

Related to the radical teaching of the book about God-and-world was also its *radical focus on this-worldliness*. Qoheleth has this in common with almost the whole Old Testament. There were veiled and hidden corrections within its this-worldliness, especially in the image of the underworld as a place of shadowy afterlife that could be improved through the mindfulness of the living and sacrifices offered for the dead. From the Greek world a notion of immortality in the Platonic tradition was introduced, with its devaluation of all material reality. Apocalyptic expectations, which arose at that time and were directly addressed by Qoheleth, could be just as effective in questioning the seriousness of death as end, if their world imagery was taken to be real. In opposition to this, Qoheleth sharply emphasized the terminal nature of death, and in this he was also following the popular philosophy. The last books of the Old Testament, and the New Testament, fully legitimate Christian speaking about the other world. However, this should not be used simply to declare Qoheleth wrong. Death does remain the total end of a human being insofar as he or she lives in the time that accompanies living.¹

Qoheleth still had to say that even the just man did not know whether God loved or despised him. Those who follow Jesus know that they are loved, even if they are sinners. It is only in this context that one may say about Qoheleth that he belongs to the Old Testament.²

¹ Lohfink, N. (2003). *A Continental Commentary: Qoheleth* (pp. 15–16). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

² Lohfink, N. (2003). *A Continental Commentary: Qoheleth* (p. 17). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.