

Study Guide-Ecclesiastes 1-2

1. Read Eccl. 1:1-11. Describe endless cycles of life.
2. Read Eccl. 1:12-18. What seemed to frustrate Solomon even with the wisdom he possessed?
3. Read Eccl. 2:1-11. List the various pleasures Solomon experienced. What pleasures do we enjoy in our country? What are some of your favorite ones? Would you agree with verse 11?
4. Read Eccl. 2:12-16. How does it make you feel that you are going to die?
5. Read Eccl. 2:17-23. How did it make Solomon feel to think he was going to die?
6. Read Eccl. 2:24-26. For the first time Solomon mentions God as a factor. What does He say about the person who pleases God?
7. According to 1 Cor. 15:58
"Therefore, ... always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."
 - a. What is Paul saying about our labor?
 - b. What do you think "...the work of the Lord..." is?

Application

Discuss any insights from this life experiment. What are some changes you would like to make in your life from what Solomon learned?

Message Slides

Ecclesiastes 1-2

Ecclesiastes 1:1

"The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:"

1 Chron. 1:11-12

"Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, possessions or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, **12** therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, possessions and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

A. Endless Cycles under the Sun (v.2-11)

2"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?

4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.

5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.

6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.

9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.

11 No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them.

B. Endless Wisdom under the Sun (v.12-18)

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind!

14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

15 What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.

16 I said to myself, "Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge."

17 Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.

18 For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.

1 Kings 4:29-34

29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. **30** Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 He was wiser than anyone else, ...and his fame spread to all the surrounding nations.

32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

33 He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. **34** From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

C. Endless Pleasure under the Sun (2:1-11)

1 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.

2 "Laughter," I said, "is madness. 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 good for people to do under the heavens 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 male and female **singers**, and a **harem** as well—the delights of a man's heart.

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 labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.

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.

1. Pleasure

>each on mouse click<

2. Large Projects

3. Wealth

2 Chron. 9:13-16

Every year King Solomon received over twenty-five tons of gold, ¹⁴in addition to the taxes paid by the traders and merchants. The kings of Arabia and the governors of the Israelite districts also brought him silver and gold.

2 Chron. 9:22-24

All of King Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold, and all the utensils ... Silver was not considered valuable in Solomon's day. ²¹He had a fleet of ocean-going ships sailing with King Hiram's fleet. Every three years his fleet would return, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. ²²King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king in the world. ²³They all consulted him, to hear the wisdom that God had given him. ²⁴Each of them brought Solomon gifts—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules. This continued year after year.

4. Sex

5. Prestige

Eccl. 2:9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

1 Kings 10:4-8

When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, **5** the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.

6 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true.

7 But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard.

8 How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!

D. An Ending Life (2:12-16)

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 have eyes in their heads, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

15 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."

16 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!

D. An Ending Life (2:17-23)

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 that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil 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 person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

22 What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun?

23 All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

E. What about God? (2:24-26)

24 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,

25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

26 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.