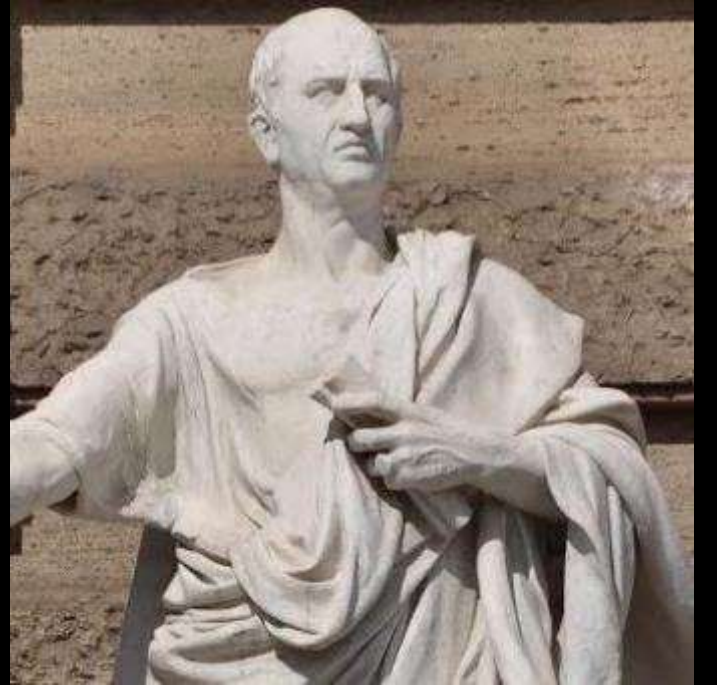
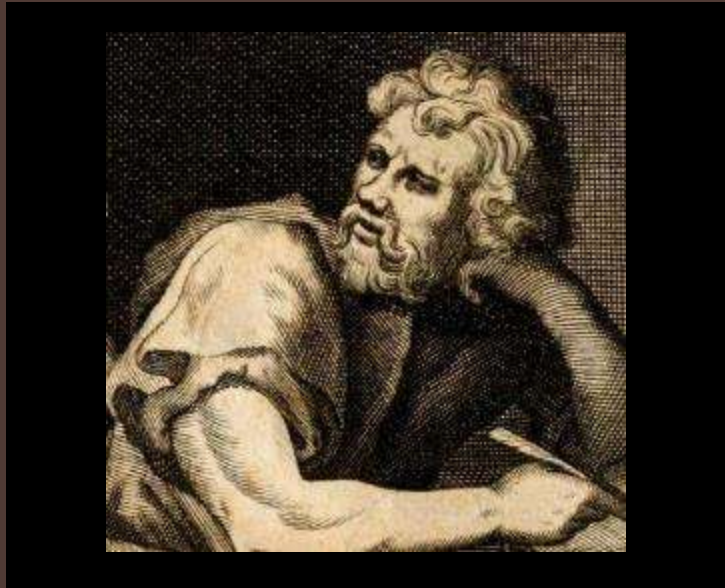
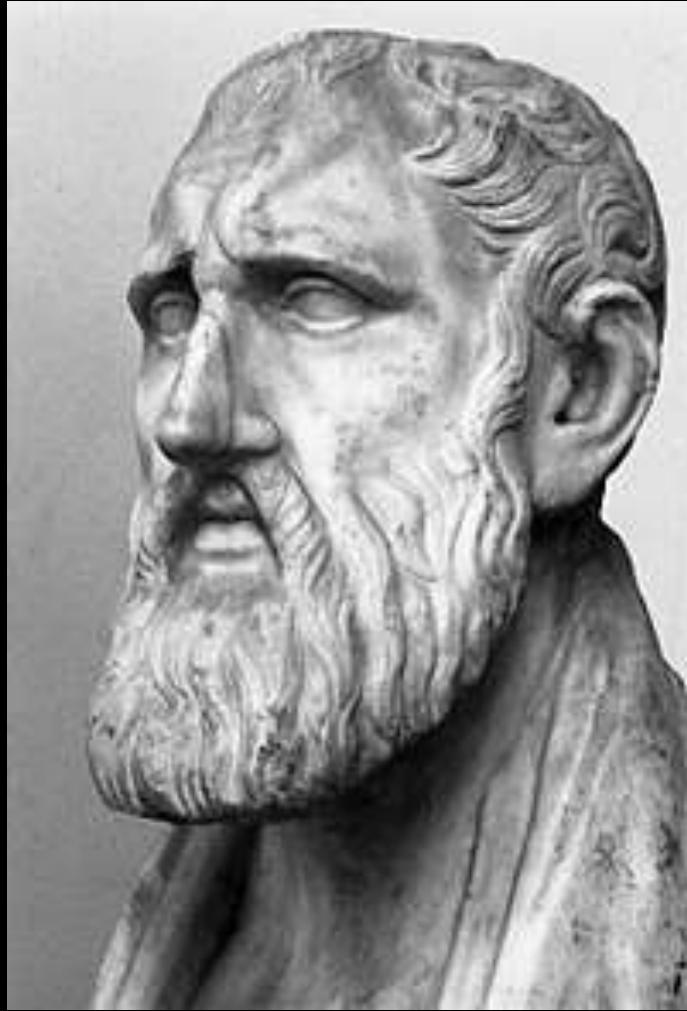
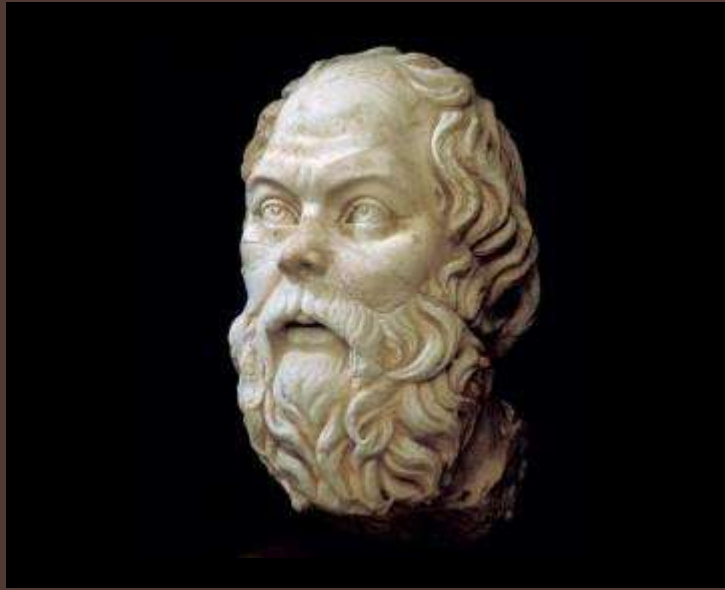




THE STOICS

6. Ecclesiastes





STOIC

Cultivating inner strength
of mind by recognising
what is in your control,
and what is not

Fortify an inner citadel, a
place of calm
detachment



STOIC

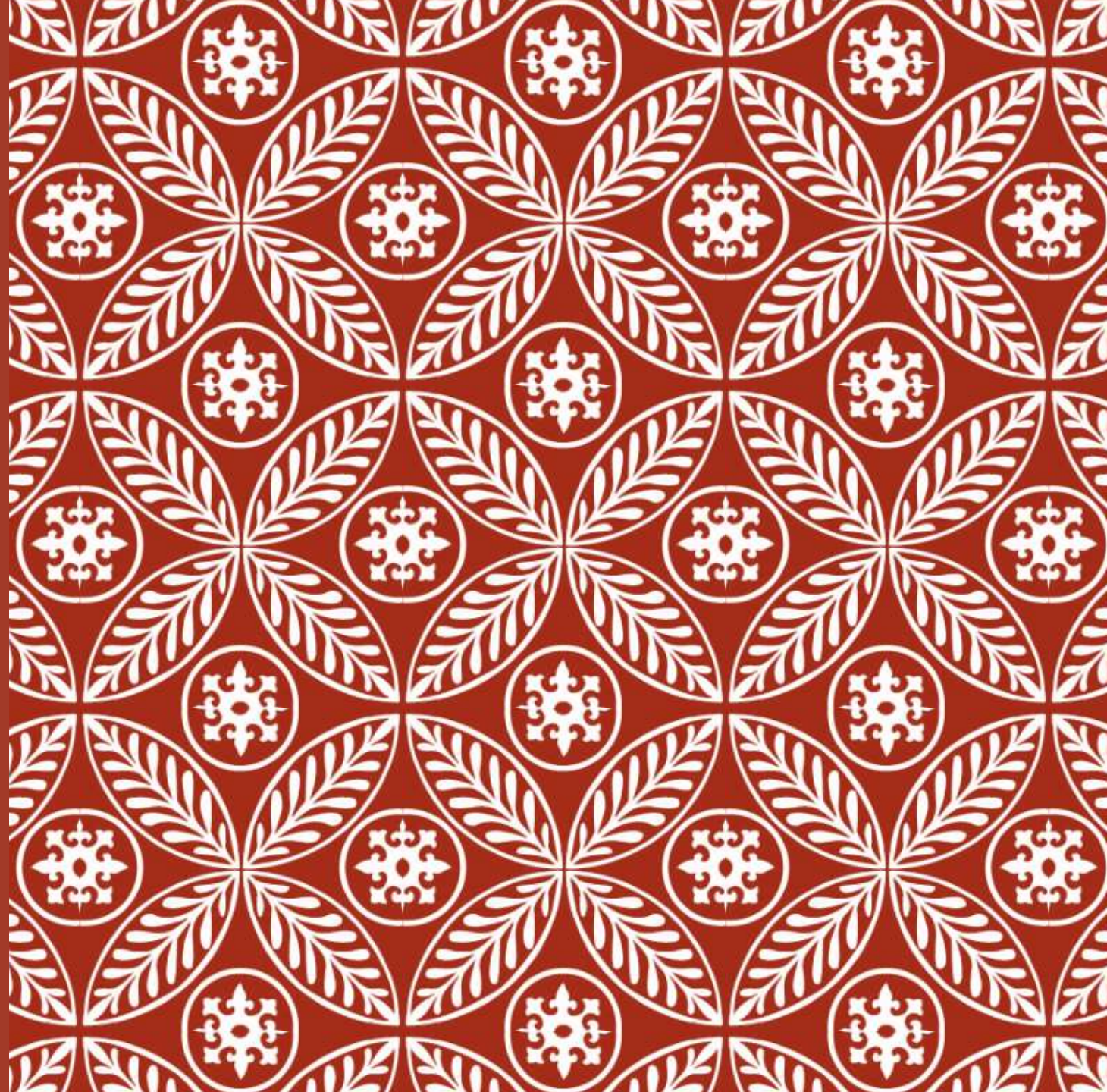
Self-Knowledge

Compassion

Living with Nature

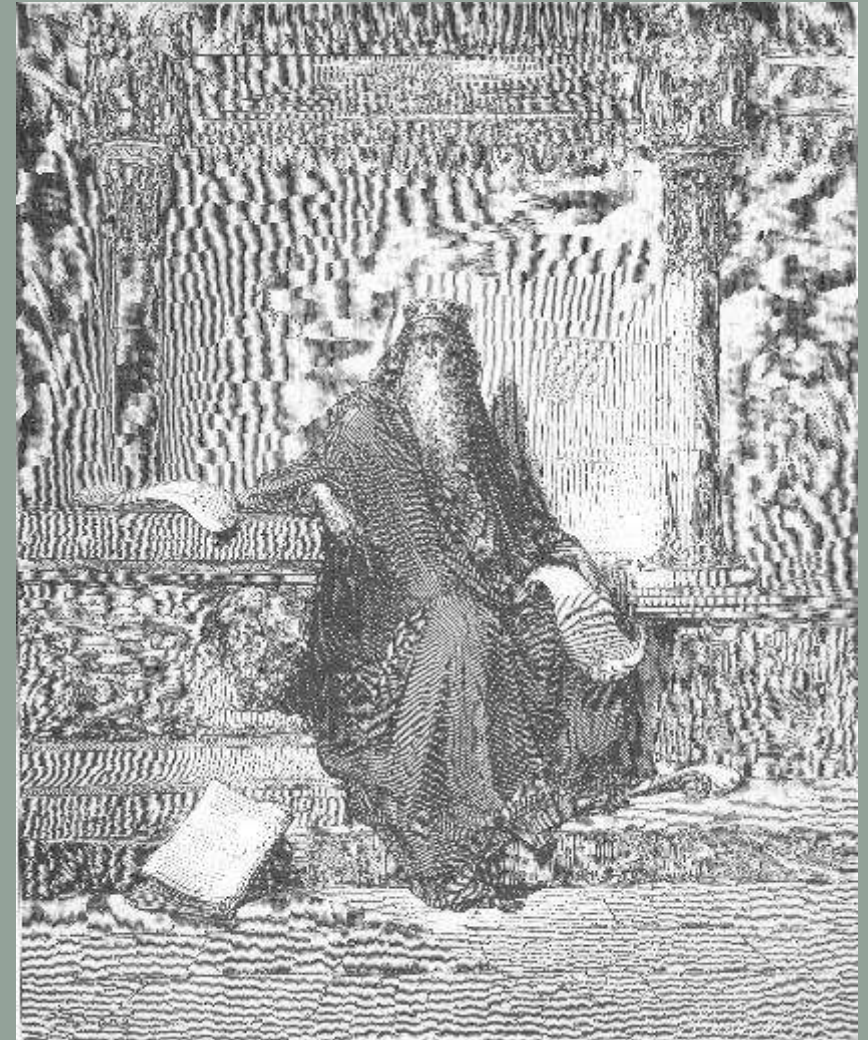
Virtues and strengths of the mind

Departing from old forms of
knowing



AGENDA

1. Introducing Qohelet
2. Vanity (*hevel*)
3. Living with Nature
4. Wisdom vs Folly
5. Joy





1. INTRODUCING QOHELET

B A
 astæ
 Regis



E R B A
 Præfagitionis,
 quam vatici-
 natus est Cō-
 cionator Sa-
 lomon, filius
 Daud, Rex

ani-
 Eccle
 is va
 omnia

Ierusalem. 2 Cū diuinationis spiritu
 præuideret Salomon Rex Israël, regnū
 Rehavam filij sui cum Ierabaam filio



¶ ECCLESIASTES, or the Preacher.

CHAP. I.

1 The Preacher sheweth that all humane courses are vaine: 4 Because the creatures are restlesse in their courses, 9 They bring forth nothing newe, and all olde things are forgotten, 12 And because he hath found it so in the studies of wisdom.



He wordes of the Preacher, the son of Dauid, King in Jerusalem.

2 * Vanitie of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanitie of vanities, all is vanitie.

beene already of olde time, which was before vs.

11 There is no remembrance of former things: neither shall there bee any remembrance of things that are to come, with those that shall come after.

12 ¶ The Preacher was king ouer Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gaue my heart to seeke and search out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done vnder heauen: this sore trauell hath God giuen to the sonnes of man, || to be exercised therein.

14 I haue seene all the workes that are done vnder the Sunne, and behold, all is vanitie, and vexation of spirit.

15 * That which is crooked cannot be made straight.

|| Or. to afflict them.

A GENTLE CYNIC
BEING THE BOOK
OF ECCLESIASTES



MORRIS JASTROW, JR.

אשר הוציאו ממצרים ענת מיצור
כי לא חמץ כי גורשו ממצרים ולא
יכלו להתמיהמה וגם צרה לא עשו

להם

זה שיאנו אובליז
על שום מיה על

מדר



שום שמדרו המצריים את הני אבותינו
במצרים שנוי מדרו את הנייהם בעבודה
קשה בחומר ובלבנים ובל עבודה
בשדה את כל עבודתם אשר עבדו

בהם

בפרך



INTRODUCING ECCLESIASTES

Qohelet – to assemble

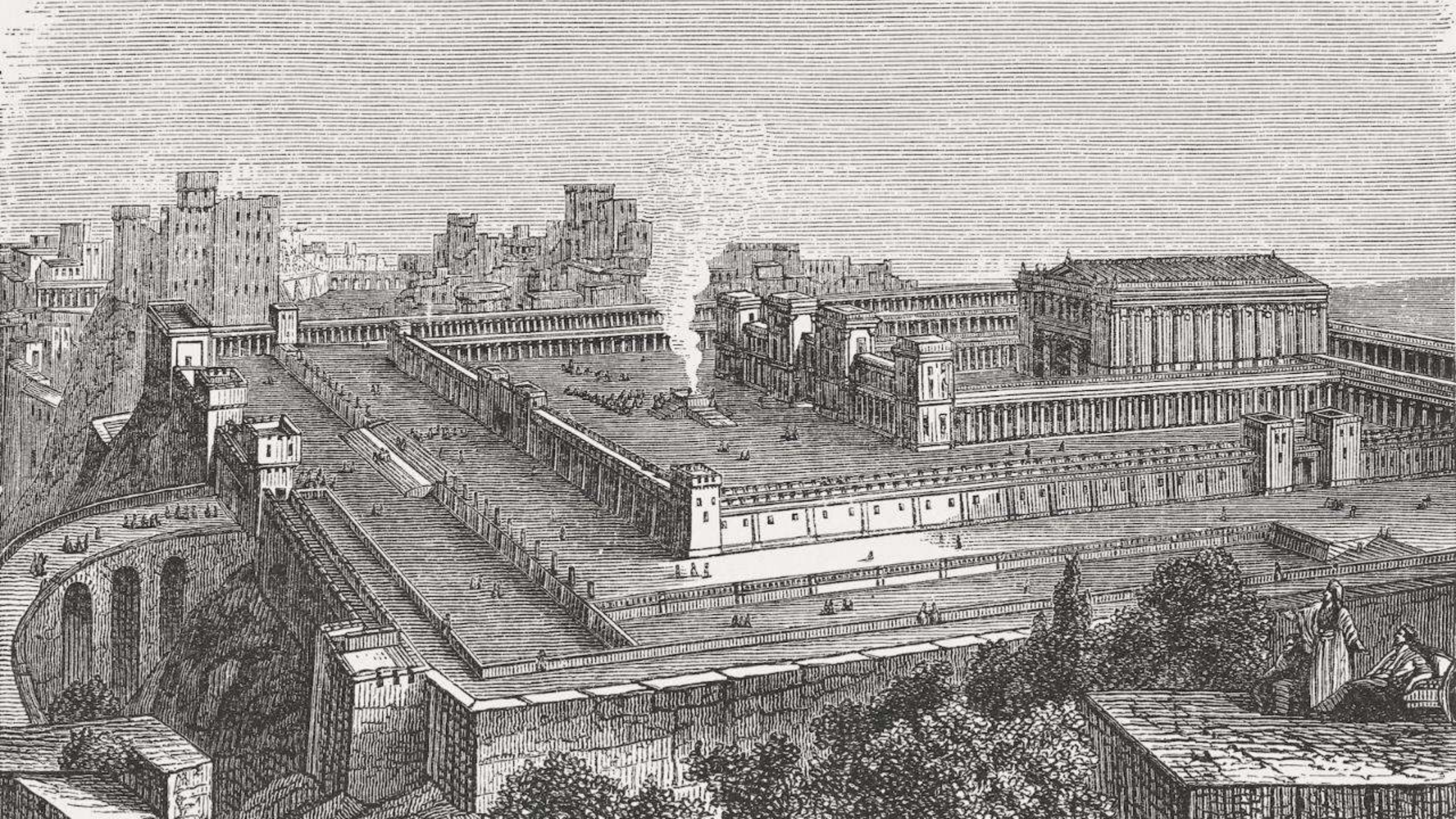
Book of Wisdom, collected in the Old Testament

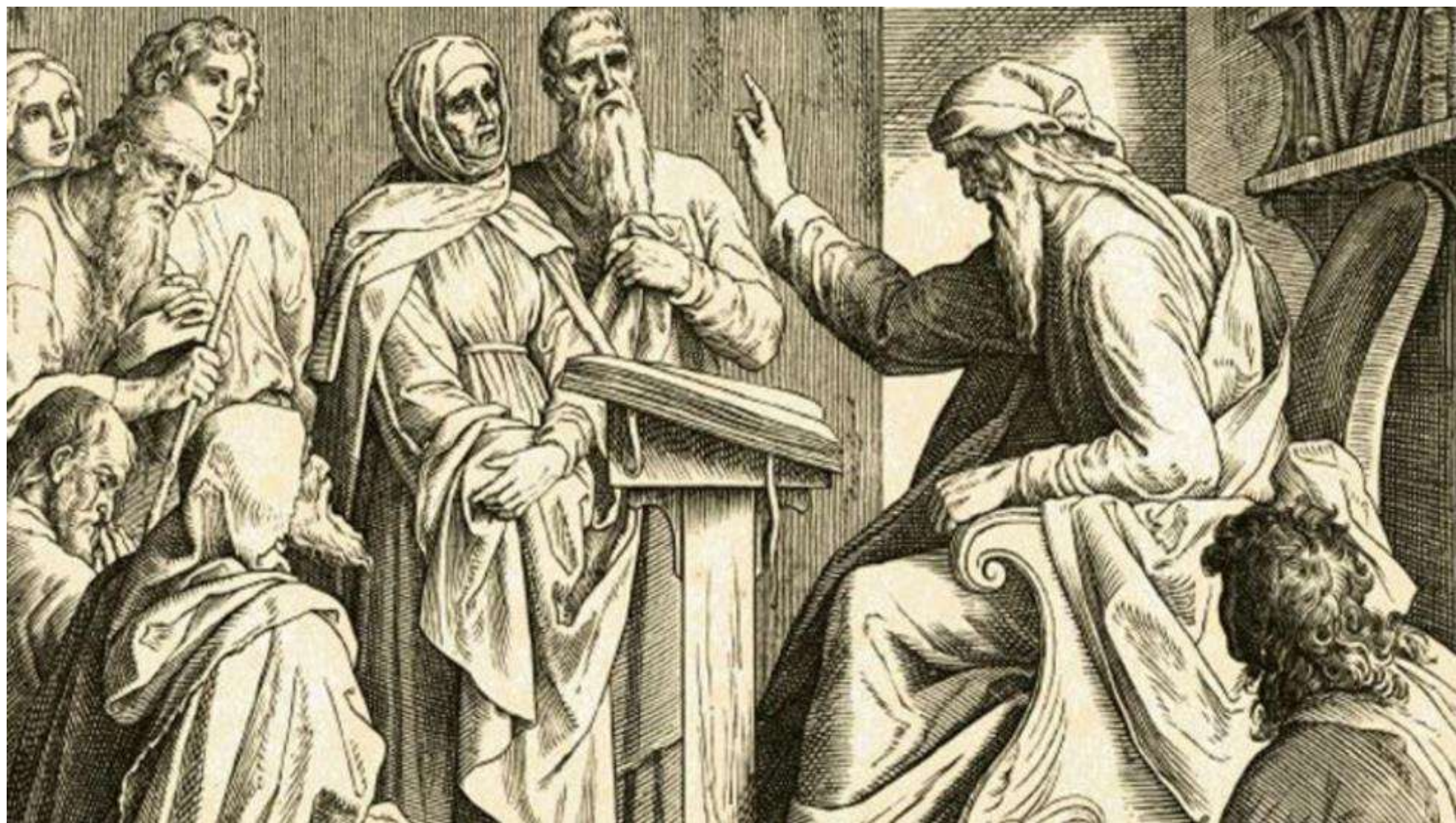
Traditionally attributed author: King Solomon, son of David

Either written around the 9th century BCE, or 2-4th century BCE...









WHO IS THE AUTHOR?

Solomon? 'the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem'; 'assembler' of God's people (1 Kings 8)

Linguistic signs of Persian and Aramaic influence – 2nd – 4th c BCE...

Contradictions in the text

Two writers? (1:1-11, 12:8-14)

Or three? – Qohelet; an orthodox editor; another sage who inserts more traditional proverbs

1:1
THE WORDS OF **QOHELETH**, SON OF **DAVID**, KING OF **JERUSALEM**

HEBREW: ONE WHO GATHERS PEOPLE

TEACHER

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON AUTHORSHIP

- KING SOLOMON?
- ANOTHER DESCENDENT OF DAVID?
- ISRAELITE TEACHER USING A SOLOMON-LIKE PERSONA

KEY POINT: THE TEACHER IS DIFFERENT THAN THE AUTHOR

ANONYMOUS → **TEACHER**

ECCLESIASTES

"HEVEL, HEVEL, EVERYTHING IS UTTERLY HEVEL"

HEBREW: VAPOR, SMOKE → USED 39 TIMES

1 TEMPORARY, FLEETING **2** ENIGMA, PARADOX

BEAUTY GOODNESS JUSTICE

THE AUTHOR'S BASIC GOAL

TO LET THE TEACHER **DECONSTRUCT** ALL THE **WAYS** WE FIND **MEANING & PURPOSE** APART FROM **GOD**

W E A L T H
P L E A S U R E
C A R E A T U S
R E

1:1

1:2

1:3-11 TIME

TIME WILL EVENTUALLY ERASE YOU, ME, AND ALL WE CARE ABOUT

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHER

THE TEACHER (1:3-12:7)

CAREER

- STRESS
- AGE
- LEAVE IT BEHIND

PLEASURE

- MONDAY ALWAYS COMES

WEALTH
CAREER
STATUS
PLEASURE

WISDOM
FEAR OF THE LORD
(SEE 9:13-16)

HEVEL
NO GUARANTEES
ENIGMA

HOW DO YOU LIVE LIFE IN THE MIDST OF HEVEL?

ACCEPT THAT ALL OF LIFE IS OUT OF YOUR CONTROL

FRIENDSHIP
FAMILY
GOOD MEAL
SUNNY DAY

THE GIFT OF GOD

11:7-12:7 DEATH

12:8

WISE
FOOLISH
RICH
POOR

GO NNA DIE

THE GREAT EQUALIZER

12:9-14

CONCLUSION & EVALUATION OF THE TEACHER

TEACHER'S WORDS
WISDOM

"OF THE MAKING OF BOOKS THERE IS NO END"

THE CONCLUSION: FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDS - THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF HUMANS: FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY DEED INTO **JUDGMENT**. EVERY HIDDEN THING, WHETHER GOOD OR EVIL (12:13-14)

THE AUTHOR (1:1, 12:9-14)

ECCLESIASTES, or the Preacher.

CHAP. I.

The Preacher teacheth the vanity of
this world: 4. Though the vanity is
revelled in their hearts: 5. They long
for nothing but vanity, and all their labours
bring forth vanity, and all their increase
bringeth vanity.



I the Preacher, the son
of Dathan, King
of Jerusalem.

1. Vanity of
vanities, such the
preacher, vanity
of vanities, all is
vanity.

2. What profit hath a man of all
his labour, which he taketh under the
Sunne?

3. One generation passeth away,
and another generation cometh: but
the earth abideth for ever.

4. The Sunne also ariseth, and the
Sunne goeth downe, and the
heavens are darkened.

5. The heaver goeth toward the
South, and turneth about unto the
North: it is whirled about continually,
and the heaver returneth againe unto
his former place.

6. All the rivers run into the sea,
yet the sea is not full: unto the place
thence they come, thither they
returne againe.

7. All things are full of labour, man
cannot utter: the eye is not satisfied
with seeing, nor the ear filled with
hearing.

8. The thing that hath been, it is
that which shall be: and that which is
done, is that which shall be done: and
there is no new thing under the Sunne.

9. As there is any thing, whether it
be man or beast, there is also a vanity.

10. There is no remembrance of former
things, neither shall there be any
remembrance of things that are to come,
but those that shall come after.

11. I the Preacher was king once
in Jerusalem.

12. And I gave my heart to seek and
search out by wisdom, concerning all
things that are done under the hea-
ven: this weary travail hath God given to the
sonnes of man, that they should be
travailing.

13. I have seen all the vanities that
are done under the Sunne, and behold,
all is vanity, and vexation of spirit.

14. That which is reared up, cannot
be made straight: and that which is
brought up, cannot be made low.

15. I was weary with mine own
heart, saying, I have come to great
age, and have gotten more wisdom
than all they that have been before me
in Jerusalem: yet my heart findeth great
travailing of wisdom, and knowledge.

16. And I gave my heart to know
wisdom, and to know madnesse and
folly: I perceived that this also is
vanity.

17. For as much wisdom is much
grief: and her that increaseth know-
ledge, increaseth sorrow.

CHAP. II.

The vanity of riches and labour in the
vanity of this world: 11. Though the
vanity is revealed in their hearts: 12. They
long for nothing but vanity, and all their
labours bring forth vanity, and all their
increase bringeth vanity.

I the Preacher, the son
of Dathan, King
of Jerusalem.

1. Vanity of
vanities, such the
preacher, vanity
of vanities, all is
vanity.

2. What profit hath a man of all
his labour, which he taketh under the
Sunne?

3. One generation passeth away,
and another generation cometh: but
the earth abideth for ever.

4. The Sunne also ariseth, and the
Sunne goeth downe, and the
heavens are darkened.

5. The heaver goeth toward the
South, and turneth about unto the
North: it is whirled about continually,
and the heaver returneth againe unto
his former place.

6. All the rivers run into the sea,
yet the sea is not full: unto the place
thence they come, thither they
returne againe.

7. All things are full of labour, man
cannot utter: the eye is not satisfied
with seeing, nor the ear filled with
hearing.

8. The thing that hath been, it is
that which shall be: and that which is
done, is that which shall be done: and
there is no new thing under the Sunne.

9. As there is any thing, whether it
be man or beast, there is also a vanity.

10. There is no remembrance of former
things, neither shall there be any
remembrance of things that are to come,
but those that shall come after.

11. I the Preacher was king once
in Jerusalem.

12. And I gave my heart to seek and
search out by wisdom, concerning all
things that are done under the hea-
ven: this weary travail hath God given to the
sonnes of man, that they should be
travailing.

13. I have seen all the vanities that
are done under the Sunne, and behold,
all is vanity, and vexation of spirit.

14. That which is reared up, cannot
be made straight: and that which is
brought up, cannot be made low.

15. I was weary with mine own
heart, saying, I have come to great
age, and have gotten more wisdom
than all they that have been before me
in Jerusalem: yet my heart findeth great
travailing of wisdom, and knowledge.

16. And I gave my heart to know
wisdom, and to know madnesse and
folly: I perceived that this also is
vanity.

17. For as much wisdom is much
grief: and her that increaseth know-
ledge, increaseth sorrow.



¶ ECCLESIASTES, or the Preacher.

CHAP. I.

1 The Preacher sheweth that all humane courses are vaine: 4 Because the creatures are restlesse in their courses, 9 They bring forth nothing newe, and all olde things are forgotten, 12 And because he hath found it so in the studies of wisdom.



He wordes of the Preacher, the son of Dauid, King in Jerusalem.

2 * Vanitie of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanitie of vanities, all is vanitie.

beene already of olde time, which was before vs.

11 There is no remembrance of former things: neither shall there bee any remembrance of things that are to come, with those that shall come after.

12 ¶ The Preacher was king ouer Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gaue my heart to seeke and search out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done vnder heauen: this sore trauell hath God giuen to the sonnes of man, || to be exercised therein.

14 I haue seene all the workes that are done vnder the Sunne, and behold, all is vanitie, and vexation of spirit.

15 * That which is crooked cannot be made straight.

|| Or. to afflict them.

HE HAS MADE everything beautiful IN ITS TIME



in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

The Vanity of Living Wisely

¹²So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who races after the king? Only what has already been done. ¹³Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness. ¹⁴The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them. ¹⁵Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. ¹⁶For 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! ¹⁷So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

The Vanity of Toil

¹⁸I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me. ¹⁹and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my strength under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰Then I gave up my heart about and gave my heart up to despair because of the toil of my labors under the sun. ²¹Sometimes a person who has labored with wisdom and knowledge and has gained much and has increased his wealth, he does not enjoy it, for he must leave it to the man who will come after him. This also is vanity and a striving after wind. ²²What has a man from all the toil of his heart with which he toils under the sun, so that he may eat and drink for all his days? For he must leave it to the man who will come after him. This is a vexation, even in the midst of his life, and at the end he leaves it to the man who will come after him. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

²³There is no person who can enjoy himself, for he must leave it to the man who will come after him. ²⁴For the man who has gained much and has increased his wealth, he does not enjoy it, for he must leave it to the man who will come after him. This is a vexation, even in the midst of his life, and at the end he leaves it to the man who will come after him. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

A Time for Everything

³For everything there is a season, and for every matter under the

- ² a time to be born, and a time to die;
- ³ a time to plant, and a time to harvest;
- ⁴ a time to kill, and a time to be killed;
- ⁵ a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- ⁶ a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
- ⁷ a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- ⁸ a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
- ⁹ a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- ¹⁰ a time to seek, and a time to lose;
- ¹¹ a time to keep, and a time to give;
- ¹² a time to tear, and a time to laugh;
- ¹³ a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- ¹⁴ a time to love, and a time to hate;
- ¹⁵ a time for war, and a time for peace.

The God-Given Task

¹⁶What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has made everything beautiful in its time. He has put eternity into man's heart, yet he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to the end. ¹⁷I perceived that whatever is done on earth, and whatever is achieved, is like a passing shadow. ¹⁸Man should eat and drink and take pleasure in his toil—this is God's gift to man.

¹⁹I perceived that whatever is done on earth, and whatever is achieved, is like a passing shadow. ²⁰Man should eat and drink and take pleasure in his toil—this is God's gift to man.

From Dust to Dust

²¹Moreover, I saw under the sun, in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. ²²I said in my heart, "I will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every deed." ²³I said in my heart with regard to the deeds of man that God is testing them, that they see that they themselves are but dust.

STRUCTURE

Initial Poem (1.2-11)

I. Qohelet's Investigation of Life (1.12-6.9)

II. Qohelet's Conclusions (6.10-11.6)

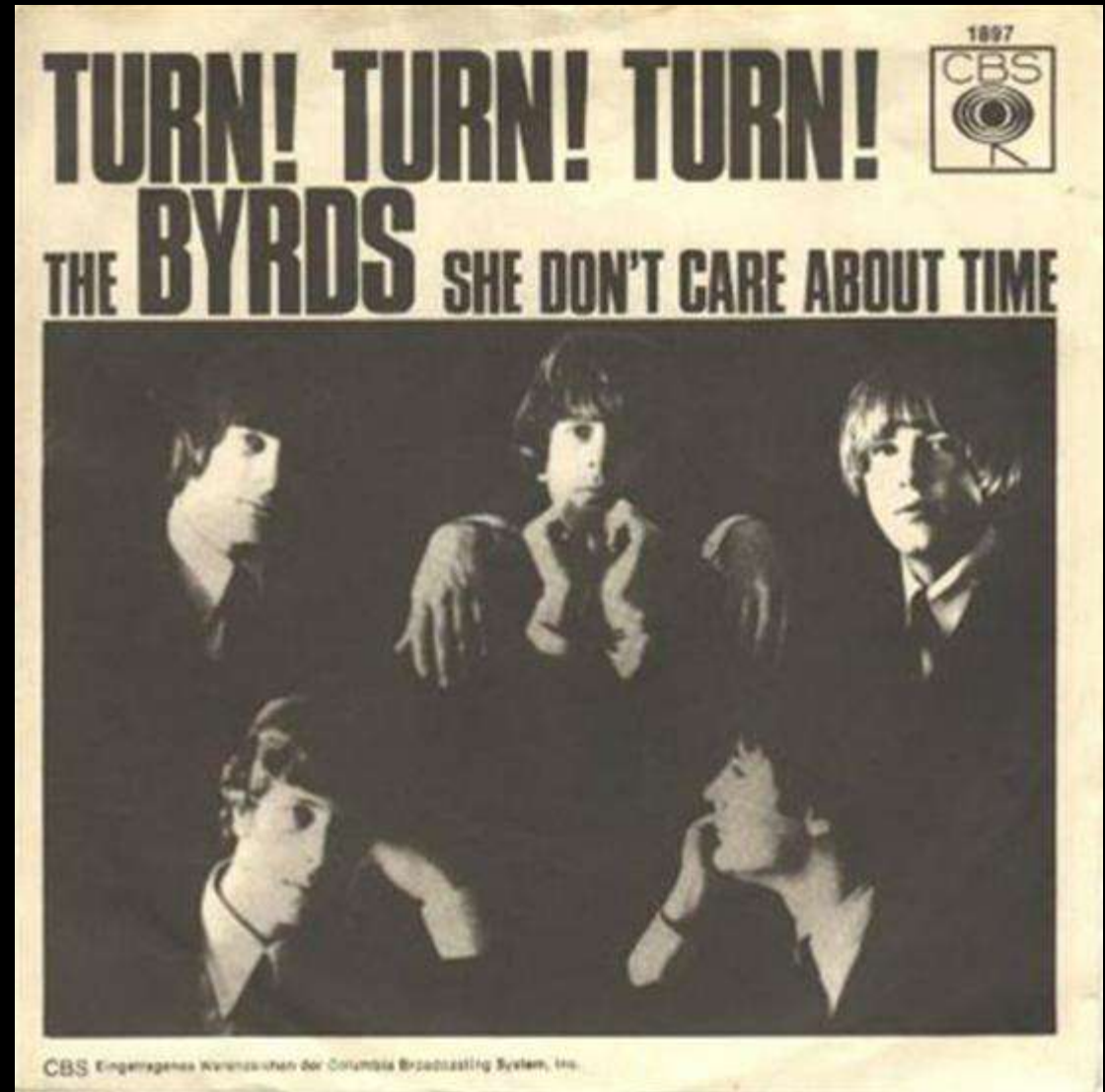
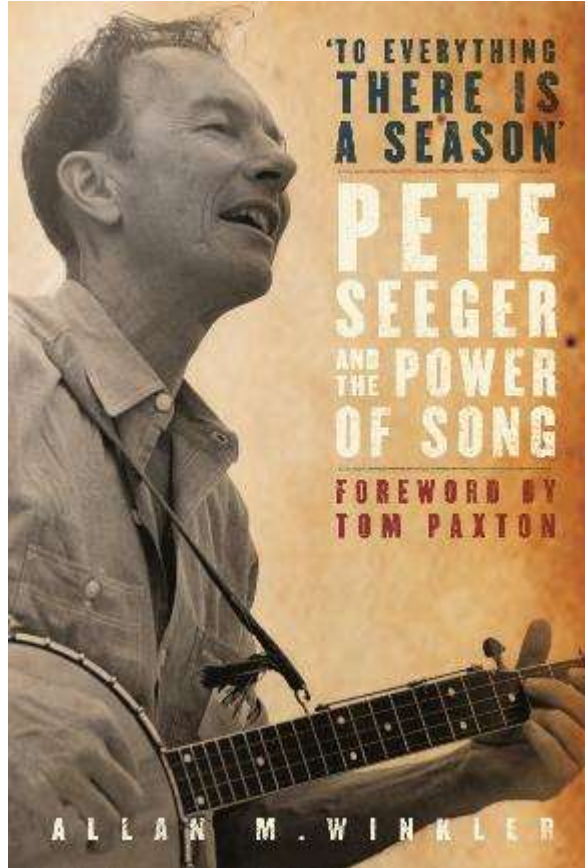
Introduction (6.10-12)

A. Man cannot find out what is good for him to do
(7.1-8.17)

B. Man does not know what will come after him
(9.1-11.6)

Concluding Poem (11.7-12.8)

Epilogue (12.9-14)



The sun also ariseth
and the sun goeth down
and hasteth to his
place where he arose

There is a time for everything

For everything a season

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Ecclesiastes 3:11

2. VANITY

A thin, dark vertical line is positioned to the right of the section header, extending from the top of the header area down to the bottom of the page.



‘Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, it is all vanity’.

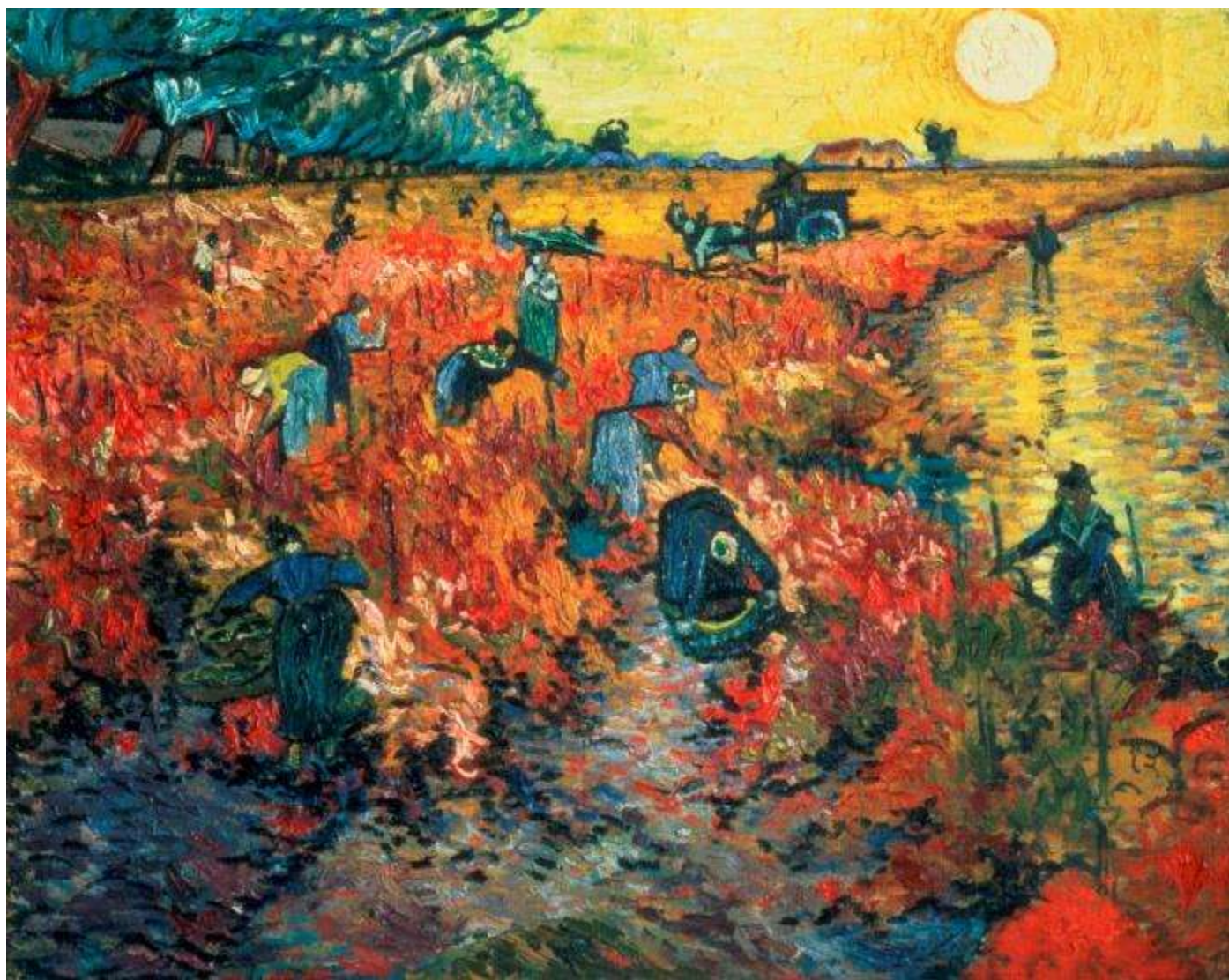
Used 37 times – often as a refrain, ‘this too is vanity’

Vanity: absurd, senseless, incomprehensible,
ungraspable, meaningless

Or: ‘Breath of a breath! All is a breath’

Vulgate: *vanitas* introduces most chapter headings –
of seeking knowledge, of pleasures, of work...

HEVEL



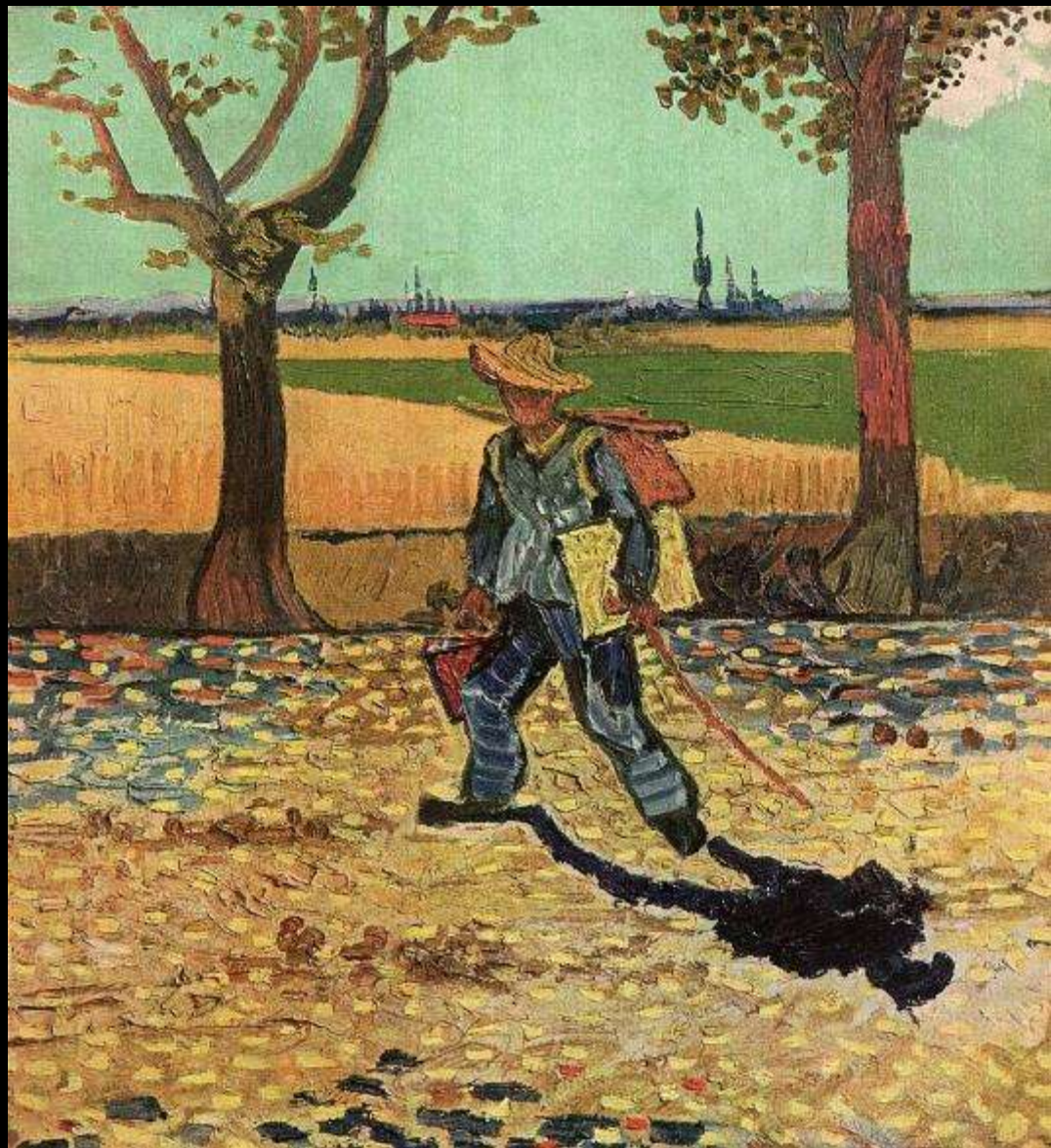
3 'What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

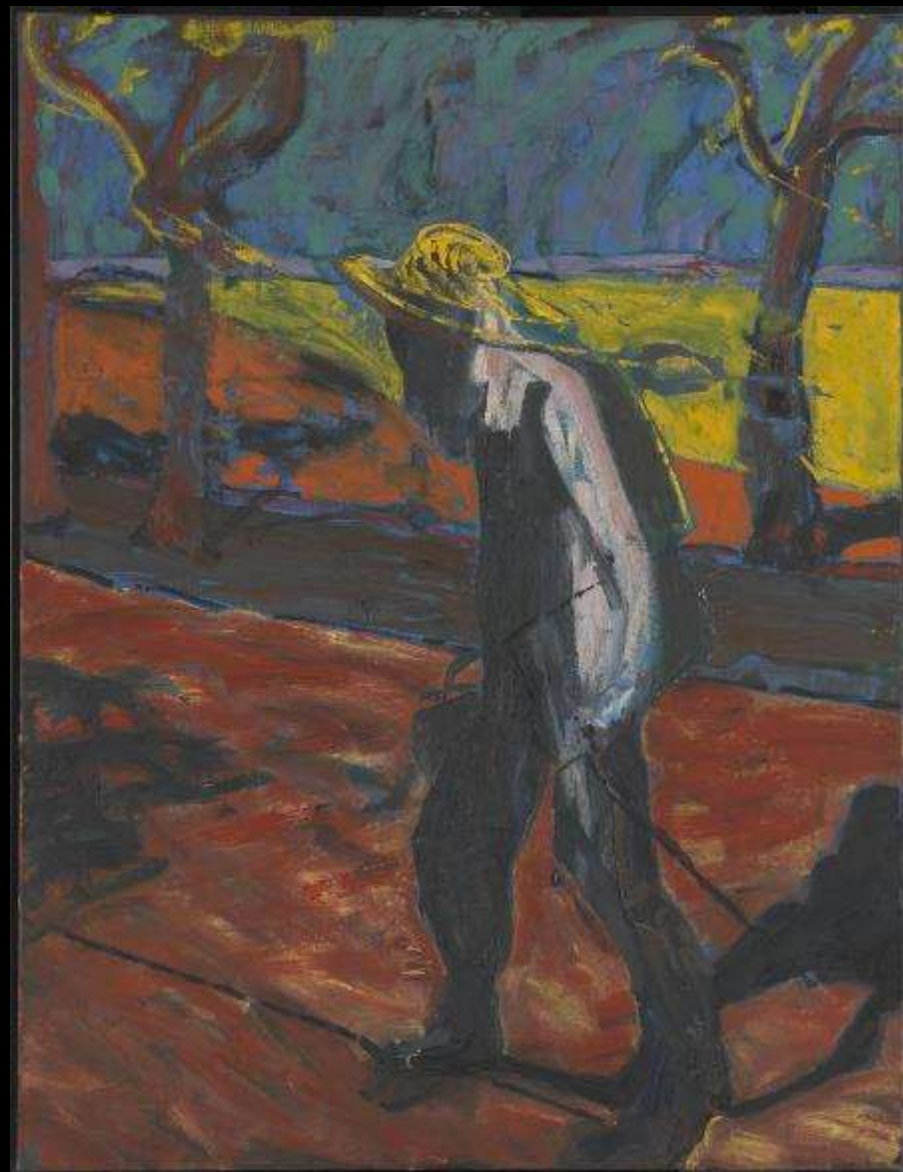
4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.'









ALL IS VANITY...

The brevity of life, the shortness of time...

The grip of powerful illusions on our thinking...

The weight of death

This body, like a 'battered crate'...

Does Qohelet think like a Stoic?





3. LIVING WITH NATURE

STEREO

Turn! Turn! Turn! THE BYRDS



1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time of war, and a time of peace.'



يشد فاصلة على وجهه منقوشة
 ويطلق وقد كان القوم واداء
 ثمره منقوشة على وجهه منقوشة
 على عظمه منقوشة على وجهه منقوشة
 حيوته منقوشة على وجهه منقوشة
 منقوشة على وجهه منقوشة



من الناب من قصه نادر منقوشة
 منقوشة منقوشة منقوشة
 من الناب من قصه نادر منقوشة
 منقوشة منقوشة منقوشة

منقوشة منقوشة منقوشة
 منقوشة منقوشة منقوشة



BREATH

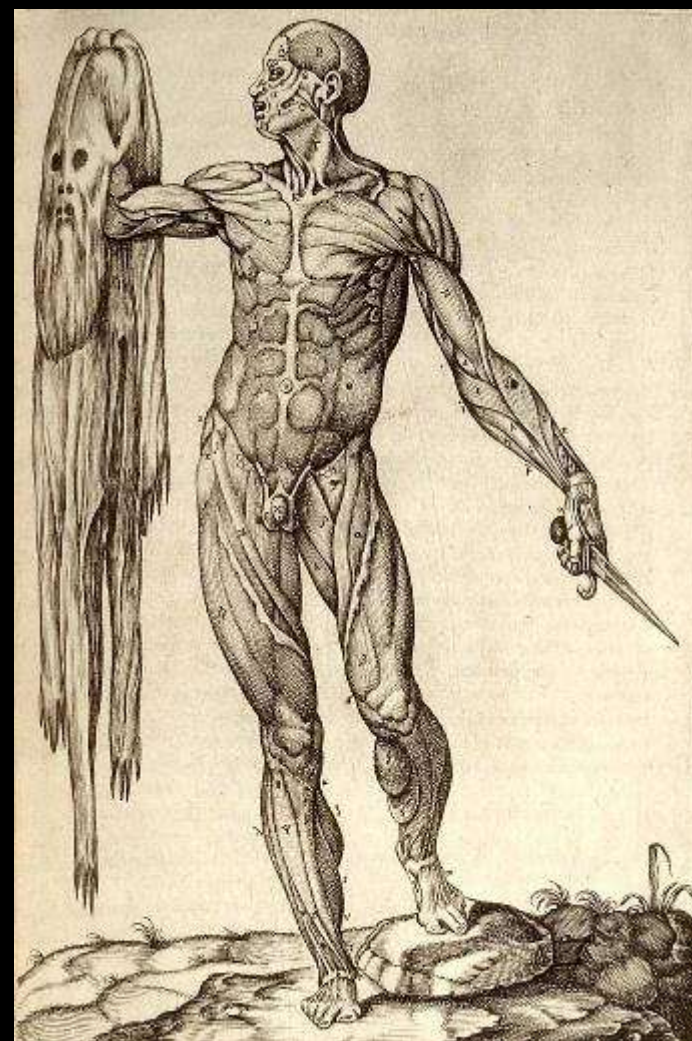
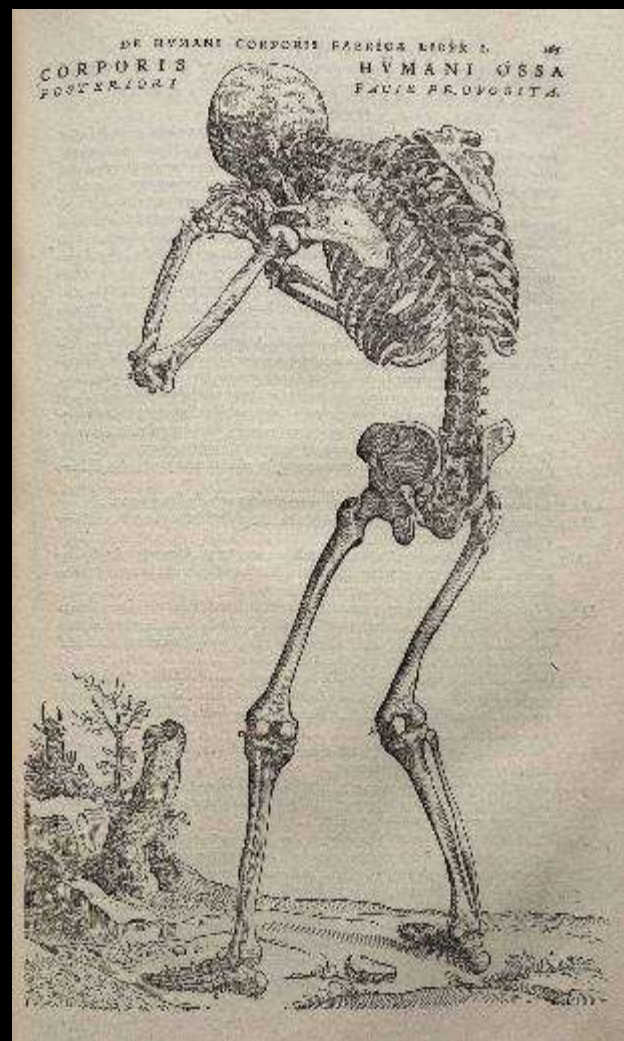
Everything shares in a common breath...

Men 'themselves are beasts'. All things turn to dust

3:19 'For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. 20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.'

So, the upshot: we can merely enjoy our portion. The rest is beyond our knowledge:

3:22 'for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?'





4. WISDOM VS FOLLY



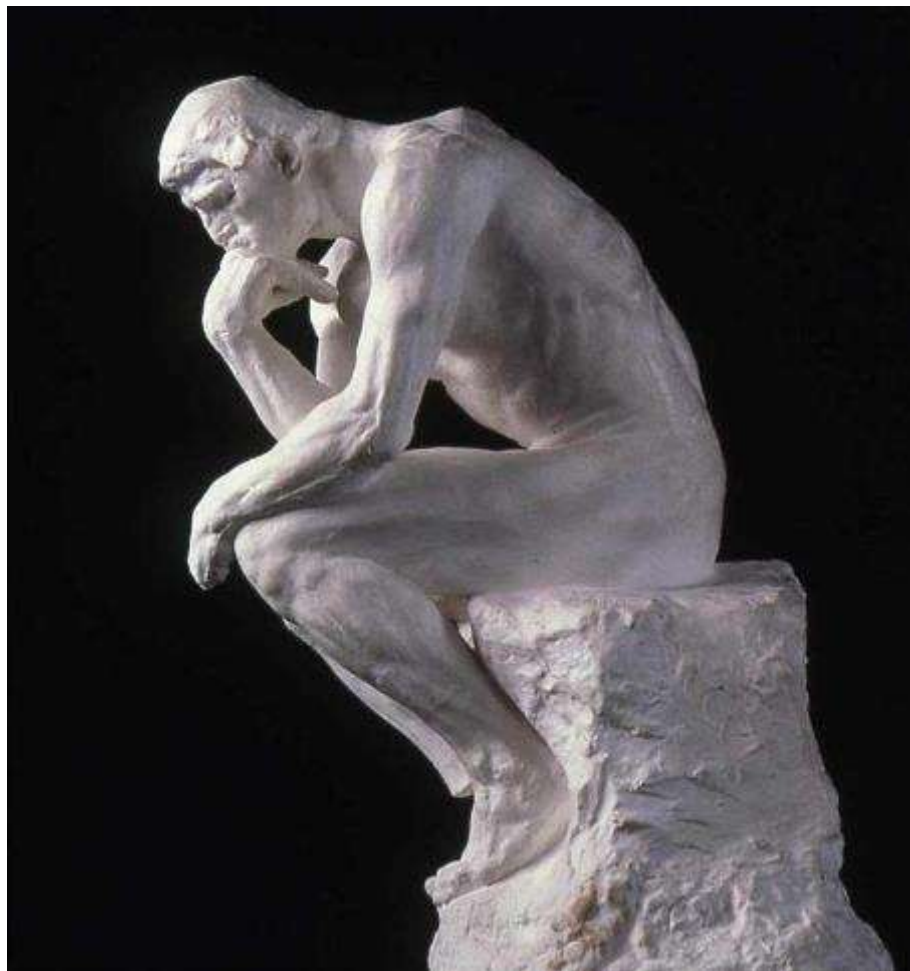
Qohelet mostly praises wisdom. But it is limited by death, by the greater power of fools, and is later dismissed at the end...

7:11 'Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. 12 For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.'

7:19 'Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.'

9:16 'Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. ...18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.'

THE WISE MAN VS THE FOOL





2:20 'Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.'

2:23 'For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.'

Our names shall be 'covered in darkness' (6:4).

God disappears, 6:12: 'For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?'

1:18 'For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.'

DESPAIR



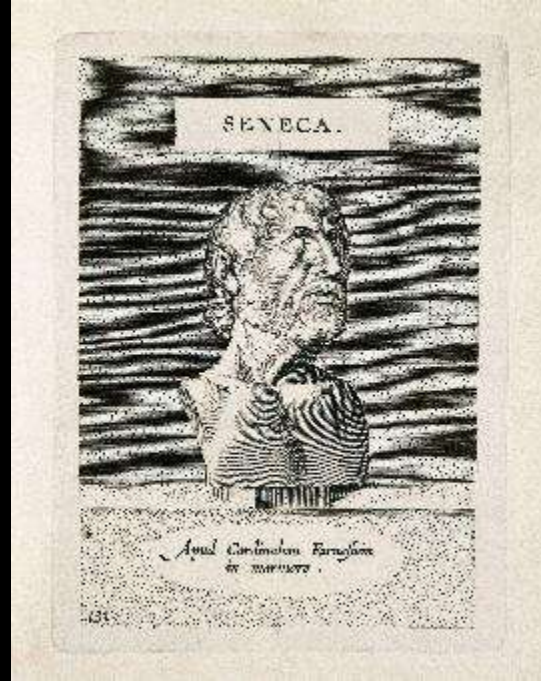
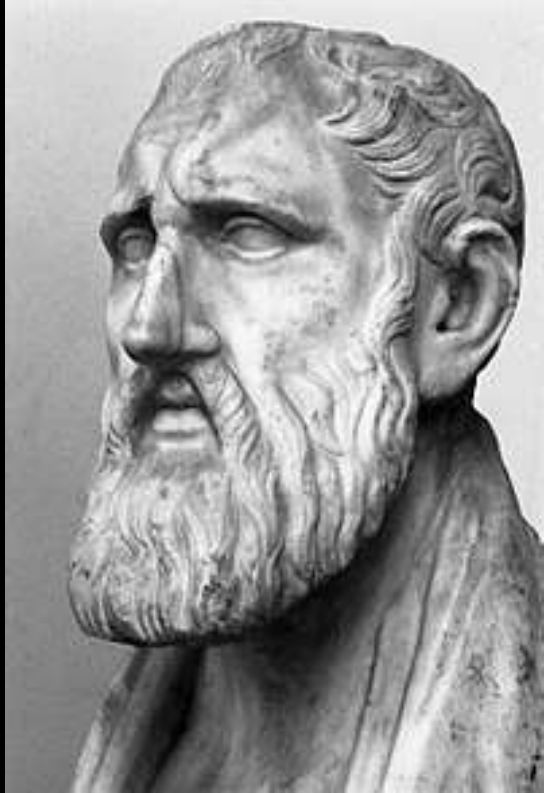


‘15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom...

17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

ALL IS VANITY



STOIC OR ANTI-STOIC?

Every person is circumscribed by death, or fate

Life defined by continuous activity, regeneration, all 'under the sun'

Rhetorical questions, self-admonition, the search for meaning in a disenchanted world

Zeno and Chrysippus give an analogy of a dog tied to a wagon pulled in front of him – he can follow willingly or not, so it is with humans.

The wise and the fool are equal – not so for the Greek Stoics

Wisdom has no legacy, and it is vanity to seek out the nature of the universe

'all is vanity', a 'grasping after the wind' – this upturns Stoic *katalepsis*, which is literally 'grasping' of an impression caused by external objects.



5. JOY





Eat, drink and be merry...

Generosity: 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days' (11:1)

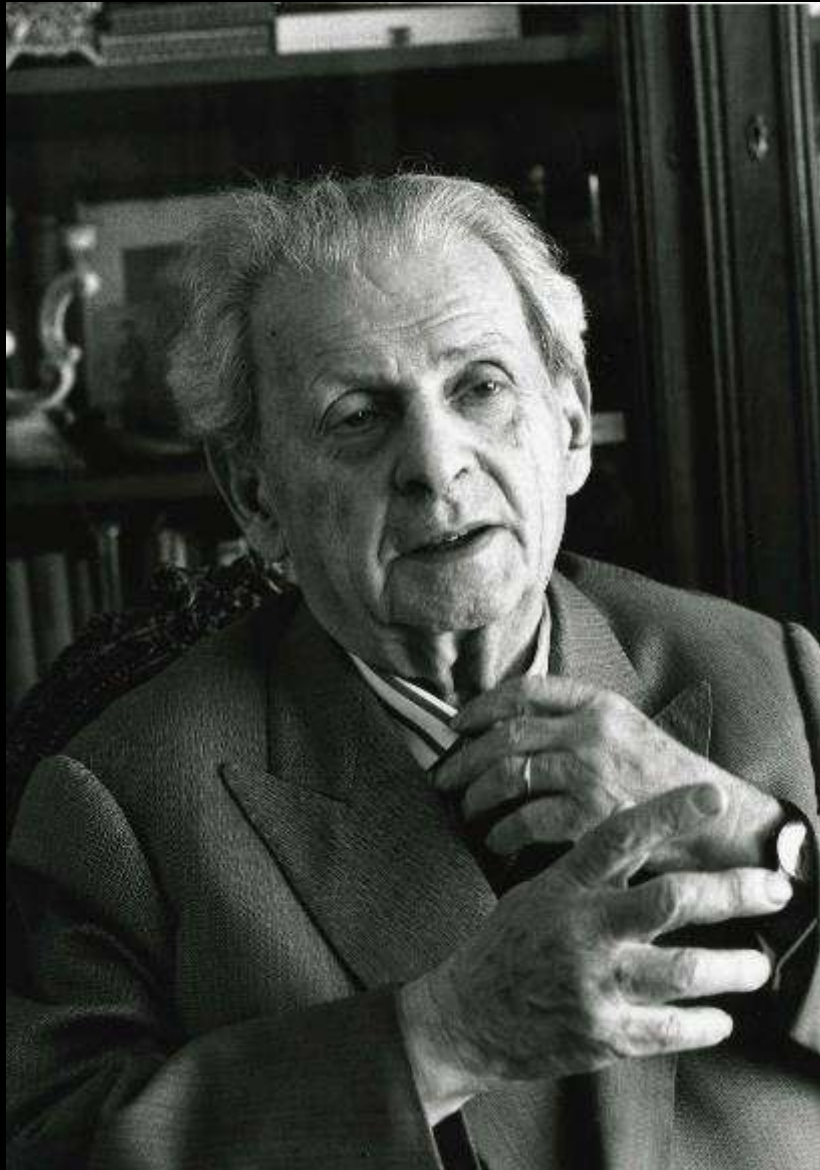
Enjoy life but anticipate adversity: 11:8 'But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.'

Enjoy love and friendship: '4:9 Two are better than one ...

9:9 'Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity'

A WAY OF LIFE





WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."



I do not propose to write as who is ignorant, but to say as truthfully as I can of the things I have seen and felt in the woods, and to do so in the most simple and direct manner, if only to make my neighbor up. — Page 10.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LXX.

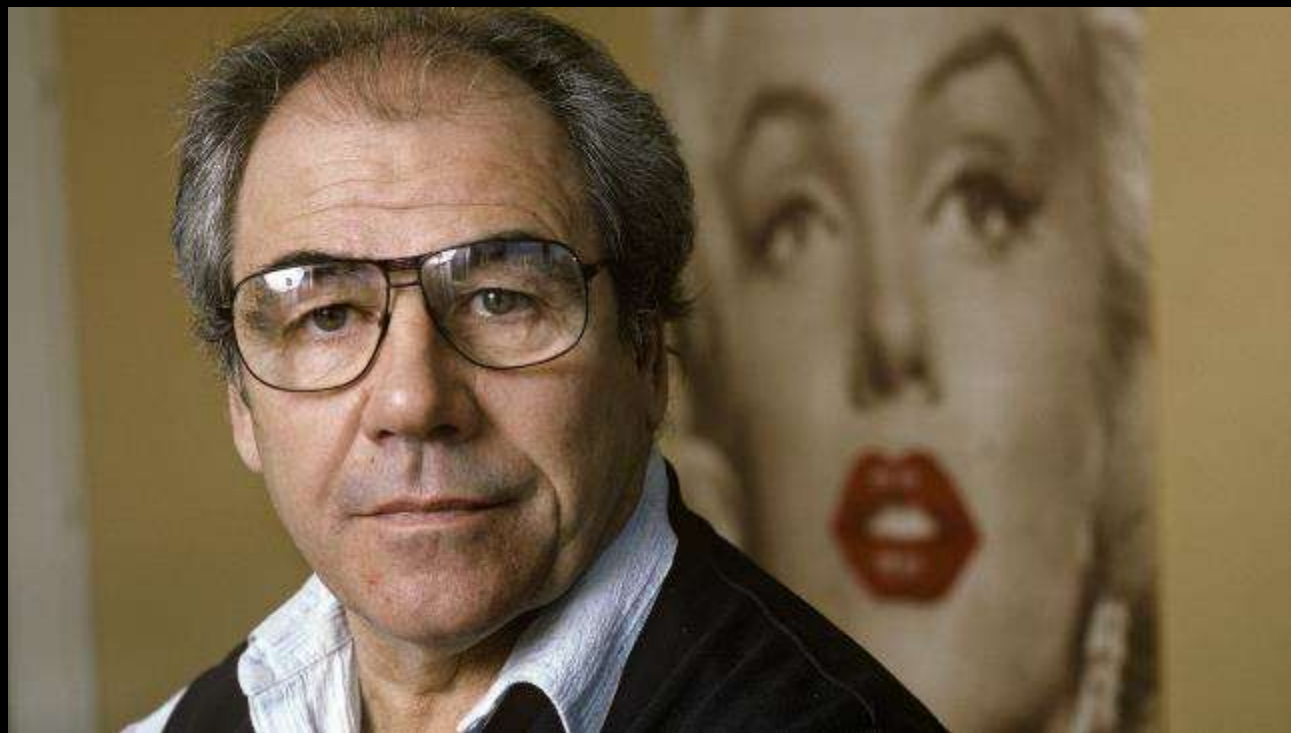
Seneca: 'Life is a gift of the immortal gods, but living well is the gift of philosophy.'

Levinas: 'It is in the *manner* in which one is present, in which one lives, that there is ethics''

Perry: 'Qohelet is *foundational of a culture that values discourse over power*'

12:10-11 'because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge ... The words of the wise are as goads'

A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE



Jean Baudrillard

Simulacres
et simulation



Galilée

STOIC

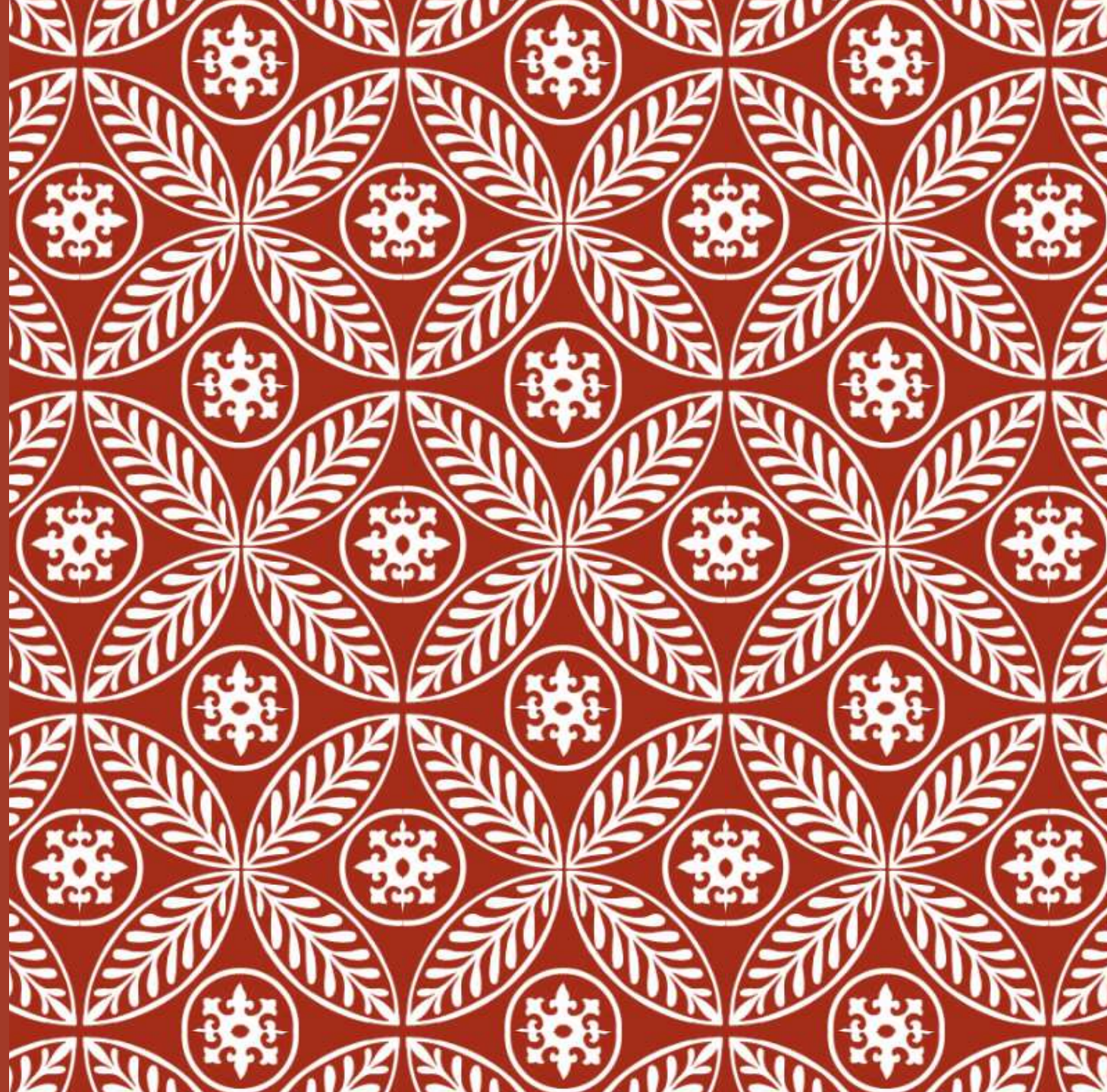
Self-Knowledge

Compassion

Living with Nature

Virtues and strengths of the mind

Departing from old forms of
knowing



FOR DISCUSSION ON MONDAY

1. What is the purpose of Ecclesiastes?
2. What characterises the perspective of Qohelet?
3. Is this a work of Stoicism, or anti-Stoicism?

Discussion: 1pm-3pm. You can use the same Zoom link from last week. It's also up on Moodle

WEEK 7: THE DHAMMAPADA

We continue seeking sideways...

A collection of sayings attributed to the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 BCE)

We'll read the first two thirds, using the Juan Mascaro translation

In its view of nature, the search for meaning, the burden of desire, the transience of existence, and its view of “the way”, we will explore resonances and divergences with the Stoic tradition

For anything, email Dan.Taylor@marywardcentre.ac.uk