

23^A WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Ecclesiastes

ROLAND MURPHY

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Resumo de Ecclesiastes

What part of the canon raises more questions and offers more challenges for the Old Testament student than the Book of Ecclesiastes? "No other book in the Bible has so steadfastly defied analysis," Roland Murphy admits.

Driven to their conclusions by presuppositions common to their own day, scholars have been unable to agree about almost every question pertaining to the writings of Qoheleth. To help us delve into this perplexing work, he offers this succinct but thorough commentary.

Here is a commentary written by a scholar's scholar from a man who has spent a lifetime immersed in Semitic language studies and who has enriched contemporary biblical studies as a professor, author, and editor with particular expertise in the field of Wisdom Literature.

Written for serious clergy and for well-informed lay readers, this volume contains a sensible treatment of the text, buttressed by copious technical notes and impressive annotated bibliographical materials sufficient to stimulate and instruct the most avid student of this elusive segment of Scripture.

Readers who have learned to appreciate the fine Word Biblical Commentary series will be pleased to find Dr. Murphy's insightful comments arranged in the same familiar format which facilitates a careful study of God's Word.

Roland Murphy's "Introduction" is, by itself perhaps, worth the price of this volume. Revealing vast knowledge of past and present studies on Ecclesiastes, this section of the commentary surveys the broad range of conflicting ideas about this book.

Murphy irenically dissects all the major theories of authorship, dating, sociological setting, and linguistic analysis, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. "The present commentary," Dr. Murphy tells us, "rests on the shoulders of previous scholars, while trying to remain

faithful to the thought of Qoheleth." He has attempted a balanced interpretation between the absurd and the joyful-hallmarks of Qoheleth.

Why should we study an enigmatic work like Ecclesiastes? "Qoheleth has as much to say about the quality of faith as does any other biblical work," Dr. Murphy insists. "He tells us that faith means accepting God on God's terms." In the pages of this volume, Roland Murphy helps us to hear that important message.

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