

UNDER THE SUN

Joy, Sorrow, Vanity, and What Really Matters in Life

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. -Ecclesiastes 12:13

The Quest:

“To Understand The Purpose of It All”

Ecclesiastes 2:18-3:15

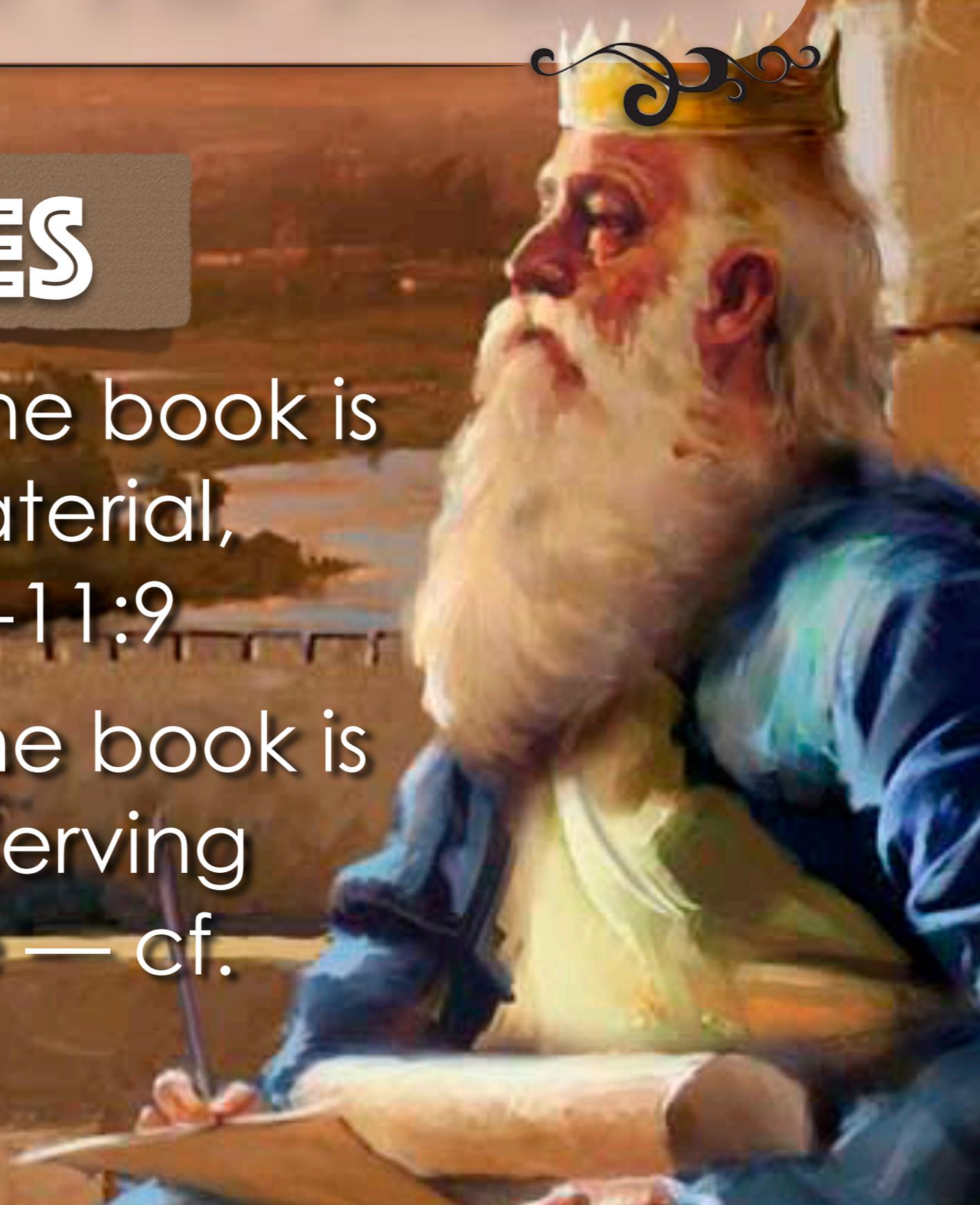
Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ To everything *there is* a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

"The Words of The Preacher"

ECCLESIASTES

- The main focus of the book is the VANITY of of material, earthly things — 1:1-11:9
- The main point of the book is the importance of serving God throughout life — cf. 11:9-12:1, 13-14

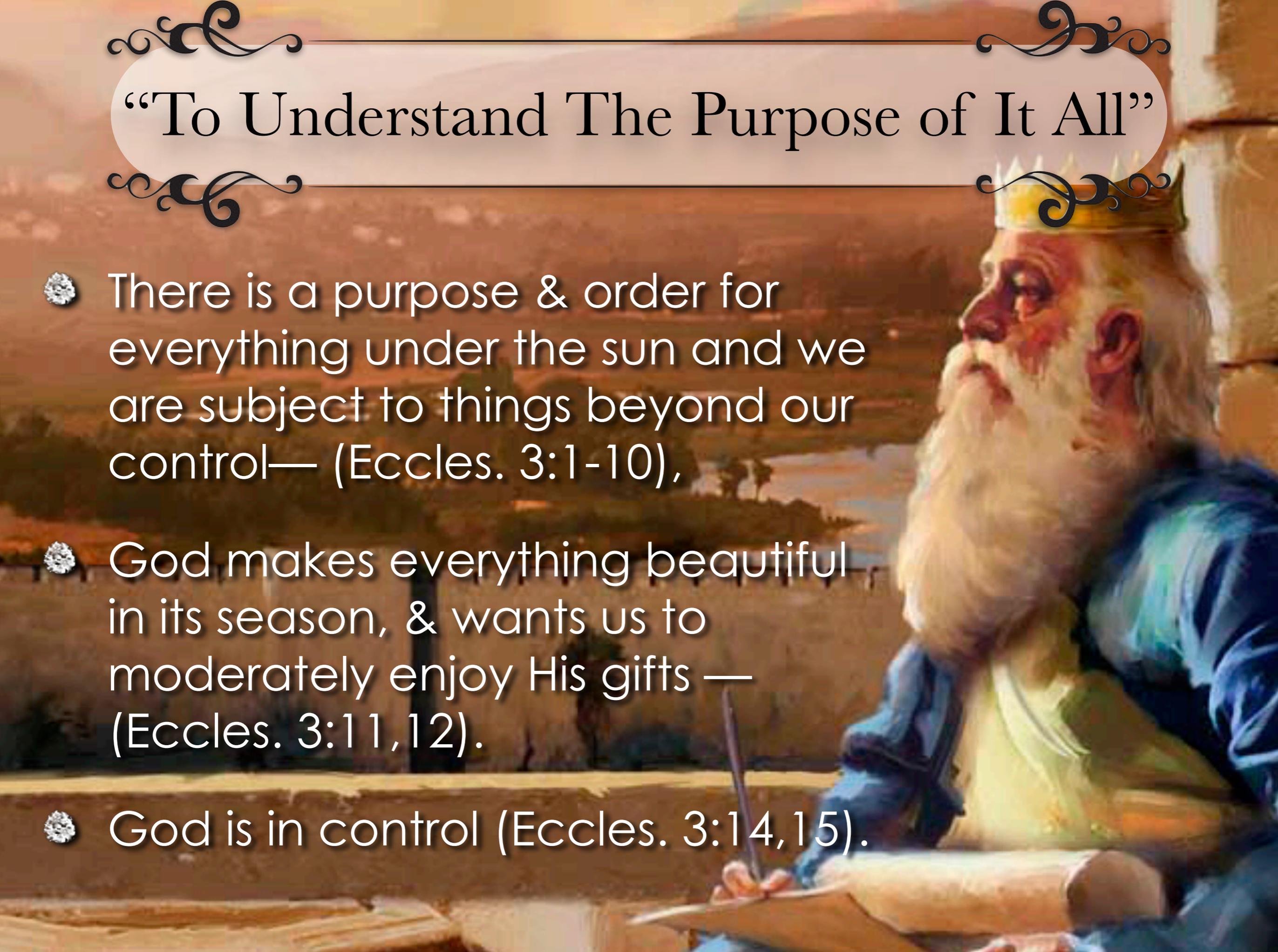


"The Words of The Preacher"

THE QUEST FOR SATISFACTION

- ❖ Cannot be found in “amusements and delights?” — 2:1,2
- ❖ Cannot be found in wine — 2:3
- ❖ Cannot be found in work 2:4-6
- ❖ Cannot be found in wealth — 2:7-8a
- ❖ Cannot be found in women — 2:8b
- ❖ Cannot be found in wisdom — 2:13-16





“To Understand The Purpose of It All”

- There is a purpose & order for everything under the sun and we are subject to things beyond our control— (Eccles. 3:1-10),
- God makes everything beautiful in its season, & wants us to moderately enjoy His gifts — (Eccles. 3:11,12).
- God is in control (Eccles. 3:14,15).

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 (NKJV)

¹ To everything *there is* a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: ² A time to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck *what is* planted; ³ A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up; ⁴ A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance;

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 (NKJV)

⁵ A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones; A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶ A time to gain, And a time to lose; A time to keep, And a time to throw away; ⁷ A time to tear, And a time to sew; A time to keep silence, And a time to speak; ⁸ A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 (NKJV)

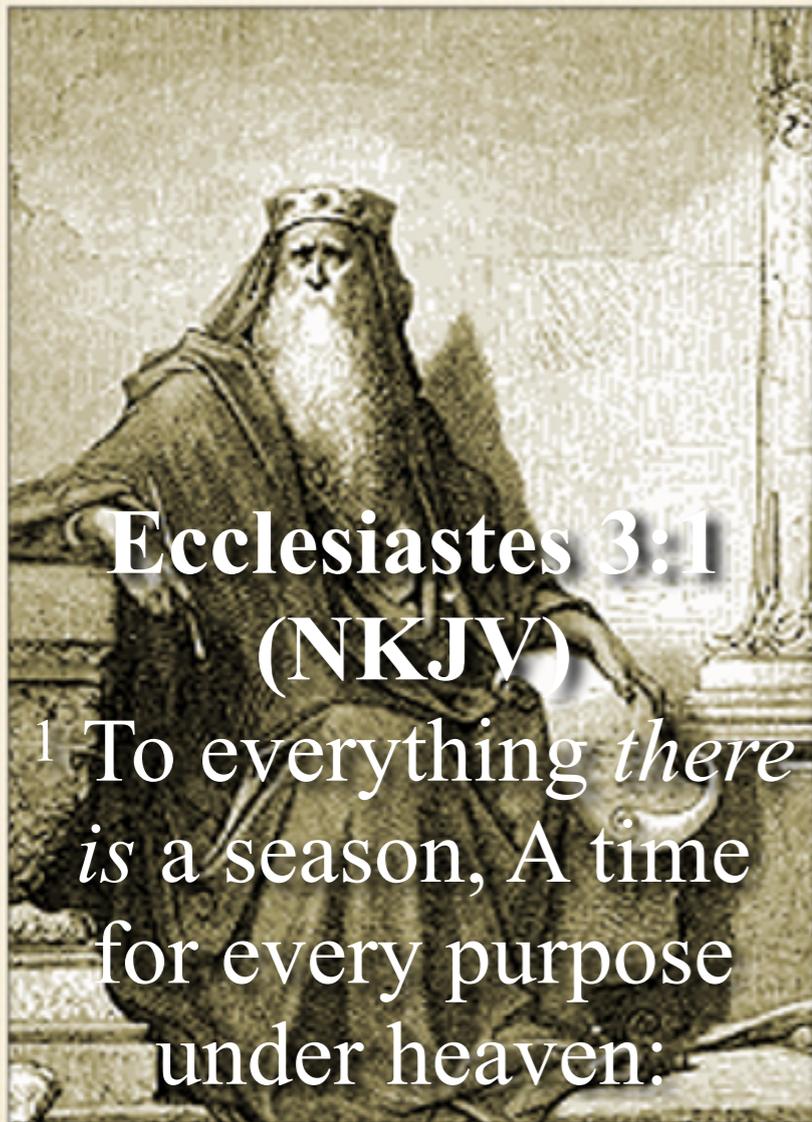
⁹ What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? ¹⁰ I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 (NKJV)

¹² I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, ¹³ and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it *is* the gift of God. ¹⁴ I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does *it*, that men should fear before Him. ¹⁵ That which is has already been, And what is to be has already been; And God requires an account of what is past.

“The Quest For Purpose”

Realizing our lack of control over the things around us



**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there*
is a season, A time
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under heaven:

- ▶ **Season** – A fixed, definite portion of time –
 - ▶ Spring – Summer – Fall – Winter
 - ▶ Baseball, football, basketball; hunting season,
- ▶ **Time** – A particular point in time in which a thing may be done or begun.
- ▶ **Purpose** – (Activity, NIV) – That which is done on earth.

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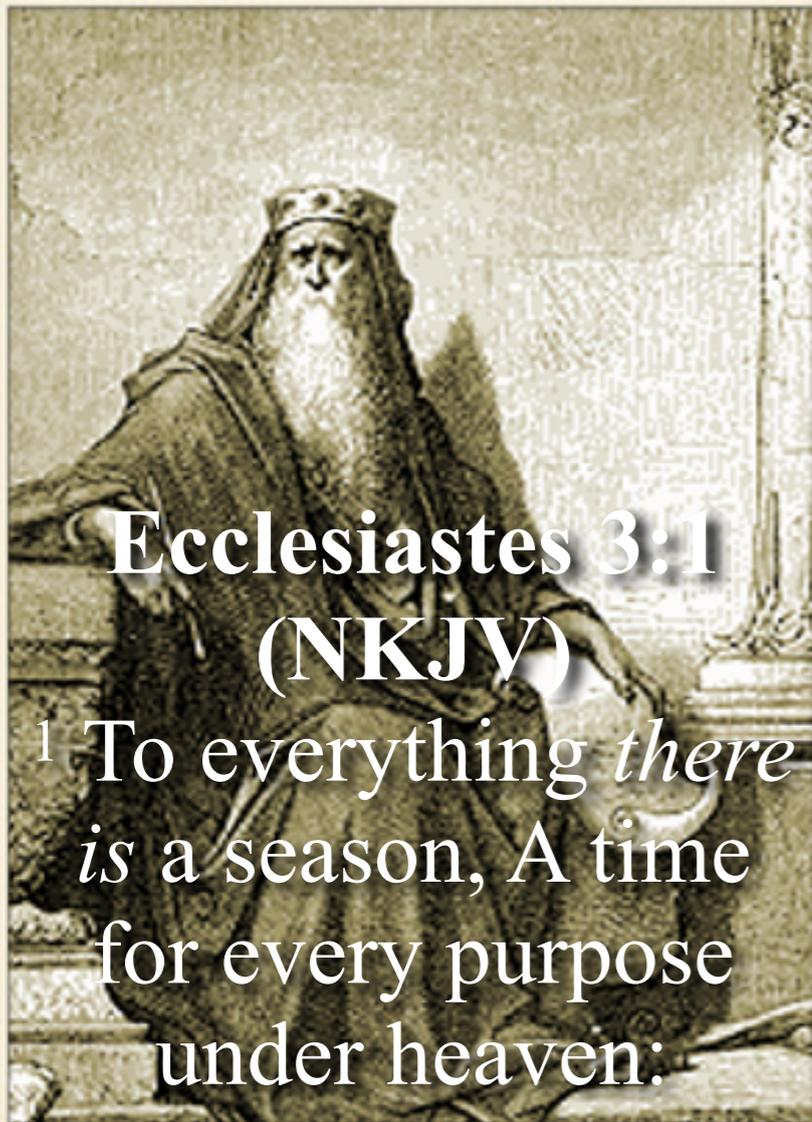
**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there* is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

- ▶ Divine providence has arranged the order in which everything happens — God is indeed over all.
- ▶ Things achieved in the previous chapter, e.g., wisdom, wealth, success, happiness, etc., are not solely in our hands, but contingent on external circumstances beyond our control.

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Realizing our lack of control over the things around us



**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

*¹ To everything there
is a season, A time
for every purpose
under heaven:*

EVENTS

TIME

LIFE

LIMITATIONS

CYCLES

“The Quest For Purpose”

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- ▶ In Hebrew manuscripts and in most printed texts verses 2–8 are printed in two parallel columns so that the contrasting times are clearly juxtaposed.
- ▶ The list contains fourteen pairs of contrasts, ranging from external circumstances to the inner affections of a person's being.

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▶ **A time to be born, And a time to die; (2)**

- No control over our birth — When, where, by whom, circumstances, personal traits . . .
- Our death certain – Gen 3:19; Heb 9:27; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Ps 89:48
- Everything we experience “under the sun” transpires between these two events.

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- ▶ **A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted; (2)**
 - “Uproot” might refer to harvesting, but probably more refers to cutting down trees, clearing land, etc...
 - Everything has a beginning and an end--- eventually even the physical universe will be uprooted (Hebrews 1:10-12; 2 Peter 3:9-11).

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there*
is a season, A time
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▶ **A time to kill, And a time to heal; (3)**

- A time to butcher livestock (Genesis 9:2-3); execute criminals (Romans 13:4); protect your family from intruders (Exo. 22:2).
- To time to heal, care for the wounded, nurse a sick animal back to health.

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there* is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

▶ **A time to break down, And a time to build up; (3)**

- Unsuitable, old or dangerous structures will be removed to be replaced by new ones
- Sometimes we see things we love - memories - landmarks, etc. removed to make way for the new -
- This also applies to nations (Jeremiah 18).

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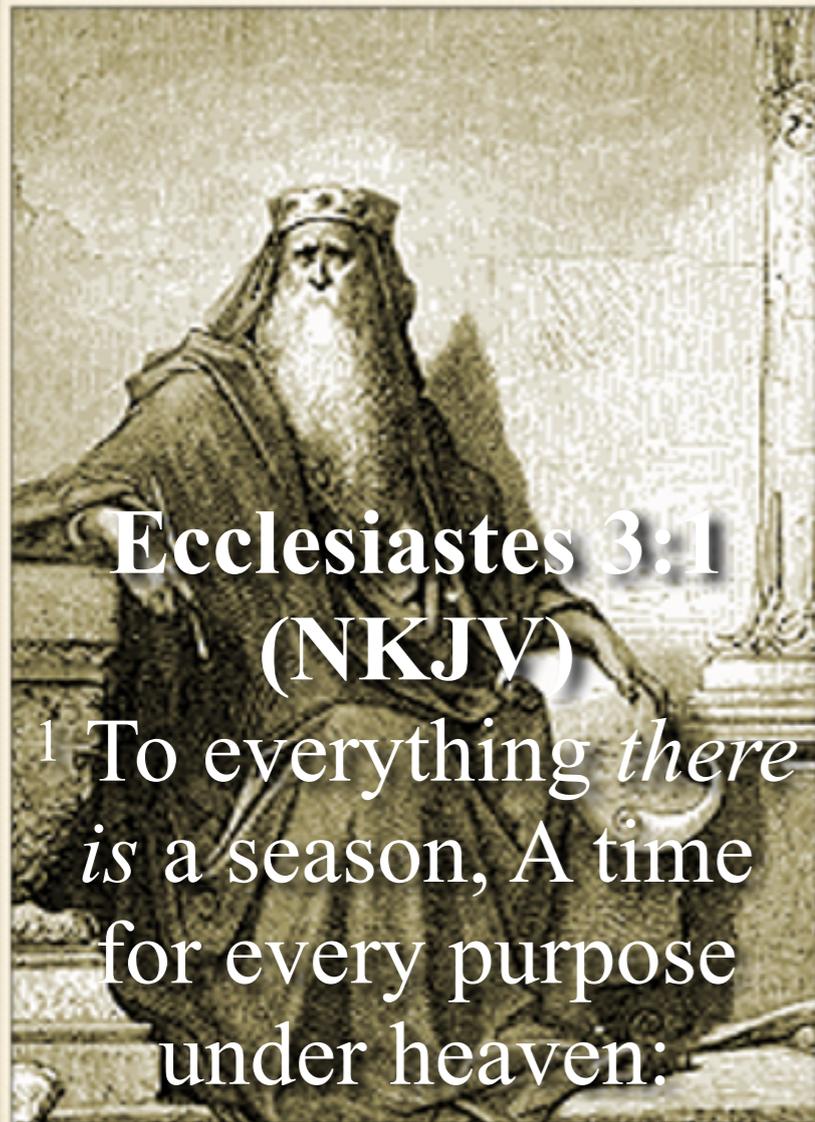
Realizing our lack of control over the things around us



- ▶ **A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; (4)**
 - We want to feel good all the time and avoid anything that might bring us sorrow. — But, like it or not, tragedy, heartache, and suffering will affect us all.
 - Such inward feelings are given full expression at funerals and weddings ... (7:2,3; Rom. 12:15)

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(NKJV)**

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- ▶ **A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; (4)**
- The word “dance” means to leap or skip about. The natural response to JOY! (Luke 15:25)
- “Biblical dancing was the unrehearsed, spontaneous exuberance resulting from a great physical victory, or some festive occasion” (Kidwell p. 75).

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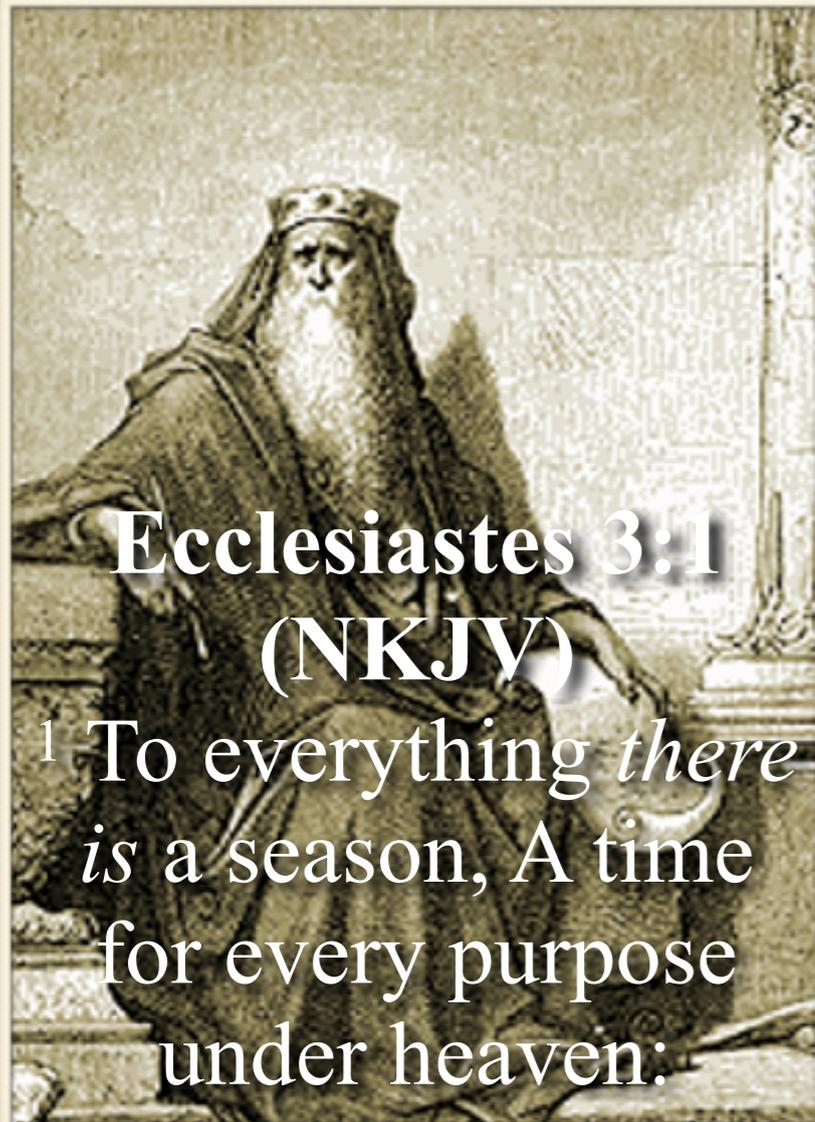
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- ▶ **A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; (4)**
- There is a time to mourn for your own sins and the sins of others (1 Cor. 5:2; James 4:9-10; 2 Cor. 7:8-10; Mat. 26:75).
- A time to rejoice - the lost are found - sins are forgiven - our efforts put into spiritual things bear good fruit — (Luke 15:5-10)

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there*
is a season, A time
for every purpose
under heaven:

▶ **A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones; (5)**

■ “The next couplet has occasioned many interpretations: ... The practice in war of marring an enemy’s field may be in view (2 Kgs 3:19, 25), ... probably the reference is to tearing down and building stone walls, winepresses, guard towers, and roads.” — *Smith, J. E. (1996). The wisdom literature and Psalms. Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.*

“The Quest For Purpose”

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there* is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

- ▶ **A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing; (5)**
 - There is a time to receive people with open arms (Phil. 2:29), and a time to reject (Titus 3:10).
 - Such is often determined by the actions of others — (1 Cor 5;).
 - We can't be friends with all the people we would really like to be friends with. — (Mat 18:15-17; 2 Thes 3:14,15)

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there* is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

- ▶ **A time to gain, And a time to lose; A time to keep, And a time to throw away (6)**
 - There are things worth searching for (Luke 13:24; 2 Tim. 2:15; Eph. 4:3). And then there are times to give up, to cut your loses and admit failure.
 - Some things we need to hold on to and some things we need to get rid of (Col 3:5-14). The same is true with friends (1 Cor 15:33).

“The Quest For Purpose”

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there* is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

- ▶ **A time to tear, And a time to sew — (7a)**
 - There are times when it is natural to tear clothes, whether from grief, anger, or other causes, e.g., as being old and worthless.
 - There are also times when it is appropriate to mend them.
 - This principle applies to many things, i.e., - relationships, friendships, practices or habits, and possessions. —

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there*
is a season, A time
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- ▶ **A time to keep silence, And a time to speak; — (7b)**
 - Many times silence is the best policy! (Prov. 10:19; 17:27, 28) — When angry (James 1:19), or when you haven't heard the question yet (Prov. 18:13).
 - And then, there is a time to speak out - and even wrong if we do not speak — (Esther 4:13,14; 15:23; 25:11; 27:5; Gal. 2:11-14; Eph. 5:11).

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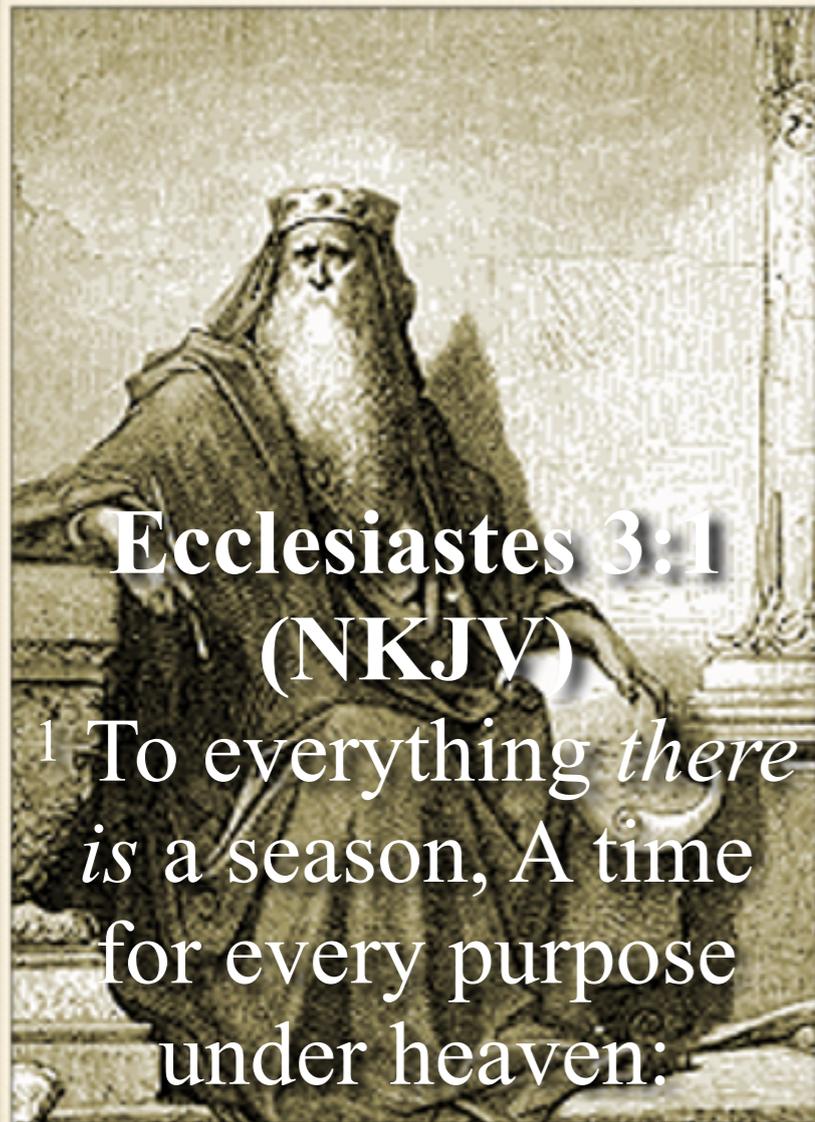
**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there*
is a season, A time
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under heaven:

- ▶ **A time to love, And a time to hate; — (8a)**
 - Love - the main characteristic of God & His children - (Mk 12:29-31; Col. 3:12-15)
 - BUT - - there are times when we ARE TO HATE, especially evil, every appearance of immorality, injustice and oppression, — (Psalm 119:104; Prov. 6:16; 8:13; Rev 2:6,15).

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)**

¹ To everything *there*
is a season, A time
for every purpose
under heaven:

- ▶ **A time of war, And a time of peace — (8b)**
 - As much as we may want peace - peace will NEVER be universally possible! (Rom 12:18)
 - Situations may force us into conflict — we can't remain passive / neutral - Sometimes peace isn't possible. (Jude 3)
 - Wars exist because SIN exists (Mat 10:34-38; Lk 11:23; Jn 3:20).

“The Quest For Purpose”

Realizing our lack of control over the things around us

**Ecclesiastes 3:9–10
(NKJV)**

⁹ What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? ¹⁰ I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied.

- ▶ The 14 contrasting conditions lead to this Question - (the same answer as in 1:3) - “**None!**”
- In all we do - all depends on times & seasons over which we have NO control — (a farmer plants & work his fields – but - drought – floods – bugs – fire ...)
- There is no satisfaction or security in our efforts to acquire material possessions – **Yet we must work** – 2 Thes 3:10

“The Quest For Purpose”

God's Purpose In Time & Eternity

**Ecclesiastes 3:11
(NKJV)**

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

▶ **Everything Is Beautiful ...**

- The beauty of nature: Fall & spring – summer & winter / The grand Canyon – the Ozarks
- A newborn / innocent child
- Marriage / Endurance
- The beauty of death! Ps 116:15
- How can these things be objectively considered without recognizing God?

“The Quest For Purpose”

God's Purpose In Time & Eternity

**Ecclesiastes 3:11
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11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

- ▶ **Man has a deeply ENGRAINED sense of PURPOSE & DESTINY ...**
- We are made in the image of God - We alone think about where we have been and where we are going -
 - Many attempt to squelch this hunger by drowning it in their pursuit of temporal things.
 - To ignore the purpose God has planted in our hearts is to reject God's eternal purpose for us!

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God's Purpose In Time & Eternity

Ecclesiastes 3:11
(NKJV)

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

▶ **We are INCAPABLE of FULLY perceiving God's work ...**

- Apart from Divine revelation, we are blind concerning what God has done in the past or will do in the future (Deut. 29:29; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13)
- As much as men may search - as much as they reason, apart from God's revelation, they will always be in the dark — Genesis 1; Romans 1:18-26 ...

“The Quest For Purpose”

Benefit of A God-Centered World View

Ecclesiastes 3:12– 13 (NKJV)

¹² I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, ¹³ and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.

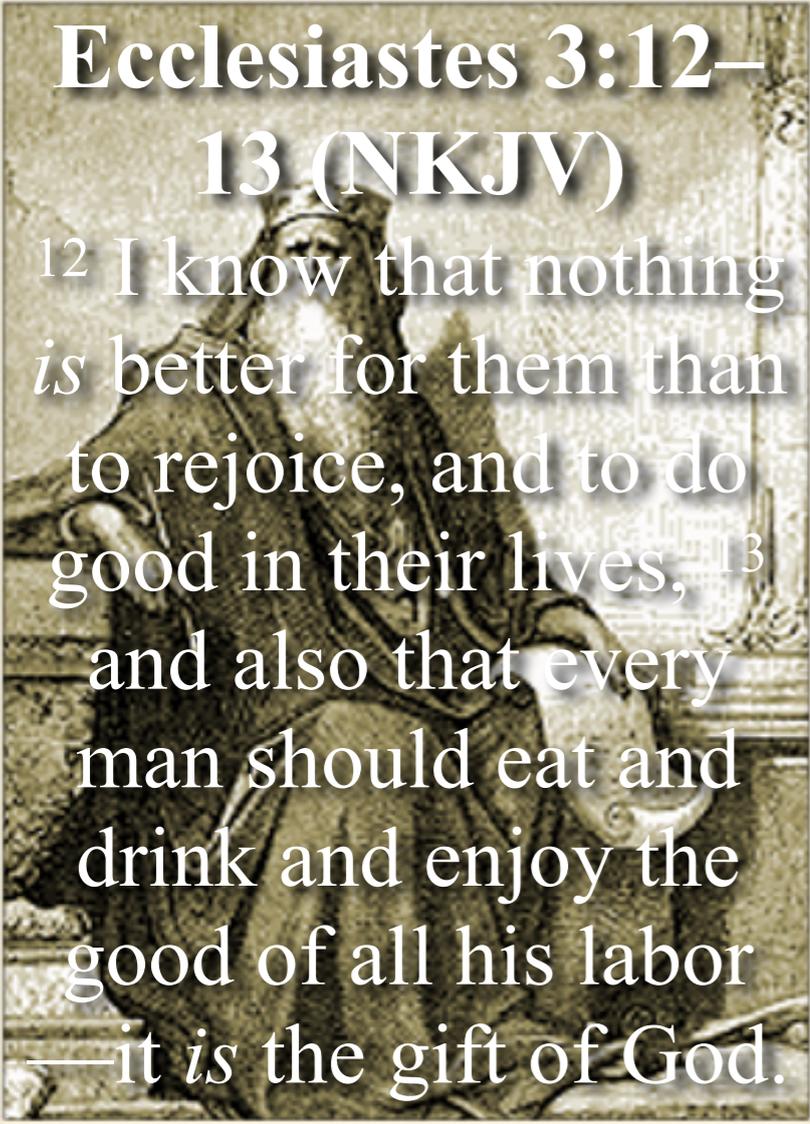
▶ **God DESIRES the best for us, and that we enjoy His blessings ...**

- So often we are in such a hurry to get to the next stage in our lives that we ignore the joys to be experienced where we are.
- So often, we miss the blessing because of our failure to see the bigger picture — (2 Col 4:15,16)
- We also forfeit blessings by worrying about things beyond our control — (Mat 6:25-34)

“The Quest For Purpose”

Benefit of A God-Centered World View

Ecclesiastes 3:12– 13 (NKJV)



¹² I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, ¹³ and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor — it is the gift of God.

How everything changes **WHEN WE TRUST** in the Sovereign of the universe —
Phili 4:3-13

“The Quest For Purpose”

Benefit of A God-Centered World View

Ecclesiastes 3:14

(NKJV)

¹⁴ I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does *it*, that men should fear before Him.

▶ **God's will is immutable ...**

- His Law – Promises – (God's works contrasted with man's)
- Who are we to reply against God – Rom 9:20 — We cannot add to or subtract from God's Word ...
- We are not in control — GOD IS! — So we **MUST** trust Him and **FEAR HIM!** — Prov 1:7;

“The Quest For Purpose”

Benefit of A God-Centered World View

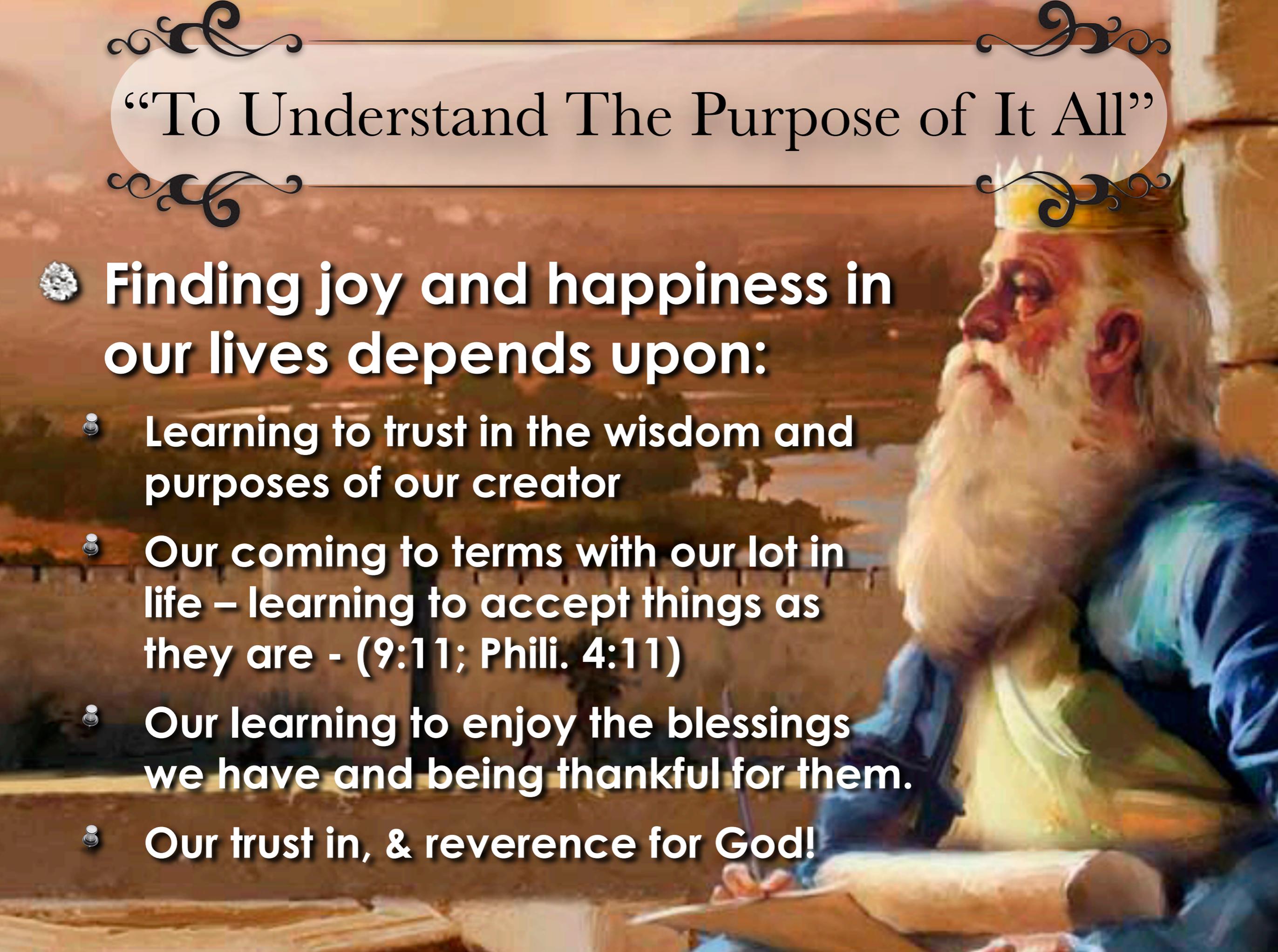


**Ecclesiastes 3:15
(NKJV)**

¹⁵ That which is has already been, And what is to be has already been; And God requires an account of what is past.

▶ **God Is In CONTROL ...**

- The orderly and appointed succession of events is evidence of the moral government of God
- However, some events appear to contradict God's sovereign control, but he assures us that any violation of the rules is only temporary — God will set all things RIGHT - He will hold all violators accountable, 12:13,14



“To Understand The Purpose of It All”

- ◆ **Finding joy and happiness in our lives depends upon:**
 - Learning to trust in the wisdom and purposes of our creator
 - Our coming to terms with our lot in life – learning to accept things as they are - (9:11; Phili. 4:11)
 - Our learning to enjoy the blessings we have and being thankful for them.
 - Our trust in, & reverence for God!

“To Understand The Purpose of It All”

FULFILLMENT

- Can ONLY Be found IN CHRIST —
- All that God gives is in Christ —
Col. 2:9; Eph 1:3
- Those of us in Christ have a knowledge & PEACE none outside of Him can know or have! - John 14:6;



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Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. -Ecclesiastes 12:13

The Quest:

“To Understand The Purpose of It All”

Ecclesiastes 2:18-3:15

Charts by Don McClain

Preached March 3, 2019

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Luke 16:19–26 (NKJV)

¹⁹ “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luke 16:19–26 (NKJV)

²⁴ “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ ²⁵ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’