

Ecclesiastes

Basic two parts:

1. Chapters 1-6 – The Questions. Qohelet (the teacher, Solomon) describes his examination, testing, experience, observation and research. Vanity is identified and exposed.
2. Chapters 7-14 – The Answers. Qohelet provides his summary which includes counsel and what he identified as wisdom. This portion of the book is intended to deliver you from vanity and teach you how best to use the life that you have. The source of life and the designer of reality is the Lord, so the ultimate conclusion is to fear the Lord.

Ecclesiastes chapters 1 and 2 (ESV)

1:1 - The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

- A. Superscription
- B. The superscript says that “the Preacher” or “the Teacher” (Hebrew: **Qohelet**) was the son of David, the king of Israel
- C. **Qoheleth** /Coe-hell-eth/ is the Hebrew title of this book and the name/title/occupation of the speaker.
- D. The Hebrew word **qohelet** means:
 - a. “one who assembles”
 - b. “speaker in the assembly”
- E. The speeches and lectures of Qohelet are found in 1:12-12:7.

1:2 - Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

- A. Theme of this book is to identify the **hebel** of life or the vanity, emptiness, temporalness of life.
- B. **Hebel** appears 35x in this book “vanity” or “meaningless” (Hebrew **hebel**) is used
- C. **Hebel** appears 32x in the Old Testament with 13x it is referring to idols as useless
- D. There are 8 words in the Hebrew for 1:2. Five of these eight are forms of the root word **HEBEL**
- E. **Hebel** (actually pronounced /heh’bel/, not like “hybel” as in Bill Hybels of Willow Creek but the meaning matches)

F. Hebel

- a. Means:
 - i. “vapor, breath” and
 - ii. “vanity”
- b. Captures these meanings and translations:
 - i. Meaninglessness
 - ii. Vanity
 - iii. Futility
 - iv. Emptiness
 - v. Absurdity
 - vi. Fleeting
 - vii. Idols
- c. Relates to:
 - i. Wind
 - ii. Mist
- d. Refers to things that do not last. **Hebel** communicates the unsustainable and the temporary.
- e. Often in Ecclesiastes **hebel** is the word used to communicate:
 - i. “lack of meaning”

- ii. "lack of endurance"
- f. When the Hebrew repeats **hebel** as in "**hebel hebel**" is means:
 - i. "complete meaningless"
 - ii. "vanity of vanities"

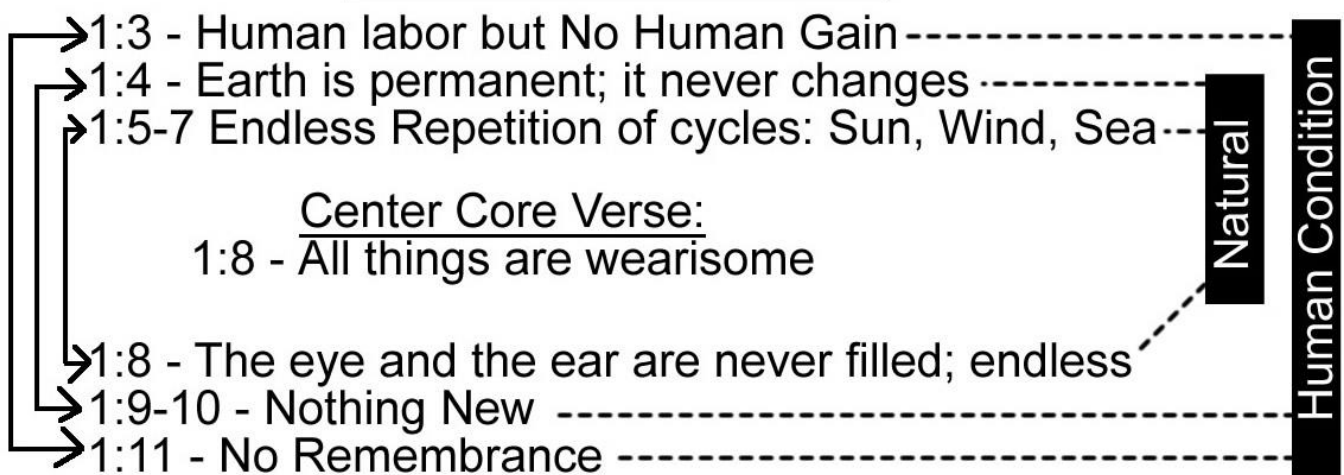
G. **Hebel** is used in:

- a. Isaiah 57:13 to refer to "wind"
- b. Proverbs 21:6 to "a fleeting vapor"
- c. Psalms 144:4 man is like a breath (**hebel**)
- d. Jeremiah 16:19 uses **hebel** to refer to things that are deceitful and ineffective
- e. Zechariah 10:2 says that idols give comfort that is empty and momentary. Thus, in perspective of reality idols are a delusion and a lie.
- f. Proverbs 8:14, **hebel** means absurd when seen in the light of Truth and Reality.
- g. Injustice is contrary to Reality and thus is considered **hebel** or an absurdity in:
 - i. Ecc. 2:14-15
 - ii. Ecc. 2:18-21
- h. How the word **hebel** is used in the text helps understand the word, OR BETTER, we need to learn the meaning of the Hebrew word **hebel** and let it speak for itself when it appears in the text!
- i. It seems Ecclesiastes is warning against people living their lives in pursuit of temporary, absurd, empty, priorities that are contrary to Reality. Yet, on the surface our own life and existence can appear to be **hebel**. Yet, because there is a God there is something bigger happening that is NOT **hebel**. Since our on nature is only experience in a **hebel** existence and in a hebel creation it is hard (and, maybe impossible) to see anything more than **hebel**.
- j. Paul seems to be referring to this when he explains our hope for escaping this incomprehensible "vanity" in Romans 8:12-39.

1:3-11 is a unit that can be organized like this:

Ecclesiastes 1:3-11 Comparison

UNDER THE SUN



Point of 1:3-11 – Life in this world is a monotonous prison that requires us to distract ourselves of the truth of this **hebel**.

Common Words or Phrases

1. Under the Sun is used 29 times in Ecclesiastes, but zero times in all the other books.
2. "Wind" translated from Hebrew **ruah**
 - a. **Ruah** means "wind", "breath", "spirit."
 - b. Wind is considered in this book to be a non-productive movement
 - c. Wind is considered to move in a continuous cycle as if moving in a circular pattern which always returns having accomplished nothing
 - d. "chasing after wind" is an image of meaninglessness, vanity, emptiness, etc.
 - e. "chasing after the wind" is meaningless or **hebel** because:
 - i. You cannot catch the wind.
 - ii. If you do catch the wind, you have nothing.
3. "Things" is from Hebrew **debarim** which means "things" or "words"
4. **Dor** means:
 - a. "generations" when referring to cycles of humanity
 - b. "cycles" when referring to cycles of nature such as seasons

1:3 - What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

- A. Looking for profit or gain
- B. Qohelet's use of "under the sun" identifies the arena available for his research.
- C. After death you have no gain/profit left
- D. (The concept that you could gain something for human kind or leave something behind for others will be addressed as also ineffective later.)

1:4 - A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

- A. Nature wins! Men are consumed and time moves on. Humans have no lasting impact on creation.
- B. Nothing changes, even though men are constantly active in trying to make changes.
- C. Jerome said:
 - a. "What is more vain than this vanity: that the earth, which was made for humans, stays – but humans themselves, the lords of the earth, suddenly dissolve into dust?"
- D. The word **dor** means
 - a. "generations" referring to humans
 - b. "cycles" which would refer to seasons and nature

1:5 - The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.

- A. Three illustrations of things that never change, but whose cycle is a continuous **hebel**:
 - a. Sun
 - b. Wind
 - c. Water
- B. The three illustrations of nature would seem to support the translation of the Hebrew word **dor** as "cycles" of nature instead of "generations" of men, but both concepts are correct.
- C. The illustration of the Sun's cycle perfectly captures the image on monotonous **hebel**.
- D. The word "hurries" is the Hebrew word **sa ap** meaning "to pant" like a runner breathing heavily in a race.
- E. The translation is "and to its place pants (**sa ap**)" This "panting" can be positive or negative depending on what Qohelet is trying to say:
 - a. Negative = panting with exhaustion as in Isaiah 42:14
 - b. Positive = panting for God's word as in Psalm 119:13

1:6 - The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.

- A. The Sun travels East to West, but the wind might be considered to be traveling North and South. So, as the Sun goes around and around East to West, the wind goes around and around North to South.
- B. The wind creates the illusion it is displaying an impressive force, but actually the wind is merely blowing in circles. Nothing is ever accomplished by the wind.

1:7 - All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.

- A. The Dead Sea might be in mind of the writer since it was geographically very close and it is the world's greatest example of this principle.
- B. This could be an illustration of what Paul is referring to in Romans 8:19-21 as "frustration", because even with all the power and movement in the universe, nothing really ever happens.
- C. The point here is most likely this: The rivers are always flowing and emptying into the Sea, but the Seas never fill up.
- D. Even though we often try to see Solomon addressing in these verses the water cycle that causes evaporation to create precipitation, this is probably not the point.

1:8 - All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

- A. This verse is key to rightly establishing the negative, pessimistic tone for Qohelet having mentioned these cycles (**dor**)
- B. The mention of generations (**dor**, endless cycles), the Sun, wind, and water makes the point: Human life is dull and unfulfilling.
- C. Dabar is the Hebrew for "things" or "words".
 - a. Literally this verse could say: "A man is not able to say"
 - b. Which would translate as:
 - i. "A man is not able to say or express the weariness, the vanity, the emptiness of creation."
 - ii. "The weariness and emptiness of creation cannot be expressed by man"
 - c. This concept is similar to Paul being in the presence of God and seeing things in the glory of God that man cannot express since man has not been allowed the capacity to express things that are beyond this state of **hebel**.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 - "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And, I know that this man was caught up into paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter."
- D. "All things" (Hebrew **dabar**) reminds me of:
 - a. Romans 8:28 – "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good..."
 - b. Romans 8:36-37 – " 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."
 - c. Romans 8:39 – "...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

E.

1:9 - What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

- A. Qohelet now turns to history as an example to prove his point.
- B. History itself is going nowhere

- C. Human history is a meaningless cycle
- D. Hebrew biblical history is a progressing spiral
- E. But, to the human view of knowledge and experience the ultimate end can not be understood.

1:10 - Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us.

- A. Qohelet addresses a potential argument that could be voiced against his previous conclusion
- B. The argument is even stronger today.
- C. The argument could be:
 - a. Surely things are new. Things are changing! We have seen new things appear in history! Even new things have occurred even in our own lifetime!
- D. Qohelet’s point addresses and answers the following:
 - a. New technology is merely forgotten knowledge that has been rediscovered.
 - b. New things are still being used by the same old Adam-man for the same old reason with the same old priorities by the same old motivation.
- E. “Here is a common expression” is literally:
 - a. “There is a word that it/he says”
 - b. Hebrew: “en dabar ‘amar ”
 - c. This may simply be introducing the following quote or “word” (*dabar* that follows in the next verse

1:11 - There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.

- A. The reason we think it is new is we have forgotten so much of the past people, events and things.
- B. Our ignorance makes us think we are original.
- C. Technically there are two Logic Problems, but this is overstressing the intent:
 - a. Problem number one:
 - i. Qohelet says there is no remembrance of those who came before
 - ii. YET, Qohelet also says that what is has already been.
 - iii. PROBLEM: If no one remembers how can someone say it has already been
 - iv. RESOLUTION: It proves that it is because of *hebel* (temporal, emptiness) of life no one remembers the people or the accomplishments of the past so what is “new” is really just the repetition of a cycle of what has already happened and been forgotten.
 - b. Problem number two:
 - i. Qohelet says that in the future no one will remember
 - ii. YET, Qohelet also says in this book that no one knows the future.
 - iii. PROBLEM: If no one knows the future then how do they know that in the future no one will remember.
 - iv. RESOLUTION: This book proves one sure thing: *hebel* (vanity, meaninglessness). So, based on this established fact we know that even though we do not know the future we can be sure that the future will not remember us!

1:12 - I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

- A. Solomon was king (and, still is at the time of this writing)
- B. Solomon is writing as the Qohelet who was also the king
- C. This verse is not saying Solomon is dead.

1:13 - And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.

- A. Qohelet was committed to learning, acquiring wisdom and gaining knowledge.
- B. It was not a pleasant task.

- C. It was a burdensome task because:
 - a. It was an impossible project to complete.
 - b. Some key information was hidden from man:
 - i. Deep in creation
 - ii. Deep in philosophy
 - iii. Completely out of man's reach in another dimension.
- D. 1 Kings 4:29-34 – Solomon's wisdom
- E. 1 Corinthians 3:19 – man's limit

1:14 - I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

- A. All of Qohelet's work and research is dated and will ultimately be outdated, updated, lost with death, disappear into oblivion.
- B. The intellectual challenge is "chasing after wind" which means:
 - a. You can never catch the wind
 - b. If you did catch the wind you would have nothing.

1:15 - What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

- A. Twisted = Cannot be solved
- B. Lacking = Information needed to continue is missing
- C. Point: Man is limited by personal ability and accessible information

1:16 - I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

- A. With having reached the ceiling of intellectual pursuit of wisdom Qohelet now turns to simpler things of the temporal side of humanity.
- B. He calls the temporal/carnal side "foolishness"
- C. This "foolishness" is to be contrasted with the pursuit of understanding and unraveling philosophical questions beyond human ability.
- D. The "foolishness" is not referring to stupid, wasteful, immature or sinful behavior.
- E. "Foolishness" in Qohelet text refers to the carnal side of life which will include:
 - a. building and construction
 - b. attaining wealth and business success
 - c. pleasures
 - d. entertainment
 - e. physical activities
 - f. (again, this is not "sinful" behavior, but merely an engaging in the natural state of man without seeking to understand the wisdom Qohelet failed to fully attain.)
- F. Qohelet will occupy his thoughts and time with human activity.
- G. Qohelet had previously attempted to unravel humanity's limit concerning the fullness of wisdom and, now, Qohelet is attempting to experience the meaning and extent of man's carnal existence.
- H. The summary of this quest is increased grief.
- I. Qohelet again finds himself trapped by his intellectual limits and the shallowness of physical fulfillment.

1:17 - And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

1:18 - For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

Details of Qohelet's Pursuit of Foolishness, Carnal, Temporal, Laughter, Pleasure, Construction, etc.

2:1 - I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity.

- A. "Test you" is meant to say he will:
 - a. Experiment...
 - b. Examine...
 - c. Experience...these things to attempt to unravel their meaning, results, benefits and limits
- B. Basic question: Does the pursuit of temporary things ("foolishness")...
 - a. ...explain why we are here?
 - b. ...fulfill our created purpose?
 - c.produce eternal results?
 - d. ...ultimately satisfy the sane man?
- C. Basic Summary: This test produces the same basic results as Qohelet's pursuit of wisdom. The pursuit and development of the "foolish" (carnal, temporal, etc.) ultimately unravels and cannot hold together long enough to provide real answers.

2:2 - I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?"

- A. Laughter is temporary and at best a momentary distraction.
- B. Pleasure (fun) produces nothing of eternal purpose.
- C. NOTE: Laughter and Pleasure are NOT sinful or evil, but they are not an indication that the ultimate meaning has been found or the ultimate purpose has been accomplished. Qohelet does not equate laughter, pleasure, fun with evil. These are far from wrong, but they are far from leading Qohelet to a conclusion.
- D. Basically: There is nothing to be seen here.
- E. Laughter and fun are not to be stopped, but don't think you have found the meaning to life because you are having fun and laughing.

2:3 - I 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.

- A. Qohelet experimented, experience and tested wine.
- B. Wine dulls the senses and alleviates pain of life including physical, emotional, mental, etc.
- C. Qohelet did not become a drunkard and did not set out to find the meaning of life by abusing alcohol.
- D. Qohelet appears to be involved in a test to see if things are clearer and if a better balance in his understanding of life can be attained if he takes the edge off with wine.
- E. Qohelet is continuing his experimenting, experiencing the carnal opportunities in life.
- F. The question could be stated like this, "In the few days of their lives" is it best to spend those days medicated with wine?
- G. NOTE: This was not a sin anymore than laughter (2:2) and the construction of building projects (next in 2:4). If wine is evil then so is laughter and building projects.
- H. The conclusion is that these things are carnal, foolish and empty if this is all you have.

2:4 - I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself.

- A. "I undertook great projects" could be translated: "I enlarged my spheres of activity."

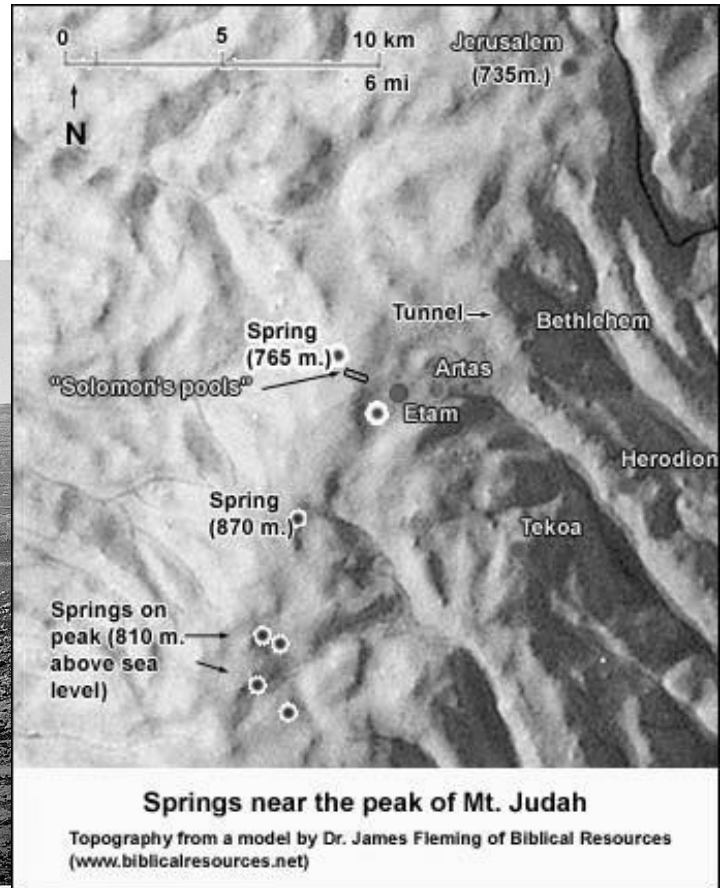
- B. Key phrase is found in words like “my spheres” and “for myself”. This seems to be referring to self-improvement projects.
- C. Solomon’s building projects:
 - a. 1 Kings 7; 9:1; 10:21 and 2 Chronicles 8:3-6.

2:5 - I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.

- A. The great gardens could refer to the development and expansion of the Kings Gardens SE of Jerusalem watered by canals and channels from the Gihon Springs that watered the Kidron Valley

2:6 - I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees.

- A. Three ancient stone pools can be found in the Valley of Artas SW of Jerusalem traditionally called the Pools of Solomon.



- B. The following is from Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon%27s_Pools)
 - a. The three large reservoirs, following each other in line, stand several dozen meters apart, each pool with a roughly 20 foot drop to the next. They are rectangular or trapezoidal in shape, partly hewn into the bedrock and partly built, between 387-587 feet long and 26-52 feet deep, with a total capacity of well over 75 million US gallons. The pools were part of a complex ancient water system, initially built between sometime around 100 BC and 30 AD.

2:7 - I 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.

A. Solomon's ownership of slaves, herds and flocks is in 1 Kings 4:20-23

2:8 - I 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.

- A. Solomon was a patron of the arts.
- B. Solomon supported the development music and invested in the presentation of arts such as music.

2:9 - So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

- A. Restates 2:3 where Solomon's pursuit of the carnal, natural, foolish, pleasures was identified as an experiment designed to for research the meaning of existence, the purpose for man and the answers to life.
- B. Qohelet was guided by his wisdom, not his sin nature or the loss of self-control.
- C. The result of his research in this area also confirmed to him that the answers to life are not available to man.

2:10 - And 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.

2:11 - Then 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.

- A. Qohelet had worked hard and had invested his time for these results
- B. But, Qohelet investment did not equal his gain in understanding or his attainment of meaningful answers.

The Result of the Foolishness Research Project (Ecc. 2:12-17)

2:12 - So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done.

- A. 2:12a – Solomon compared his research results for “Wisdom, Knowledge and Intellect” with his research results for “Foolish, Carnal, Laughter, Building, Pleasure”
- B. 2:12b is difficult to translate and interpret
 - a. Literal Hebrew is:
 - “What is the man who will come after the king when they have already made?”**
 - i. “made” could mean “crowned”, but this is the wrong word to use if that is the reference
 - ii. “What is the man” finds equals in:
 - 1. Ps. 8:4
 - 2. Ps. 144:3
 - 3. Job 7:17
 - iii. “man” is Hebrew **‘adam** is used throughout Ecclesiastes to refer to the human race stemming form Adam of Genesis 2-4.
 - 1. “man” or, the seed of Adam, in Ecclesiastes is mortal, foolish, futile and evil.
 - 2. “the king” is a term that could be referring to the original king, the first man, Adam. Adam was the first king and representation of all men. (The text would otherwise be saying, “Who is the adam who will come after adam.”

- iv. "Who they have already made" would simply be a reference to the plural godhead of Genesis 1:26 when the first man was created.
- b. The point of 2:12b would then be:
 - i. What are the chances a descendent from Adam will come along that will be different or an improved version of the original Adam? None. All descendents of Adam will never be able to see or understand more than the original Adam. So mankind remains limited and will continue to see life unravel with no meaning.
- c. Modern attempts to translate 2:12b:
 - i. "What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done."
 - 1. This is a paraphrase of a text that has had to make emends to the text to make sense
 - 2. This assumes the text is saying, "After King Solomon's investigation what more can be added to his research? Nothing."
 - 3. The king (Solomon) is stating his concern that the king who follows him (Rehoboam) will be lacking wisdom, virtue and experience necessary to appreciate all of Solomon's understanding and will be incapable of managing all of Solomon's possessions.
- d. The Septuagint considers "king" to refer to wise council which has been abandoned
- e. The Vulgate considers "king" to be God
- f. The Targum sees the statement communicating the thought that no one should or could reverse a royal decree after it has been implemented.

2:13 - Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness.

- A. Even though both wisdom and foolishness are lacking to reach the ultimate destination, a comparison of Qohélet research concludes this:
 - a. Wisdom = Light
 - b. Foolishness = Darkness
- B. Light means you are aware of your surroundings, but it still does not empower you to alter or change your surroundings.
- C. Darkness means you are not even aware of your surroundings, but because of this darkness you are also unaware of the helpless, meaningless condition you are in, so it is easier and less painful to eat, drink and be merry while you wait for the ultimate disaster.
- D. Note: The possession of wisdom or a life of carnality does NOT change the path or the destination for the person (the wise man or the fool). Both end up the same – dead in a grave.
- E. The difference is the wise can see the danger coming and at least anticipate his fate and his end. But the fool is surprised by everything and cannot anticipate reality.
- F. Often the fool can create a false perception of reality and dilute his awareness of the obvious disastrous fate of man.

2:14 - **The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them.**

- A. The wise see death, anticipate death, contemplate death, but still cannot stop death or escape death.

2:15 - **Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity.**

- A. Qohélet is sobered by his own mortality

2:16 - For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!

- A. In his realization of mortality the wise, intellectual vainly attempts is to try to leave behind some great contribution or history altering information that will cause others to always remember him. In a sense, attempt to achieve immortality by being eternally remembered through the coming generations.
- B. The reality is that this may work for a few generations, but ultimately the wise, history-altering intellectual will be forgotten (as will his contribution). This is similar to the fool who left nothing.

2:17 - So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

- A. The conclusion of this research:
 - a. Qohelet had previously chosen the way of wisdom over foolishness because he anticipated some lasting fame, recognition, or eternal value.
 - b. But, the research showed Qohelet that philosophy is an illusion. The wise are caught in a false philosophy that is best compared to choosing the wind. (Which cannot be caught, and if it is caught you have caught nothing.)
 - c. NOTE: This does not mean wisdom is wrong or worthless. Nor is it better to be foolish, ignorant and unaware.
 - d. THE POINT is do not try to think wisdom, intellect or knowledge, can be used to escape the hopeless reality of life.
 - e. Wisdom simply gives you the light to see the hopeless state of life
 - f. Foolishness simply keeps you in the dark concerning our hopelessness.
 - g. Wisdom is better because at least it lets you know there is a problem AND you have no available answer!!

2:18 - I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me,

- A. "Toil" –
 - a. the root is used repeatedly in 2:18-26
 - b. words with this root refer to both:
 - i. the toil/labor of the man
 - ii. the earnings/profits of the man's labor

2:19 - and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.

- A. The meaning of life is NOT to make the world a better place for your children because they may squander it.
- B. The people who follow may not appreciate your work or your product.

2:20 - So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun,

- A. The understanding Qohelet gained caused him to sink into disillusionment

2:21 - because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil.

- A. At death a man loses his:
 - a. Possessions
 - b. Skill set
 - c. Intelligence
 - d. Intellectual advances and understanding

2:22 - What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun?

- A. At death nothing transfers with the man's soul.
- B. All is left behind and, if possible, picked up by others and used or lost by them.

2:23 - For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

- A. A man burns his life up persevering trouble and toiling to attain what ultimately is lost.
- B. Man's life is meaningless.

2:24 - There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God,

- A. What is the point of life?
 - a. First, you cannot escape the need to labor and produce to provide for yourself.
 - b. Second, now we know that the toil and the product of toil is meaningless in light of eternity
 - c. Third, find the balance and learn to:
 - i. Enjoy work
 - ii. Enjoy your production
 - iii. Enjoy your food and drink
 - d. Four, this is not saying life is merely carnal. This is not saying eat, drink and party.
 - e. But, it is saying since you have to toil and labor you might as well learn to enjoy it.
 - i. Enjoy it, but do not be distracted by it.
 - ii. Do not begin to think you have found the meaning of life because you enjoy work and have become physically and financially successful.

2:25 - for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

- A. God designed life this way:
 - a. You are a man. Learn to live responsibly and enjoy your life.
 - b. God holds truth and meaning. God keeps them with himself in eternity and you cannot attain these things on earth.
 - c. Seek God and enjoy the life he gave you. Because without God you:
 - i. Cannot enjoy life
 - ii. Do not have access to the ultimate purpose and meaning
 - d. Be satisfied to be a man
 - e. Be humble enough to seek God

2:26 - For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

- A. Note: God responds to man's response to life
 - a. Those who please God = wisdom, knowledge, happiness
 - b. Those who please self = toil, producing for the one who pleases God

B. This is Romans 2:6-7,

"He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."

C. Everybody is used by God.

D. This is not the formula for fate (fatalism, impersonal God, Calvinism)

E. This is the formula for grace (God responding to give fallen man what he does not deserve, but has faith to seek or to ask for.