

Ecclesiastes 1:12–2:11 (NASB95)

12 I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.

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

16 I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge."

17 And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind.

18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.

1 I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility.

2 I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?"

3 I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives.

4 I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself;

5 I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees;

6 I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees.

7 I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem.

8 Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines.

9 Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.

10 All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.

11 Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.

"So, What's the Point?"

The author of this book does not speak to Israel as a prophet, thundering forth the word of God newly received. He speaks to them as a philosopher who is trying to find out the point of life and all that mankind does under the sun. In search of the meaning of life, he tells of four pathways that he travels in his quest to find lasting satisfaction and the real purpose for life under the sun.

I. The Pathway of _____
(Ecclesiastes 1:12-18)

II. The Pathway of _____
(Ecclesiastes 2:1-3, 10)

III. The Pathway of _____
(Ecclesiastes 2:4-6)

IV. The Pathway of _____ and _____
(Ecclesiastes 2:7-9)

The Conclusion: (Ecclesiastes 2:11; 3:14-15; 5:18-20; 12:13-14)