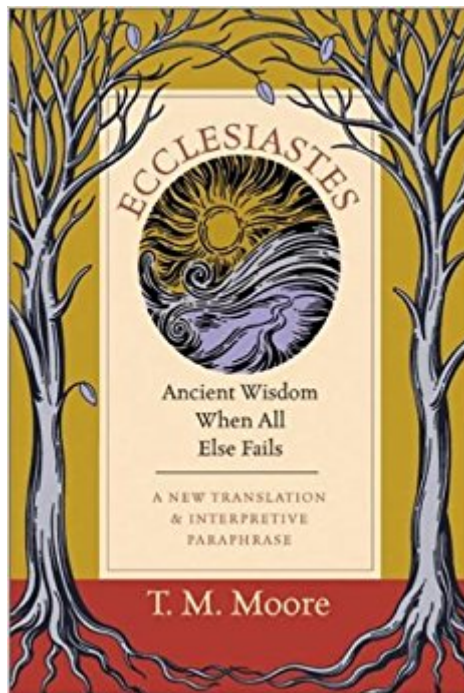


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Ecclesiastes: Ancient Wisdom When All Else Fails: A New Translation & Interpretive Paraphrase



Synopsis

Recipient of a 2002 Christianity Today Award of Merit!"Meaningless!" says Ecclesiastes. "All is meaningless!"We live. We work. We die. Even with our best efforts to find lasting enjoyment and significance, we are faced with the conclusion that there is nothing new under the sun.Despite this gloomy assessment (or perhaps because of it), people have been drawn to the Middle Eastern wisdom of this enigmatic book for thousands of years. Its brutal honesty doesn't flinch from life's difficulties or its thorniest problems.The new translation and interpretive paraphrase provided here by T. M. Moore artfully unveils the ancient mysteries of this often puzzling book. By its very cynicism, Ecclesiastes seems to suggest that to find what is of enduring value we must embrace the hard things, not avoid them. With notes and a useful study guide, Moore skillfully shows us that the dark side will have its say. The question is, will it have the last word?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Biblical studies so rarely produces something totally new that when it does happen, it's a revelation. T.M. Moore, the former president of Chesapeake Theological Seminary, gamely takes on the curmudgeonly Qoheleth in Ecclesiastes: Ancient Wisdom When All Else Fails: A New Translation & Interpretive Paraphrase. He retranslates Ecclesiastes into rhymed iambic pentameter, creating some fascinating turns of phrase amidst Qoheleth's legendary musings. Amazingly, InterVarsity Press rescued this creative, unique manuscript from its slush pile. Kudos to all involved. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

This little book by T.M. Moore is ideal for personal or small group study. It is one that I will use. Its format makes it ideal for study in that it is succinct and contains study questions for each chapter/lesson. It does have some weaknesses. Since both the translation and paraphrase are footnoted at the end of the text, it makes for lots of tedious flipping back and forth. As for authorship, his argument identifying Solomon as the author is not entirely convincing. His hermeneutic is based on a reading of the phrases "under the heavens" and "under the sun." Unlike, most commentators who view the two phrases as essentially saying the same thing, Moore argues instead that the former is used in contexts where "proper, heaven-oriented motivations, aspirations and conclusions are in view," whereas the latter "always occurs in a context marked by futility, frustration, vanity and 'chasing after the wind.'" While there may be something gained from such a interpretive strategy, he cites "under the heavens" as occurring only twice--in 1:13 and 3:1. For all of his years of teaching and research, how is it that he misses the same phrase in 2:3?

T. M. Moore's new book on Ecclesiastes is a very attractive study guide. Its strengths are that it is a concise study that is formatted to a 13-week series replete with study questions for each chapter. The author has not only provided his own translation but includes his own interpretive paraphrase adjacent to the text. Its weaknesses are that due to format for study (with full footnoting included) it can be sheer tedium to read through the book in one sitting. In addition, perhaps an unintended oversight is found in the introduction where he claims the phrase "under the heavens" occurs only at 1:13 and 3:1. It also appears in 2:3. One last weakness is that, in order to set forth his own interpretive view of Ecclesiastes, his interpretive paraphrase is often too free with the original Hebrew text. However, I still recommend it at the introductory level as a resource for personal or group study.

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