

Ecclesiastes 2.1-11

“Is That All There Is?”

Are you there? Are you Praying? Are you Praying for Pretenders?

The Happy Idiots struggling for the Legal Tender...

Believing in whatever Money Can Buy...

Making love with Sunglasses On – In your Dorm – Searching thru Wudaokou

Most Books in Bible DECLARE and DESCRIBE God and our Life in in Him
 THIS Book of Ecclesiastes REMINDS Us of Billions NOT Know God of Bible
 HEAR Heart CRY of Many in World - How THINK, FEEL, How they See LIFE
 Never found – Way, Truth, Life – Do NOT Know the Father, Son, Holy Spirit

The Search in Ecclesiastes

1.1-11	1.12 – 12.8	12.9-14 Summary and Critique <i>Looking to The Son</i>
Qohelet's Viewpoint Introduced	Words of the Searcher (Qohelet) <i>'under the sun'</i>	

Reflections > ANCIENT Searcher: Inspired, Inerrant book - Ecclesiastes

2 VOICES Words of Qohelet > 1.12 through 12.8 > Heart of Book

Searcher in Ecclesiastes NOT an ATHEIST > IS a God >> CANNOT Know Him

SEARCH: IS There ANY MEANING to LIFE? Is there more than NOTHING?

FINAL Version: Critique of Qohelet Unknown EDITOR > 2 Human Authors

“Qohelet’s speech is a foil, a teaching device, used by a second wise man in order to instruct his son (12:12)...(Qohelet’s) speeches are torn down and demolished in the end.”

Tremper Longman III

1. Hope in Pleasure?

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

The Teacher of Ecclesiastes is addressing Israelites for whom a new day had dawned. They no longer lived their quiet, agricultural existence – depending on the Lord to provide their daily bread. They lived at the crossroads of a new, booming international trade between Egypt and Asia/Europe. Fortunes could be made, and lost, overnight. The Israelites were scrambling to get rich. But the Teacher begins his book by warning them: “Apart from God, people gain nothing for their toil.”

Sidney Greidanus

Great CITY Beijing 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!

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 Many Philosophers – Know DETAILS about Many POP STARS

Author of Eccl. clear ref to Solomon > BUILDING on STATUS of Solomon

Qohelet reached back to Solomon’s experiences of wisdom, pleasure, and achievement and used them as his core curriculum. David Allan Hubbard

Solomon: Stopped at NOTHING > NO LIMIT to his BUCKS or his BRAINS

Solomon: Widely known as the WISEST and RICHEST man in WORLD

His FACE was always on the COVER of FORTUNE Magazine!

So Derek KIDNER says in Ch 2 “we put on the mantle of Solomon”

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!

Most of us HOPE Pleasure will Anesthetize us 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
...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

FULL SPREAD of PHOTOS in ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST Magazine!

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.

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

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 – Buffet, Zuckerburg, Aga Kahn, Bezos, Gates, 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.

Jokes v. 2
Alcohol v. 3
Art v. 4
Nature v. 5,6
Money and possessions v. 7,8
Music v. 8
Sex v. 8
Affirmation v. 9
Work v. 11

If Solomon could not find meaning in things of this world, who could?

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!

VOICE of Solomon asks "Why crash and burn into Materialism?"

Why not learn from an Expert Like ME – You will be LANDING into PAIN

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 Mgr: ***Never made so much money on Pornographic In-Room Films***

Beijing has it ALL > Little BIRDIES sing “***CHEAP, CHEAP, CHEAP!***”
NO Mom & Dad - No PEOPLE Who KNOW YOU – OCEAN Away

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

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

PRETENDER must GET IT UP AGAIN!

Like drinking Salt Water > Just makes you MORE THIRSTY

What you GAIN SLIPS through your FINGERS

Cannot quench Thirst of Life by Drinking Pleasure

Seek Satisfaction thru Pleasure Fails: God Not Built us Be Satisfied that Way
YOU may be RICH > And at SAME TIME – DESPERATELY EMPTY
POOR Man looks at EMPTY REFRIGERATOR > says ‘Nothing to EAT!’
RICH Man looks at Refrigerator FULL of Food > says ‘NOTHING to Eat!’”

a. Searching ‘under the sun’

under the sun = apart from God = worldly endeavors

Looking ‘under the sun’ for ‘gain’ by our ‘toil’ is like trying to buy medicine in a shoe store. Zack Eswine

ANOTHER Bible Character with Good Sense of Business ASKED –
What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Mark 8:36

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.

AMERICANS play a game they call FOOTBALL – Ball OBLONG Shape!

One of most SUCCESSFUL American Football Stars – TOM BRADY

Interviewed at End of Another Successful Season...

“Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there is something out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, ‘Hey man, this is what it is.’ I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think...It’s gotta be more than this.’ I mean, this isn’t it, this can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be.”

Then the interviewer asked Brady, “What’s the answer?”

“I wish I knew. I wish I knew.” Tom Brady

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.

PEGGY LEE – a once famous Singer and Songwriter, told the Background of one of her MOST FAMOUS Songs....

“When I was 12 years old, my father took me to a circus, the greatest show on earth. There were clowns and elephants and dancing bears, and a beautiful lady in pink tights flew high above our heads. And so I sat there watching the marvelous spectacle. I had the feeling that something was missing. I didn’t know what it was, but when it was over I said to myself, “Is that all there is to a circus?”

“Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friends, then let’s keep dancing. Let’s break out the booze and have a ball, if that’s all there is”

Peggy Lee

b. Satisfaction ‘in the Son’

1000 yrs before Jesus was Born – King DAVID described Contentment in God
 Unlike Most World Leaders who Never Return Money they Steal from Nations
 Gave ALL earthly Riches because soon Going to FAR Greater House of God
 One Not Made by Human Hands – Eternal in the Heavens

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... You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16.5-6,11

PSALM of Solomon’s Father DAVID > Looks to Full Joy of HEAVEN
 JOY from HEAVEN has already Come to Earth – Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit

God placed this Short Book in LIBRARY of 66 Books > All 66 Point to HIM
 On Easter Afternoon Jesus found some His own Disciples who Not Listening..
 Reminds Slow & Foolish Disciples that He is the SUBJECT of All Scripture

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself... “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Luke 24.27

(In) Ecclesiastes... We face the appalling inference that nothing has meaning, nothing matters under the sun. It is then that we can hear, as the good news which it is, that everything matters – *'for God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil'* Derek Kidner

Some say **NOTHING** in LIFE Matters! GOD says **EVERYTHING** Matters!
GATEWAY for All People to ENTER into a Relationship with JESUS CHRIST
God is **NOT** a SPOILSPORT – Not trying to TAKE PLEASURE Away from Us
Once we FIND He is Greatest GIFT – All Other gifts become Delightful in HIM

Jesus: "now one greater than Solomon is here" Matthew 12:42

ONE thing in World is TRULY NEW > God the SON > Life is NEW in HIM

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4.13,14

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 Church, Tanning Time? God's Time!

This does not mean that if we believe in God all our troubles will be over or that we will never again feel the weariness and vanity of life under the sun. For one thing, believers often forget to remember God, and when we do, we are right back ‘under the sun’ again. But Ecclesiastes does open up the possibility of an ‘above the sun’ perspective that can bring joy and refreshment to life as we learn everything matters. Philip Ryken

What is the chief end (life goal) of man?
To glorify God and enjoy Him forever! Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 1

WHERE are we supposed to DO THAT? Right HERE / WHEN? – Right NOW!

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!!

Poor Christian woman lived in 18th C – Name has been FORGOTTEN by Man

I do not know when I have had happier times in my soul than when I have been sitting at work, with nothing before me but a candle and a white cloth, and hearing no sound but my own breath, with God in my soul and heaven in my eye. I rejoice in being exactly what I am – a creature capable of loving God, and who, as long as God lives, must be happy. I get up and look a while out the window. I gaze at the moon and stars, the work of an Almighty Hand. I think of the grandeur of the universe and then sit down and think myself one of the happiest beings in it.

Christian Sister, 18th C

Have you FOUND this SIMPLE but REAL and LASTING PLEASURE?

Not available ON-LINE – or in a SHOPPING MALL – Not be Delivery MAN

Found ONLY in the LIVING GOD – Made YOU and ALL THINGS

Find IT when KNOW Him – GLORIFY Him and ENJOY Him FOREVER

IF you remain UNDER THE SUN you will end with NOTHING

IF you reside IN the SON you'll end w/EVERYTHING...ETERNALLY NEW

Ecclesiastes 2.¹ I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.” But behold, this also was vanity. ²I said of laughter, “It is mad,” and of pleasure, “What use is it?” ³I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. ⁴I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. ⁵I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. ⁷I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. ⁸I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.⁹ So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.