

Reading Ecclesiastes

# Vanity of Vanities?

Smoky Hill church of Christ

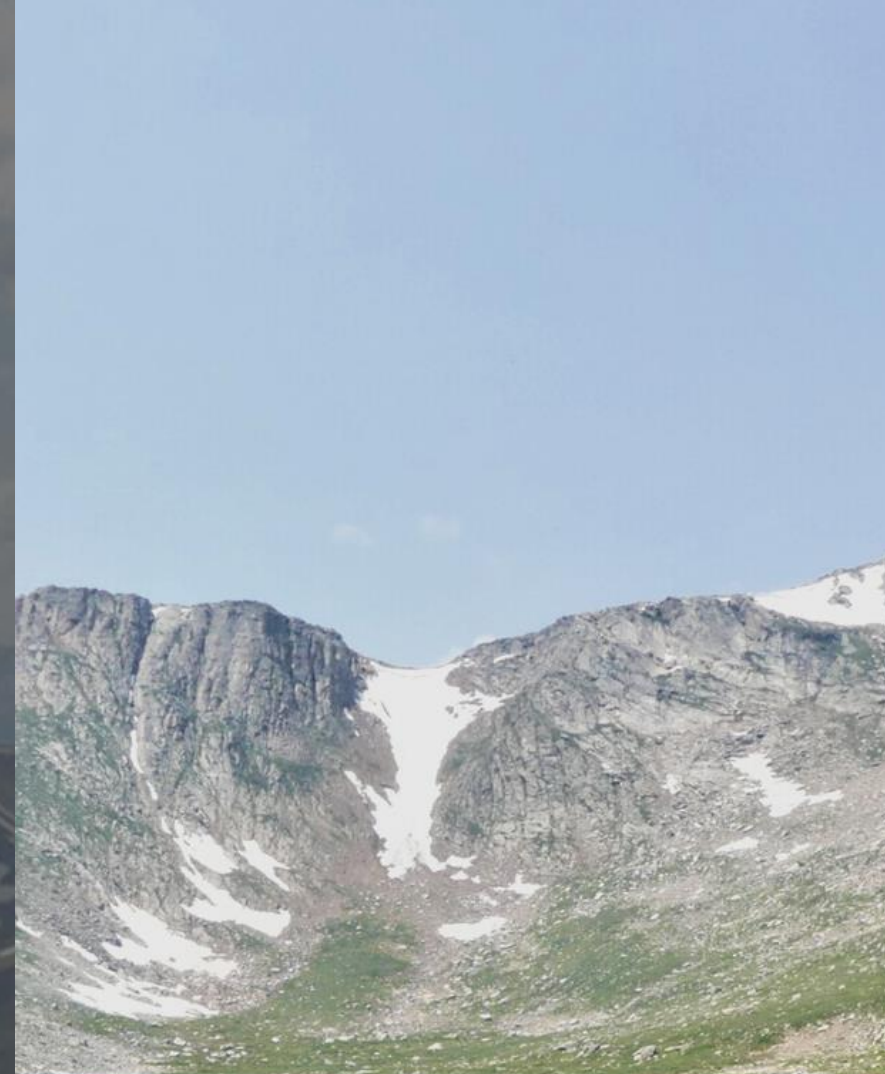


FALL  
2023

1. THE ENIGMA OF LIFE (INTRO + 1.1-11)

# INTRODUCTION TO WISDOM

Comparing Wisdom to the rest of the Bible's inspired texts.



# Who is the Author?

**SOLOMON?**

ECCLESIASTES 1.1, 12

"Son of David" | "King in Jerusalem"

ECCLESIASTES 1.16; 12.9

"Great Wisdom" | "Many Proverbs"

ANCIENT TESTIMONY

Targumim, Origen, Jerome, etc.

# Who is the Author?

**NOT SOLOMON?**

ECCLESIASTES 1.1

It doesn't say Solomon (contra Prv 1.1)

ECCL 1.12, 16; 5.7–8; 10.20

"Was King" | "All before him" | 1 Kings 11

THE LANGUAGE ITSELF

"If Solomon wrote it, there is no history of the Hebrew language" -F. Delitzch

# Who is the Author?

**QOHELETH / PREACHER**

ECCLESIASTES 1.1

The biblical answer

KING AS LITERARY DEVICE

Not the same as pseudepigraphal.

AUTHOR VS. COMPILER

The introduction and conclusion aren't from Qoheleth (cf. 12.9–14)

## THE PREACHER AS A BELIEVER?

"Under the Sun" | God in Ecclesiastes | Glimpses of Truth

## THE QOHELETH AS AN UNBELIEVER?

The editor's bookends (chs 1 and 12) reframe his discussion

## QOHELETH AS FAITHFUL SKEPTIC\*

Speaks to hope in the midst of skepticism, faith as the answer to observation

# Who is “Qoheleth”?

*Vanity, vanity,  
all is vanity!*  
*(1.2–3)*

THE THEME AND  
THE QUESTION

“What does someone gain for all of  
their toil under the sun?”

38x “Vanity”

32x Questions

9x “Toil”

29x “Under the Sun”

**ECCLESIASTES 1.4-11**

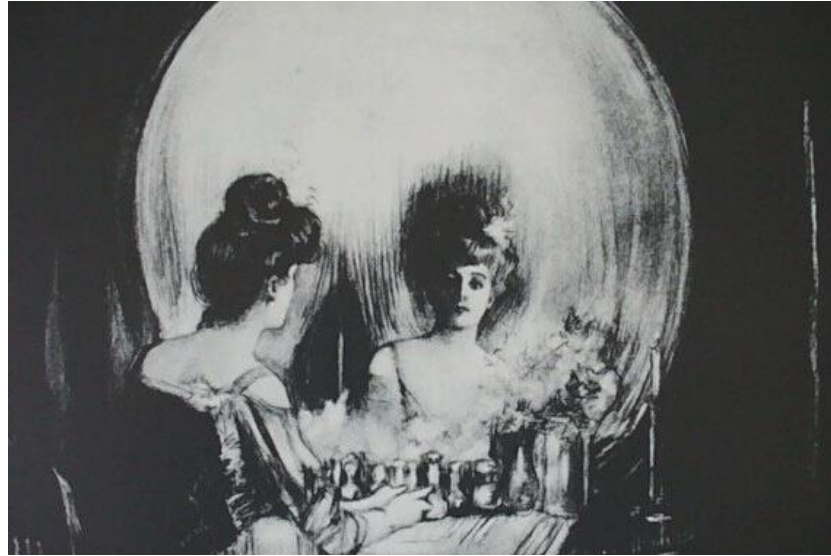
**There is no  
remembrance.**

1

VANITY OF VANITIES?







## READ

Ecclesiastes 1.18–2.26

Genesis 2–3



## QUESTIONS

What sort of “wisdom” does the author seek out?

What is the “unhappy business” (1.13)?

What attempts are made to find the “answer”?

What do we think about these explorations?



# Next Class

## 2. SEARCHING FOR MEANING



