and the first part of verse 17 says: ¹⁶*I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.* ^{17a}*And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly....* Notice the rest of 17 and 18 here. It talks about wisdom being pointless and futile. This is human wisdom, of course, spoken of. He said what he had noticed in verses 16-17, he goes on in the last part of 17 and says, ^{17b}*I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.* ¹⁸*For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

It was like grasping for wind. More wisdom and knowledge just increases grief and sorrow. The more we know sometimes it just seems that we become more aware of the things around us and the problems that are here in this life.

In the book of Proverbs, Solomon extolled wisdom and knowledge. In Ecclesiastes, he says it only brings trouble. The difference here is that in Proverbs he is speaking of true wisdom and knowledge as found in the fear of the Lord. In Proverbs 1:7, the Bible says, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

And then in chapter 9 and verse 10 of Proverbs, it says, *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon laments the futility of the insincere wisdom and knowledge of those who built on humanistic or pantheistic foundations. The word "pantheistic," of

course, means many gods. It has the idea that it really doesn't matter which god you worship and so forth, and that's totally not true. If you worship the things of this world, you're not worshipping the true God. If you're worshipping anything or anybody else other than the true God, that is Elohim, that is the One who sent His only begotten Son to die for us human beings on this Earth, and He is the only One, the only way to Heaven, and that's through Jesus Christ. It does matter what God you worship. There's only one way to Heaven and that is through the true God, Jesus Christ.

Vanity in this book Ecclesiastes does not mean foolish pride although Solomon surely had much he could boast about. It rather expresses the emptiness of life when lived outside the will of the true living God.

And now we go into Chapter 2 and I believe this chapter is to denote the degree to which the preacher sought for meaning in life under the sun to consider his estimation of mirth, pleasure, wine, wisdom, folly, and wealth and providing purpose for living and also to appreciate his conclusion for what is best in life and the One who makes it possible.

Verses 1-10 talk about the preacher's search for meaning and in verses 1-2, it says, ¹*I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.* ²*I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?*

He's searching here for something that seems to escape a lot of people, and here in these two verses, verses 1-2, Solomon reasons within himself in his heart. He's reasoning in his heart a true searching. He tries to bring real satisfaction to himself by enjoying the superficial satisfaction of something that is

only appealing to the flesh. This satisfaction, he discovers, is worthless and empty. What good is laughter, happiness, or enjoyment? It doesn't make sense. It's mad, he says. What good is it?

And then we read in verses 3-10 the search description, a description of the search. In verse 3, it says, *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.*

Solomon experimented with wine and folly, according to verse 3. He decides to drink wine while trying to use wisdom, in other words, right thinking, until he experienced irrational or thoughtless thinking, and this is folly. By doing this, he wanted to see if these actions would be good for all mankind to do while on Earth under the Heaven.

Then, we look at verses 4-6. It says, *⁴I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: ⁵I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: ⁶I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.*

Notice what Solomon did here, what he's saying. Solomon did great things for himself, according to these verses 4-6. His deeds and actions were very impressive and significant. He did these things, of course, for himself. He built houses for himself. He planted vineyards for himself. He made gardens and orchards for himself. He planted all kinds of fruit trees for himself. He made water pools to water the fruit trees for himself. It would seem as though he was doing everything for himself and for no one else, and that includes God. He was working for the flesh while he was doing

these things. He was noticing this. He was searching at this point.

In verses 7-8, it talks about Solomon getting what he wanted. It says there, *⁷I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: ⁸I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.*

He got male and female servants with more born in his house. They came along; they were born. He possesses extraordinary herds of animals consisting of both large and small numbers, more than any in Jerusalem before him. He acquired silver, gold, and unusual treasures of kings and provinces. He gathered entertainers around him, male and female singers. He had anything that would bring enjoyment to all men. He had all kinds of musical instruments.

Notice in verse 9 he says, *So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.* Solomon says he was great. His great worldly possessions made him the wealthiest person who had ever lived or ruled as a king in Jerusalem. In addition to his great possessions and power, Solomon retained the wisdom he had asked the Lord for, according to verse 9.

Notice in II Chronicles 1:9-12 it says: *Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father... This, once again, is Solomon speaking here in II Chronicles Chapter 1. He says, Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. ¹⁰Give me now*

wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great? ¹¹And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: ¹²Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

There are many kings who have come and gone, not only in Jerusalem but in this world, and the Bible tells us here that no one is going to excel or exceed the knowledge, the wisdom, and the riches of Solomon. In II Chronicles 9:22, it says, *And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.*

Then we look on in verse 10 of Ecclesiastes 2, and we see this continuing on, this thought here. And it says, *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them... anything he wanted... I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*

Whatever Solomon wanted he got. Any pleasure his fleshly, humanistic heart desired he got. Everything he did made him happy. He worked for pleasure, and his work made him happy, according to verse 10.

As we look further, we understand the preacher in verses 11-23 has reflections. He looks back and he stops to think. And in verse 11, it says, *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all*

was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

He reflected upon his labor, and as he looked back on all his labor, Solomon found everything he had labored for was nothing but vanity. It was worthless, nothing of lasting value, according to the first part of verse 11. And the end result of his work was frustrating. It was vexation of spirit, because anything he had done was of no earthly value, and that's what it means, "under the sun," the Earth. No value.

Then we look in verses 12-17 and we see wisdom, madness, and folly, the reflections that he had upon these subjects. It says in verse 12, *And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.*

Solomon considered the comparative value of wisdom, thoughtless behavior... and this is madness... and recklessness... and this is folly. After everything had been done that can be done, who could do more?

In verse 13, he says, *Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.* He found that wisdom is far better than reckless behavior... folly... as light is far better than darkness.

I wonder today, have you discovered that? Have you discovered that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, that He is the One who leads and guides those who are saved, those people who have trusted Him. You may not know which way to turn today in your life, but the Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. And that verse in the Bible goes ahead to say that no man cometh unto the Father but by Him, but by Jesus Christ.

If you want to see Heaven one day, you need to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you want to have guidance in this life, you need to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Ask Him to save you today. "Lord, come into my heart. I receive You as my Lord and Savior."

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