

## Ecclesiastes 2

## Shop Till you Drop!

In this GREAT CITY SEE Mighty Engine of Economy burn ALL CYLINDERS  
 New, Shiny, Massive Shopping Cathedrals – Filled with State of the Art Things  
 Filled ALSO with People – Mostly Young – Many of them POCKETS Filled  
 Sure they're soon to FIND Joy – Meaning – in some SHINY BOBBLE  
 Not unique to BJ – GLOBAL – Shopping is WORLD's Favorite PAST-TIME  
 Great TRAGEDY of Life > Too MANY MALLS, Too LITTLE TIME!

Reflections > ANCIENT Searcher: Inspired, Inerrant book - Ecclesiastes

Ch 1 - Wise man sees World & CRIES: Monotony, Misery, Meaninglessness

Ch 2 ? ESCAPE Grief & Despair of life > Turning to Pleasure & Laughter

Shop to MAKE Self FEEL BETTER / Go get Something NEW to Eat or Wear

## 1. Hope in Pleasure?

SURELY this Search for Life thru Pleasure will have a BETTER ENDING!

Ch 2 relates MORE to MOST than Ch 1 > Love BLING more than BOOKS

Most more CONCERNED about IMAGE NOT IDEAS / Feelings Not FACTS

Cannot Name ONE Philosopher – Know DETAILS about Many POP STARS

## a. Cautious

Most on Ave. of Pleasure Not Sitting in Study at Night Smoking Pipe –

Thinking: Philosophy of Pleasure / NO! Not EXAMINING Life > Experiencing!

ENJOYING Life Not ANALYZING It! Pleasure Anesthetizes from REALITY

Q – will NOT LOSE HEAD as SCAMPERS across World's PLAYGROUND

GOING to PARTY but Keep Guard Up, Mask On

v. 3 *my mind still guiding me with wisdom.* I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

v. 9 In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

Friends “Will you STOP being so ACADEMIC and just have a GOOD TIME?”

b. Comprehensive > Decides to Check out the PLEASURE SCENE!

1) Pour some Wine! v. 3 I tried cheering myself with wine

Whenever World searches for PLEASURE > ALCOHOL is NEARBY!

Need to LOOSEN Up – LIQUID RELAXANT – Get into the ZONE!

2) Projects

vs. 4-6 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees.

Head of State > PATRON of National HORTICULTURE – Parks, Monuments

White House Cherry Blossoms > OBAMA Veggie Garden!

...the *temple* was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent *seven years building it*. It took Solomon *thirteen years*, however, to complete the construction of *his palace*. 1 Kings 6.38,7.1

3) People: No LIMIT to Solomon’s BUCKS, BRAINS, and BABES

vs. 7,8 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. ..I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man.

Jim in Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn > Could NOT believe the Bible

Bible > Solomon was Wisest man in World and he had 700 wives.

Jim never could see how those two things went together!

4) Property

vs. 7,8 I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces.

Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors [*That is, probably about 185 bushels (about 6.6 kiloliters)*] of fine flour and sixty cors [*That is, probably about 375 bushels (about 13.2 kiloliters)*] of meal, ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl. 1 Kings 4.22,23

5) Praise v. 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

Heroes: MOST TOYS – Warren Buffet – Aga Kahn – Bill Gates – George Soros

The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, [*That is, about 25 tons (about 23 metric tons)*]...King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon 1 Kings 10.14,23,24

6) Pleasures LURE of Pleasure is how it HEIGHTENS our SENSES

When he WANTED SOMETHING he really WENT FOR IT!

REFUSED No Pleasure > Could NEVER Get ENOUGH > Always HUNGRY

v. 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.

We are created to enjoy a tender touch, a tasty morsel, a tangy beverage, a graceful figure, a delicate perfume, a pure sound; from the standpoint of our senses, we might conclude that pleasure is what we were made for... But pleasure promises more than it can produce. Its advertising agency is better than its manufacturing department. It holds out the possibility of exquisite delight, but the best it can perform is titillation. David Hubbard

Pastor's Conf near CHICAGO Airport > Several Thousand Pastors in Hotel

Right after Over > Hotel Mgmt called Conf Organizers

“We would love to host your Conf for Pastor's again NEXT YEAR!”

Gave Proud Feeling to Conf Organ: > Pastor's really left GOOD IMPRESSION

Hotel Manager: *We have never made so much money on In-Room Adult Films*

Beijing has ALL – HISTORY – FOOD – FASHION – ELECTRONICS- DVDs  
*NO Mom & Dad* - No PEOPLE U Know or Who KNOW YOU to who SEND \$  
 Little BIRDIES everywhere sing **“CHEAP, CHEAP, CHEAP!”**

## 2. Hope needs Permanence

Sociologists: 20,000 X's a day > Image or Idea promising Pleasure in This World

Print Media, Radio, Television, Internet, Cell Phone ads, Billboards, Signs

a. Nothing Lasts - Cannot quench Thirst of Life by Drinking Pleasure

Seek Satisfaction thru Pleasure Fails: God Not Built us Be Satisfied that Way

v. 11 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.

BJ Olympics of 2008 > Perhaps BEST Ever – World was in AWE

NOW What to DO with USED Bird's Nest and Water Cube?

We would LIARS if we DENIED > There is PLEASURE in Sin > Bible says..

By faith Moses...He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy *the pleasures of sin for a short time.* Hebrews 11.24,25

Pleasure SATISFIES only DURING the Act > Pleasure for a SHORT TIME

REPETITION is KEY to PLEASURE – More and More, Again & Again

Like drinking Salt Water > Just makes you MORE THIRSTY

**What you GAIN SLIPS through your FINGERS**

v. 18-23 all the things I had toiled for...I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. What does a man

get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

Solomon's Kingly Reign most Glorious in Israel's History > Greatest Territory  
Israeli Politician's Today DROOL to Imagine Having their Nation so VAST  
But his Foolish Son – Whittled Size of Father's Kingdom to less than 1/3 SIZE

Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah...Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done. They also set up for themselves high places...under every spreading tree...the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them... 1 Kings 14.21-27

SHRANK his Father's Kingdom Dramatically > traded GOLD for BRONZE

## b. No one Lives

Law of Unintended Consequences: Pursue Pleasure get Things Don't Expect

Famous Personality - Politician – Pastor – Professor > Just ONE Night Stand

Never that Pleasure Cost - Marriage, Family, Children, Job, Home, Future, LIFE!

***Pleasure is a liar and a trickster and a cheat.***

v. 12-16 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? I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die!

Shop till you DROP – Mean that LITERALLY – 1<sup>st</sup> ref to DEATH in Book  
 Death's REALITY HAUNTING, INESCAPABLE Shadow – Gloom over HOPE  
 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no  
 further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Ecclesiastes 9.5

### c. No basis for Love

vs. 17,18 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was  
 grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the  
 things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who  
 comes after me.

If there is a lie at the centre of existence, and nonsense at the end of it, who has  
 the heart to make anything of it? Derek Kidner

*Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son  
 of David. Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his  
 sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do  
 anything to her. Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab...a very shrewd man.  
 "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you  
 tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's  
 sister." "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes  
 to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me  
 something to eat. ...David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of  
 your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." ...Then Amnon said to  
 Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand"...  
 But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with  
 me, my sister." "Don't, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me. Such a  
 thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing...Where could I  
 get rid of my disgrace? ...You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel.  
 Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." But he  
 refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. Then  
 Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had  
 loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!" 2 Samuel 13.1-15*

Law of Diminishing Returns – Get it because you LIKE IT! Before Long...

Don't LIKE SO Much ANY More! – Captivation grows COLD / Love to HATE

My attention span is short...instead of being content when everything is going fine, I start getting impatient and irritable. For me the important thing is the getting, not the having.  
Donald Trump

World LOOKS in Many PLACES for LOVE – Do we look to Him who IS Love?

God is only AUTHOR and GIVER of Love

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.  
1 John 4.7,8

### 3. Happiness in Pleasing God?

Searcher TRIES to make BEST of a BAD Situation

v. 24 A man can do nothing better than to...

a. Gifts come from a Giver > RIGHTLY turns Attention to GOD

v. 24,25 ...eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

All References to GOD in Ecclesiastes GENERIC Name ‘Elohim’

NEVER Personal, Covenant Name YAHWEH = ‘the Man UPSTAIRS’!

Not ‘Jewish’ book > No ref to OT heroes Abraham or Moses; nor Law of Moses,

Temple, Aaronic Priesthood, or Blood Sacrifices – No Hebrew COVENANT

‘Global’Book– God is Creator of all Peoples and Places

“not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” 2 Peter 3:9

The modern world believes that God does not exist; Qohelet believed that God existed but...Qohelet’s God is distant, occasionally indifferent, and sometimes cruel.  
Tremper Longman III

**Word MEANINGLESS occurs MORE TIMES in Eccles. than Word GOD**

REFERENCES to GOD are OFTEN HARSH

1<sup>st</sup> REF to God: What a heavy burden God has laid on men! Ecclesiastes 1:13

Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come? Ecclesiastes 8.7

I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but *time and chance happen to them all.* Ecclesiastes 9.11

## b. The Lucky and the Losers

v. 26 To the man 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.

If get on GOD'S GOOD SIDE, Maybe Pry some CRUMBS from Clenched FIST

Even GETTING these GIFTS is MEANINGLESS

Words GOOD and SINNER NOT DEFINED – Please God // The Sinner

We DEFINE Words from EVANGELICAL Systematic Theology

FINAL AFFIRMATION – NOT AMEN or Hallelujah > MEANINGLESS!

v. 26 .... to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Even PLEASING God is MEANINGLESS > Chasing after Wind > Uncertain!

God's hand conducts life's opera but from a score which even the wisest cannot read.  
David Hubbard

## 4. Hope fulfilled in Permanence

Q. idea of GOD – Common idea in MANY Churches Today – LEGALISM  
“IF you Please God – you will GET Blessings from Him”

Best Known Bible Verse - ‘God helps those who HELP Themselves’

NOT in Bible > OPPOSITE > God helps those who CANNOT help Selves!

If Qohelet has not FULLY Found God – Knowledge of God is FAINT

Solution NOT to Turn Away from God – go TOWARD – Closer – Know More

## a. The Beloved

DREAM Education / DREAM Job / DREAM Wife / DREAM House / Kids Wake Up! > NIGHTMARE! WHY? – Good things cannot Hold Weight of Life  
GLARING OMISSION – GOD who MADE World – One who made YOU!

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and *in him all things hold together.*  
Colossians 1.16,17

Wise man applied his BUCKS and BRAINS to find LASTING HOPE

BEST Efforts SLAMMED into the SOLID WALL of DEATH

INEVITABLE – INESCAPABLE – INTIMIDATING > ALL MEANINGLESS

A GREATER Wise Man > One GREATER than SOLOMON > God's Beloved  
Ecclesiastes > God's Written Word points us to GOD'S WORD Made Flesh  
...a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "*This is my beloved Son: hear him*"  
Mark 9.7

DEFEATED Enemy even SOLOMON could NOT OUTWIT or ESCAPE

Jesus: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." John 11.25,26

## b. The Blessings

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1.3

Every – Seen and Unseen – Have Now and Will Get Later – Physical & Spiritual  
This World and in Age to Come > YOURS, NOW, in Christ!!

ONE Greater than Solomon > Blessings EXCEED S's Limited, Fading Kingdom

We have received KINGDOM that cannot be SHAKEN – New Heaven & Earth  
 Sign of our Possession Now > God-Centered to All of Life

Does your leisure time, your vacation time, have God in it? Vacation from Jesus?

Is it entertainment that you could bring Jesus along to?

Pastor in Hawaii: Proud of Tourists came to Church, Tanning Time? God's Time!

LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. Psalm 16.5-6

Vs quoted in Christmas Letter of Seminary Prof – Earlier in Same Letter

He > GOING BLIND and battling CANCER / Wife > Lupus and Alzheimer's

c. The Beyond

Shop like you are GOING to DROP > Good Advice >— we ALL WILL!

He who believes in me will live, *even though he dies*.... John 11.25

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 1 Timothy 6.6-8

Solomon squandered MUCH – David his Father SAVED MUCH for Him

David said to Solomon: "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the LORD my God. But this word of the LORD came to me: 'You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name...But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest...His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. He is the one who will build a house for my Name...' Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he said you would. May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. Then you will have success if you are careful to

observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

"I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold [*That is, about 3,750 tons (about 3,450 metric tons), equal to \$ 4 Billion USD*] a million talents of silver [*That is, about 37,500 tons (about 34,500 metric tons) equal to \$ 2 Billion USD*], quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone... Now begin the work, and the LORD be with you."

1 Chronicles 22.7-15

David – 1000 yrs before Jesus was Born – Knew secret of contentment in God

Gave ALL earthly Riches because soon Going to FAR Greater House of God

One Not Made by Human Hands – Eternal in the Heavens

Shopping – AND every Aspect of our Lives – Shaped by this GOSPEL HOPE

...the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; *those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them.* For this world in its present form is passing away.

1 Corinthians 7.29-31

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1 I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. 2 "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?" 3 I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. 4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7 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. 8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. 11 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. 12 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? 13 I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. 14 The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. 15 Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." 16 For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die! 17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control

over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. 20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. 21 For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. 22 What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? 23 All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless. 24 A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, 25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? 26 To the man 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.