

**Ecclesiastes II**  
***Folly and Wisdom Contrasted***

**Ecclesiastes 2:1-26**

- I. THE EXPERIENCE OF LUXURY (Ecclesiastes 2:1-8)
  - a. Solomon's Decision to Prove Himself with Mirth (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3)
    - i. The word *prove* defined (Ecclesiastes 2:1)
      1. Occurs 25 times in scripture
      2. In modern day many people think of the word *prove* and the first thing that comes to mind may be a court room where evidence is given. That definition is true of the word; however, it can mean other things as well.
      3. From Etymology online comes the following: From Old French *prover* (11c.), "to test, prove worthy," ([www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com))
      4. This is proven out through scripture by how it is used in various passages.
        - a. The Lord proved his people (Exodus 16:14; Deuteronomy 8:2; Judges 3:1, 4)
        - b. David asked to Lord to prove him (Psalm 26:2)
        - c. The Lord told his people to prove Him (Malachi 3:10)
        - d. Paul told the Thessalonians to prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
    - ii. The word *mirth* defined (Ecclesiastes 2:1)
      1. From Old English *myrgō* "joy, pleasure," ([www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com))
      2. Many times in scripture it is associated with noise:
        - a. Laban with Jacob (Genesis 31:27)
        - b. The Jews at the Rivers of Babylon (Psalm 137:1-3)
          - i. Note: The Lord took the Jews mirth from them when the Babylonians took them captive. (Jeremiah 25:10)
          - ii. This is interesting in light of the fact that Solomon experienced mirth and folly during his time, at the expense of the future of the kingdom. (see 1 Kings 11:1-2,9-11)
      - c. Connected to laughter (Proverbs 14:13)

3. Solomon's conclusion (Ecclesiastes 2:2)
  - a. Laughter is mad.
  - b. Mirth, what doeth it?
4. Solomon's wisdom of laughter and mirth (Ecclesiastes 2:2)
  - a. The worldly view point (Ecclesiastes 8:15)
  - b. The heart of fools love mirth (Ecclesiastes 7:4)
    - i. Note: The heart of a fool has no delight in understanding (Proverbs 18:2)
    - ii. The above verse is interesting in light of the fact that Solomon has chosen to prove himself with mirth.
  - c. The end of mirth is heaviness (Proverbs 14:13)
  - d. Mirth is vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:1)
- iii. Solomon's study and experience of wine and folly (Ecclesiastes 2:3)
  1. He gave himself unto wine (Ecclesiastes 2:3)
    - a. Note: Wine in the Bible at times can be strong drink (Alcohol) and at other times is not. The best way to determine if it is or not is to read the context.
    - b. Note this may or may not have been strong drink
    - c. If it was, and it very well could have been in light of the context and Ecclesiastes 1:17 (see Eccl. 1:17). One should note the following scriptures:
      - i. Abigail and Nabal (1 Samuel 25:36)
      - ii. Wine is a mocker (Proverbs 20:1) – note this was said by Solomon himself.
      - iii. A drunken man will speak perverse things (Proverbs 23:29-33)
      - iv. A drunken man will not feel pain (Proverbs 23:34-35)
      - v. It is not for kings to drink strong drink (Proverbs 31:4-5)
    - d. It is interesting to note the context of Proverbs 23; if Solomon was partaking of strong drink then we see where this could give us some insight into his fall with the strange women of the land that was about him, and the other sins that he committed against the Lord. (see 1 Kings 11:1,4)
    - e. Wine and wisdom do not mix (Proverbs 31:4-5)
  2. He laid hold on folly (Ecclesiastes 2:3)
    - a. So that he might see (understand) what was good for the sons of men (Ecclesiastes 2:3)

- b. The fool's heart is in the house of mirth (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4)
  - i. Remember Solomon's conclusion (Ecclesiastes 2:2) – "laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?"
  - ii. Note: Solomon is not speaking about the sober enjoyment of things here on this earth (1 Timothy 6:17) but of the things that do us no good, things that can harm us, things that have no real value in this life.
  - iii. In fact Solomon noted that "a merry heart doeth good" (Proverbs 17:22)
  - iv. But even in this treatise Solomon wrote Proverbs 15:13 and Proverbs 14:13.
  - v. Why is laughter "mad?"
    - 1. It often ends in a catastrophic event (Psalm 2:1-5)
    - 2. It solves nothing; it is a temporary "steam valve."
    - 3. Sometimes it is uncontrollable (James 3:8)
    - 4. It often edifies no one, and at the wrong time can cause damage.
  - vi. The rebuke of the wise is better than the song of the fool (Ecclesiastes 7:5)
  - vii. The laughter of the fool is vanity (Ecclesiastes 7:6)
  - viii. Also consider the fact as a Christian today, we should have a balance in all things that we do (1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 2:4)
  - ix. Folly is connected to deceit (Proverbs 14:8; 2 Timothy 3:13)
- b. Solomon's Commitment to Find Out (Ecclesiastes 2:2,3)
  - i. What was good for the sons of men (Ecclesiastes 2:3)
    - 1. Once again you see Solomon's commitment to this study.
    - 2. To give of his time, heart, and wisdom (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 7:25)
  - ii. Which they should do "under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:3)

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- c. Solomon's Riches Named (Ecclesiastes 2:4-8)
  - i. Houses
  - ii. Vineyards
  - iii. Gardens
  - iv. Orchards
  - v. Pools of water
  - vi. Servants
  - vii. Maidens
  - viii. Cattle
  - ix. Silver
  - x. Gold
  - xi. Various treasures
  - xii. Singers (Men and Women)
  - xiii. Musical instruments
- d. Solomon's Great Works, Houses, Gardens, and Pools (Ecclesiastes 2:4-6)
  - i. The house of God (1 Kings 6:1, 38)
  - ii. Solomon's houses (1 Kings 7:1,8)
    - 1. Solomon apparently had many houses because the Bible uses the plural; of course we see that he built Pharaoh's daughter a house.
    - 2. Solomon took seven years to build the Lord's house (The Temple).
    - 3. It took him thirteen years to build his own house.
      - a. Of course, thirteen is associated time and time again in the Bible with rebellion.
      - b. Before it is over with, Solomon's pleasures will drive a wedge between him and his God.
  - iii. Solomon's gardens and pools (Ecclesiastes 2:5-6)
    - 1. This tells us that Solomon had on hand many different fruits, herbs, and vegetables to feed his house and the nation.
    - 2. He had gardens to enjoy the beauty of the flowers and trees.
    - 3. The watering system was very great in that the pools held water in store for growing things even in dry weather.
- e. Solomon's Servants, Cattle, Riches, and Music (Ecclesiastes 2:7-8)
  - i. Cattle were the measuring stick of wealth by many of these people.
  - ii. Solomon had a huge investment in cattle.
    - 1. Job was considered to be very wealthy in his day
    - 2. Consider Job's wealth of livestock from Job 1:1-3;
      - a. 7000 sheep
      - b. 3000 camels
      - c. 500 yoke of oxen – 1000 oxen
      - d. 500 She asses
    - 3. Job was a wealthy farmer when you look over at what he owned; he had camels and asses to move his goods back and forth to

market. He had oxen to plow the fields, sheep to eat and to get wool from to make clothing.

4. Solomon was no different in that he had all these things and more.
- iii. Solomon's riches and peculiar treasures (Ecclesiastes 2:8)
  1. The singers and musical instruments (Ecclesiastes 2:8b)
    - a. Solomon had a live orchestra anytime he wanted it.
    - b. That is amazing even by today's standards.
    - c. Who cares what's on the radio, let's just have the orchestra and singers play and sing something.
    - d. It appears that Solomon even collected musical instruments. (v. 8) (2 Chronicles 9:11)
  2. The riches and peculiar treasures (Ecclesiastes 2:8)
    - a. The peculiar treasures would have included items that today are worth millions of dollars.
      - i. The highest price that a Stradivarius was sold for was \$3,544,000, at a public auction in 2006. This violin was called the Hammer, produced in 1707. It was estimated to be no less than 1.5 million, and no more than 2.5 million, yet it sold at \$3.5 million.
      - ii. <http://www.stradivariusviolins.org/pricesofstradivariusviolins.html>
    - b. The riches (silver and gold)
      - i. Solomon's yearly gross in gold was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold. (1 Kings 10:14)
      - ii. If you think that this does not sound like a lot, then notice the following.
        1. A talent is as much as a strong man can carry. From 60 pounds up to 100 pounds.
        2. So using a conservative number (say 66 pounds) multiply that by 666, one gets 43,956 pounds of gold. There are 16oz in a pound.
        3. As of March 17, 2013 gold was \$1,592 per ounce. So that means in one year Solomon had \$1,119,647,232.00 in gold brought into his treasury by today's standards. That means in four years his treasury would have \$4,478,588,928.00 in gold.
        4. This does not include all his trade brought in. (1 Kings 10:15, 21-23)
        5. Don't forget what other kingdoms brought Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-2,10, 24-25)

- II. THE FAILURE OF LUXURY (Ecclesiastes 2:9-11)
  - a. The extent of Solomon's greatness (Ecclesiastes 2:9)
    - i. He was greater than anyone before him that had lived in Jerusalem
      - 1. Greater in riches (2 Chronicles 9:20-22, 27)
      - 2. Greater in power (2 Chronicles 9:23-26)
      - 3. Greater in glory (2 Chronicles 9:17-19)
    - ii. This means he was greater than even his father David
      - 1. In riches
      - 2. In power
      - 3. And in glory
  - b. The extent of our Lord's greatness (compared to Solomon)
    - i. It has been said that Solomon's reign is a great picture of the millennial reign of the Lord (to a degree of course, one must consider that a picture is not always perfect, Solomon was a man that had sin in his life). (Psalm 72:1-20 – A Psalm written by David for Solomon).
      - 1. Greater in riches (Psalm 50:7-12)
      - 2. Greater in power (Psalm 2:7-12; 50:1-6; 110:1-7; Daniel 2:44-45; Isaiah 63:1-4)
      - 3. Greater in glory (Psalm 113:4; 148:13)
  - c. The wisdom that God gave Solomon remained with him (Ecclesiastes 2:9b)
  - d. The extent of Solomon's pleasure (Ecclesiastes 2:10)
    - i. Solomon withheld nothing from himself
      - 1. Of whatsoever his eyes desired
        - a. The desire of the eyes can bring trouble
          - i. Adam and Eve sinned in the garden over what could be seen (Genesis 3:6)
          - ii. Achan lusted after something that he was not supposed to have (Joshua 7:20-26)
          - iii. Samson's eyes caused trouble for him (Judges 14:1-3)
          - iv. David and his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-3)
        - b. The eyes of man need to be guarded from the evil of this world
          - i. Job made a covenant (Job 31:1)
          - ii. The turning of the eyes from evil (Psalm 119:37)
          - iii. The eyes should not depart from the word (Proverbs 4:20-27)
          - iv. The things of this world will pass away (1 John 2:15-17)

2. Or whatever brought his heart joy
  - a. Joy in the Bible many times is associated with something that is good. However it can be connected to things that are not.
    - i. The hypocrites joy is but for a moment (Job 20:5)
    - ii. The rejoicing of a boaster is evil (James 4:16-17)
    - iii. Folly is joy to him that has no wisdom (Proverbs 15:21)
  - b. The heart of man needs to be guarded as well
    - i. Man's heart is said to be evil and wicked (Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9)
    - ii. Therefore it needs to be checked and balanced
      1. By the LORD (Jeremiah 17:10; 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 139:23-24)
      2. By His word (Hebrews 4:12-13)
      3. David prayed for Solomon that he would have a perfect heart (1 Chronicles 29:10, 17-20)
      4. David warned Solomon to have a perfect heart before God (1 Chronicles 28:2-10)
    - iii. So that a man might live his life out in joy for the glory of God (Psalm 32:11; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
  - ii. The portion of Solomon's pleasure (Ecclesiastes 2:10b)
    1. Solomon was able to get everything he wanted. None of us can say that.
    2. He withheld nothing from himself; if he wanted it he got it.
    3. Yet at the end of verse 10 Solomon makes the statement, "and this was the portion of all my labour."
  - e. Solomon's survey of all his greatness and wealth (Ecclesiastes 2:11)
    - i. Notice Solomon looked over all that he had. He took account of it.
    - ii. In fact if you look back up to verses 4-8 you see where he had just took note of it all.
    - iii. This reminds us of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel (Daniel 4:28-33)
      1. Nebuchadnezzar was reminded that it was God that had given him his kingdom (Daniel 4:31)
      2. Notice Nebuchadnezzar's response after his education in the fields (Daniel 4:34-36)
      3. Nebuchadnezzar praised the One that had given him his kingdom (Daniel 4:37)
    - iv. All was vanity and vexation (Ecclesiastes 2:11b)
      1. Apart from God (Remember what Nebuchadnezzar said)
      2. Notice Solomon says, "there was no profit under the sun"
      3. This is true for today (Mark 8:36-37; John 6:63; 1 Corinthians 13:3)