

## *Ecclesiastes 1:1-18*

**“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. 2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. 3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? 4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. 5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. 6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. 7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither return again. 8 All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. 9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. 10 Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. 11 There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after. 12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. 15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. 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. 17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. 18 For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.”**

**“Ecclesiastes, begins by saying “The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” (verse 1)** Ecclesiastes may look familiar to you, you know the Ecclesia, it’s the Church, the Called Out Ones. Ecclesiastes, the Preacher is the one who calls, it’s not preaching necessarily the way we would think about it today, but this is one making a proclamation, Ecclesiastes is the Caller, the Preacher, the Ecclesia are the ones who are called out. So this is God no doubt, speaking to us. He is using Solomon, remarkable, remarkable man to put these things to a page. There are volumes written about why the author wasn’t Solomon, and this kind of writing didn’t match Solomon the way he wrote, and here, I don’t know about you guys, if you write a letter while you’re bummed out, it’s much different than when you write a letter when you’re doing great. You know, most of the time when you write a letter complaining, you want to go to the mailbox the next day with a can-opener and get it out. So my advice to you, don’t send one of those letters until you rewrite it the third time, write the letter, put it away, get it out two days later, rewrite it, throw the first one out, get the second one out, rewrite that, and then send the third one, usually you’re pretty good by that time. Solomon here is writing, a depressed man, he’s writing to us about vanity of vanities. Everything in this world from the horizontal, that is futile, that frustrates, that left him empty, vexation of spirit. We know that it’s Solomon, without all of the scholars trying to help us figure out who it is, because in verse 12 it says **“I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.” (verse 12)** and the only son of David that was king over all of Israel was Solomon, because his son Rehoboam split the kingdom, and there was only one king who was the son of David who ruled over all of Israel in Jerusalem, that was Solomon. And under Jeroboam and Rehoboam, the kingdom was split up, Rehoboam ruled the Kingdom of Judah from the south, and Jeroboam from Bethel and different places from the north, so just a no-brainer, this is Solomon writing to us [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kings/1.html>]. Now, interesting man, David tells us twice, in Chronicles, that while David was still on the throne, that his son Solomon was young and tender. When Solomon is born, the second child from David and Bathsheba, the first died, God sent Nathan, to name him Jedidiah [2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 12:24-25], **‘Loved of the LORD,’** and David called him Solomon, **‘Man of Peace.’** And certainly during his reign in Jerusalem, in Israel, they saw peace they had not seen under David. His father

David wanted to build the Temple, but couldn't because he was a man of blood. David spread out the kingdom to its greatest boundaries, over 60,000 square miles, when David was king, and the kingdom and the way it was spread out, remarkable. And then David of course hands off that kingdom to Solomon, David had prefabricated the Temple, it was really David's Temple, he collected all the gold, all the stone, all the timber, he was friends with Hiram in Lebanon. And then Solomon comes to the throne, after there was intrigue and so forth. And Solomon as a young man takes that throne, and he's tender, you know that God appears to him, and he says **'LORD, give me wisdom, how can I as a young man rule such a great people?'** And God says, **'Your heart is important to me, and because you didn't ask the throat of your enemy, gold, silver and all of these other things, I'm going to give you all those things besides, but I'm going to give you great wisdom.'** And we're told in the Scripture he becomes, he's the wisest man that ever lived. He didn't learn that from his father, who was a Hippie and played the guitar out with the sheep, and was a warrior. That wisdom was imparted by Almighty God, and he becomes, you know, so many times through Proverbs he says you can ask God for wisdom, you can go to him and ask him, God can grant wisdom, and he gives, it's going to tell us in here, knowledge, wisdom and understanding, to those who he loves, who walk upright before him. So he comes before the throne that way, with an open heart, he's young, tender, the words of David no doubt reverberating so often in his heart and his mind. But as that kingdom grows, it tells us Solomon becomes so wealthy, that silver was accounted as rocks in his day, it didn't mean anything at all. There was so much gold and so many jewels, that silver was worthless. Ancient historians tell us Solomon had a special guard, soldiers that would run next to his chariot. And the requirements were they had to be over six foot tall, they had to have long raven black hair, and these guys would run beside his chariot, and every morning when they get up, they would put these white silk robes on, and they would grind gold, fresh gold, every morning and sprinkle gold dust on their black raven hair, so their golden hair would sparkle as they ran next to his chariot, you know, you're way out there. This is a guy who imported monkeys and peacocks, you know, you just get bored, you have everything, and in one sense end up with nothing even though you have everything. He writes about that frustration here. And sadly as we see at the end of his life, multiplying wives, 700

wives, 300 concubines, they turned his heart away from God. So we're looking at a man whose not born-again, the way you and I, we are. He doesn't have regeneration the way we do, in Christ, but much like his father David, he has the opportunity to have a heart that's faithful to God, and God will say **'Your heart is not perfect towards me like the heart of your father David.'** [Comment: Calvary Chapel's have this belief that salvation for those who had the Holy Spirit back in the Old Testament, like the prophets, and a few kings, like David, didn't have the complete indwelling of the Holy Spirit and weren't like us born-again believers. I don't know where they get that belief, but personally, I think the prophets and David and the few kings that did have the indwelling Holy Spirit, had it just like we do today, being born-again believers. It's one of those secondary beliefs where in reality we just don't know, but we'll find out in the Resurrection to immortality at Jesus' return, that we do know.] Remarkable, David was an adulterer and murderer, but David never changed God's, he sinned before his God, he repented before his God, he made his mistakes before his God, he committed adultery before his God, but he never changed gods. And Solomon would end up leading this incredible kingdom, incredible power, and his era is an era of peace. David had to put all of his attention into battlement, war and so forth. Solomon is not fighting war, so he's building buildings, he's doing all these other things, he's making shields of gold, in his palace, there were shields made of gold. You can't carry that in a fight. It says he had ivory, imported ivory and made ivory thrones, and then overlaid the ivory thrones with gold. It's just the amount of wealth and opulence that we see in the life of this man, and the kingdom at this point in time is really unimaginable, what had been gathered to Solomon, under God's blessing. [Comment: Often things in the Old Testament mirror things to come in the New Testament. We all know the Millennial Kingdom of God, which is prophesied in both Old and New Testaments, is going to be a time of wealth, peace and prosperity, as Jesus Christ rules the earth from Jerusalem. It was pointed out to me once, that Solomon's reign of peace, prosperity and opulence was a physical foretaste of God's coming Kingdom on earth, to come at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ.] So he says here, **"The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem."** (verse 1) it's kind of his intro. **"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"** (verses 2-3) This is a depressed

buckaroo. You can tell right from the beginning, listen, as we go through these 12 chapters, **“vanity,”** [“vanity” Hebrew: *hebel, emptiness*] you’re going to hear that word 38 times in 12 chapters. He kind of leaves these things out here in the beginning. **‘What profit, what advantage, what good is there,’** that word **“profit”** we’re going to hear that 10 times through these 12 chapters. “of all his labour” we’re going to have that word **“labour,”** it means **“labour to the point of exhaustion,”** not being lazy, but giving everything to what you’re doing. He says **“What profit hath a man of all his labour” that’s 23 times,** laboring to the point of exhaustion. This is something that men do, 49 times through the Book. And his whole context is **“under the sun”** 29 times. ***And of course, what he’s missing, all through, is what’s over the sun, in heaven. His whole fixation is not on the vertical, but on the horizontal.*** And when I listen to him, as he tells us these things, because he delved deeper into all of this than anyone you and I know, or anyone I believe in history, he begins to talk. Now look, it gets depressing as we go on, so I just want you to know, there is a conclusion in the last chapter, you don’t have to turn there, I’ll read it to you, if I can find it here, my computer notes [he’s joking, he only has his Bible up there]. He says, **“Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth,”** that’s his exhortation, ‘while you’re young.’ Because he’s going to talk about the world and the monotony of it, that things never change, he’s really lost something. But he says **“Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;” (12:1)** So it seems that’s when he’s writing this, as he’s become older. He says his conclusion is this, **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:”** it’s this, he says, **“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” (12:12)** Fear God, reverence or hold God in awe, for this is the whole, “duty” shouldn’t be in italics, this is the whole of man, the idea is, this is the purpose of man. There is no other purpose for man, God created man for fellowship, God made Adam and Eve, he says **‘Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth,’** and he says **‘This is the whole purpose for the existence of man, is to walk in awe and reverence of God, and to keep his commandments, that’s the conclusion, after all of the things I’ve given myself to,’** and we’re going to read about some of those things as we move into this.

## *Life Is Merely A Parade Of Coffins And Cradles*

So he says **“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” (verse 2)** and look, when he says that, it’s not just stupid, the idea is, futile, empty, the idea is, these are things I gave my energy, my intellect, I did my best, I gave my life to these things. It doesn’t say that those things necessarily are wrong, not the kind of vanity that just, you know, worthless, stupid foolish stuff. It’s just he says, **‘in all of that energy, there’s just futility, in that sense it’s vanity of vanities.’** And then he comes to this, **“What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?” (verse 3)** here his observations begin, he says **“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.” (verse 4)** everybody’s got all these great ideas, people accomplish great things, the truth is, you know this is a parade of coffins and cradles, that’s all it is. One generation’s going, one generation’s coming, you’re either doing funerals or baby dedications, and that’s the way the whole thing goes, and the earth just keeps on rolling. There’s a monotony to all this. In his great wisdom it’s driving him crazy. He says **“The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.” (verse 5)** kind of panting, the idea is, the horse running, panting to the place where he arose, the sun goes back, you know, as the world turns, goes round and round and round. The river of time continues to run, and it is exempt from human clocks and calendars, it is just time, and it continues to go, and the world continues to turn, and the solar system continues to move [and even our galaxy continues to turn, rotating once around every 205,000 years].

## *Solomon Understood The Earth’s Air Current Systems, Ocean Current Systems, And Earth’s Hydro-System*

Very interesting, in verse 6 he says, **“The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.” (verse 6)** He says there are these weather patterns, this is before satellite photography. Here’s a guy who understands that

there are weather patterns on the face of the planet, and he says ***'They're monotonous too, once you understand them, they just kind of do the same thing over and over and over, you know, global warming, global cooling...they do the same thing over and over, El Nino, El Nino, El Nino, El Nino,'*** just he understands all this stuff, he says it just continues to go on back and forth in all of the circuits. And then he says ***"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."*** (verse 7) of course, the sea never gets full, he says, there's a hydro-system, and he says that whole thing just goes, it's monotonous, it goes and goes and goes, 1.5 trillion tons of rain fall every day on the planet, 330 million cubical miles of ocean on the face of the earth, it's an incredible hydro-system which turns and turns and turns. He's doing something here, very important for us to understand. If you can sit outside, if I get out and get alone in my backyard, I ain't where he is, just in my backyard, I love the mountains, I'm married to a beach family, that's a curse, but I love the mountains. If I get out somewhere on a cool porch, the sky is blue, blistering blue cold sky, pretty, cup of coffee and my Bible, I'm crying, tears are running. I never think *'Oh this evolution thing is so cool,'* I sit there and say *'God, you blow my mind,'* and I sense his presence, I look at the creation, I love to hear the birds sing, I love to see the clouds, see the shapes, I love to just watch what's going on, I'm amazed. If you lose that, you've lost something. [Solomon was going through a huge midlife crisis, it seems to be what Ecclesiastes is all about. And even believers can go through this, and at that point, yes, you've lost something. But it happens, it's happened to me, in a way, I'm over 70, looking back and saying 'Where did it all go?'] Be careful. Here's a guy whose saying ***'I understand all that, I understand so much about it,'*** he's going to tell us wisdom becomes a curse. ***'So what, I understand all this stuff, it becomes monotonous, hydro-system, weather patterns...'*** you know, this guy, he's lost something in this. Wonderfully, he says, ***'Here's the conclusion in the end, he says enjoy your creator in the days of your youth, before the days come when you don't have any pleasure in them.'*** Look around, your Creator he says, your Creator.

*If I Only Had*

He says **“All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” (verse 8)** He says, the eye, it’s never satisfied, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nothing makes the eye happy, the ear is not happy, it’s never fulfilled with hearing. You know, your eye has an appetite, you should know that. Because it’s connected to a depraved part your being, your eye has an appetite, you hear people say *‘Feast your eye on that!’* or people say *‘Your eye is bigger than your stomach.’* He says, look, the eye is never satisfied for seeing. The things that the media puts in front of us these days, from pornography to advertisements, you wonder why there’s so much robbery and so forth, it’s because the poorest person in this country sees the same advertisements that the multimillionaire in this country sees. And this stuff is paraded in front of us all the time, and none of it is gonna satisfy. He’s going to say to us ***‘I got it all, I went out and bought at least one of everything that you’ve ever seen.’*** The eye is never satisfied, he said, it’s never fulfilled, I want more, I want bigger, eye-candy telescopes, microscopes, I want to look at more and more. Now there’s a reason, by the way, it’s because you haven’t realized what your eyeballs are for yet. [If the physical universe, creation, is so awesome, from astronomy to microbiology and chemistry, just imagine what it’s like where God is, outside of space-time, in the spirit-universe he lives in.] When the Trumpet blows, and you change in the twinkling of an eye, and the first thing you see is the Lamb of God with the marks of slaughter upon him, the first thing you see is your Saviour looking at you, in that instant you’ll know fully as you’ve been fully known, that all your sins were paid for 2,000 years ago on the cross, then you’ll understand what eyeballs are for. When you see the Sea of Glass, and the rainbows around the throne of God, and the cherubim, and the lights and the City, you’ll understand what eyes are for. ok? [cf. Revelation 21:1-23 for openers] They’re not for the stupid stuff we do with them now. ***‘The ear is never filled with hearing,’*** not music. I’ve listen to so much music, played so much music, sometimes my ears ring. [I think Pastor Joe was a musician during his Hippie days.] When I listen now, I listen to harp players, I don’t just listen to Rock’n Roll, I love Rock’n Roll, and I love the Beatles, but I listen to teaching all the time, so when I listen to music now, and then I find weirder harp players all the time. You’re never satisfied, I love some of these harp players. Gossip, people that are given to

gossip, your ear is never satisfied. Praise, *'Oh, you're so strong, you're so handsome,'* your ears never get full of that, *'give me more, give me more, tell me more of that.'* Solomon, he says, you can't even explain it, he says the eye is never satisfied for seeing, the ear, never filled with hearing, there's never satisfaction he says. **"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."** (verse 9) the idea is, it waits long enough it happens again, and you only think it's new, because you weren't around the last time it happened. Save your Bell-Bottoms, I'm telling you. You won't be able to fit in them, but you'll get a lot of money for them when they come back. Nothing new under the sun, look, what's new is over the sun, for you and I. Is this sad to hear this? What he's trying to do, he says, ***'as we go through this Book, I'm trying to save you from "If I only had,"'*** there's an infection we get called ***'If I only had,'*** you don't want the "If I only had's" if I only had this, if I only had that, and if I only had this, if I only had that. He said ***'I have all that,'*** *'if I only had a wife, then 10 years later, if I only was single, if I only had a husband,'* he said 'I had a thousand of them, it ain't gonna solve the problem.' He's trying to save us from that. He says, everything that happens, there's nothing new, it all comes around again. That's frustration. And he doesn't know what we know. Because he's only looking under the sun, 29 times through the Book ***"under the sun."*** ***Over the sun, you and I know, is a new birth, there's a new creation in Christ.*** Hebrews 10 there's a new and living life, and he's done it all by himself. There's a new heavens and a new earth, there's a new City, Holy Jerusalem [there will be, hasn't happened yet, cf. Revelation 21:1-23, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/revelation/Revelation%20%2021-22.htm>], there's an awful lot that is new that he just didn't even know about, but you and I know about. Imagine that? He was the wisest man that ever lived and we know some stuff that he don't know. I didn't say we're wiser than him, I'm just saying we got some info he doesn't. We should let it affect us. He said, ***"there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us."*** (verses 9b-10) there isn't anything new going on, not fashion, not music, not trends, nothing new. Again, I have this National Geographic book, I have a number of books on Egypt, it always fascinates me. This one says that in Egypt, their famous alcoholic drink in Egypt was beer. Of

course they never had a cold one, they only had warm ones. [They might have had cold ones, my father, who liked to study Egypt, found out they were making ice by laying out pans of water at night when the temps would drop below freezing. They would gather up the ice, stacking it up each night, buried in sand much like we buried ice in ice houses in sawdust, before refrigeration.] But all the Pharaohs had their own brew masters and their own breweries, and they found in the hieroglyphics, one of the professors in one of the universities in ancient Egypt wrote *“My students are good for nothing, all they do is carouse and drink beer.”* I’m thinking, *‘You’re right Solomon, there ain’t nothing new under the sun.’* and you think that’s never happened before, this has been going on for thousands of years, *‘Hey, we’re drinking, this is cool, we’re out there scoring something new,’* you’re stupid, there ain’t nothing new. They got thousands of years of drunks to talk to you and tell you how cool that is, let alone enough here. He says **“There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.” (verse 11)** you know, great people pass away, and you don’t remember them. What’s great? Who in the last six Super Bowls, who were the losing teams? They finally got to the big game, they should be remembered for getting there. Besides, you can google, you don’t have to think anymore, you don’t have to use your brain. If Solomon would have had a mobile device he’d have been stupid. But he thought. **“There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after. I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.” (verses 11-12)**

*‘That Which Is Crooked Cannot Be Made Straight,’ In This World, That Is, But We’ve Been Made Straight*

So he says now, **verse 13, “And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.”** “to seek” the idea is “to understand,” “to search out” is “to experience.” And he says, ***‘I did that by wisdom, not just insanity, concerning all things that are done under heaven.’*** Now look, here’s the guy, the wisest

among men, with no limitations. What he's going to say as he moves into the book, ***'now as I indulge myself, wine, women, peacocks, building, gardens, rivers, wisdom, I was the wisest man that ever lived, tried to figure it out, and I had ZERO limitations, I had more money than you've ever dreamed of, and more women than you ever dreamed of, and more bands, you got quadraphonic stereo? I had the performer in my palace, I had them live.'*** he says ***'I gave my heart to understand and to experience by wisdom concerning all things that are done under the sun,'*** and he said, ***'this is sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised, God's put this out there to try us, to wear us out.'*** "Verse 14, ***"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."*** i.e. "vexation of spirit," "frustration." He said ***'I've seen everything, I know the whole deal,'*** ah, we're told in ***1<sup>st</sup> Kings chapter 4,*** it says, ***"God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore, beyond measure. Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East country, and he spake 3,000 Proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five, and he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, he spake also of the beasts and of the fowls and creeping things and fishes, and there came of all the people to hear the wisdom of Solomon from all kings of all the earth which had heard of his wisdom."*** So he says here, ***'I have seen all the works done under the sun,'*** he understood zoology, he understood botany, he understood dendrology (trees) ichthyology, entomology, ornithology, gemology, alchemy, geology, metallurgy, he understood all of these things. And he says, ***'I understood all that stuff, there's gotta be more than this, there's gotta be more than this, I have seen all of the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity, vexation of spirit, frustration.'*** ***"That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered."*** (verse 15) Now, you and I know that's not true, because we were crooked, and been made straight by Jesus Christ, so this is a man in desperation. He said ***"That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered."*** (verse 15) "wanting" "lacking" cannot be numbered, there are so many things wrong, you can't count them. You can agree with

that, you can go home and watch the news, in every realm, in the economy, sociology, in our culture, militarily, environmentally, there's just so many things wrong, you can't keep track of them, that's what he says here.

### *'I Learned No News Is Good News'*

He says **"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."** (verse 16) he looks around his ivory throne covered with gold. **"And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit."** (verse 17) *'I learned so much I realized no news is good news, because everything else I learned was grieving.'* He says, **"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."** (verse 18) this isn't difficult for us to understand because we live in the information age. He said that he that increaseth knowledge, I mean, we have that just at our disposal, all of the things that are going on, it never stops. I love my deal [iPhone] because my calendar is on there, phone numbers are on there, and it beeps and it has whistles and makes all these sounds, and sometimes I think *'I'm going to turn everything off, and it's just gonna be a phone.'* I would rather enjoy smashing it with a hammer and just going back to the store and say *'Give me a phone that rings, that doesn't do anything else,'* because he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. Look, the more we see in this world, and more than any generation that's ever lived, we're exposed, the more suffering we see, we see what's going on around the world every day, injustice and suffering and so forth. Solomon didn't have an up-look, imagine watching the news and not having a New Testament, not knowing Jesus Christ, not having the hope of heaven [or eternal life in God's heavenly kingdom], imagine watching and understanding about what's going on in the world, with no hope beyond this world. That's Solomon, the predicament he was in.

## *Ecclesiastes 2:1-26*

“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 profit doeth it? 3 I sought in mine heart to give myself to 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. 4 I made me great works; I builded houses; I planted me vineyards: 5 I made me gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all *kind of* fruits: 6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: 7 I 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: 8 I 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. 9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, 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. 11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had labored to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun. 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. 13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. 14 The wise man’s eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. 15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also *is* vanity. 16 For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise *man*? as the fool. 17 Therefore I hated life; because the work that is

wrought under the sun *is* grievous unto me: for all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit. 18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me [ya, Rehoboam his son, who would lose 10/12's of the kingdom in his first week of reigning]. 19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have labored, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity. 20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun. 21 For there is a man whose labour *is* in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not labored therein shall he leave it *for* his portion. This also *is* vanity and a great evil. 22 For what hath a man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? 23 For all his days *are* sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This *is* also vanity. 24 *There is* nothing better for a man, *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God. 25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten *hereunto*, more than I? 26 For God giveth to a man that *is* in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him that is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit." [the word "vanity" is taken from the Hebrew word "hebel" which means "empty."]

### *Where We Should Not Look For Fulfillment*

So he says here in **chapter 2** so "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also *is* vanity." (verse 1) speaking to his heart, 'I'm going to test you, with mirth, with gladness, and with enjoying pleasure, I'm just gonna party-on now, I can't handle reality, so now I'm going to party for awhile, I'm gonna see *what that does.*' Now look, again, this is, that we should receive God's Word from Solomon, the wisest among men, you don't need to listen to Sigmund Freud, you don't listen to Carly Young, you don't need to listen to Dr. Phil or Dr. Ruth or any of the gurus

because this is the wisest man who ever lived, wiser than all of them put together, this is a guy who had resources that none of them had, this is a guy who indulged himself in ways no one has ever had. And he's saying to us, **'Don't go there, it ain't there, I have plumed the depths of all of those things, and it's not satisfying.'** Look, the next Book is going to take us to a completely different place, this is a vanity of vanities, the next Book is the Song of Songs. That goes where we want to go. He says, look, now he moves into this, testing himself *if it feels good, do it* kind of a place, **"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee (speaking to his own heart) with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?" (verses 1-2)** I like that "what doeth it?" **'I'm carrying on, it can just be madness, what does it accomplish, what does it do?'** He says, **"I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom;" 'I'm gonna try to do that wisely,'** he failed, by the way, you can't give yourself to wine wisely. **"and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life." (verse 3)** **'What do you get out of this world? all this stuff I understand, all of the things I see I have, it doesn't produce anything, people just need to party, man, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die,'** kind of a thing, he's saying, **'so I gave myself to those things, to see, you know, what I should do, what should men do all the days of their life.'**

*'I Built All Kinds Of Great Works, Building Projects,  
Farms, Amassed Great Wealth, And It Was All For  
Nothing, Emptiness'*

And now from verse 4 to verse 11, 32 times we have a personal pronoun, "I did this for myself," "I" "mine," he's got an "I" problem here, to these verses. He says this, **"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:"** let me read through it first to

get an idea of his “I” “me” problem here. **“I 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: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces:”** probably precious stones, jewels, **“I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, *as* musical instruments, and that of all sorts.”** if I wanted a concert I didn’t throw on some vinyl, he said they showed up at my house, if I wanted to listen to whatever I wanted to hear, I just brought them in, *Hotel California*, get me *The Eagles*, bring them in [Stevie Ray Vaughn is my choice], no I don’t want the Beach Boys, he would just go through these things, men singers, women singers. **“and the delights of the sons of men”** interesting, King James says “as musical instruments, and that of all sorts,” I think your NIV may hit it here, it says **“a harem,”** the Hebrew says **“a lady and ladies,”** again we’re told in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings chapter 11 verse 3 that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines, so he says **‘I gathered all this,’** it’s not musical instruments here, it’s speaking of a harem, concubines gathered, I mean he could have indulged in. In **verse 9** continuing, he says, **“So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.”** That’s debatable, Solomon, as we read through this, **“and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy;”** imagine that. One of the years when Michael Jackson was still alive I was watching this show on TV and this person was interviewing him, and he was going shopping, he like walked into this place, he said, *‘Ah, I’ll take two of those, three of those, cars, I’ll take four of those, I’ll take,’* and you think *‘This can’t be real, he spent like \$3 million dollars just on a whim.’* Solomon topped that, trust me, Solomon topped that, he said **‘I was great, I increased all that were before me in Jerusalem, he bought all the rights, all the Beatle songs, etc., all the publishing.’** **“for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. 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.” (verses 4-11)** Look, you have to understand, I mean, Solomon, we’re told this, in Solomon’s provision, here’s a guy who decided to drink wine, this is for one day at his tables, Solomon’s provision for one day was 30 measures of fine flour, that

was 2lbs of bread each for 14,000 people per day. 3 score (60) measures of meal, 600 bushels of meal, then on the table, this is a pound and a half of meat each, for 14,000 people, this is his table, 10 fat oxen, 20 regular oxen, of the pastures, 100 sheep, besides harps, roebucks, fallow deer, fatted fowl, so he's got enough meat on his table for 14,000 people every day. Imagine that, a pound and a half of meat and two pounds of bread for 14,000 people every day at your house. And then he's got a thousand wives there too, 'Guess whose coming for dinner?' guess whose not, you know. You just think of that, that's incredible. And then he says **'I've builded houses,'** and he tells us about that. It tells us this, it says **'Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 measures of wheat for food for his household, and 20 measures of pure oil, Solomon gave to Hiram year by year,'** it says, **'And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom as he promised him, and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and king Solomon raised a levy out of all of Israel, the levy was 30,000 men, and he sent them to Lebanon 10,000 a month by courses, a month they were in Lebanon and two months they were home, this is to cut wood. And Solomon had 70,000 that were bearing burdens, he had 80,000 more that were hewers of wood that stayed in the mountains,'** it says, you add this up, **'that Canaanites that were involved in this, 115,000 labourers.'** So when it says he builded houses, it's not talking about 'I made a bungalow,' you know, he's got 30,000 of this one group, he's got 70,000 of another, he's got 80,000 hewing wood, he has, it tells us, 3,000 foremen, 3,000 foremen working for him, and 115,000 Canaanites. So just imagine when he says 'I was building stuff,' houses, palaces, gardens, fountains. In another place it tells us he's got, he likes this monkey, so he sent out his ships and he got monkeys and peacocks and apes he gathered from all over the world. Just imagine, it must have been fun if he was your grandpa and to go over to his house, huh? My grandkids would love to come over if I had poodle and peacock and monkeys and everything here. It's a little bit like that when they all come over [chuckles]. So he says **'I planted, I did all these things, I builded, you know, my gardens, I drank,'** you think, 'What was his table like?' you know, 14,000 people at dinner every night. That's a lot of wine. That's a lot of meat, that's a lot of drinking going on. **'Building houses, I filled my life with a harem and all of this stuff, because reality was too boring, with the air currents and the weather currents, wind and the water and all, it just never stopped,**

*that drove me crazy, so I'll party-on for awhile.'* And after all of that he said that ended up to be nothing [emptiness, hebel]. So then he says, he enters into exploring his existence by comparison in verse 12 here in chapter 2. He says, **"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."** (verse 12) *'Whose going to come after me? I'm going to find out everything I could find out, whose going to come after me? Even that which hath been is already done. There isn't anybody coming after me that's going to do anything new.'* **"Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness."** (verse 13) I agree, wisdom is so much better than foolishness, it's like light is better than darkness, I'm agreeing with that, no problem there. He makes this observation, **"The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all."** (verse 14) Here's a man, filled with wisdom, his eyes are in his head, he's thoughtful with his prosecution of his life, the fool walks in darkness, he doesn't think about anyone. But in the end, the same thing happens to both of them, they both kick the bucket. They end up the same, he says. **"Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity [emptiness, hebel]."** (verse 15) *'Why should I tell anybody I'm more wise? the same thing happens to me happens to the fool.'* **"I said in my heart, that this also is vanity."** *'it's emptiness, frustration.'* **"For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool."** (verse 16) forever, in eternity (Solomon's implying). By the way, that's wrong, our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, **Malachi 3:16** says **'A book of remembrance is being written before the LORD for those who gather together and think upon his name.'** It means every Wednesday night when we're here, or with the women tomorrow night in the ladies praise and prayer, when we gather, Malachi says the LORD stoops down, in fact, it gives us a very interesting picture, it says **"his ears hearken,"** is for the word used for a horses' ears when they stand up, when their ears stand up. It says when the LORD hears people gathered together, on Wednesday night, singing praise, in his Word, it says his ears stand up, then it says he bends down, great

big ear comes over the building when we're here, he listens not just to what I'm saying, but what you're thinking, so you shouldn't be thinking 'Oh shut up Joe, get over with it,' he can hear that. But it says **'A book of remembrance is written then, all of our names, every Wednesday night, they were singing about me, they were studying my Word,'** it's not forgotten. Solomon in his frustration says **'There is no remembrance of the wise more than the fool for ever,'** "seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten." (verse 16b) untrue. It's true "under the sun," where men don't have a perspective of eternity. **"And how dieth the wise man? as the fool." (16b)** he says, **'the same way as the fool does.'** Look what he says in **verse 17,** **"Therefore I hate life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."** Do me a favour, don't think 'If I only had a little more gold, Kugerands, I'd be happy,' no, listen to him, **'I HATE LIFE!'** 'If I only had more women,' he didn't need pornography, he had a thousand women! 'If I only had a little more of this, a little more of that, if I only had 14,000 people over for dinner,' listen to him, he had it all, he indulged himself in every way. There isn't anybody here that's ever thinking 'If I only had one of these,' he had 94 of them. Listen to what he's saying, **'I hated life, you can take all of this stuff, all the eye-candy, all this stuff here, all the stuff to indulge yourself in, the stuff that you think will make you happy, and you die the same way the fool does,'** he says, **'so I hated life.'** Voltaire said, "I hate life, but I'm afraid to die." That's a tough situation to be in, I hate living, but I'm afraid of dying. Solomon says **'therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous to me, all is vanity and vexation of spirit, it's just emptiness and frustration.'** Don't listen to him, **there's a lesson in this,** this is not truths to live by, ok? **This is, listen to the words of a frustrated man telling us where we should not look for fulfillment.** That's what he's doing.

*The Frustration, Emptiness Of Leaving Everything You've Worked For And Amassed To Somebody Whose Going To Blow It All*

He says, **“Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.” (verse 18)** And maybe at this point he’s thinking about Rehoboam, you know, this seems to be towards the end of his life. Maybe he realized ***‘This kid that’s going to take this, Lord, you only know what he’s going to do when it ends up in his hands.’*** And he says **“And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.” (verse 19)** You know what you leave behind when you leave? Everything. It’s a simple test. And he said ***‘I’m realizing, everything I’ve ever amassed, everything I’ve indulged myself in, everything I have taken to myself, everything I’ve ever built with my 115,000 labourers here, and my 80,000 labourers there, and my 70,000 labourers here and my throne and my peacocks and monkeys,’*** Solomon was the only one with a fleet of ships, the Israelis were not really fond of trading by sea, this guy had fleets of ships, he went all over the world. [Comment: Under Solomon, in treaty with Hiram, they formed an Israelite navy-merchant marine Phoenician-Israelite fleet, which when the kingdom was split under Rehoboam and Jeroboam, the northern ten tribed nation of the House of Israel under Jeroboam inherited this naval-merchant marine. The southern kingdom lost this fleet. It remained intact as an Israelite-Phoenician merchant marine-naval fleet up to the reign of Jehu, who killed off Jezebel and all of Ahab and Jezebel’s children. That ended the treaty and joint fleet, which then continued on only as a Phoenician merchant marine-naval fleet. See <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kings/1.html> for historic proof of this. Following the historic fulfillment of God’s prophecies about Tyre in Ezekiel shows what happened to the naval power of Phoenicia.] He says in the final analysis you leave it to the person who comes after you, you don’t know if that person is going to be stupid or smart, and it’s all vanity. **“Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun. For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.” (verse 21)** Rehoboam, listen, his son Rehoboam when he inherited the kingdom, he took ***one week*** to split the kingdom in two, in one week, he divided the kingdom of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms, he destroyed the

whole thing in one week. You'd think he'd take a month, he should have taken two months off, is what he should have done, it would have lasted longer. Solomon says, **'What's the point, you labour, you do it wisely, you do it with knowledge,'** Solomon was fair in equity, **'yet to a man who has not laboured there, you're gonna leave everything to him for his portion, this is also vanity and is a great evil.'** **"For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?"** (verse 22) what do you end up having in the final analysis? **"For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity."** (verse 23) some of you can relate to that, Solomon didn't have any pills. Here's the richest guy in the world, he's got the best Temperpedic Mattress ever made, he's got people playing soothing music, he's got everything going on, he says **'I can't sleep, I can't sleep, I lay down, I can't sleep, I got too much cooking, it's driving me crazy.'** He ends up not even being able to sleep through the night, this is vanity, this is crazy. Look, I want you to come back next week, this doesn't just stay depressing, this goes somewhere.

*"For Without Him, Who Can Eat, Or Find Enjoyment?"  
Remember, We're Going To A Better Banquet*

He says **"There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God."** (verse 24) now there's a flash of light here. So he said **'I realize, as he's going to say in the Book of Proverbs, it's better to eat herbs and have peace in your home, than to have a stalled ox, and everybody fighting and screaming at each other.'** He says, you know what, **'There's a rich man who walks down the street, and he frustrated, got no peace in his house, fighting with his wife, fighting with his kids, he walks down the street, looks in a window, he sees a poor family, all they got is some eggplant parm, all got their heads bowed, and they're saying grace, and he says I have everything, and nothing at all, they're better off than I am.'** He says, **'At this point, you know, for man to enjoy the fruit of his labour, be able to sit in his house, with his wife, to enjoy that, that's**

***from the hand of God,***’ because this is all temporary. We’re going to a better banquet, many are going to come from the East and the West and sit down at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that’s the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, we’re headed to a better meal. But he says ***‘in this world, in all my frustration, I realize, somebody can sit down, and enjoy the fruits of their labour,’*** and I hope you feel that way, and I know many of you do, I love the holidays, and I feel bad for anybody in the church whose in a broken home, or bad experience, you know. One of the things I do enjoy, I love on Thanksgiving, Christmas, when all the kids and the grandkids come over, it gets like a circus, but it’s wonderful, and just sit there like a spectator and watch the whole thing, 14,000 of them, they all have a pound and a half of meat, and you kind of sit there and think, *‘I don’t envy really any man on this planet, I’m as rich as any human being on the earth.’* Solomon says, you know, he comes, after all of this frustration, he says a man should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy the good of his labour, he said, ***‘I saw that this was from the hand of God.’*** Ah, Jewels Abel, author who wrote *The Rockefeller Billions*, and the book says that John D. Rockefeller, at the end of his life, was making into his bank account, a million dollars a week. Now that’s when a million dollars was a billion dollars, you have to understand. There was over a million dollars profit going into his account. And yet he was under a hundred pounds and couldn’t eat. You read about Howard Hughes, the further on he went he became bigoted, he tried to keep blacks out of certain areas, he tried to control senators and congressmen and legislation, and he ended up with his fingernails growing around his hands, and had needles broken off in his arms, he was afraid of germs, he had everything and he had nothing. It’s wonderful that we can come together and sing songs together. It’s wonderful that we can come together and enjoy fellowship. It’s wonderful that we can sit at our table and enjoy a meal, and we’re waiting for the King of kings and Lord of lords, and Solomon only thought he was a builder, he only thought he knew how to set a table, and we’re waiting for the One to come, whose our Father, we’re his sons and daughters in the Kingdom. But interesting, he kind of comes to this, it comes to light in his heart. He says in **verse 25, “For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?”** if you have an NIV, I like it, they kind of do a better job here, it says ***“For without him, who can eat, or find enjoyment?”*** So let me read the two verses together, Solomon, finally with this flash of

light in his heart, ***'You know, there's nothing better for a man, that he should be able to eat and drink, that he should make his soul enjoy the good of his labour, this also I saw, this was from the hand of God. For without him, without God, who can eat or find enjoyment?'*** Verse 26, the first of six conclusions he comes to, as we go through this Book, ***"For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit."*** God gives to the individual who he's pleased with, Solomon says here, wisdom and knowledge, and joy. Ultimately it comes back in the other direction. He says, you know, this also is vanity and vexation of spirit. He says in the final analysis, it really boils down to some very simple things, this is how life is enjoyed, this is how life is lived, the rest of it become an illusion, *'If I only had this, if I only had that,'* is not reality, because he says, you know what, ***'I had it all, I had it in measure you never even dreamed of, and I was frustrated. I laid down my head at night, I couldn't sleep, had the best mattress in the world.'*** But he said if you can sit in your house, you can bow your head and say grace over a simple meal, a piece of toast and a cup of coffee, you can live at peace with your family, he said, that's from the hand of God, that's from the hand of God. He said, without him, God, how can we enjoy any of those things? He winds up wonderfully. So, I encourage you to read ahead, as we come into the next chapter, ***'There's a time for every purpose under heaven,'*** those of you who have been around as long as I have, we appreciate that right away, because you can hear *The Birds* singing that tune, that song, Bob Dillon took that, rest of you won't understand. But it's an interesting perspective that we glean there. So, let's stand, let's pray together...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Ecclesiastes 1:1-18 and 2:1-26, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

Our perspective lies "over the sun" not "under the sun," our new-birth, our Wedding Banquet is with the Lamb of God, see

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/revelation/Revelation%20%2021-22.htm>

Solomon's joint Israeli-Phoenician navy-merchant marine was inherited by the northern ten tribed House of Israel after Rehoboam caused the breakup of the nation of Israel into two separate nations. This naval-merchant marine alliance broke up when Jehu killed Jezebel and Ahab's children, reverting back to a strictly Phoenician navy-merchant marine. For this interesting history, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kings/1.html>