

ECCLESIASTES

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

“The Song of Scarcity”
(Artwork by Scott the Painter)





THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: AN EXPERIMENT IN SCARCITY



SCARCITY MINDSET:

A pervasive belief that resources are limited . . . Creating a preoccupation with what one lacks . . . Leading to chronic worry and fear . . . And driving behaviors focused on hoarding, competition, and self-preservation.

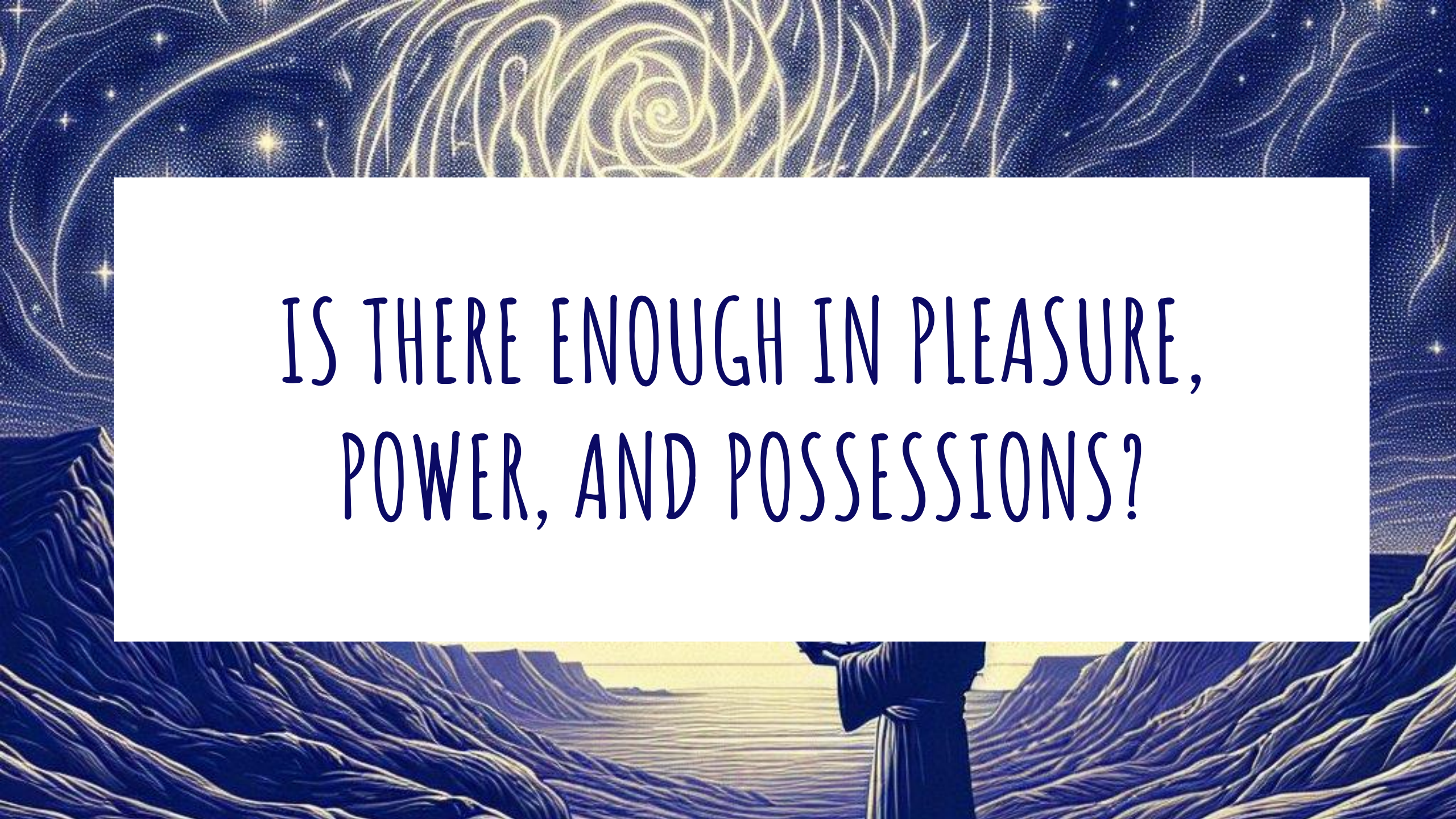


Under the Sun

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Scarcity

**“This is All There
Is”**



IS THERE ENOUGH IN PLEASURE,
POWER, AND POSSESSIONS?

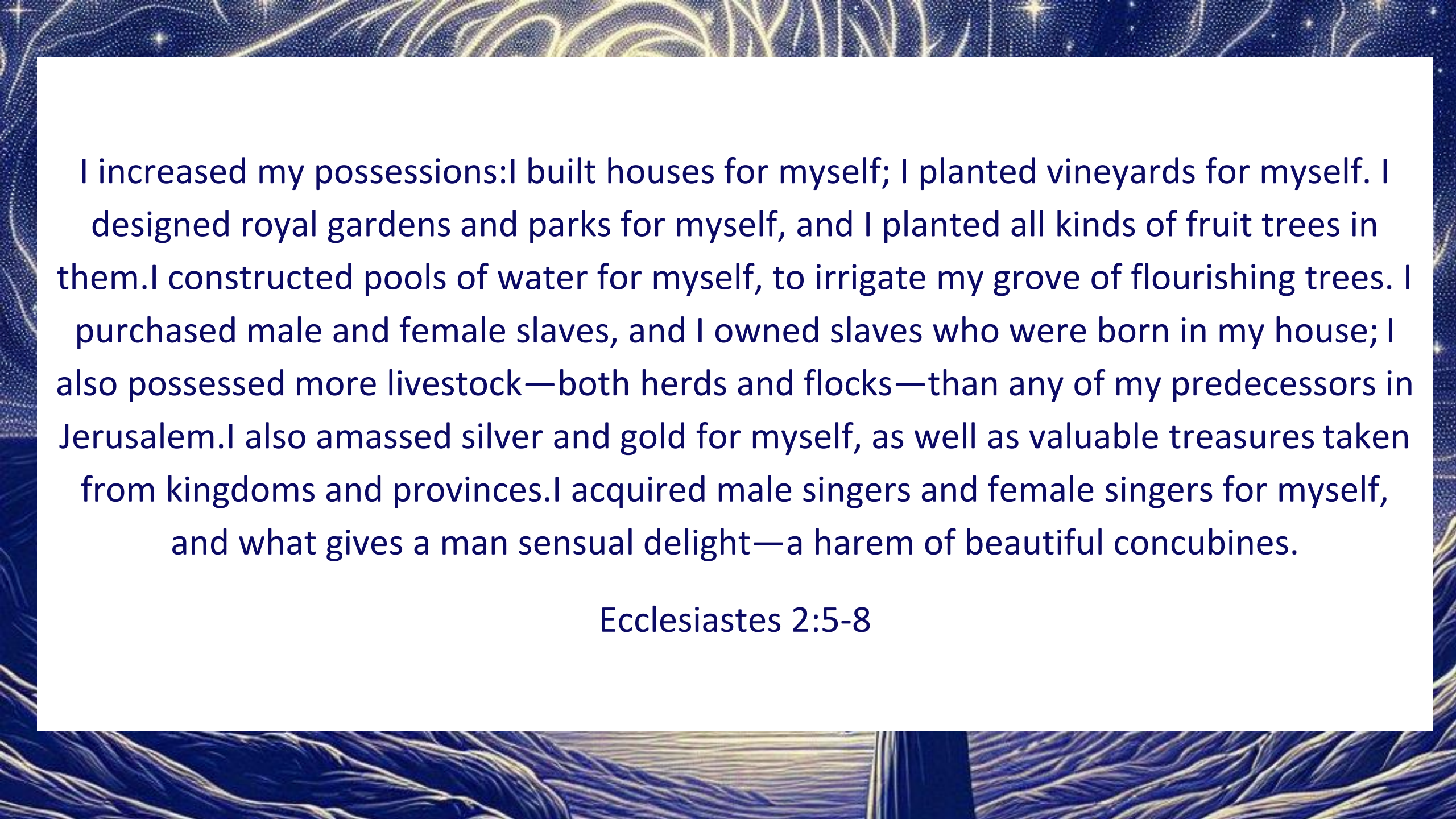


**Laughter can conceal
a heavy heart, but
when the laughter
ends, the grief
remains.**

PROVERBS 14:19

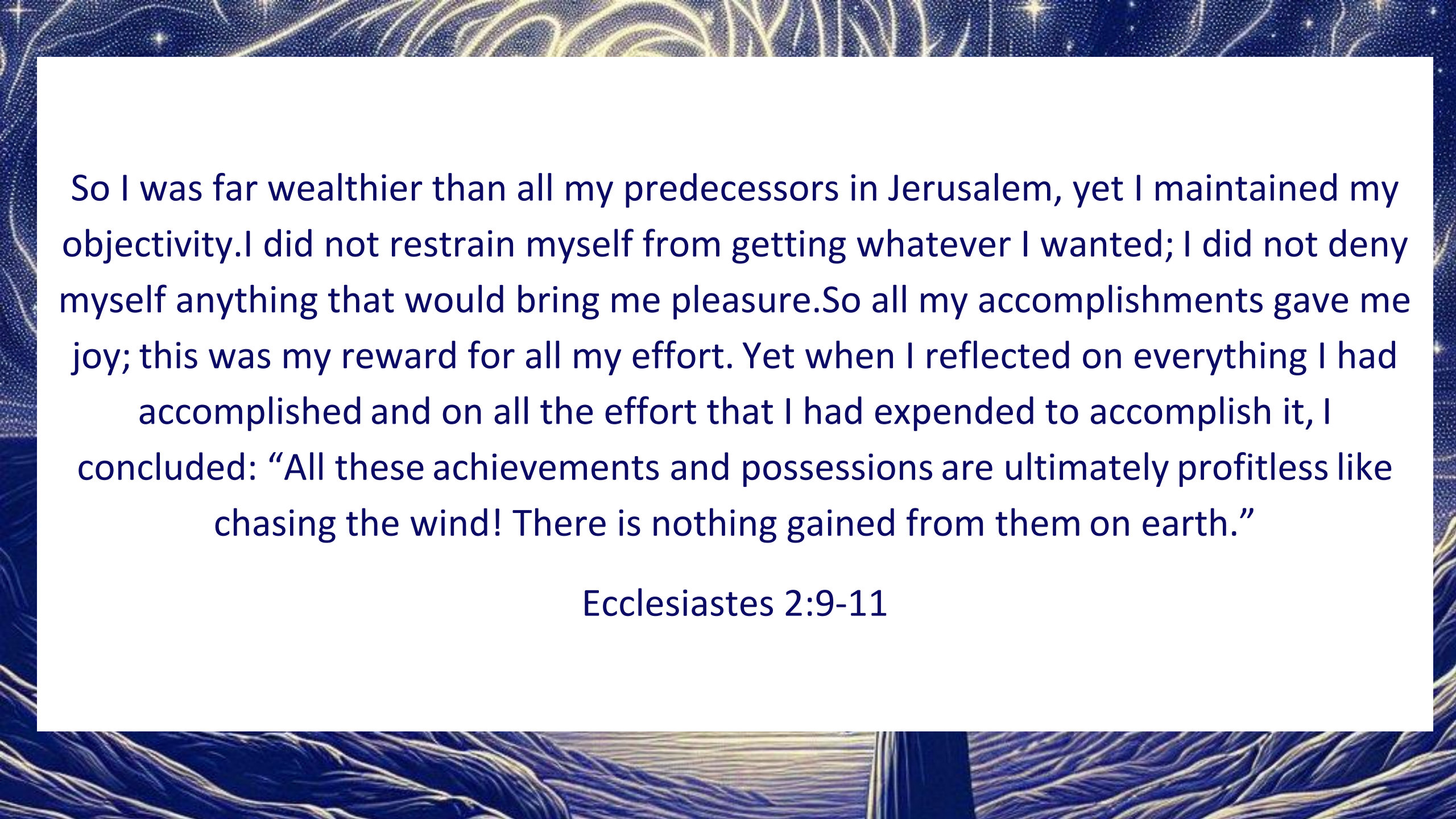
I thought to myself, “Come now, I will try self-indulgent pleasure to see if it is worthwhile.” But I found that it also is futile. I said of partying, “It is folly,” and of self-indulgent pleasure, “It accomplishes nothing!” I thought deeply about the effects of indulging myself with wine (all the while my mind was guiding me with wisdom) and the effects of behaving foolishly, so that I might discover what is profitable for people to do on earth] during the few days of their lives.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-3



I increased my possessions:I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself. I designed royal gardens and parks for myself, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.I constructed pools of water for myself, to irrigate my grove of flourishing trees. I purchased male and female slaves, and I owned slaves who were born in my house; I also possessed more livestock—both herds and flocks—than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem.I also amassed silver and gold for myself, as well as valuable treasures taken from kingdoms and provinces.I acquired male singers and female singers for myself, and what gives a man sensual delight—a harem of beautiful concubines.

Ecclesiastes 2:5-8



So I was far wealthier than all my predecessors in Jerusalem, yet I maintained my objectivity. I did not restrain myself from getting whatever I wanted; I did not deny myself anything that would bring me pleasure. So all my accomplishments gave me joy; this was my reward for all my effort. Yet when I reflected on everything I had accomplished and on all the effort that I had expended to accomplish it, I concluded: “All these achievements and possessions are ultimately profitless like chasing the wind! There is nothing gained from them on earth.”

Ecclesiastes 2:9-11



Mistake not, then, the glare of this world's glory for solid happiness. God would have us rejoice in our labour—enjoy our earthly blessings, but not rest in them—"Rejoice, as though we rejoiced not." A momentary pleasure is all that can be looked for. Let earth be the cistern only, not the fountain. Let its best blessing be loved after him—for him—as the sunbeam of his love. Let nothing of earth be our rest—God never intended so poor a portion for his redeemed ones.

CHARLES BRIDGES



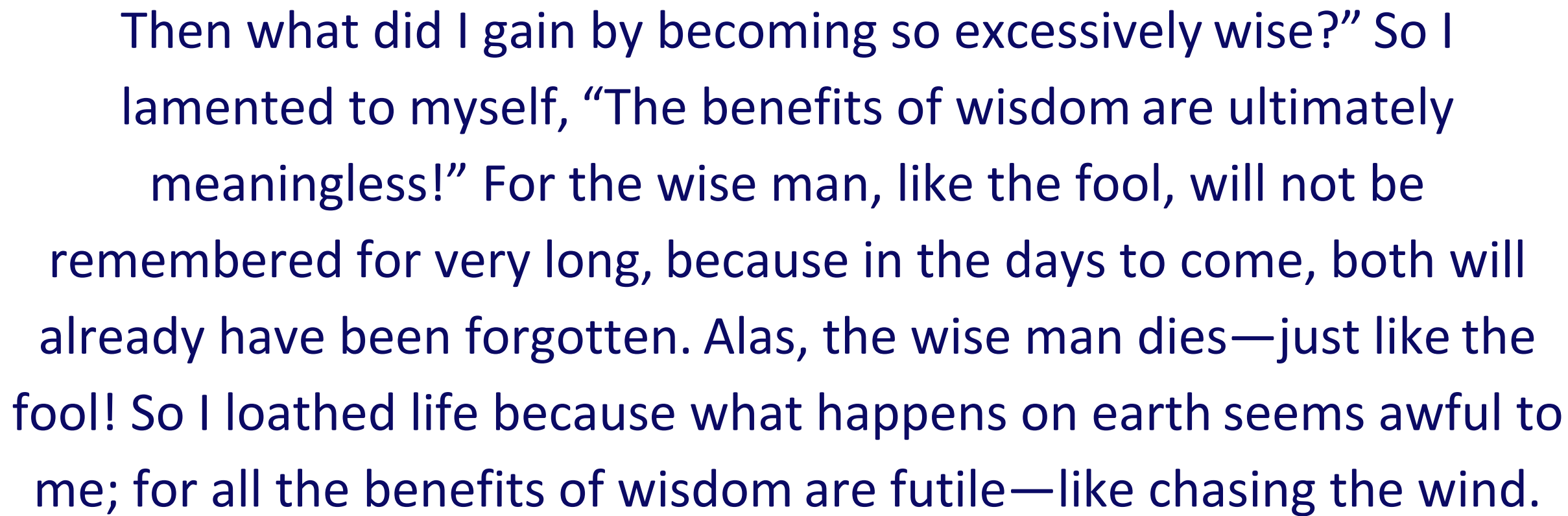
IS THERE ENOUGH IN WISDOM OR FOLLY?



For the ungodly said, reasoning with themselves, but not aright, Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy: neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave.

Next, I decided to consider wisdom, as well as foolish behavior and ideas. For what more can the king's successor do than what the king has already done? I realized that wisdom is preferable to folly, just as light is preferable to darkness: The wise man can see where he is going, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I also realized that the same fate happens to them both. So I thought to myself, "The fate of the fool will happen even to me!"

Ecclesiastes 2:12-15



Then what did I gain by becoming so excessively wise?" So I lamented to myself, "The benefits of wisdom are ultimately meaningless!" For the wise man, like the fool, will not be remembered for very long, because in the days to come, both will already have been forgotten. Alas, the wise man dies—just like the fool! So I loathed life because what happens on earth seems awful to me; for all the benefits of wisdom are futile—like chasing the wind.

Ecclesiastes 2:15-17



Solomon has tasted the glorious wonders of divine grace. God granted him the best of divine wisdom. Once he had basked in the warmth of the divine presence as he prayed. Solomon knows that there is something more than this life and he is fully aware of how he has lost its joy.

WILLIAM BARRICK



IS THERE ENOUGH IN WORK?



**There are no
pockets in a
shroud**

JEWISH PROVERB

So I loathed all the fruit of my effort, for which I worked so hard on earth, Because I must leave it behind in the hands of my successor. Who knows if he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will be master over all the fruit of my labor for which I worked so wisely on earth. This also is futile! So I began to despair about all the fruit of my labor for which I worked so hard on earth. For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; however, he must hand over the fruit of his labor as an inheritance to someone else who did not work for it. This also is futile, and an awful injustice! What does a man acquire from all his labor and from the anxiety that accompanies his toil on earth? For all day long his work produces pain and frustration, and even at night his mind cannot relax. This also is futile!

Ecclesiastes 2:18-23



Though he has been labouring all his days, yet there is not one thing he has got by his labour that is of any real advantage to him, or can yield him any solid comfort and satisfaction, or bring him true happiness, or lead him to it.

The image is a composite. The top half features a dark blue night sky filled with numerous small stars and several prominent, glowing yellow and white spiral nebulae. The bottom half shows a desert landscape with rolling, dark blue hills under a pale yellow sky. A figure in a dark blue robe stands in the center of the desert, looking out towards the horizon.

IS THERE ENOUGH IN GOD?



IF WE REJOICE IN THE
GIFTS & NOT THE GIVER,
WE ARE UNGRATEFUL
IDOLATERS.

WARREN WIERSBE

There is nothing better for people than to eat and drink, and to find enjoyment in their work. I also perceived that this ability to find enjoyment comes from God. For no one can eat and drink or experience joy apart from him. For to the one who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner, he gives the task of amassing wealth—only to give it to the one who pleases God. This task of the wicked is futile—like chasing the wind!

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26



All of these are His gifts. We are the stewards, and faithfulness is our charge. That means our hands must never close over the gifts, but remain open so that He may use them as required—and refill our hands.

KEITH KRELL



**THE PURSUIT OF GOD: AN
EXPERIMENT IN
ABUNDANCE**



Abundance Mindset:

A belief that there are plenty of resources. . . seeing potential and possibilities. . . fostering security, trust, and community . . . leading to happiness, satisfaction, and resilience.



Jesus

The Author of Abundance

“I Came That They Might Have Life,
and That They Might Have It More
Abundantly”
John 10:10



ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14

*Having heard everything, I have reached
this conclusion:*

*Fear God and keep his commandments,
because this is the whole duty of man.*

*For God will evaluate every deed,
including every secret thing, whether
good or evil.*