

## Ecclesiastes Gone ‘Sideways’\*



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*In the light of modern day attention to happiness as a personal and societal goal, this paper explores how this theme has been presented in the movie Sideways as well as in the biblical book ‘Ecclesiastes’. Although the outlook of the two clearly overlaps, the biblical perspective tempers the modern view.*

### KEYWORDS

*Ecclesiastes, happiness, instruction, justice, wisdom, vanity (hebel), Qoheleth*

In the early part of 2005 the British Prime Minister and his party bandied about the idea of instituting a happiness poll. Political interest in assessing degrees of contentment reflects the wider concern society has placed on the pursuit of happiness in the modern period. The exploration of this theme in the American movie *Sideways* reveals a *carpe diem* (‘seize the day’) attitude similar to that found in antiquity. This paper explores the modern view of the pursuit of happiness as found in the movie *Sideways* in conjunction with the biblical book *Ecclesiastes*. There are some crucial differences between the two such that the biblical perspective tempers modern enthusiasm with sound wisdom.

### *Sideways*

*Sideways* was one of the surprise hits of 2005. It tells the story of two friends who set off across the California wine country for a week. The trek is inspired by the upcoming marriage of ‘Jack’ whose good friend and old college buddy ‘Miles’ has agreed to chaperone him for a once and a lifetime trip. The story line of the movie is simple, albeit wittily executed, in that it traces the movements of the two friends as they journey together on a

middle-aged road trip. On the one side there is Jack who is making it his goal to sow his last wild oats before tying the knot in seven days hence. On the other side is Miles who teaches Jack about wine and wine tasting, but whose pleasure in the drink is not matched by the enjoyment of his own life. Although ostensibly a film about the rite of passage for middle-aged men, there is no moment of great revelation or resurrection. Appropriately named, in the course of the movie the characters move sideways.

Wine and wine tasting provide two symbolic means of characterizing the movie. On the one hand, the wine itself functions as a metaphor for the transience of existence that comes across so clearly by the lack of progression in the movie. The characters enjoy a cup of wine savouring the taste, the colour, and the bouquet, but in the end the cup and the bottle are empty. On the other hand, the wine tasting itself could be understood as a metaphor for the characters. The wine of choice is Pinot Noir which is favoured by Miles who carefully explains its cultivation. Pinot Noir is a notoriously temperamental grape easily destroyed by climate change and in need of careful and loving attention. The characters might be thought of in this way. Although wine tasting becomes the goal of the movie, it is the wine itself and not the grape that provides its real theme. Wine symbolizes transience and instant gratification.

Whilst being a light-hearted look at life, *Sideways* leads to a sense of unease. The fact that the main characters Miles and Jack pull out of

\* This paper was presented originally to retired clergy at the Gaudy meeting of the Keble College alumnae in March 2005. In appreciation of its positive reception and their thought-provoking comments and questions, I dedicate this article to them.

every scrape raises questions about issues of right and wrong. Remaining staunchly noncommittal on issues of justice, the movie ends with no resolution. In so doing, it is less about the future and more about the present. Its lack of future orientation foregrounds the relentless – at times even frantic – pursuit for the perfect bottle of wine or the perfect woman. In the end, the pursuit of happiness was the goal.

### *Ecclesiastes*

*Sideways* with its exploration of the theme of the pursuit of human happiness resonates with the Old Testament quest for the same through the principles of wisdom. Wisdom represents a worldview found in the literature of the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East that sought to establish clear strategies to attain contentment and justice.<sup>1</sup> In ancient Israel, wisdom is also a type of movement akin to that of cultic religion or prophecy.<sup>2</sup> Like cultic religion with its priests and prophecy with its prophets, wisdom had its sages who were responsible for establishing and teaching timeless truths.<sup>3</sup> As a literary genre, wisdom is not concerned with matters of religion or about highlighting the ills of society, but concentrated instead on very real concerns about the human person. The sages taught a simple truth

properly termed the doctrine of retribution: lifestyle is directly responsible for outcome. The righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. Examples of the wisdom tradition in the Old Testament include the book of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes, also known as Qoheleth, depending on whether reading with the Greek heading (the former) or the Hebrew (the latter).

Through the observation of the natural and God-given order, sages established rules that enabled people to master various situations. The Hebrew word for proverbial sayings stems from the root *marshal* meaning 'to rule over or govern'. The employment of wise advice allowed an individual to govern any situation. Some examples of proverbs that the characters in *Sideways* might have found useful include; 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise' (Prov 20:1), 'Whoever loves pleasure will suffer want; whoever loves wine and oil will not be rich' (Prov 21:17), and 'Those who linger late over wine, those who keep trying mixed wines. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder' (Prov 23:30–32).<sup>4</sup> A different type of Wisdom literature turns away from the application of truths to the exposition of a journey. In Proverbs, for instance, the first nine chapters are devoted to illustrating how the pursuit of wisdom leads ultimately to the deity. Through allegory, the sage illustrates his point using two competing female figures who both attract men: Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly.

Generally thought to be at odds with the wisdom tradition, the biblical book of Ecclesiastes exemplifies in some respects the journeying type of its literature. In it an anonymous writer known as Qoheleth embarks on a quest to ascertain the applicability of wise principles to the experience of life. The title Qoheleth comes from the Hebrew root *qahal* 'to meet, assemble' and is translated commonly as 'the Preacher'.<sup>5</sup> Qoheleth claims royal lineage by referring to himself as the 'son of King David' (1:2; cf. 1:12) – widely regarded as a reference to King Solomon. Associated with the

<sup>1</sup> R. B. Y. Scott, 'The Study of Wisdom Literature', *Int* 24 (1970), pp. 20–45, provides a summary of research in the field up until 1970. Other more recent contributions in English include, G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1972); J. L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981) and *idem*, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions: Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1995); K. M. O'Connor, *The Wisdom Literature* (Message of Biblical Spirituality, 5; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988); R. E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990); L. G. Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994); R. J. Clifford, *The Wisdom Literature* (Interpreting Biblical Texts; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998); K. Dell, 'Get Wisdom, Get Insight': *An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Literature* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> J. Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (The Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the origin of the sages, see S. Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise stated references are taken from the NRSV.

<sup>5</sup> A conceptualization traceable to Jerome via Martin Luther.

greatest Wise Man in the history of ancient Israel (cf. 1 Kgs. 3–10), Qoheleth has the means and the authority to utilize the tools of the sages in order to ascertain their validity. He writes, 'I, the Preacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven' (1:12–13a). During his pursuit for the truth, he carefully observes and classifies all aspects of life. After analysing the activity of human beings as well as the beasts in the animal kingdom, he concludes, 'I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after the wind' (1:14). The word translated as vanity is in Hebrew *hebel*. *Hebel* is multivalent and can connote 'emptiness, meaninglessness, or even hot air'.<sup>6</sup> At its heart is the sense of the fruitlessness of pursuit more than that which is vain or extravagant. Ecclesiastes' concept of 'vanity' or 'emptiness' becomes a refrain of sorts (1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26; 3:19; 4:4, 7, 8, 16; 5:10; 6:2, 4, 9, 11; 7:6; 8:10, 14; 9:2; 11:8, 10; 12:8). It occurs more than thirty times and frequently in conjunction with the phrase 'chasing after the wind'. An exemplary use is his personal observation, 'Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil that I had spent in doing it, and again, all was vanity and a chasing after the wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun' (1:11). The appearance of the refrain in the prologue (1:11) and in the epilogue (12:8) of the book reinforces its significance in the collection. With *hebel* the writer draws attention to the meaninglessness and fragility of existence.

Acutely aware of the transience of life, Qoheleth has an equally intense interest in death which he regards as the great equalizer. In spite of achievements made in life, death overtakes the godly and the sinner, the poor and the rich, the young and the old. At one point he observes, 'No one has power

over the wind to restrain the wind, or power over the day of death (8:8a).<sup>7</sup> In his recognition that death cancels every achievement, Qoheleth places his emphasis on the meaninglessness of life and, indeed, of death. The comingling of youth, old age, and death at the end of the collection (11:7–12:7) captures the sage's sense of the inevitability of death.

The scrutiny Qoheleth applied to life led him to conclude that contrary to the worldview of the sages, human beings do not possess the ability to effect change.<sup>8</sup> The Preacher of Ecclesiastes has been criticized for his scepticism.<sup>9</sup> More damning still he has been labeled a pessimist, cynic, or even a fatalist. One observation of injustice led him even to question the value of life, 'I thought the dead more fortunate than the living, but better than both is the one who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun' (4:2–3).

At first glance Qoheleth's pessimistic reflections would suggest little in common with the emphasis in *Sideways* on the attainment of happiness. However, after exhibiting that endless pursuit is fraught with difficulty, the Preacher of Ecclesiastes concludes that in spite of the meaninglessness of life one should embrace it and all it has to offer. Here is where ancient Israel and *Sideways* overlap. In *Sideways*, the characters eat, drink, and play to pass the time. The movie highlights this by showing numerous scenes of the group feasting together, laughing, talking, drinking wine with overflowing goblets lifted heartily to the lips, and by the constant movement between different vineyards. If not about revelation or resurrection, *Sideways* is about enjoyment. Interestingly, though unable to commend

<sup>7</sup> For more on this theme, see J. L. Crenshaw, 'The Shadow of Death in Qoheleth', in Gammie, et al. (eds.), *Israelite Wisdom*, pp. 205–16 and *idem*, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions*, pp. 511–12; R. Davidson, 'The Exposition of the Old Testament: Koheleth as a Test Case', *The Expository Times Lecture*, May 2003', *ExpT* 115 (2003–2004), pp. 4–6.

<sup>8</sup> R. E. Murphy, 'Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth)', in *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther* (FOTL 13; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 131.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, pp. 126–44. D. Bergant, *What are they Saying about Wisdom Literature?* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1984), pp. 57–66, provides an accessible survey of the wide range of perspectives of the message of Qoheleth. See also, Davidson, 'The Exposition of the Old Testament'.

<sup>6</sup> Discussions of *hebel* are common in Ecclesiastes studies. Some accessible definitions are provided in M. V. Fox, 'The Meaning of Hebel for Qoheleth', *JBL* 105 (1986), pp. 409–27, *idem*, *A Time to Tear Down and A Time to Build Up: a Re-reading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 27–42; Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, pp. 53–54; W. P. Brown, *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 131–32; C.-L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (The Anchor Bible; New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), pp. 47–60; E. F. Davis, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs* (WBC; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2000), pp. 166–69.

life in general, Qoheleth recommends engaging in pleasurable activities, 'So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil' (8:15). His message is succinct and ultimately positive. Because the striving of each individual results in nothing (*hebel*), each person should enjoy what his or her days on earth have to offer.

In the view of Ecclesiastes, what is attainable is the ability to rejoice in every day. Do everything with gusto, he says. Do everything with all your heart because it may be the last thing that you do. In the end, and in spite of Ecclesiastes reputation for pessimism, it can be seen that the Preacher is, if not an outright optimist, at least a realist. The message for which he is less well known is his encouragement to embrace the fullness of life. He adds to what should be enjoyed:

Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart ... Let your garments always be white ... Enjoy life with the woman whom you love, all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going (9:7-10).

Qoheleth had no concept of life after death because in his worldview Sheol is the place of the dead where bodies lie fallow and thoughtless. In the light of the relativizing moment of death, he promotes living in the now. The sum of Qoheleth's message is 'eat, drink, and be merry'.

Like *Sideways*, Ecclesiastes revels in the present. There are several important differences, however, between the characters in the movie *Sideways* and Qoheleth in the biblical book Ecclesiastes. The most important difference is that although the Preacher may be described as a pessimist, he could not be labelled an atheist. For him God exists, however unknowable and unreachable. Everything on earth takes place under the purview of the deity. In Qoheleth's commendation of enjoyment cited previously, the conclusion of the passage found at 8:15 was omitted purposefully. It is this element that distinguishes the thought of Qoheleth the man from the characters of *Sideways*. In full the text reads, 'I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing

better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink and enjoy themselves ... for this will go with them in their toil *through the days of life that God gives them under the sun*' (8:15). For Qoheleth, every day of life should be celebrated because it is a divine gift. In her study of Ecclesiastes, Davis notes that the verb 'to give' occurs twenty-eight times in the book with fifteen instances referring to divine action.<sup>10</sup> She concludes, 'What Koheleth aims to instill in his students is the ability to receive the pleasures of life as the gift they are and to recognize God as giver.'<sup>11</sup>

The emphasis on the providential actions of the deity is reinforced by the conception of Yahweh found in Ecclesiastes. Unlike much of the Old Testament and indeed the New Testament, Ecclesiastes does not have a clear idea of who God is or how God should be worshipped. In the book the deity remains mysterious and distant, the creator and the ultimate sovereign of the universe, without any form or likeness. The ideology of Ecclesiastes is informed by an awareness of the transcendence of God. The shift away from conceptualizing the deity places greater significance on what God does. Qoheleth's message aptly concludes with the assurance of divine control of things, 'God will bring every deed into judgement, including every secret thing, whether good or evil' (12:14).

An additional point of departure from the movie is that Qoheleth takes seriously the social context of his day. Rather than applying the abstract and objective principles of some divine order to his assessment of society and interpersonal relations, he utilizes the strategies of wisdom (observation and categorization) to contemplate external reality. Of him, Clifford asserts, 'In no other biblical wisdom book does an author explicitly base all his teaching on his *personal* experience and observation'.<sup>12</sup> Qoheleth as a sage is well aware of himself as well as the social and historical circumstances in which he lived. His negative worldview is inextricably linked to the events of his day. Ecclesiastes is commonly dated to the third century BCE and placed within a Jerusalem ruled by the Ptolemies in Egypt.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Davis, *Ecclesiastes*, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> Davis, *Ecclesiastes*, p. 161.

<sup>12</sup> Clifford, *The Wisdom Literature*, p. 99 (italics his).

<sup>13</sup> The date tends to be based on linguistic grounds. The association with the late Persian period – the fourth century BCE – by Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, pp. 22–35, is thought

The governing strategies of the Ptolemies were particularly oppressive due to the development of a highly centralized administrative government to exert greater political and financial control over dependent territories. Ptolemaic ruling strategies led to a growing divide between the rich and the poor with the rich benefiting from local control over the collection of taxes and management of the king's estates. Within Ecclesiastes, the Preacher attacks the prosperity theology prevalent in his day which correlated character and the attainment of wealth. Qoheleth grapples with issues of justice and shows them to be found wanting. In so doing, he exposes the emptiness of suffering and the error of a prosperity theology that accepts the direct association of behaviour and reward. Through Qoheleth's investigation the doctrine of retribution is riven asunder.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the biblical book serves a constructive purpose not found in *Sideways*. Ecclesiastes belongs to the wisdom tradition that had at its core the mission to impart knowledge. Indeed, one of the goals of Wisdom literature in general, and Ecclesiastes in particular, is the construction of character.<sup>15</sup> Initially, the form category of Ecclesiastes suggests it serves as instruction. Although containing features common to Wisdom literature in the Ancient Near East and Egypt,<sup>16</sup> the closest parallels are with grave biographies and royal testaments.<sup>17</sup> Grave biographies and royal testaments 'create the literary fiction of a dead person who, speaking from the tomb, undertakes to instruct

the living in the wisdom of life. The purpose is to ground the life of the person in the just order of the cosmos, to indicate that he or she lived in harmony with creation'.<sup>18</sup> In essence, this type of Wisdom literature provides lasting and unassailable truths applicable to life. In addition to its genre and form, three features indicate the admonitory intention of Ecclesiastes: (1) instruction appears more prominent in the latter half of the collection, (2) the book ends with a formal address to the young man (11:9-10) making its strategy similar to that of Proverbs 1-9, and (3) an editorial epilogue designates the Preacher as a wise man who collected and conveyed knowledge (12:9, 10).

The moral constructive element of Ecclesiastes is one of the more recent illuminating areas of research on the book that has led to renewed interest in the Preacher's message. Various guidelines found in the book including quietude, living a simple life, humility, enjoyment of leisure and work, the limiting of virtue and vice, reverence of God (literally, 'the fear of God'), and a *carpe diem* attitude.<sup>19</sup> While any number of these would be suggestive to the characters in the movie, it is only with reference to the last that Ecclesiastes rivals the message of *Sideways* (and one might add, tempers its ideology). Seven passages reflecting on enjoyment recur throughout the biblical book (2:24-26; 3:12-13; 3:22; 5:17-19; 8:15; 9:7-10; 11:9-10).<sup>20</sup> In Whybray's examination of these passages, he noted that the emphasis on enjoyment becomes more emphatic as one proceeds through the collection.<sup>21</sup> This observation led him to proclaim Qoheleth 'the Preacher of Joy'. Subsequently, Perdue has shown that the literary structure is organized around the sevenfold occurrence of the phrase *carpe diem*. Furthermore, he observes that whilst the first five occurrences of the enjoyment passages are in the first

to be unlikely given the relative peace required for the task about which Qoheleth set. Cf. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 1 (London: SCM Press, 1974), pp. 18-23, 115-28.

<sup>14</sup> M. V. Fox, 'Wisdom in Qoheleth', in L. G. Perdue, et al. (eds.), *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*, pp. 115-31, summarizes the failure of wisdom in four areas: (1) wisdom does not provide enough knowledge, (2) wisdom is overwhelmed by fickle fortune, (3) wisdom is overwhelmed by death, and (4) wisdom hurts.

<sup>15</sup> O'Connor, *The Wisdom Literature*, p. 122; R. E. Clements, *Wisdom in Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 35; Brown, *Character in Crisis*, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> See the collection of articles in J. L. Crenshaw, *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (New York: Ktav, 1976) and Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, pp. 151-79.

<sup>17</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation*, pp. 194-202, but see the reservations raised by Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation*, p. 202.

<sup>19</sup> O'Connor, *The Wisdom Literature*, pp. 130-31; Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation*, pp. 238, 241-42; Brown, *Character in Crisis*, pp. 135-48; Davis, *Ecclesiastes*, pp. 161-62.

<sup>20</sup> E. P. Lee, *The Vitality of Enjoyment in Qoheleth's Theological Rhetoric* (BZAW 353; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), provides a current consideration of these texts with particular attention to issues of authorship and current relevance.

<sup>21</sup> R. N. Whybray, 'Qoheleth, Preacher of Joy', in K. J. Dell and M. Barker (eds.), *Wisdom: The Collected Articles of Norman Whybray* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 141-52 [reprinted from *JSTOT* 23 (1982), pp. 87-98].

person singular, the last two are admonitions from the perspective of the second and third person. The shift from personal reflection to an admonitory tone suggests that, 'This counsel to experience joy and celebrate life represents what Qoheleth has discovered to be the single value in human living and; therefore, wishes to transmit to his audience'.<sup>22</sup> In spite of a discernible turn to joy, the pessimistic tone so often noted in research on Ecclesiastes is not without warrant. Murphy rightly draws a more sombre cast to any interpretation that enthusiastically subscribes to the joyful outlook of the book. He maintains that whilst promoting a message of grasping the joy of the moment, the Preacher remains aware of the finality of death and the inscrutable ways of the deity.<sup>23</sup> Qoheleth promotes the embrace of the divine gift of daily living in spite of, or possibly in revolt against, the uncertainty of life and death. The advocacy of enjoyment in Ecclesiastes represents seasoned joy – not naïve pleasure seeking. Opposed to the pursuit of happiness, Qoheleth, nonetheless, encourages happiness in the pursuit – to revel in the blessings of every day – in companionship, in feasting, and in one's work.

In the final reckoning, the symbolic name Qoheleth itself suggests the role of a teacher. At the beginning of the collection (1:1, 2), the sage is called *haqoheleth* (the definite article and the feminine participle), translated literally 'the Qoheleth'. The participle used this way frequently connotes 'the one who engages in a certain activity'. Blenkinsopp insists that the reference to a person who convenes an assembly in the context of the book has less to do with an ecclesiastical setting and more to do with conferring knowledge on a group of students.<sup>24</sup> His

observation is appropriate because the book of Ecclesiastes has little to do with cultic matters. Qoheleth assembles information to analyse, assess, and convey. In so doing, it is conceivable that he gathers students to pass on his knowledge. Qoheleth, then, is not the Preacher, but the Teacher of Joy.

### Conclusions

The movie *Sideways* for all its fun and frivolity was ultimately depressing because it portrayed the pursuit of happiness as vain. The ultimate goal of the characters was not joy, but instant gratification. It is a bleak portrait of self-absorption. In contrast, the biblical book of Ecclesiastes includes all of human activity within a divine sphere. Individuals have the ability to bring the sacred into every aspect of life by recognizing the sacredness of the created world and celebrating the gifts of the deity. In the final verdict then:

Qoheleth is not much of a theologian, in the narrow sense; he tells us very little about God and nothing about the world to come. But he tells us a great deal about what it means to be human: to live in the world responsibly and joyfully, in the peculiar tension between limitation and freedom that is the human condition.<sup>25</sup>

Ecclesiastes insists that recognition of the Divine is necessary to the fulfillment of life. In so doing the ancient sage of Ecclesiastes provides a much needed corrective to the modern pursuit of happiness as characterized in the movie *Sideways* and, indeed, as found within the prosperity theology so prevalent in modern Western society. The teaching of Qoheleth has indeed gone sideways when the divine dimension is lost.

<sup>22</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation*, p. 237.

<sup>23</sup> Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>24</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Davis, *Ecclesiastes*, p. 169.

### Coming Next Month

Tobias Nicklas considers *Papyrus Egerton 2*, the 'unknown gospel'; Angus Paddison reflects on 'The Nature of Preaching and the Gospel of John'; and Jeff Keuss offers a Lenten reflection on Shusaku Endo's *Silence* and *Life of Jesus*.

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