

Ecclesiastes 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:

Analysis

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits—the Hebrew 'gannim' (גַּנִּים, gardens) and 'pardesim' (פְּרָדִים, orchards/parks) describe elaborate landscaping projects. The word 'pardes' (singular: paradise) is a Persian loanword denoting royal pleasure gardens, appearing only here, Nehemiah 2:8, and Song of Solomon 4:13. Solomon's horticultural ambitions exceeded mere utility—these were aesthetic enterprises designed to maximize sensory pleasure through beauty, fragrance, and variety.

The phrase **all kind of fruits** emphasizes comprehensive experimentation. First Kings 4:33 records that Solomon 'spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall,' demonstrating botanical expertise. Yet despite creating environments of exquisite beauty and abundance—earthly paradises—the Preacher will conclude these projects failed to satisfy. Only the true Paradise, restored through Christ (Luke 23:43; Revelation 2:7), provides lasting fulfillment.

Historical Context

Solomon's building projects were legendary. First Kings 7:1-12 describes his palace complex requiring thirteen years to complete. Josephus (Antiquities 8.7.3) and later rabbinic sources describe Solomon's elaborate gardens near Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence from the ancient Near East shows that royal gardens symbolized power, wealth, and divine favor—Mesopotamian kings boasted of

collecting exotic plants from conquered territories. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon exemplified this tradition. Solomon's gardens functioned similarly, demonstrating Israel's prosperity under his reign (970-930 BC). Yet the Preacher retrospectively exposes the emptiness behind such magnificent accomplishments when pursued as ultimate ends rather than received as God's gifts (2:24-26).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What projects or environments have you created hoping they would provide lasting satisfaction, and what did you discover?
2. How does Solomon's verdict on his elaborate gardens challenge modern assumptions about finding fulfillment through creating your ideal environment or lifestyle?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	עֵץ	בְּהֶם	וְנָטַעְתִּי	וּפְרִידֹסִים	גַּן וְתֵן	לִי	עָשָׂה יְהוָה
	trees		and I planted	and orchards	me gardens	I made	
H3605	H6086	H0	H5193	H6508	H1593	H0	H6213

פְּרִי:

in them of all kind of fruits

H6529