

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

“Better Things Than Vanity”

(Ecclesiastes 7:1-14)

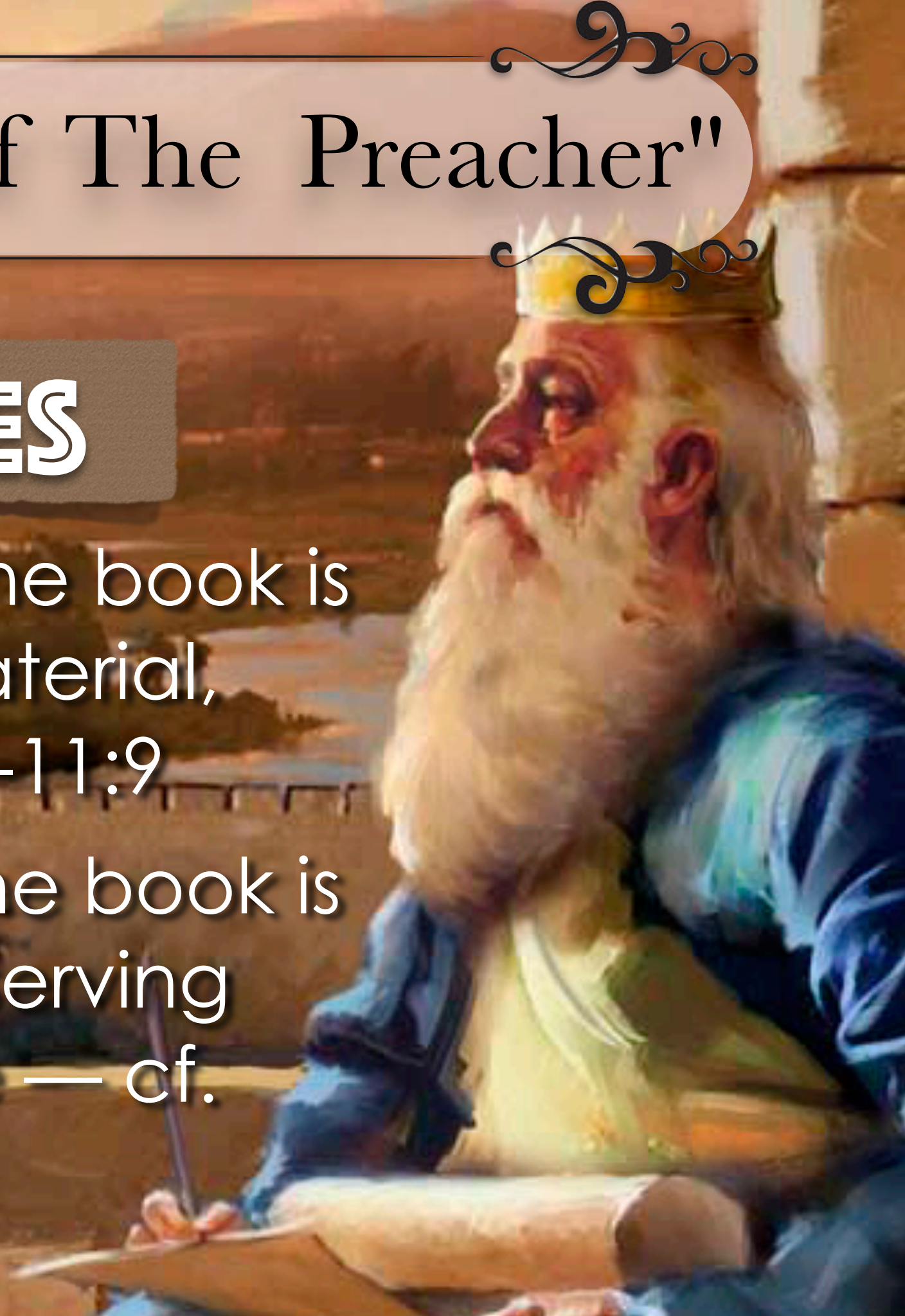
Ecclesiastes 7:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance, And profitable to those who see the sun. ¹² For wisdom *is* a defense *as* money *is* a defense, But the excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives life to those who have it.

"The Words of The Preacher"

ECCLESIASTES

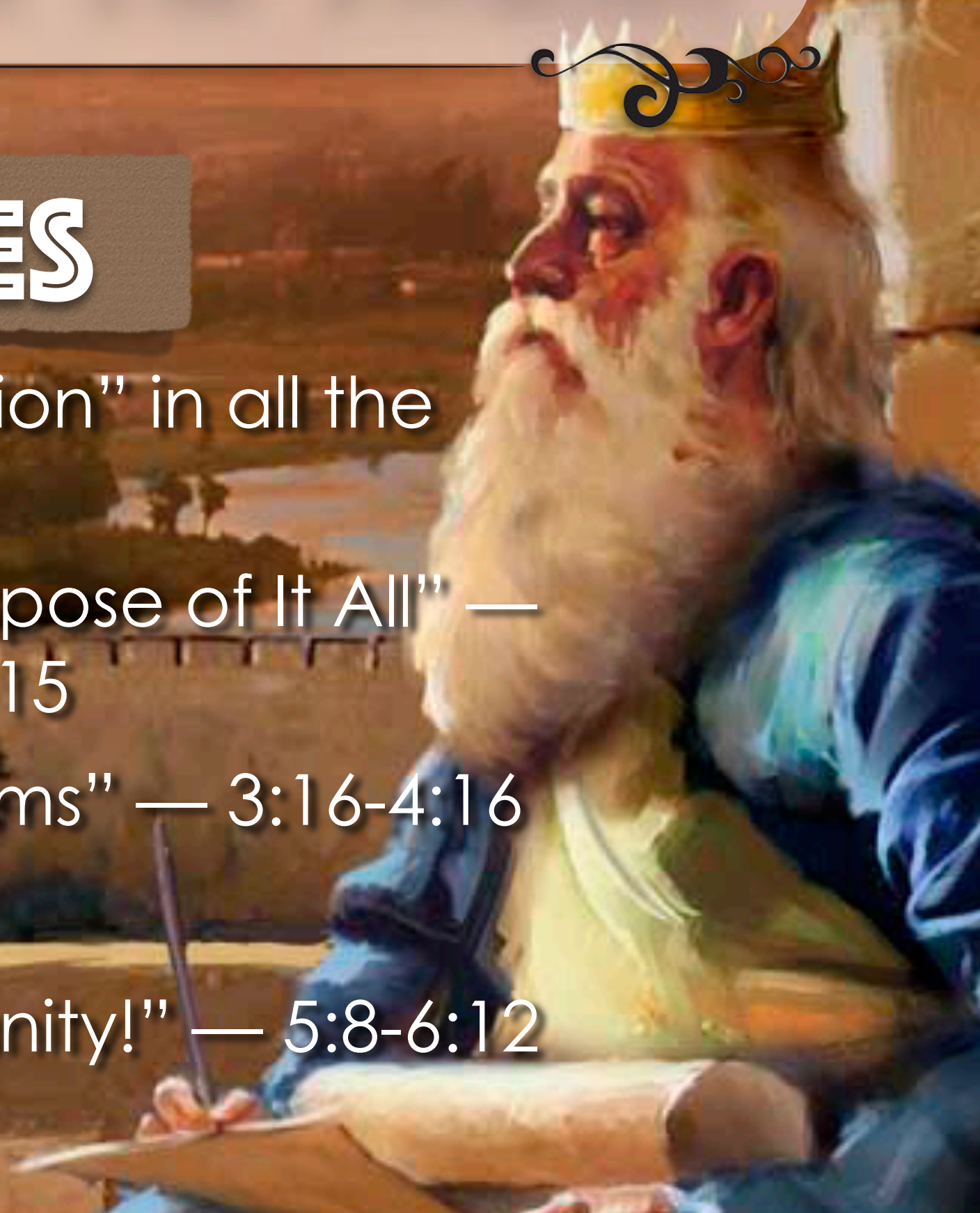
- The main focus of the book is the VANITY of of material, earthly things — 1:1-11:9
- The main point of the book is the importance of serving God throughout life — cf. 11:9-12:1, 13-14



"The Words of The Preacher"

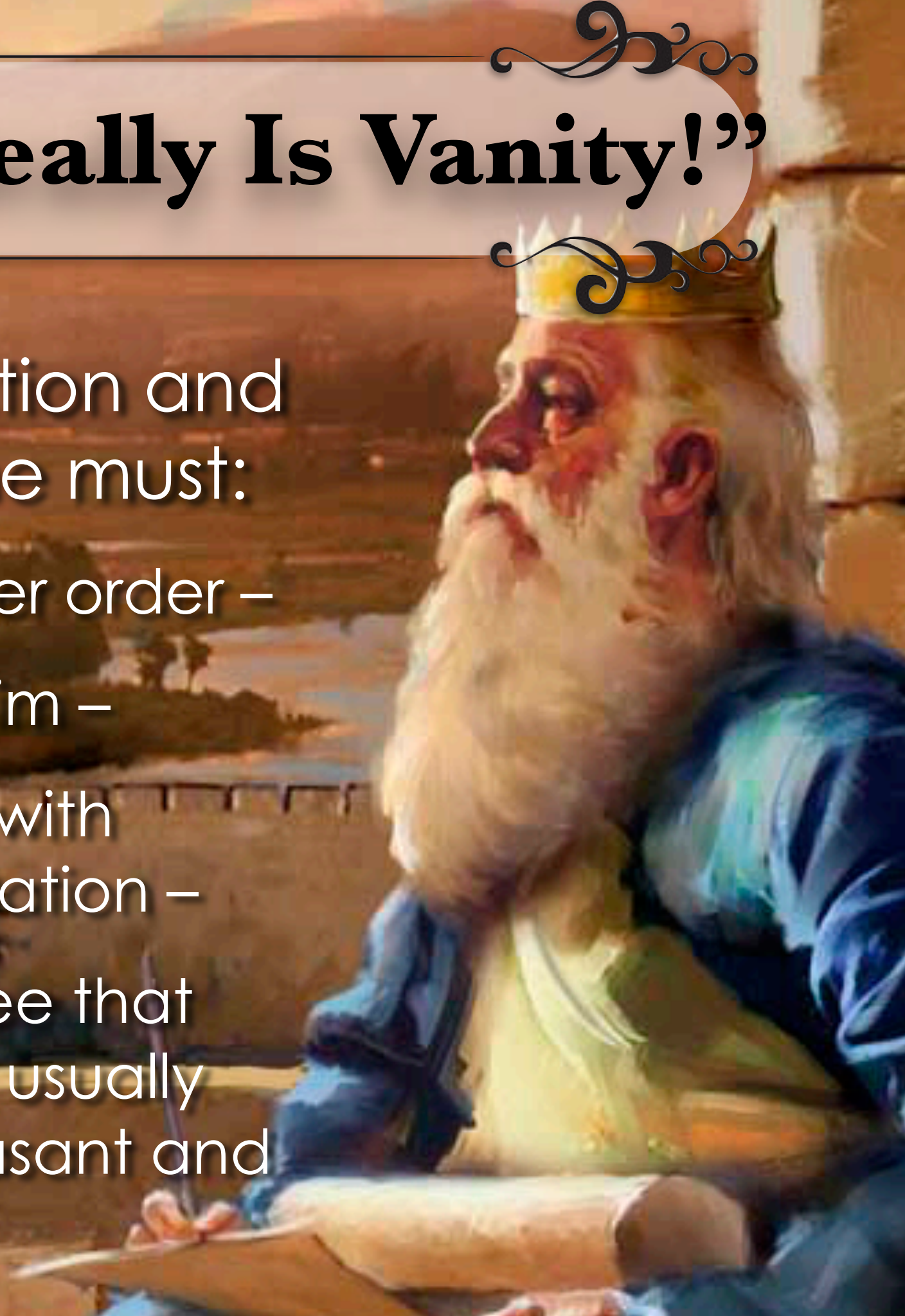
ECCLESIASTES

- "The Quest for satisfaction" in all the wrong places — 2:1-16
- "To Understand The Purpose of It All" — God is in control — 3:1-15
- "The Problem of Problems" — 3:16-4:16
- "Fear God" — 5:1-7
- "Everything Really Is Vanity!" — 5:8-6:12



“Everything Really Is Vanity!”

- To find REAL Satisfaction and Enjoyment in Life, one must:
 - ✓ Have priorities in proper order –
 - ✓ Worship God & fear Him –
 - ✓ Enjoy God’s blessings with thanksgiving & moderation –
 - ✓ In this lesson, we will see that “The Better Life” is not usually produced by the pleasant and enjoyable . . .



Ecclesiastes 7:1–14 (NKJV)

¹ A good name *is* better than precious ointment, And the day of death than the day of one's birth; ² Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that *is* the end of all men; And the living will take *it* to heart. ³ Sorrow *is* better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better. ⁴ The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

Ecclesiastes 7:1–14 (NKJV)

⁵ *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise
Than for a man to hear the song of fools. ⁶
For like the crackling of thorns under a pot,
So *is* the laughter of the fool. This also is
vanity. ⁷ Surely oppression destroys a wise
man's reason, And a bribe debases the heart. ⁸

The end of a thing *is* better than its
beginning; The patient in spirit *is* better than
the proud in spirit. ⁹ Do not hasten in your
spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the
bosom of fools.

Ecclesiastes 7:1–14 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?” For you do not inquire wisely concerning this. ¹¹ Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance, And profitable to those who see the sun. ¹² For wisdom *is* a defense *as* money *is* a defense, But the excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives life to those who have it. ¹³ Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked? ¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing *that will come* after him.

“Better Things Than Vanity”

“THE BETTER LIFE”



The final verse of chapter 6 stated that no man knows for certain what is best. Yet there are some practical rules for the conduct of life which godly wisdom gives that makes life BETTER.

Some of these Koheleth now sets forth in proverbial form

“Better Things Than Vanity”

“THE BETTER LIFE”



DEATH

FUNERALS

REPUTATION

BETTER
LIFE

SORROW

“Better Things Than Vanity”

HONOR IS BETTER THAN LUXURY (7:1A)



**Ecclesiastes 7:1
(NKJV)**

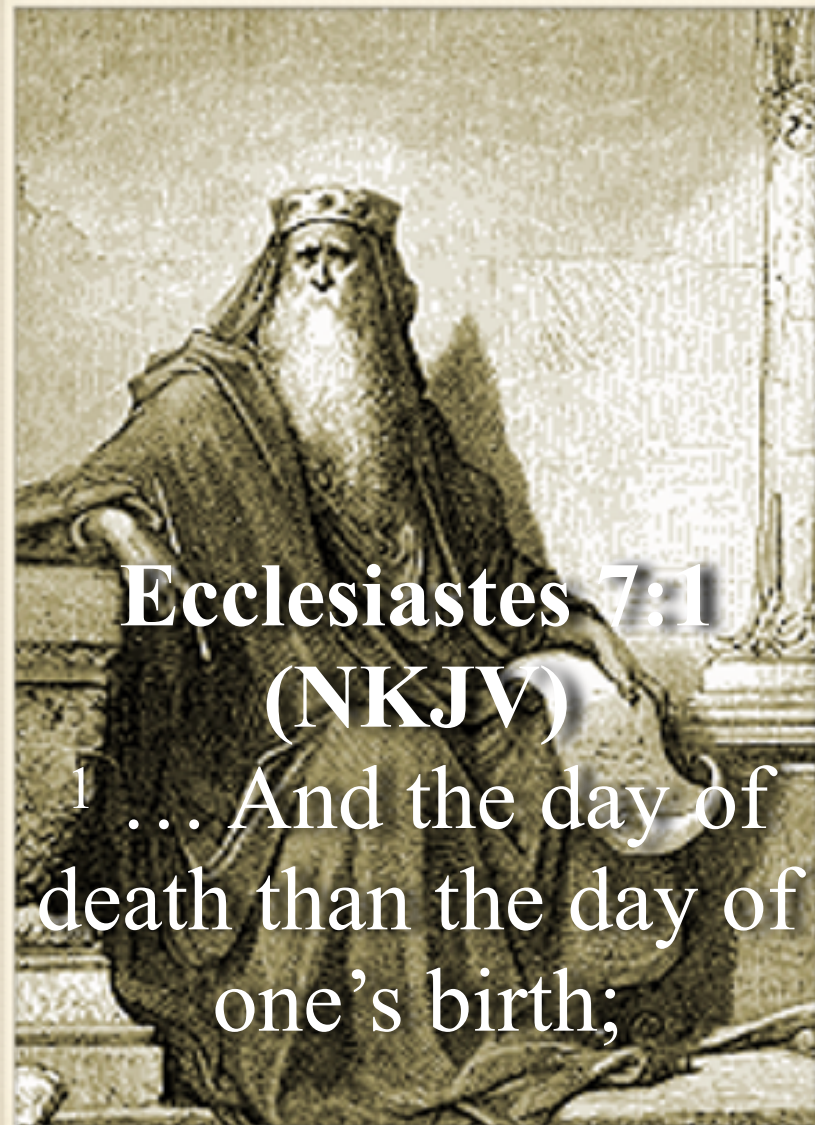
*¹ A good name is
better than precious
ointment, ...*

► Value of a good reputation – (1a)

- It is good when men think well of us due to our honesty and integrity – Prov 22:1; (influence tied to reputation)
- It is more important what God thinks of us!! - Heb 11; Luke 10:20;
- An expensive perfume may help you smell better, but good character causes you to be better & do good.

“Better Things Than Vanity”

DEATH IS BETTER THAN BIRTH - (7:1B)



► The value of death - (7:1b)

- The day of one's birth is the beginning of many sorrows - Job 14:1; 3:1-3; Jer 20:14-18
- But for the righteous, the day of one's death is the beginning of eternal bliss! - Isa 57:1-2; Ph 1:21-22; Re 14:13
- Of course the day of death for the wicked is not better — Mat. 26:24; Mark 14:21;

“Better Things Than Vanity”

A FUNERAL IS BETTER THAN A PARTY (7:2-4)

Ecclesiastes 7:2
(NKJV)

² Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that *is* the end of all men; And the living will take *it* to heart.

► The value of mourning (7:2)

- What is seen in the house of mourning?
 - 📌 Ourselves – Heb 9:27; Ps 89:48; Eccl 3:20
 - 📌 Coming face to face with reality should cause us to seriously reflect upon our on mortality and current standing before God!

“Better Things Than Vanity”

A FUNERAL IS BETTER THAN A PARTY (7:2-4)

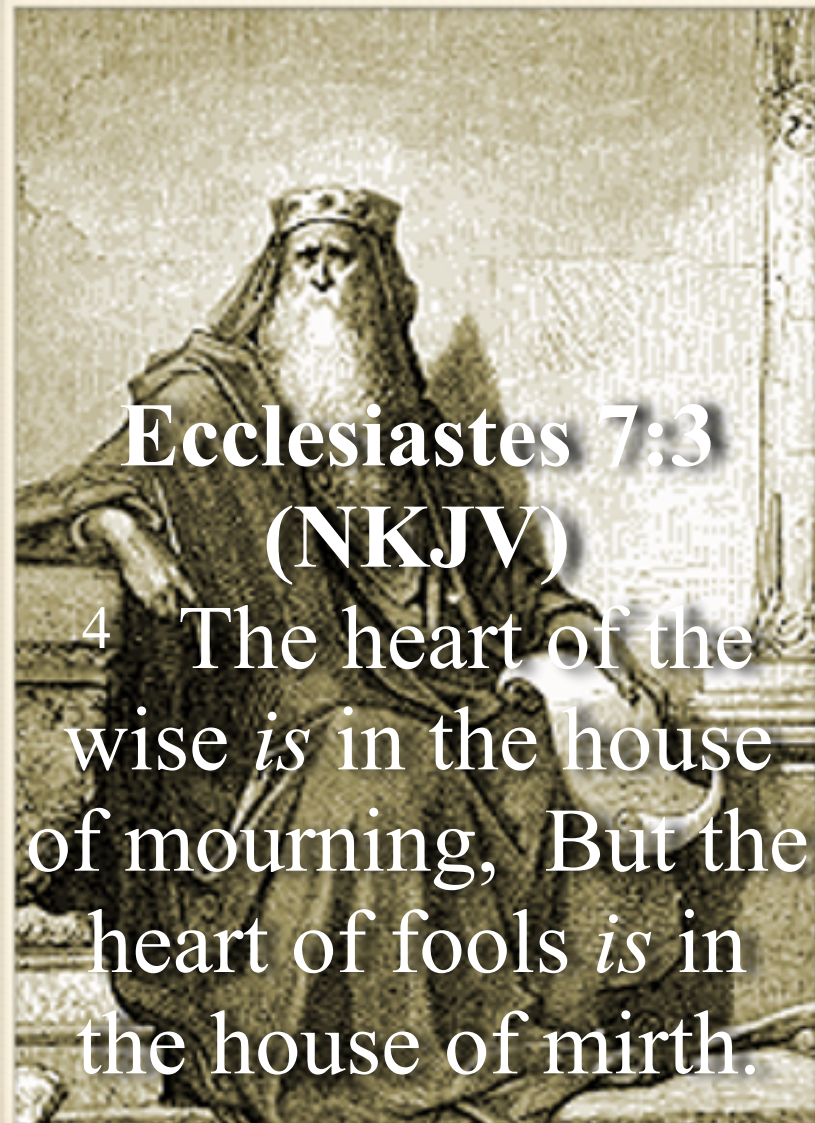


► The value of sorrow (7:3)

- Laughter may have its place, but sorrow is superior to making the heart better - Ps 119:67,71; 126:2; Heb 12:11
- Laughter provides a temporary reprieve from the burdens of life but sorrow encourages us to make positive changes

“Better Things Than Vanity”

A FUNERAL IS BETTER THAN A PARTY (7:2-4)



**Ecclesiastes 7:3
(NKJV)**

⁴ The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

► The value of wisdom (7:4)

■ The wise CONSIDERS:

- The frailty of life – James 4:14; Job 7:6, 7; Ps. 89:47; 90:5–7; 102:3. Is. 38:12
- Himself in view of deaths looming reality – Heb 9:27
- What he must do to prepare for death NOW! – 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 3:13

“Better Things Than Vanity”

REBUKE IS BETTER THAN A SONG – (7:5-6)

► The Value of Rebuke (7:5–7)

- Solemn rebuke is not pleasant. No one likes to hear it. Yet Koheleth argues that “it is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.” – Gal. 2:11
- A real friend helps you see your faults – Psalm 141:5



**Ecclesiastes 7:5
(NKJV)**

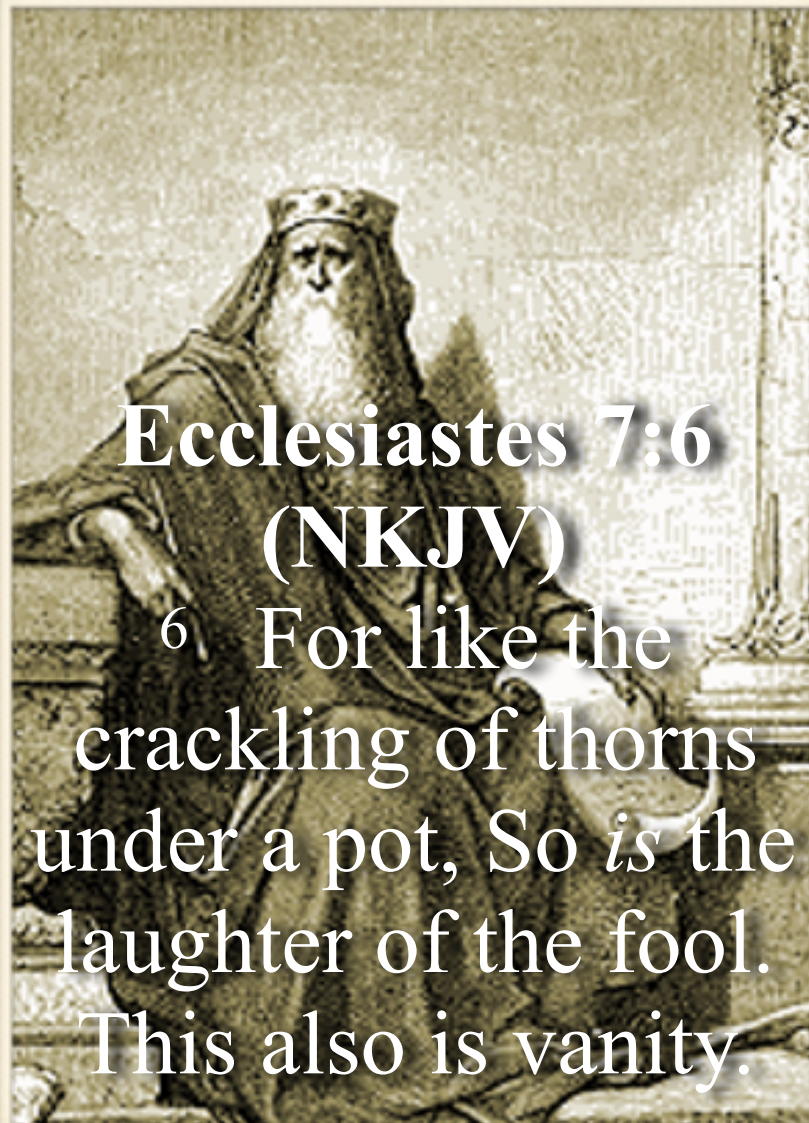
*5 It is better to hear
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“Better Things Than Vanity”

REBUKE IS BETTER THAN A SONG - (7:5-6)

► The Value of Rebuke (7:5-7)

- In that region where wood was scarce, thorns, hay and stubble were used for fuel.
- The song of fools is like that. It is - loud - short & leaves nothing of lasting value - It is therefore “vanity”
- Flattery nor thorns possess any useful purpose! - 1 Thes 2:5

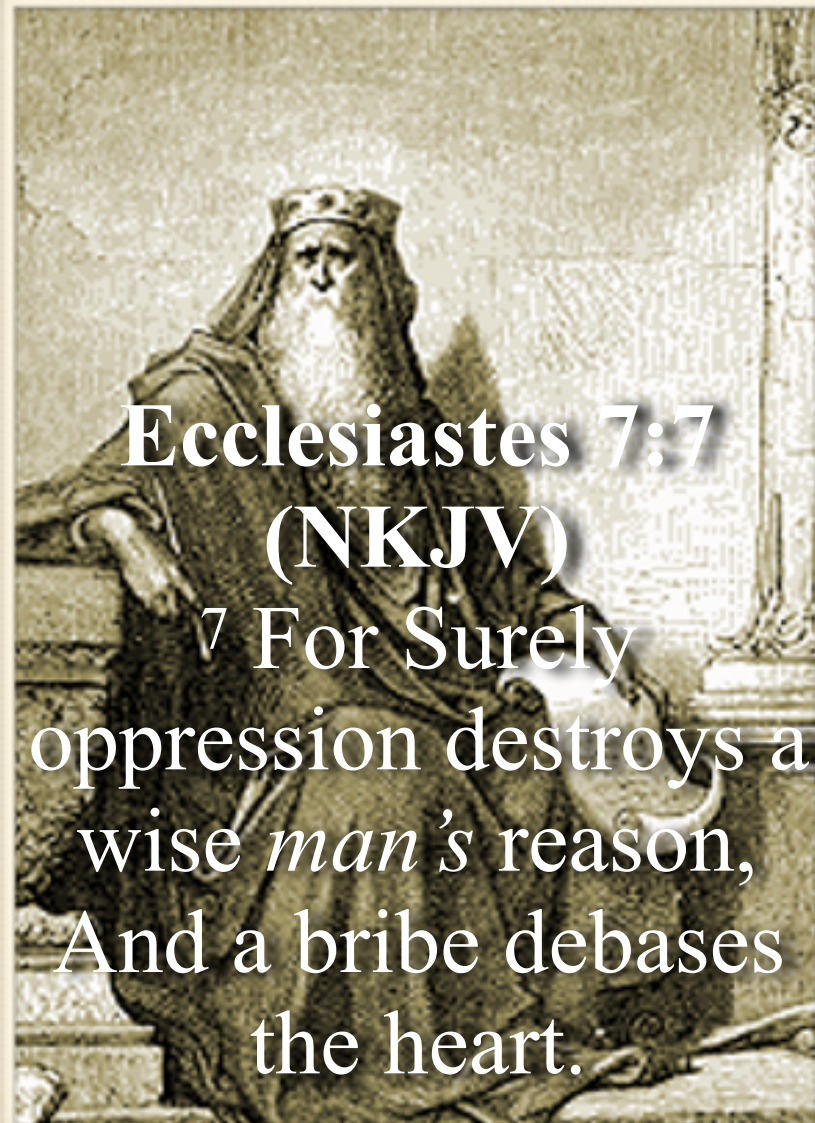


**Ecclesiastes 7:6
(NKJV)**

6 For like the crackling of thorns under a pot, So is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity.

“Better Things Than Vanity”

PATIENCE IS BETTER THAN YIELDING – (7:7-10)



**Ecclesiastes 7:7
(NKJV)**

**7 For Surely
oppression destroys a
wise *man's* reason,
And a bribe debases
the heart.**

► The Value of resistance (7:7)

- Solomon warns us that adversity and prosperity offer many temptations to abandon a wise lifestyle and to live like a fool.
- By oppression - we may surrender to the PRESENT difficulty & forfeit long term blessings — Mat 13:20,21
- The opportunity for QUICK reward may tempt us to forfeit our principles — Prov. 17:8, 23

“Better Things Than Vanity”

THE END IS BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING (7:8-10)



► The Value of Perseverance (7:8)

- The end of a thing is the ‘goal’ set out to be reached in the beginning! — Ps. 126:5,6
- Understood when applied to building a house, Training for a sporting event, any undesirable task! — Lk 14:28-33
- Anything of value takes time, effort and patience to gain! — Jame 5:11

“Better Things Than Vanity”

THE END IS BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING (7:8-10)

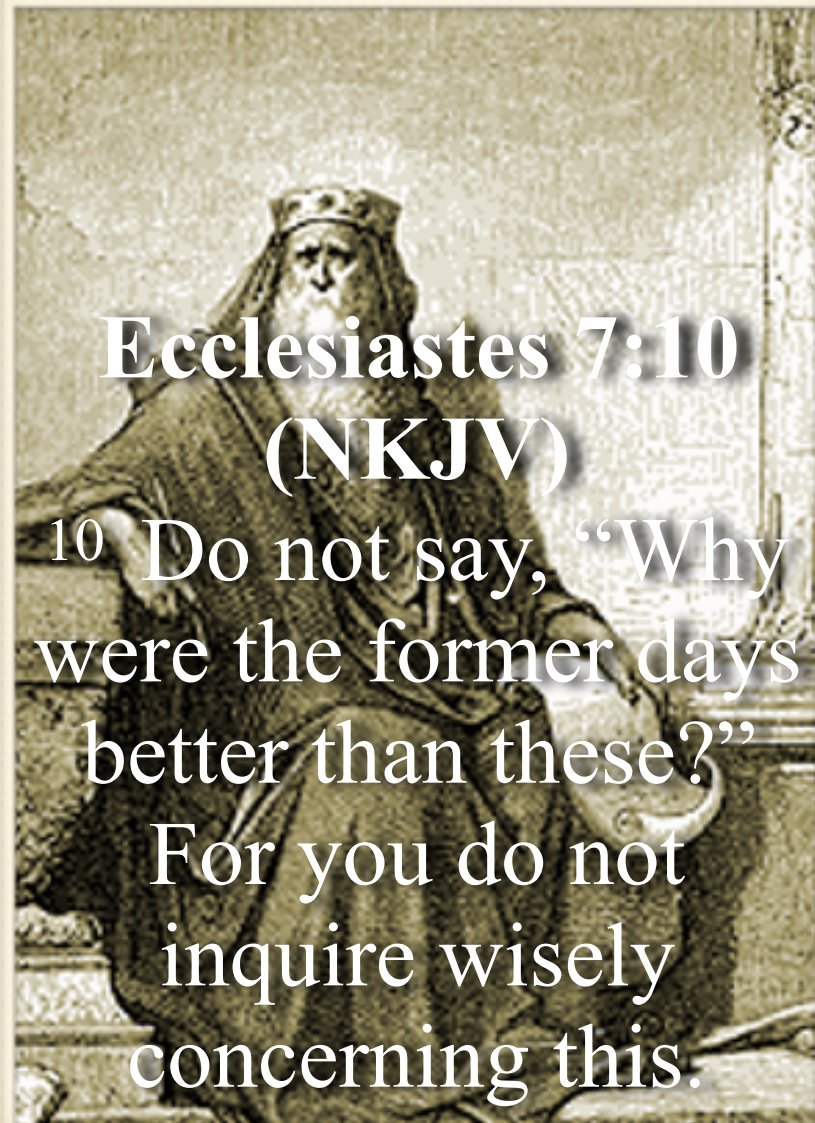


► The Value of Contentment (7:9,10)

- Fools aren't willing to do the hard stuff to gain the valuable prize – instead they lose their cool – James 1:19; Prov. 16:32; Est. 3:5,6

“Better Things Than Vanity”

THE END IS BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING (7:8-10)



Ecclesiastes 7:10
(NKJV)

¹⁰ Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?” For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

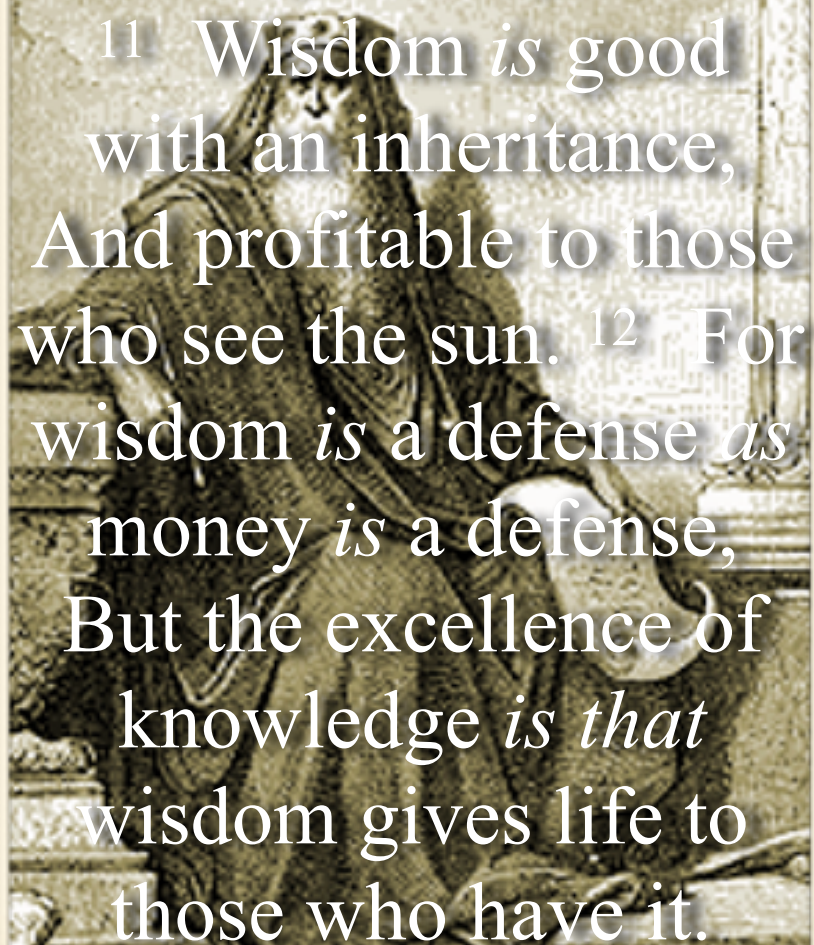
► The Value of Contentment (7:9,10)

- Fools aren't willing to do the hard stuff to gain the valuable prize – instead they lose their cool – James 1:19; Prov. 16:32; Est. 3:5,6
- It is not wise to live in the past – *(not to disparage the value of memories, but cannot change past)*
- We must live in the present – and be content – Num 11:5; Phil 4:11; 2 Cor 4:18

“Better Things Than Vanity”

WISDOM IS BETTER THAN WEALTH (7:11-12)

Ecclesiastes 7:11,12
(NKJV)



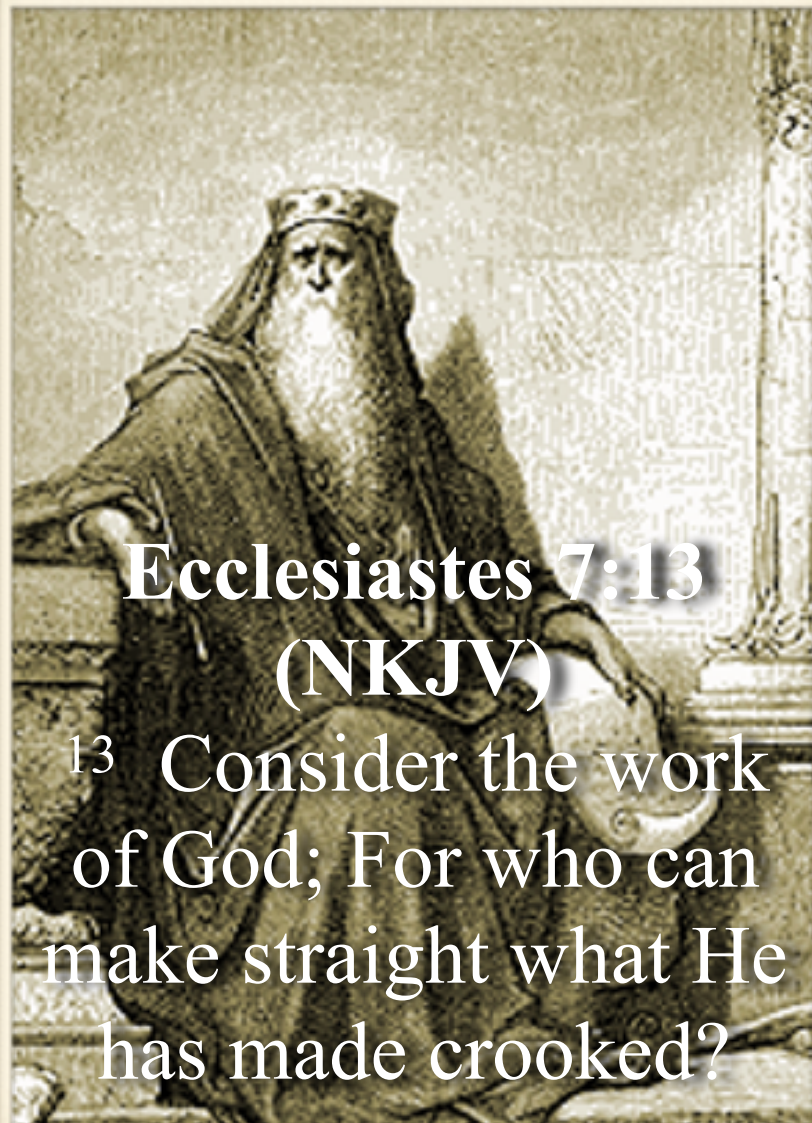
11 *Wisdom is good with an inheritance, And profitable to those who see the sun.* 12 *For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.*

► The Value of Wisdom (7:11,12)

- Both wisdom and inherited wealth are good – BUT – wisdom is far better – (Prov 8:11)
 - Wisdom & money are said to be a defense – (having money when needed is important)
 - But only WISDOM can give life!!! — Prov 3:13-23

“Better Things Than Vanity”

RESIGNATION IS BETTER THAN INDIGNATION (7:13-14)

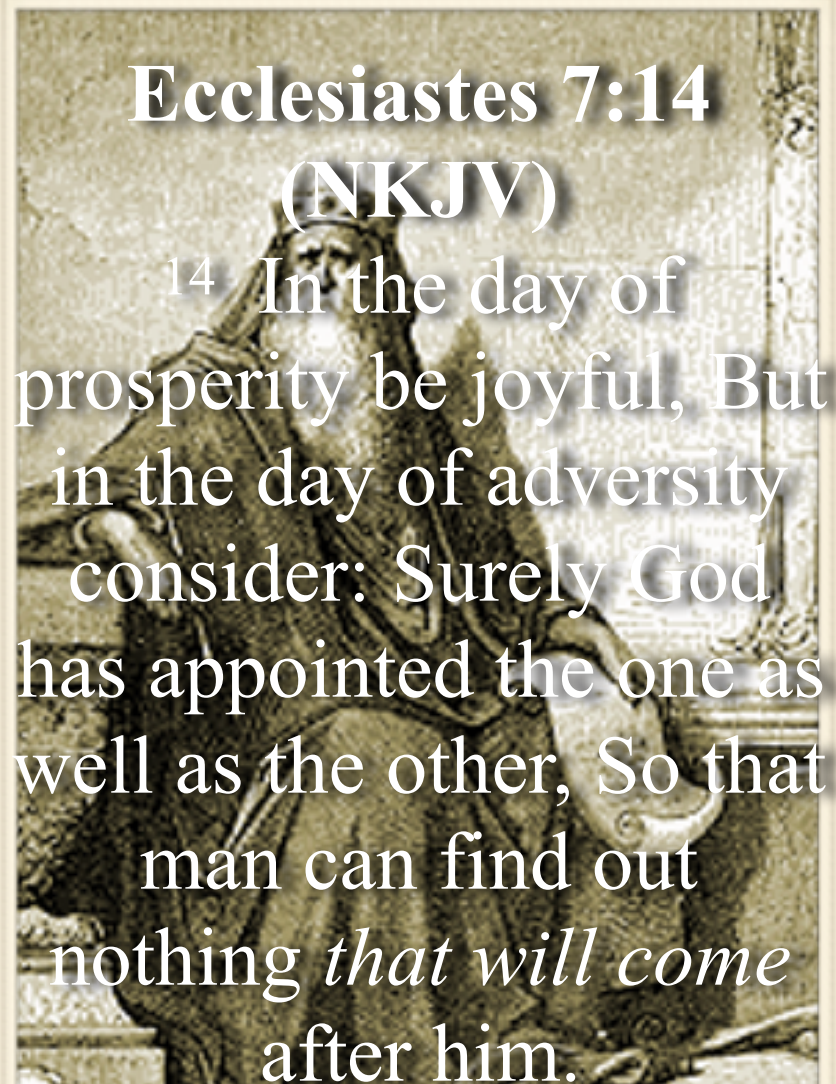


► The Value of Humility (7:13-14)

- There are many things beyond our control!! – (1:15; Da. 4:35.)
- There is nothing wrong with changing the things we can – But we must learn to accept the things we cannot change – Heb 13:8; Phil 4:11-13
- We need to learn & understand the difference.

“Better Things Than Vanity”

RESIGNATION IS BETTER THAN INDIGNATION (7:13-14)



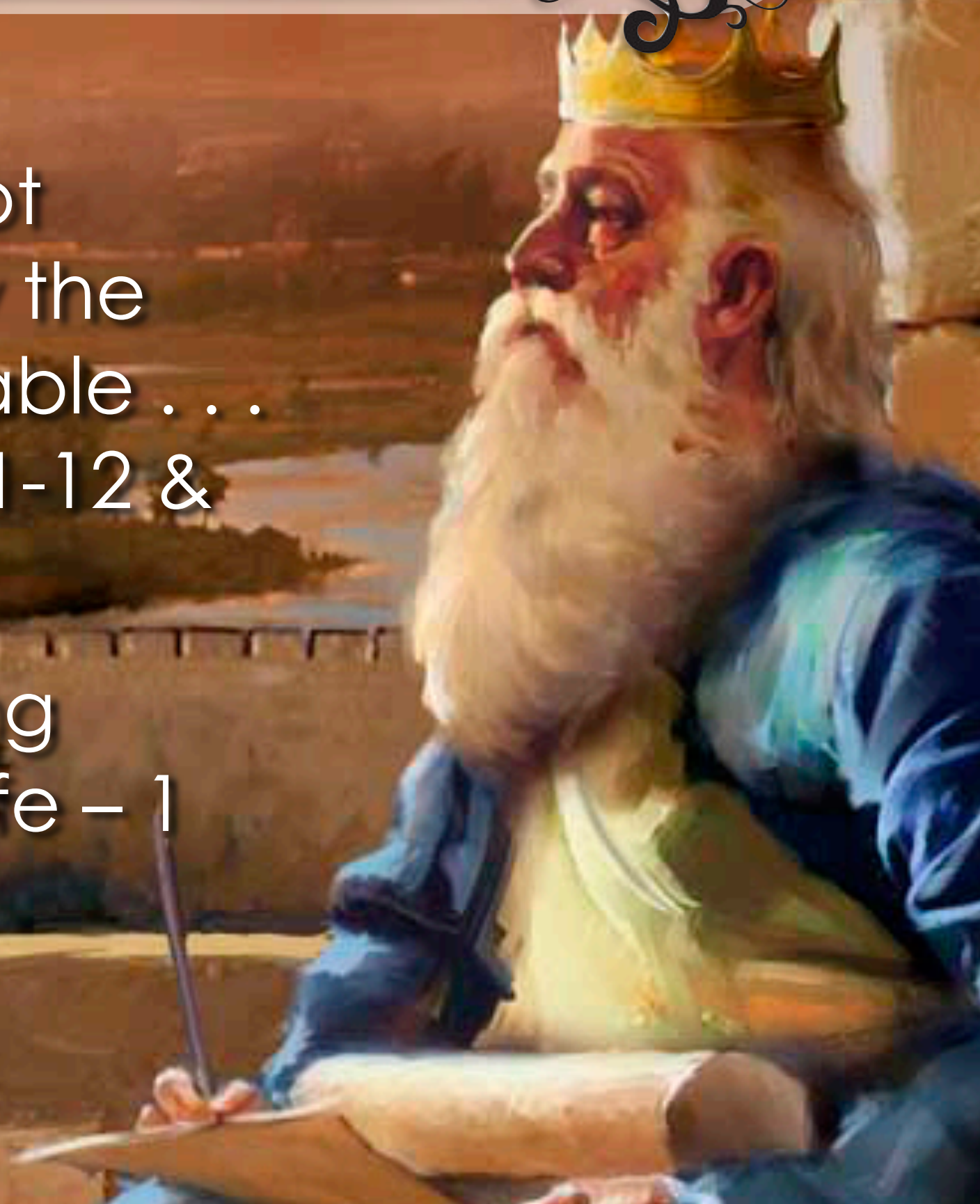
**Ecclesiastes 7:14
(NKJV)**
14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing *that will come* after him.

► The Value of Humility (7:13-14)

- There are many things beyond our control!! – (1:15; Da. 4:35.)
- When things go well with you, be cheerful; accept the situation and enjoy it - make the best of the present.
- “in the evil day, consider,” i.e., use the times of adversity for solemn reflection.

“Better Things Than Vanity”

- ❖ “The Better Life” is not usually produced by the pleasant and enjoyable . . . (Compare James 1:1-12 & Hebrews 12:1-17)
- ❖ But rather persevering through the fires of life – 1 Peter 1:3-9



“Better Things Than Vanity”

- Are you serious about your spiritual growth – service & work? Are you walking wisely with endurance? — (Eph 5:15,17; 1 Pet 1:6-9)
- The blessings & promises we have in Christ are FAR BETTER than what The world provides!
- ARE YOU IN CHRIST?



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

“Better Things Than Vanity”

(Ecclesiastes 7:1-14)

Charts by Don McClain

Preached March 14, 2019

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Hebrews 11:13–16 (NKJV)

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.