### Ecclesiastes

## Chapter 2

1‘Then I said to my heart:  
  
 ‘Well come now;  
 I’ll [fill] you with joy and then you’ll know good!’  
  
 ‘But, even that was just folly.  
  
 2‘To laughter, I said, ‘You’re a burden!’  
 And to joy, I asked, ‘What have you achieved?’  
 3So I thought in my heart:  
  
 ‘I’ll drink wine for my flesh!’  
  
 ‘But my heart then led me towards wisdom.  
  
 ‘Next, I decided to hold onto joy  
 Until I could see just what kind of good  
 There is to be found among sons of men,  
 And what they can do in their short years of life.  
  
 4‘So thereafter, I went into action…  
 I planted vineyards and built many homes.  
 5I made myself gardens and parks,  
 Which I planted with all sorts of fruit.  
  
 6‘Around them, I dug ponds and lakes  
 To water the groves filled with trees.  
 7I acquired many slaves (both men and women),  
 And many native servants were born.  
  
 ‘I also acquired great herds and flocks…  
 More than all who had come before me.  
 8I collected much silver and gold for myself…  
 The possessions of kings and estates.  
  
 ‘I prepared for myself, many singers…  
 Men and women, I brought to amuse me.  
 I had men and women who just served me wine.  
  
 9‘Then, I became great as my wisdom increased  
 (More than all who had come before me);  
 And indeed, my wisdom was proven.  
  
 10‘Everything that I could ask for  
 Was there in front of my eyes,  
 And no joy was withheld from my heart.  
 But, although these efforts of my heart brought me joy;  
 This was the sum of all I’d achieved.  
  
 11‘For, when I looked at the things I had done,  
 And the things that I’d made with my hands…  
 When I considered the effort it took,  
 I saw that it all was just folly.  
 Since, no matter what our spirits may choose to do;  
 It brings no advantage under the sun.  
  
 12‘So thereafter, I examined my wisdom,  
 And I saw that it too was just folly.  
 For, who under the sun will follow my words…  
 Which man will do [what I’ve said]?  
 And although the wise may have eyes in their heads,  
 The fools will still travel in darkness.  
  
 ‘I also realized that both them and I  
 Will eventually all meet together.  
 15So, in my heart I said this:  
  
 ‘Since the fate of fools will also take me;  
 What value is there in my wisdom?’  
  
 ‘And I also said this in my heart:  
  
 ‘The things that I’ve said about being a fool  
 Are also just [wasted breath];  
 16For, both the wise the fools are forgotten,  
 And what they do won’t be remembered.  
 So, how are the wise any better than fools?’  
  
 17‘Then, I became disgusted with life;  
 For, all that I’ve done under the sun  
 Will eventually end up as bad…  
 It’s all foolish and a waste [of good] breath.  
  
 18‘I became disgusted with all of the things  
 That I had accomplished under the sun,  
 For I’ll leave it to the one who comes next…  
 19And who knows if he’s wise or another poor fool…  
 Who knows if he’ll care for the things I’ve made,  
 Or the things I’ve learned under the sun?  
 So, all of this is just folly!  
  
 20‘Thus I turned to dismiss it all from my heart…  
 All the results of my efforts,  
 And all that I’d made under the sun.  
  
 21‘For there’s a man who worked hard to gain wisdom,  
 As well as knowledge and courage.  
 But, there’s also a man who made no such effort,  
 And he will receive the same fate.  
 So, this is a great wicked folly.  
  
 22‘What happens to a man and his efforts,  
 And the resolves of his heart under the sun?  
 23During all of his days there’s pain,  
 And rage over things that are being destroyed;  
 So, during the night, his heart knows no rest…  
 Indeed, this too is just folly.  
  
 24‘Nothing worthwhile comes to a man  
 But eating, drinking, and searching for good…  
 These things truly come from God’s hands;  
 25For, without Him, who’s able to eat or to drink?  
  
 26‘To those whom He declares to be good,  
 He bequeaths wisdom, knowledge, and joy…  
 But, from the sinners, He rips this away!  
 They’re just given to those whom He finds to be good,  
 And to those who can stand before Him.  
 Yet, this is also just folly,  
 And just a waste of [good] breath.’