



Wisdom Literature Ecclesiastes

Interpreting the Text:

1. What is the religious value of the sort of skepticism we find in Ecclesiastes? How does this text fit within the Bible?
2. Qohelet is usually imagined to be a much older person. What parts of this text suggest that the author is far along in their years, having seen much of what life has to offer?
3. Why do you think people associated Solomon as the author of Ecclesiastes for so long? What does the figure of King Solomon add to the book? Does it change your reading of the text to think of it one way or the other?
4. Dr. Baden and Collins identify Qohelet as a response or rebuttal to Proverbs. Do you agree with this? What are some examples where Qohelet appears to challenge or respond to something that you read in Proverbs?
5. How do you understand the Hebrew word “hebel,” often translated as “vanity?”

Applying the Text:

1. Many pieces of the book seem to be contradictory. Can you identify any consistent underlying themes? How can those themes inform us as we move through the world?
2. How has the message of Ecclesiastes been taken up in contemporary religious contexts, if at all? How should it be?
3. What kinds of things do you consider to be “vanity” today?