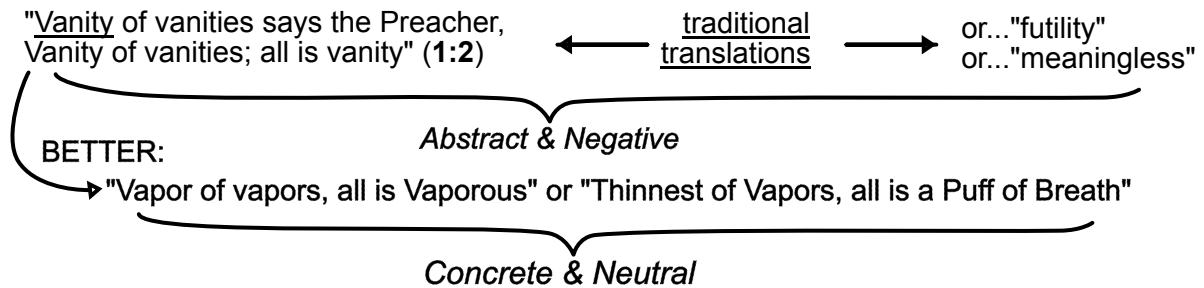


Ecclesiastes: Joy When Life Jostles

The **Author**—Number One Best Seller; the expert on Wisdom: a "Gotta have Book" (1:1)

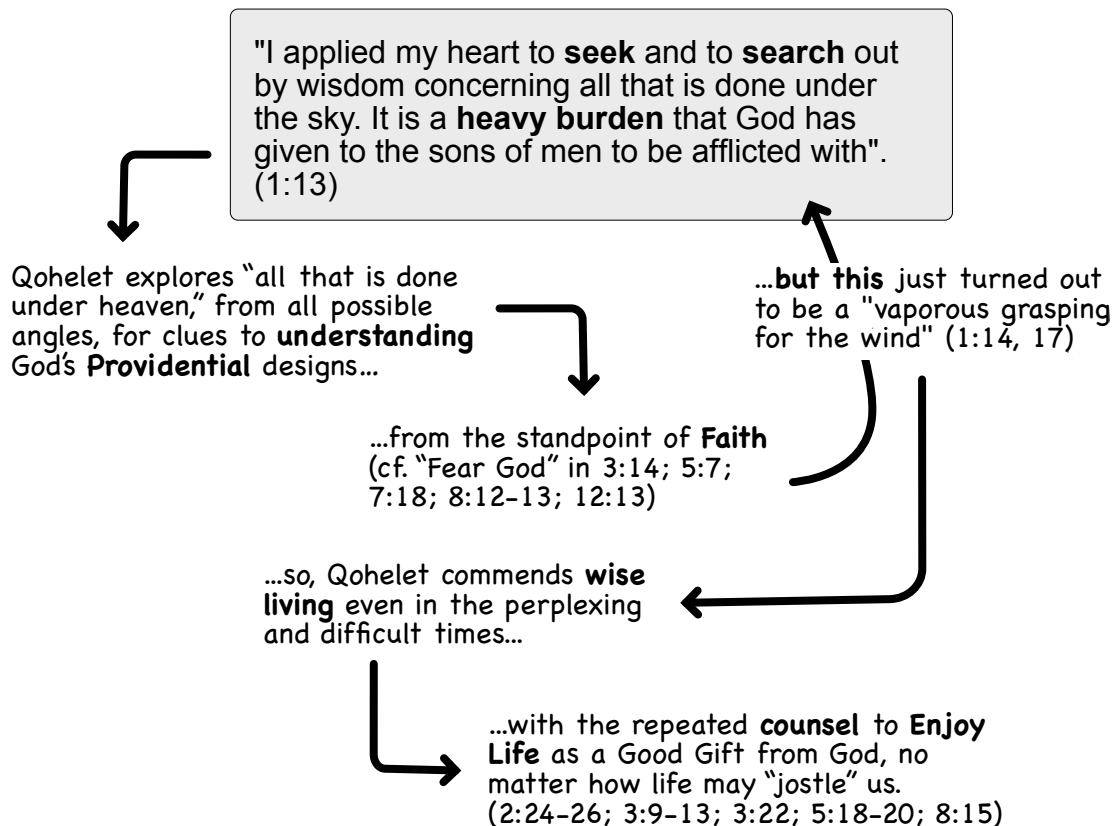
The **Translation** of 1:2



The **Framing Question**: Is there "profit" from man's toil "under the sun"? (1:3)

A **Suggestive Poem**: The physical universe shows both consistency and variation in delightful ways; but it will never reveal all that we would like to know. (1:4-11)

A **Startling Admission**: "There's a really big Something that I (the Wisdom Expert) can't understand" (1:12-18)



## Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 The Problem with **Pondering Providence**

To everything *there is* a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven:  
A time to be born, and a time to die;  
A time to plant, and a time to pluck *what is* planted;  
A time to kill, and a time to heal;  
A time to break down, and a time to build up;  
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones;  
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to seek, and a time to lose;  
A time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
A time to tear, and a time to sew;  
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
A time to love, and a time to hate;  
A time of war, and a time of peace.

:9 "What **profit** has the worker from that in which he labors?"

(= **Help in understanding** these times & purposes)

:10 "I have seen the **God-given task** with which the sons of men are to be occupied."

:11a "He has made everything **beautifully appropriate** in its time."

:11b "Also He has put **eternity** in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from **beginning to end.**"

(**Problem:** We can't **understand** how it **all fits together**)

So then, **what is the wise person to do?**

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

3:12-13

This is **how** the whole **book fits together:**

**Frustrated in his exhaustive efforts to understand God's Providential design as it impacts our earthly experience, Qohelet concludes that one must still enjoy life as a gift from God, all the while living it responsibly by trusting in the One to Whom he must ultimately give an account.**

**Why** this book is so **important:**

It affirms God as the good, sovereign and moral Governor of our world.

It deals seriously with the troublesome, unanswerable "why" questions of our earthly experience.

It counsels the believer to accept life, with all its perplexities and problems, as a good gift to be lived by faith.