

**Pleasure and Wisdom ‘Under the Sun’
Ecclesiastes 2:1-17; I Cor.15:16-20**

0.0 Introduction

- 0.1 ‘Cynical wisdom’ like Ecc shows emptiness of life *iff* lived only for itself
- 0.2 Affirming life backwardly
- 0.3 Most of us feel cynical at times – and that can be good

1.0 Three Epic Experiments

- 1.1 With pleasure (vv.1-7)
- 1.2 With wealth (vv.8-11)
- 1.3 With wisdom (vv.12-17)

2.0 Key to the Experiments: “Under the Sun”

- 2.1 Phrase echoes through book (1:9,14; 2:11,17,22; 3:16; 4:1,3,7; 6:12; 8:15),
- 2.2 Viewpoint of the working man: blunt, realistic
- 2.3 One can experiment in empty pursuits that are attractive but void (v.10a)
- 2.4 Notice some long-term outcomes – or their absence (vv.14,16,18)
- 2.5 What lies “under the sun” only gives a glimpse at God’s great world (I Cor.15:19-20)

3.0 The Importance of This for Us Today

- 3.1 Ecclesiastes a workout in natural consequences. Still, God *is* there, and here.
- 3.2 Don’t ‘live in your head’ but look upward and outward.
- 3.3 Do enjoy the good things God gives you: each has its place.

*Next week (May 9) – A Glimpse of Hope
Ecclesiastes 2:18-26*

Ecclesiastes 2:1-17 (NASB)

The Futility of Pleasure and Possessions

² 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 senseless,*” and of pleasure, “What does this accomplish?” ³ I explored with my mind *how* to refresh my body with wine while my mind was guiding *me* wisely; and how to seize foolishness, until I could see what good there is for the sons of mankind to do under heaven for 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 slaves *born* at home. I also possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also amassed for myself silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers, and the pleasures of the sons of mankind: 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 restrain 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 So I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold, all was futility and striving after wind, and there was no benefit under the sun.

Wisdom Surpasses Foolishness

¹² So I turned to consider wisdom, insanity, and foolishness; for what *will* the man *do* who will come after the king, *except* what has already been done? ¹³ Then I saw that wisdom surpasses foolishness as light surpasses darkness. ¹⁴ The wise person’s eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one *and the same* fate happens to both of them. ¹⁵ Then I said to myself, “As is the fate of the fool, it will also happen to me. Why then have I been extremely wise?” So I said to myself, “This too is futility.” ¹⁶ For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise, along with the fool, since *in* the coming days everything will soon be forgotten. And how the wise and the fool alike die! ¹⁷ So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was unhappy to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.

1 Corinthians 15:16-20 (NASB)

¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷ and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If we have hoped in Christ only in this life, we are of all people most to be pitied.

The Order of Resurrection

²⁰ But the fact is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.