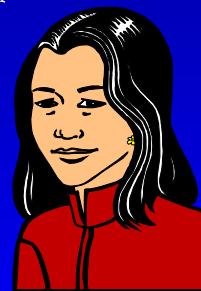


# Christ in Ecclesiastes

Why Is Ecclesiastes  
so depressing?

For Lansdale Presbyterian Church  
Vern Sheridan Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.  
Westminster Theological Seminary





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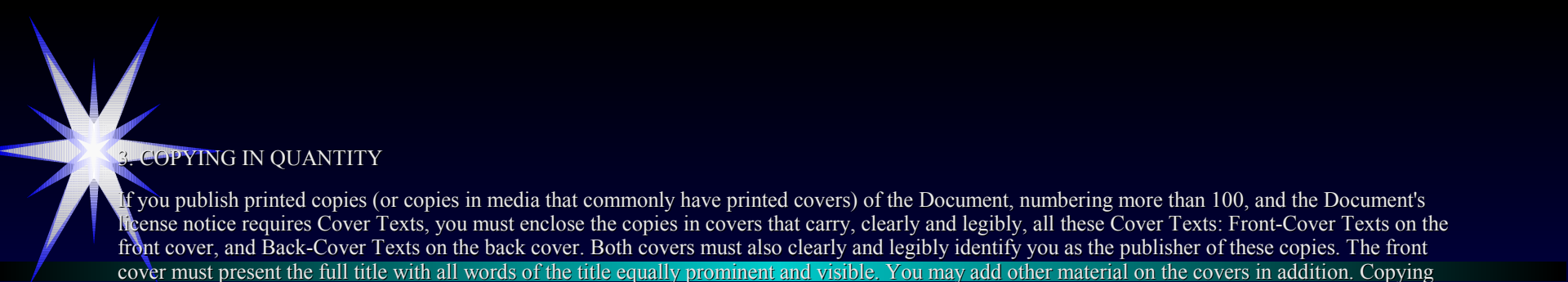
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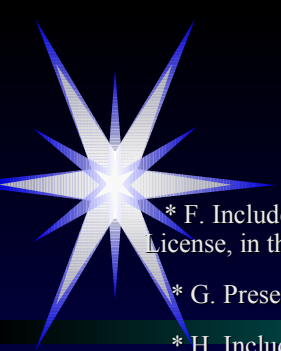
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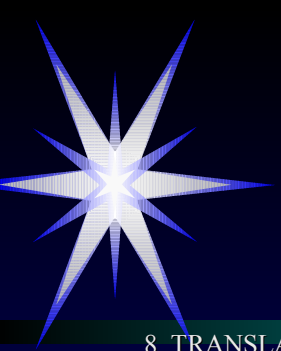
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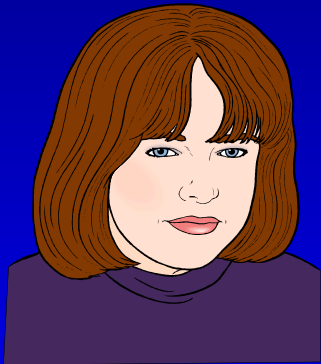
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# Challenge: Wisdom

How can I find  
meaning in my life?



God gives  
wisdom.





# Resources

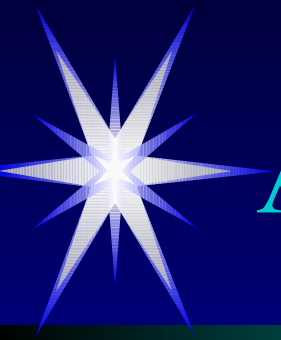
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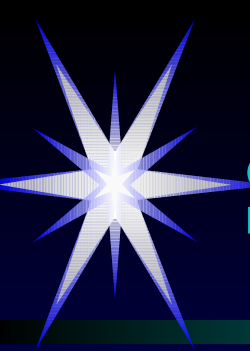
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## A. Seeking Wisdom

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# Seeking to Understand

meaning for life  
wisdom



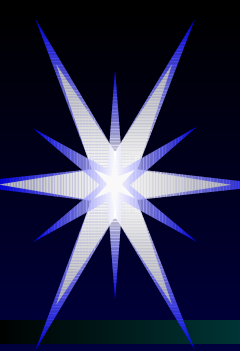
who am I?



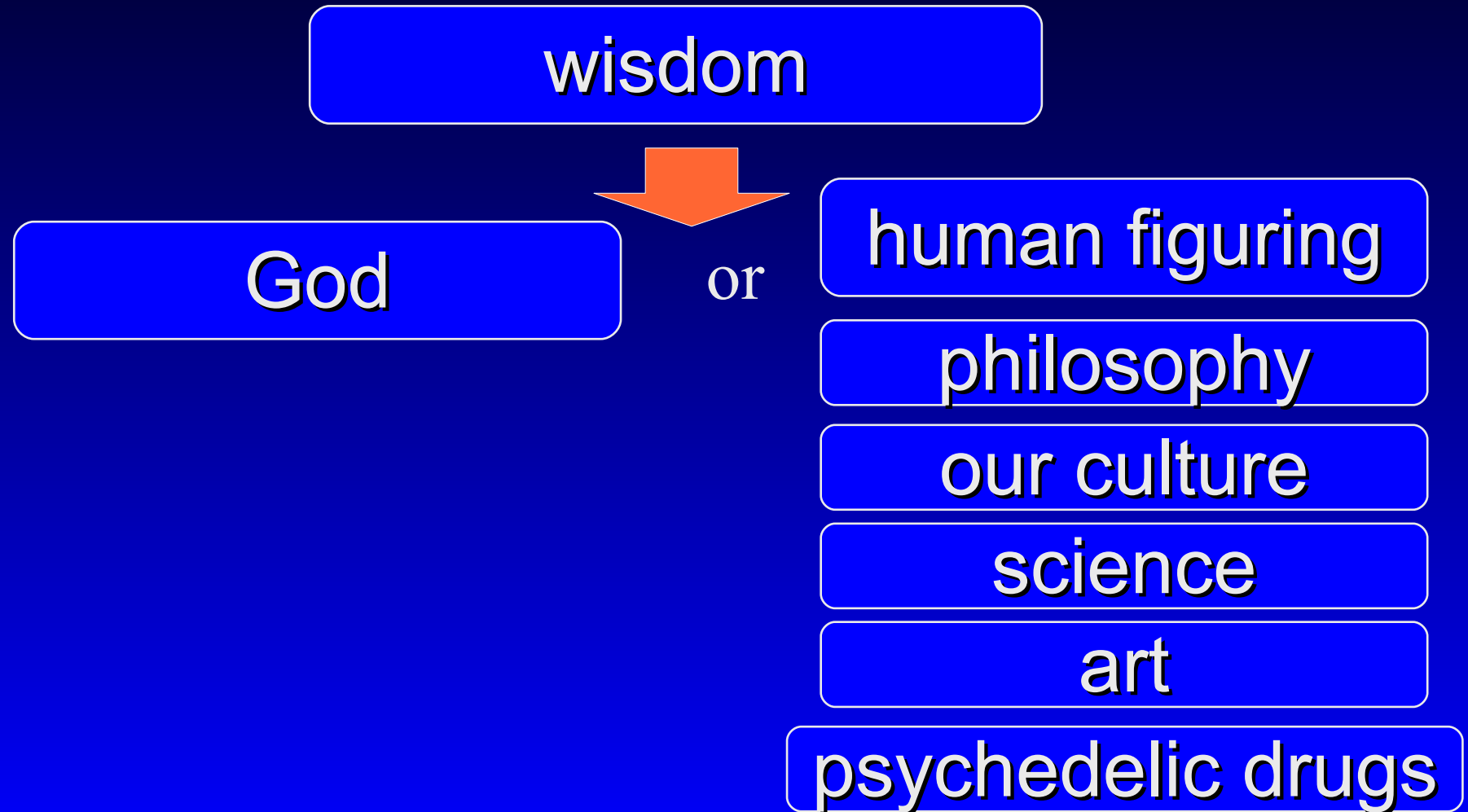
God speaking

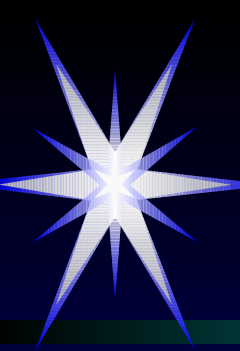
or

human figuring

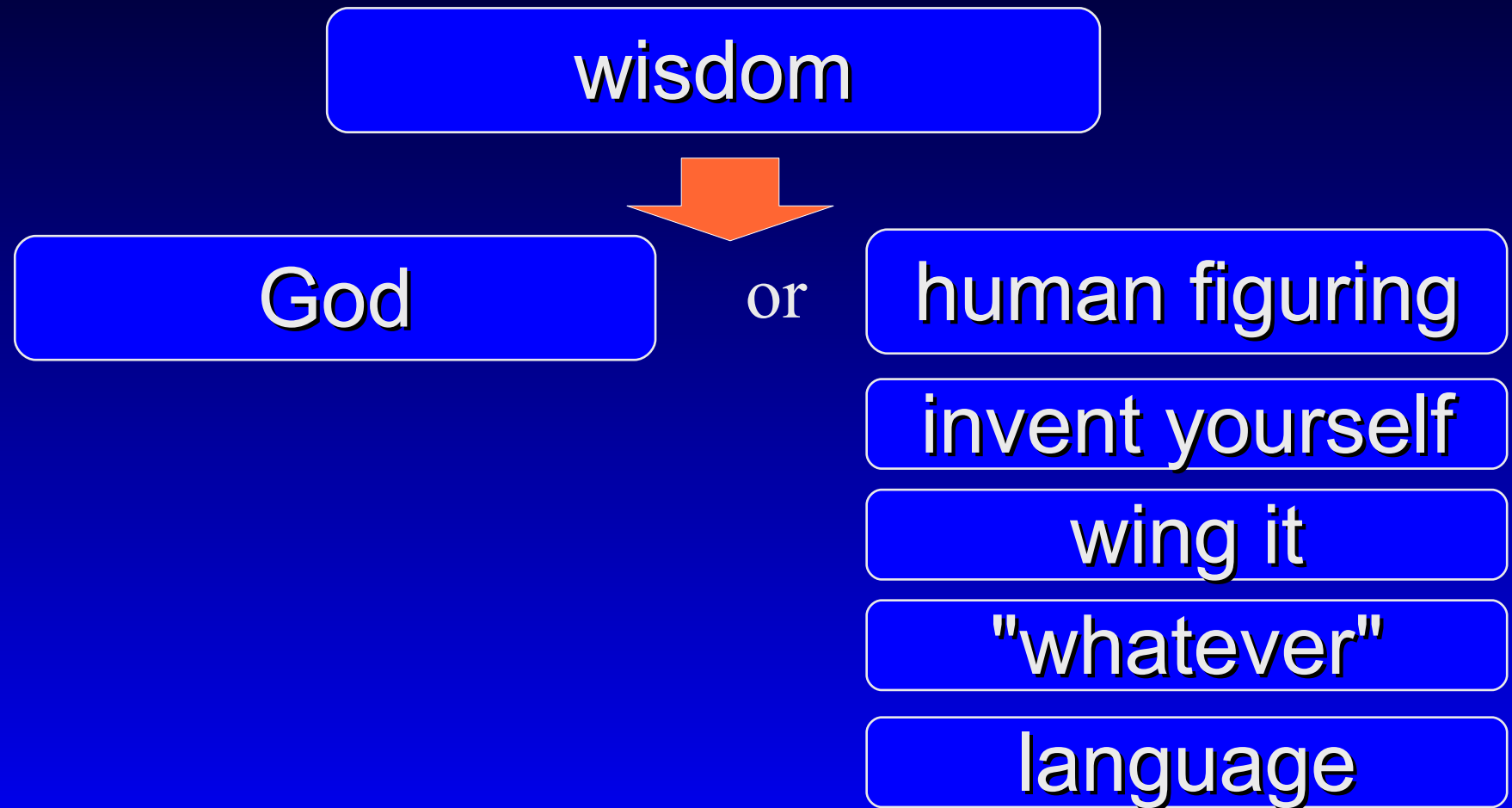


# Sources of Wisdom

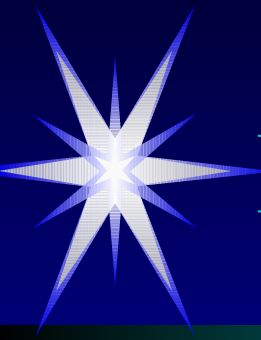




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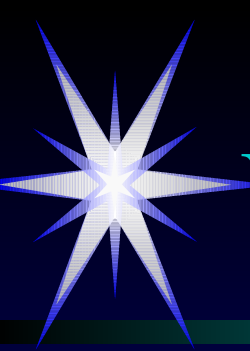






## B. Wisdom Books

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# Wisdom from God

---

With God are wisdom and might;  
he has counsel and understanding.  
-- Job 12:13

For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and  
understanding.  
-- Prov. 2:6



# Wisdom Books

---

wisdom

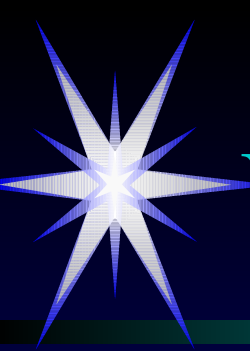


Proverbs

"The proverbs of Solomon, son of David,  
king of Israel:

To know wisdom and instruction  
to understand words of insight."

-- Prov. 1:1-2



# Wisdom Books (Job)

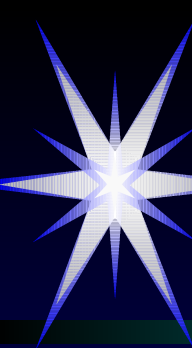
wisdom



Job

Proverbs

"But where shall wisdom be found?  
And where is the place of understanding?"  
-- Job 28:12



# Wisdom Books (Eccles.)

wisdom



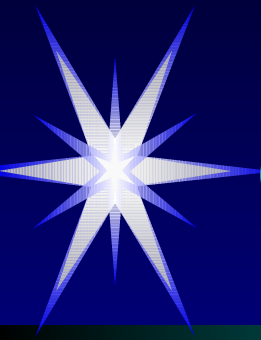
Job

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

"I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

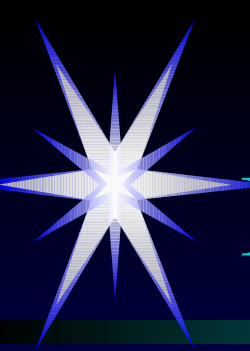
-- Eccles. 1:16



## C. Christ as Fulfillment

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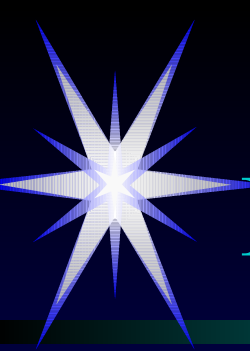


# Fulfillment in Christ's Wisdom

---

... the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

-- Col. 2:2-3



## Fulfillment in Christ's Wisdom (2)

---

He [God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

-- 1 Cor. 1:30

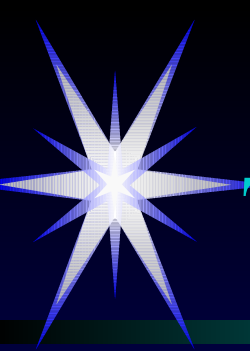


# Fulfillment in Christ's Wisdom (3)

---

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

-- Matt. 11:27

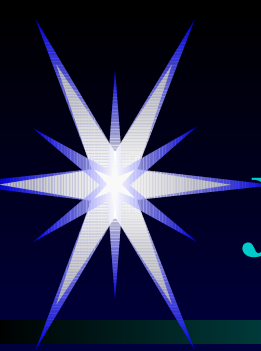


# The Call of Christ

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Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, ...

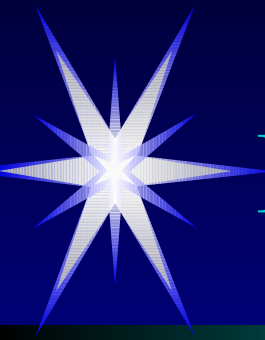
-- Matt. 11:28-29



# Jewish Thinking about "Wisdom"

Draw near to me, you who are not instructed, and dwelling in the house of instruction. ... Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction, She is near. Behold with your eyes that I have labored only a little, and I have found myself much rest.

-- Wisdom of Sirach, 51:23-27  
(2d century B.C.)



# D. Wisdom and Mystery

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# Benefits

---

What the wicked dreads will come upon him,  
but the desire of the righteous will be granted.

-- Prov. 10:24

The righteous will never be removed,  
but the wicked will not dwell in the land.

-- Prov. 10:30



## Benefits (2)

---

The integrity of the upright guides them,  
but the crookedness of the treacherous  
destroys them.

-- Prov. 11:3

The righteousness of the blameless keeps  
his way straight,  
but the wicked falls by his own wickedness.

-- Prov. 11:5

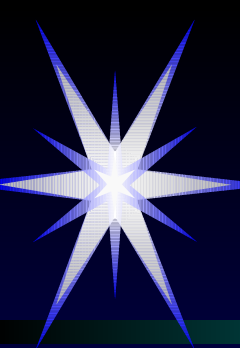


## Benefits (3)

---

The righteous is delivered from trouble,  
and the wicked walks into it instead.

-- Prov. 11:8



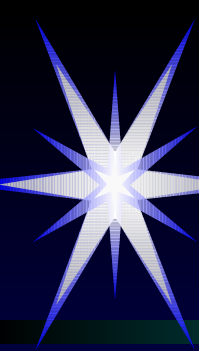
# Problem of Suffering

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Eliphaz: "Remember: who that was innocent ever perished?" -- Job 4:7

Job: "He [God] destroys both the blameless and the wicked." -- Job 9:22

why?



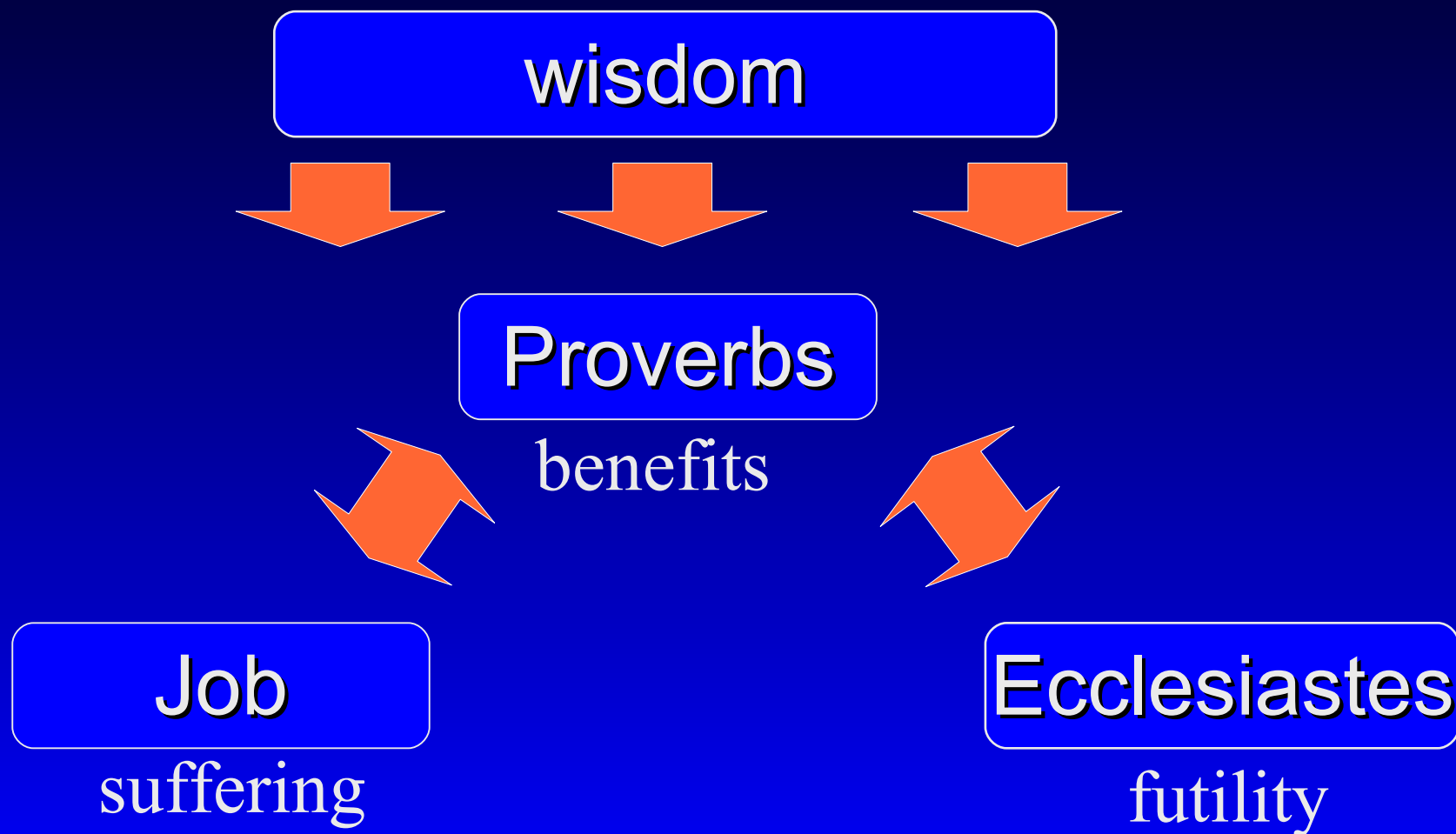
# Problem of Futility and Death

For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool! -- Eccles. 2:16

why?



# Wisdom with Questions







# Ways of Seeking Wisdom

## Proverbs



## Ecclesiastes





# Starting in Proverbs

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning  
of knowledge. -- Prov. 1:7

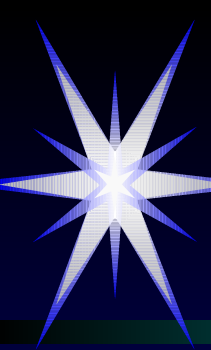


# Ending in Ecclesiastes

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The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

-- Eccles. 12:13-14



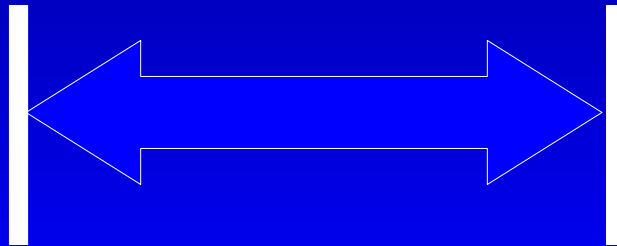
# Under the Sun

God's plan



**under the sun**

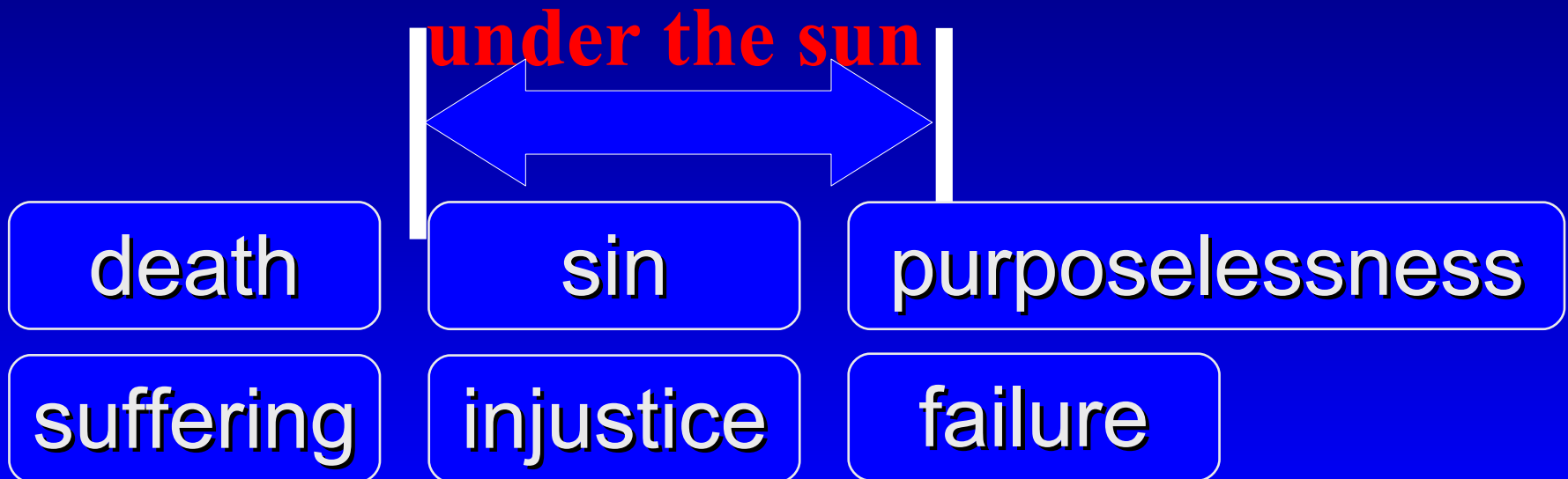
human insight





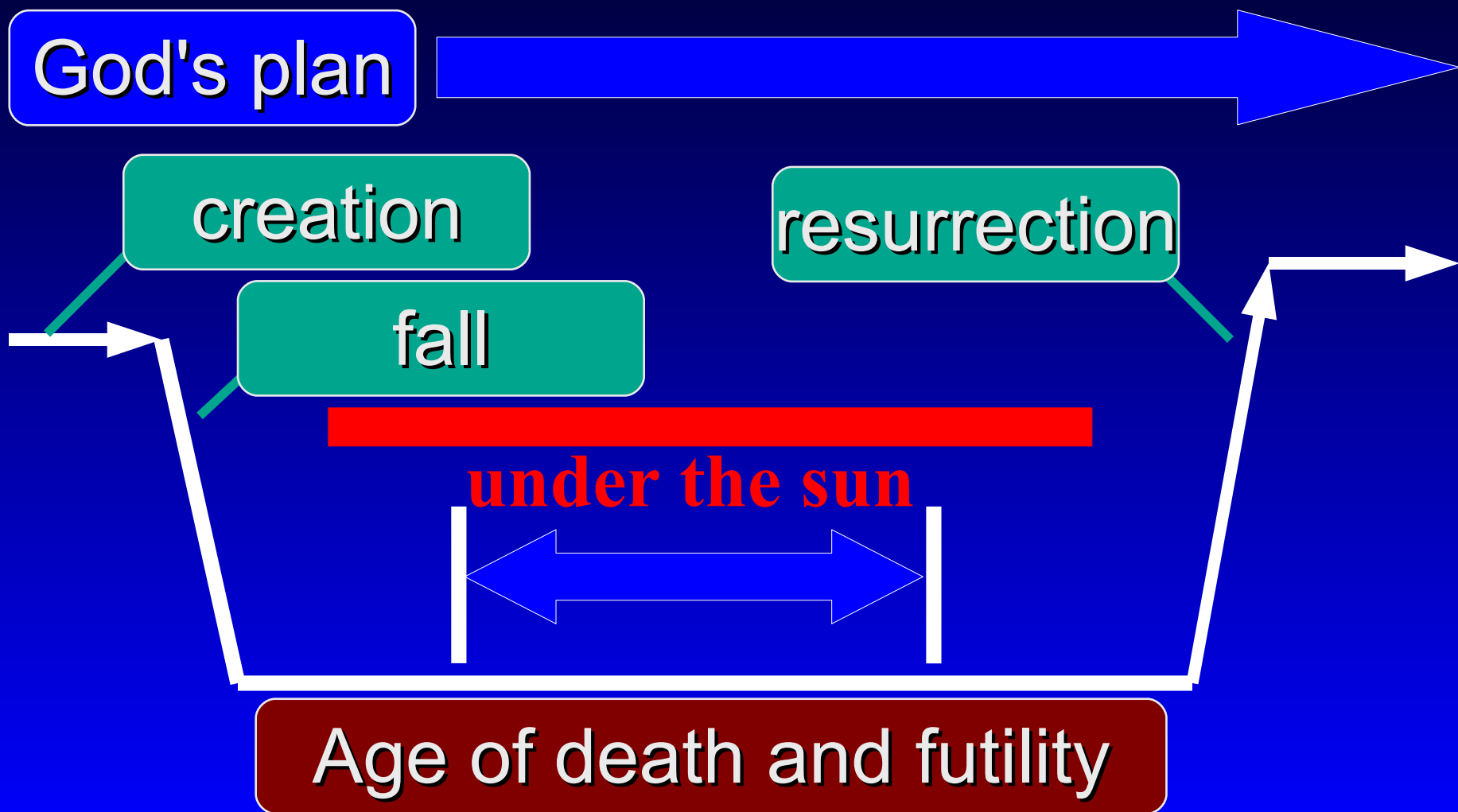
# This Age

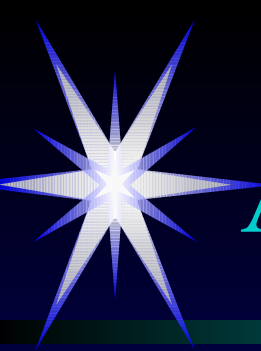
... the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. -- Gal. 1:3-4





# This Age within God's Plan





# A Good Beginning

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And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. -- Gen. 1:31



# Death and Suffering

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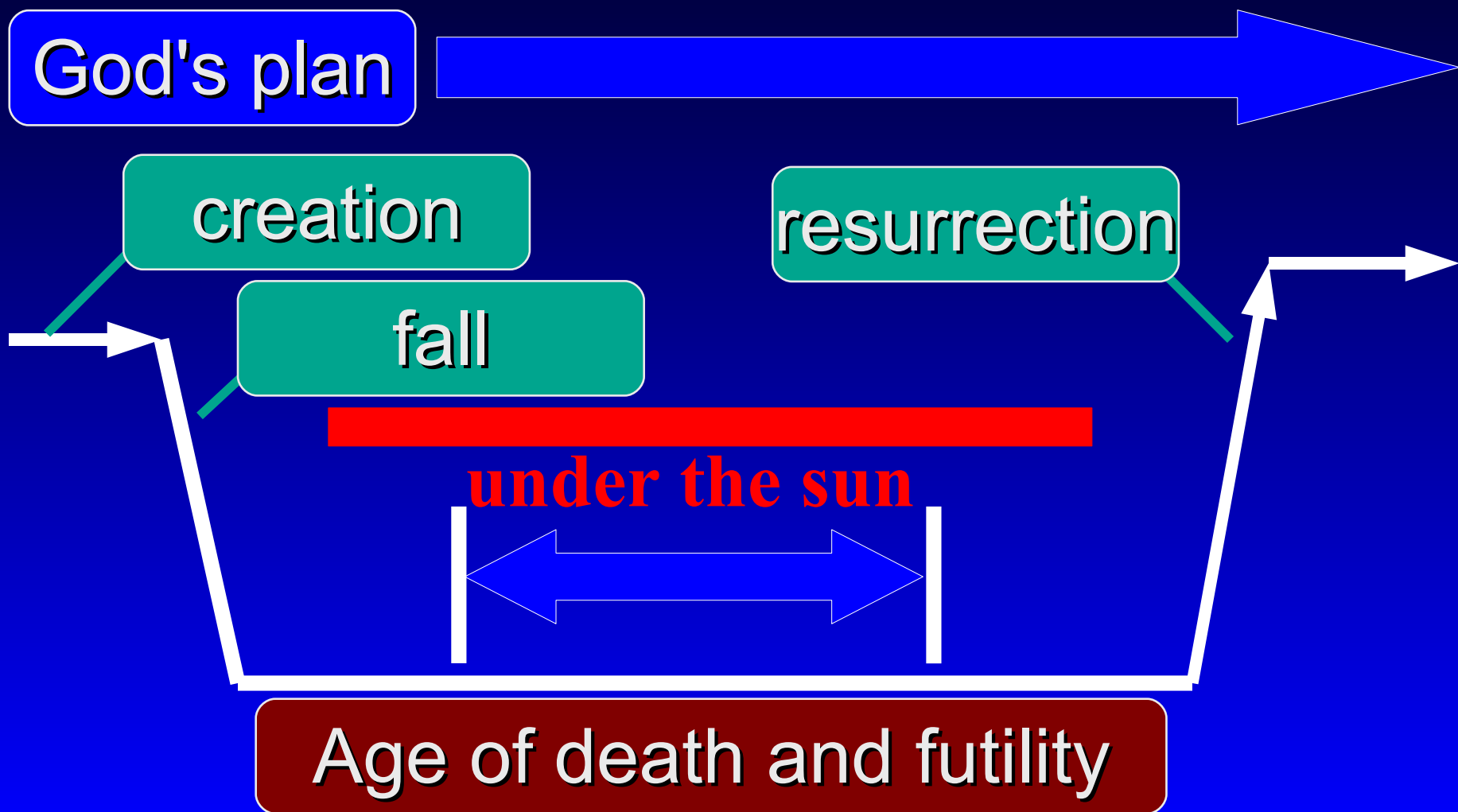
By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.

-- Gen. 3:19





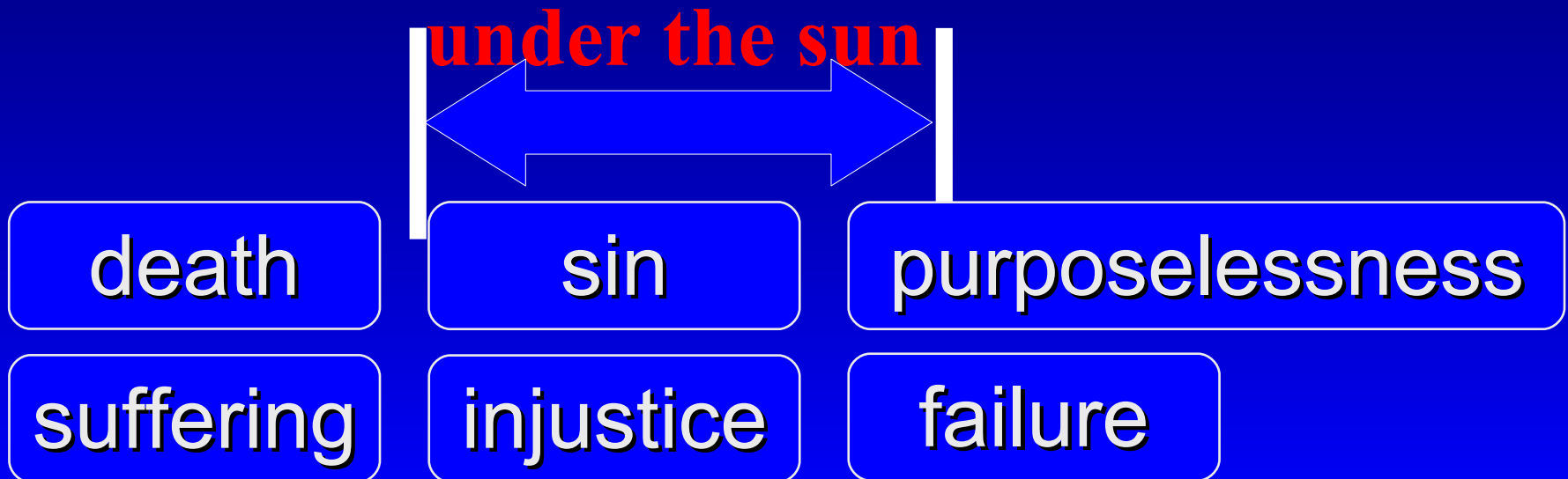
# This Age within God's Plan





# This Age

... the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself  
for our sins to deliver us from the present  
evil age. -- Gal. 1:3-4





# Death

I am the resurrection and the life.  
Whoever believes in me, though he die,  
yet shall he live, ... -- John 11:25

**under the sun**

How the wise man dies just like the fool!  
-- Eccles. 2:16



# Suffering

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us.

-- Romans 8:18

## **under the sun**

For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

-- Eccles. 2:23



# Sin

... the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. -- Gal. 1:3-4

## **under the sun**

Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. -- Eccles. 9:3



# Injustice

... behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. -- Rev. 19:11

## **under the sun**

Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and they was no one to comfort them. -- Eccles. 4:1



# Purposelessness

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. -- 1 Cor. 15:58

## **under the sun**

So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

-- Eccles. 2:17



# Failure

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So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. -- 2 Cor. 4:16-17

## **under the sun**

Riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture. -- Eccles. 5:13-14





# Glory to God

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. -- 2 Cor. 4:7

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## **under the sun**

Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. -- Eccles. 9:11