

# OT Biblical Theology: Genesis to Joshua

## 6OT702

Reformed Theological Seminary, Washington D.C.  
Fall 2006

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### Course Description and Relevance for Ministry

The course studies Genesis through Joshua, six foundational books that focus on the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan. The first five books have traditionally been recognized as a literary and even authorial whole, the Torah or Pentateuch. The core of the Torah is the story of the Exodus and the Wilderness Wanderings (Exodus through Deuteronomy), while Genesis serves as an essential preamble to the story of Israel's founding. Joshua, though not part of the original literary whole, nonetheless is the expected sequel as it narrates the entry of Israel into the land of Canaan. These books will be studied from a historical, literary, and theological perspective, though the focus of this class will be on theology and canonical interpretation (including christological significance).

We are not just interested in these books for antiquarian reasons. These books constitute the foundation of the living Word of God that remains vital for today. Thus, we will be asking questions about modern appropriation. How should these books be taught and preached today?

### Selected Topics to Be Covered

Topic One: Creation Theology (Creation in the light of ANE Myth)  
Topic Two: The Effects of the Fall  
Topic Three: The Cycle of Sin, Judgment, and Grace in Genesis 4-11  
Topic Four: The Abrahamic Covenant  
Topic Four: The Abraham Narrative as Journey of Faith  
Topic Five: The Continuity of the Promise with Isaac and Jacob  
Topic Six: Joseph and Divine Providence  
Topic Seven: Freedom from Bondage: the Exodus  
Topic Eight: The Law in its OT and NT Settings  
Topic Nine: Theology of Presence of God: the Tabernacle  
Topic Ten: The Theology of the Cult: Sacrifices and Priesthood

Topic Eleven: Ritual Purity

Topic Twelve: Wilderness Theology: Death of the First Generation and Hope for the Second

Topic Thirteen: Deuteronomic Theology

Topic Fourteen: The Theology of Holy War and Conquest

Topic Fifteen: The Theology of the Settlement

### *Class Schedule*

The course will be held on three Friday-Saturdays

September 15-16

October 13-14

November 10-11

Hours are Friday 7:30-10:00 PM and Saturdays 8:30-4:00PM

Class will meet in the Youth House at McLean Presbyterian Church

### Reading Assignment

Read Genesis through Joshua in at least four different translations: recommended are NLT (the most recent edition [has a diamond rather than a square logo], NRSV, NIV, the Message, the ESV, the New Century Version, and the Holman-Standard Bible.

**Read at least two before the beginning of class if possible.**

T. Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (IVP, 2002).

T. D. Alexander. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch* (Baker, 1998).

Dalley, S. *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

P. Enns, *Incarnation and Inspiration* (Baker, 2005).

S. Gundry, *Show Them No Mercy* (Zondervan, 2003).

### Graded Assignments

#### **1. Term Paper**

All students will write a paper between 10 and 15 pages. This paper will be a detailed exegetical and biblical theological examination of one unit of text from a text from Genesis to Joshua. Alternatively, a topical paper is acceptable. For the latter the student may chose a theological theme and study it first in Genesis through Joshua and then discuss its use in later canonical material. The student may choose a text or

topic, but it must be cleared by the professor by the last day of class. This paper will show the student's personal reflection on the passage as well as interaction with the commentaries and other secondary literature.

**Due: December 16**

## 2. Reading Report

All students are to write a book report on the required reading. Each report is to be approx. 2 pages. Students should choose one issue in a book and write a critical interaction with that deals with that issue.

**Due: December 9**

## 3. Take-Home Exam

The exam will be an essay-type exam in an open book, take-home format. It will be written by all students taking this course for credit. The questions will help students review the class material and reflect on further implications of the material for their reading of the Bible and their application of Genesis through Joshua in their ministry. Students' exam responses are not to be edited after the designated writing time has ended.

**Due: November 22**

### Evaluation

Term Paper	40%	40%
Exam	40%	40%
Reading Reports	20%	20%

### Recommended Resources

The following are commentaries from the 3d edition of my Old Testament Commentary Guide (Baker). Early next year the 4<sup>th</sup> edition will be published which will be more up to date.

#### **Genesis**

Aalders, G. C. *Genesis*. 2 vols. BSC. Zondervan, 1981. 311 pp. and 228 pp.

This is an English translation of a commentary originally published in Dutch in 1949. Although somewhat dated, Aalders's work retains its value as a theological commentary. Writing from within the Reformed tradition, Aalders shows great exegetical skill and theological insight. MS\*\*\*

Atkinson, D. *The Message of Genesis 1–11: The Dawn of Creation*. BST. Inter-Varsity, 1990. 190 pp.

A brief, expository, and devotional reading of the first part of the Book of Genesis. Atkinson is insightful and knowledgeable. LM\*\*\*

Baldwin, J. G. *The Message of Genesis 12–50: From Abraham to Joseph*. BST. Inter-Varsity, 1986. 224 pp.

Baldwin writes in a popular style, yet there is no doubt that considerable scholarly research stands behind her commentary. Her approach to Genesis 12–50 is traditional, yet not stodgy. LM\*\*\*

Boice, J. M. *Genesis*. 2d ed. 3 vols. Baker, 1998. 1,303 pp.

Boice, a popular Presbyterian preacher, expectedly puts a heavy emphasis on the application of the text. Unfortunately, his treatment of Old Testament narrative tends to be highly moralistic in ways that the text does not intend. LM\*\*

Briscoe, S. *Genesis*. CC. Word, 1987. 414 pp.

Briscoe does a good job navigating the difficult interpretive issues of Genesis. Not that he is always right, but he exercises fairly sensible judgment. The volume, in keeping with the purpose of the commentary, is sermonic and anecdotal, not exegetical or biblical-theological. However, what it does, it does well. LM\*\*\*

Brueggemann, W. *Genesis*. Interp. Westminster John Knox, 1982. viii/384 pp.

Brueggemann, although a moderately critical scholar, is always stimulating and insightful. His commentary concentrates on the final form of the text and focuses principally on the theology of the book. LM\*\*\*\*

Cassuto, U. *From Adam to Abraham: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. Trans. I. Abrahams. 2 vols. Magnes, 1964. xviii/323 pp. and xiv/386 pp.

This is an excellent commentary on the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Cassuto, a conservative Jewish writer, died unexpectedly before the book was completed. He is a brilliant philologist and literary scholar. He, interestingly, goes against the scholarly tide and rejects the Documentary Hypothesis. S\*\*\*

Coats, G. W. *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature*. FOTL. Eerdmans, 1983. xiii/322 pp.

Definitely one of the best volumes in the series thus far, this commentary nonetheless is difficult to wade through due to its focus on form-critical issues. Coats is most helpful when he deals with narrative issues from a literary standpoint. He is least helpful when he spends time analyzing the sources of the narrative rather than concentrating on the final form of the text. S\*\*\*

Davidson, R. *Genesis 1–11*. CBC. Cambridge University Press, 1973. x/118 pp.

This brief commentary presents a critical perspective on the first chapters of Genesis to an educated, popular audience. The introduction presents a source-critical approach to the question of composition and deals with myth and the stories of Genesis. LM\*\*

Gibson, J. C. L. *Genesis*. DSB. 2 vols. Westminster John Knox, 1981. ix/214 pp. and 322 pp.

In keeping with the nature of the series, Gibson writes in a popular vein. He helpfully opens up the text for lay understanding, showing the relevance of Genesis for the Christian. He is less helpful when he describes the composition of the book along the lines of older source criticism. LM\*\*\*

Gowan, D. E. *Genesis 1–11*. ITC. Handsel, 1988. ix/125 pp.

A short theological study of the first eleven chapters of the Bible. While there is considerable theological reflection, the book also displays a fair share of typical critical assumptions. Gowan's treatment of the relationship between the theology and history of Genesis is quite superficial and will not satisfy many. While many of the commentaries in this series come from a third-world perspective, this one does not. It also fails to interact with contemporary social and political issues to the extent of many of the other volumes. LM\*\*

Hamilton, V. P. *The Book of Genesis*. 2 vols. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1990, 1995. 522 pp. and 774 pp.

Hamilton does an excellent job interpreting the text in a positive way as well as handling the difficult questions of the book (creation story, history of patriarchs, religion of patriarchs). Between Wenham and Hamilton, Genesis is well covered. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Hartley, J. E. *Genesis*. NIBCOT. Hendrickson/Paternoster, 2000. xvii/393 pp.

I cannot always agree with Hartley's analysis of the structure of the Book of Genesis or with his analysis of sections of it as a palistrophe (the arrangement of material in a V-shaped pattern, also known as chiasm), but Hartley nonetheless offers a clear and straightforward analysis of the Book of Genesis. The depth of exposition is constrained by the series. His arguments in favor of Mosaic involvement in the production of the book and also in favor of the patriarchal narratives is refreshing. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Herbert, A. S. *Genesis 12–50*. TBC. SCM, 1962. 160 pp.

Herbert assumes the literary introduction of Richardson. He believes that the patriarchal period began in 1650 B.C., a view not widely held today by liberal or conservative scholars. He sees the uniqueness of Israelite religion not in monotheism but in divine-human personal relationships. LM\*\*

Kidner, D. *Genesis*. TOTC. Inter-Varsity, 1967. 224 pp.

This is an excellent commentary within the parameters of the series. Since it is so brief, it cannot hope to fully comment on the text. It is noticeably lacking (by design) substantial philological notes. It is written from a solidly conservative standpoint. This is a good starter commentary for the layperson. LM\*\*\*

Maher, M. *Genesis*. OTM. Michael Glazier, 1982. 279 pp.

The volume may have some value in its theological commentary. It presents the rather naive critical view that Genesis is a "statement of religious truths" rather than history. Maher accepts the now dated Documentary Hypothesis, although he notes challenges to it in passing. LM\*\*

Mathews, K. A. *Genesis 1–11:26*. NAC. Broadman, 1996. 526 pp.

Mathews has produced an excellent study of the primeval history with an emphasis on the text as literature and theology. He does not shrink from the difficult historical and philological issues either. He navigates well the relationship between these chapters and ancient Near Eastern literature. He intends to complete his study of Genesis in the future. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Richardson, A. *Genesis 1–11*. TBC. SCM, 1953. 134 pp.

Richardson gives a brief exposition of source criticism, although aware that the traditional sources contain older material. He treats the main stories of the first few chapters of Genesis as parables, avoiding the label "myth" because the lay mind equates that term with falsity. LM\*\*

Ross, Allen P. *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Baker, 1988. 744 pp.

The book opens with a short introduction to the whole book, stating the author's method of approach to Genesis. Ross presents an evangelical alternative to the documentary approach. The bulk of his treatment, however, is more like a running exposition with an emphasis on theology. As such it is often insightful and helpful. A good book, especially for pastors preaching through the Book of Genesis. LM\*\*\*\*

Sarna, N. M. *Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel*. Schocken, 1966. 245 pp.

This readable commentary is written from a pious Jewish perspective that takes into account a moderate historical-critical approach and attempts to make Genesis meaningful and relevant to an educated lay audience. Sarna believes that God can work through four sources (JEDP) as well as a unified book and further argues that historical criticism supports rather than denies faith. Short, but readable, with an emphasis on interpretation and comparative studies. MS\*\*\*

Sarna, N. M. *Genesis*. JPS Torah Commentary. Jewish Publication Society, 1989. xxi/414 pp.

This commentary is considerably more academic in approach than the one published in 1966. It studies the text in a verse-by-verse, virtually word-by-word manner. Although Sarna recognizes the composite nature of Genesis, he treats the book as a whole in the commentary. His emphasis, although he deals with other aspects of the text, is on Near Eastern background and Jewish tradition. MS\*\*\*\*

Scullion, J. J. *Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers, and Preachers*. OTS. Liturgical/Michael Glazier, 1992. xviii/366 pp.

This commentary, published right after Scullion's death, is a strong, traditionally critical approach to the book. Not that the author lacks his own distinctive approach, but he fails to take into account important recent developments in literary approaches and also recent insights from source criticism. Nonetheless, he is strong on the history of research up to the most recent developments and also on ancient Near Eastern background. M\*\*\*

Skinner, J. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. ICC. T & T Clark, 1910. lxvi/552 pp.

This volume represents the best of turn-of-the-century critical thought. Skinner does a detailed source analysis of the book along the lines of the Documentary Hypothesis. This is an extremely detailed commentary. Helpful grammatical information may be found here. The book is in small print, however, and is often hard to read. Not recommended for the layperson or pastor. S\*\*

Speiser, E. A. *Genesis*. AB. Doubleday, 1964. lxxiv/379 pp.

Speiser takes a fairly classical, critical approach to the Book of Genesis in the delineation of sources. The introduction separates P, J, and E sources (the order in which they appear in the book) and then discusses the residue. Speiser is of some help in matters of language, since he was one of the preeminent Semitic linguists of his day. This commentary is a must-buy for the scholar, but probably of little use to anyone else. S\*\*

von Rad, G. *Genesis*. OTL. Westminster/SCM, 1972. 440 pp.

An insightful, but critical, commentary on Genesis. Von Rad is sensitive to theology and literature. He is not known for his work on the Hebrew language. He argues for the Hexateuch and delineates sources. S\*\*\*

Waltke, B. K., and Cathi J. Fredricks. *Genesis*. Zondervan, 2001. 656 pp.

This commentary is not in a series but is well worth tracking down and adding to a reference library. Waltke is the dean of evangelical biblical studies, and this commentary is exegetically insightful and theologically rich. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Walton, J. H. *Genesis*. NIVAC. Zondervan/Hodder & Stoughton, 2001. 752 pp.

Walton's commentary is stimulating and well-written. He navigates the difficult issues of the book well. Unfortunately, he rarely comments on the relationship between Genesis and the New Testament. LM\*\*\*\*

Wenham, G. J. *Genesis 1–15*. WBC. Nelson/Paternoster, 1987. *Genesis 16–50*. WBC. Nelson/Paternoster, 1994. liii/□353 pp. and 555 pp.

Wenham is one of the finest evangelical commentators today. His commentary on Genesis shows his high level of scholarship and his exegetical sensitivity. He represents a conservative approach to Genesis, but does not completely reject source theory. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Westermann, C. *Genesis*. 3 vols. Continental Commentary. Fortress/SPCK, 1984–86. xii/636 pp., 604 pp., 269 pp.

These three volumes were originally published in German between 1974 and 1982. This commentary is a fully conceived approach that takes into account text, form, setting, interpretation, purpose, and thrust. It also provides excellent bibliographies for each section and synthesizes previous research. It claims to be the first major commentary on Genesis in decades, and is from a moderately critical stance. MS\*\*\*\*

Youngblood, R. *The Book of Genesis: An Introductory Commentary*. Baker, 1991. 295 pp.

This volume is a reworking of two volumes that Youngblood published in 1976 and 1980. The focus is on the book's teaching, not on philology or form. The introduction, which deals with questions of authorship and date, among other issues, is adequate for the volume, which is directed toward laypeople. The writing style is engaging and clear. LM\*\*\*

## **Exodus**

Burns, R. J. *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*. OTM. Michael Glazier, 1983. 298 pp.

The author takes a traditional literary-critical approach to these three pentateuchal books. She asserts that Exodus "must be read as a religious creed and not as a historical chronicle" (19). She does not treat every chapter of all three books, and Leviticus and Numbers get less attention than Exodus. LM\*\*

Cassuto, U. *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*. Trans. I. Abrahams. Magnes, 1967. xvi/509 pp.

Cassuto rejects the Documentary Hypothesis and explains the existing text. He is sensitive to the literary artistry of Exodus and brilliant in his philological analysis. See also comments under his commentary on Genesis. S\*\*\*

Childs, B. S. *The Book of Exodus*. OTL. Westminster/SCM, 1974. xxv/659 pp.

This is one of the best commentaries on Exodus. Childs divides his commentary into different sections, including textual criticism and philology, critical methods, Old Testament context, New Testament context, and history of interpretation. Although representing a critical perspective, this volume is valuable to evangelical ministers. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Coats, G. W. *Exodus 1–18*. FOTL. Eerdmans, 1999. xiv/□178 pp.

The preface explains the difficult journey that this volume had to reach publication and this in large part explains why this book is not even close to being up to the standard of the rest of the series. S\*\*

Cole, R. Alan. *Exodus*. TOTC. Inter-Varsity, 1973. 239 pp.

As is the case with all the volumes in this series, this is a book with all the inherent disadvantages of a short commentary. There is not much of general introduction or interaction with source criticism, but there is an excellent theological introduction. It is definitely worth the price. LM\*\*\*

Dunnam, M. D. *Exodus*. CC. Word, 1987. 395 pp.

As with most of the volumes in this series, this one is heavier on anecdotes and sermonic application than a serious study of the book's content. Of course, such a study can be a useful supplement to other commentaries, especially for ministers as they seek to bridge the gap between the ancient world and that of a modern congregation. LM\*\*\*

Durham, J. I. *Exodus*. WBC. Nelson/Paternoster, 1987. xxxiv/□516 pp.

The strength of this commentary is its focus on the theology of the text. Its weakness is its casual attitude toward the historicity of Exodus. Durham identifies the heart of the book's message as the presence of God with God's people. MS\*\*\*\*

Ellison, H. L. *Exodus*. DSB. Westminster, 1982. 203 pp.

Ellison does a good job explaining the text to the modern lay reader. He is insightful, but the commentary is too brief. The introduction is short even for the series, and makes only passing reference to the critical problems of history. Ellison emphasizes theology and is committed to a New Testament approach after studying the text in its Old Testament context. LM\*\*

Enns, P. *Exodus*. NIVAC. Zondervan/Hodder & Stoughton, 2000. 448 pp.

Enns has produced an incredibly insightful theological study of the book. He also deals well with the important historical issues, but not from a technical standpoint. This commentary is ideal for those preaching on Exodus, because he so thoughtfully explores the book's trajectory toward the New Testament gospel. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Fretheim, T. E. *Exodus*. Interp. Westminster John Knox, 1990. xii/321 pp.

This very readable volume is stimulating in discussing the theological message of the Book of Exodus. Fretheim might be described as a moderate critic who concentrates on the final form of the text. This volume is not particularly helpful on the more technical aspects of the book. LM\*\*\*\*

Gispen, W. H. *Exodus*. BSC. Zondervan, 1982. 335 pp.

Gispen's work was originally published in Dutch in 1951. It is full of helpful exegetical and theological insights from a Reformed perspective. MS\*\*\*

Hyatt, J. B. *Exodus*. NCB. Sheffield, 1971. 351 pp.

Hyatt takes a critical approach to the Book of Exodus. His comments are brief and sketchy. There is very little theological or literary exposition. The book, however, has a series of excurses on various topics of interest, such as the origin of Mosaic Yahwism and the Passover. Worthwhile only if one is interested in a critical perspective on an issue. S\*\*

Noth, M. *Exodus*. Trans. J. Bowden. OTL. Westminster/□SCM, 1962. 283 pp.

Noth is one of the most important German critical scholars of this century. He concentrates on historical and literary issues from a critical perspective. This is an important piece of scholarship, but will not help the pastor or layperson. S\*\*\*

Propp, W. H. C. *Exodus 1–18*. AB. Doubleday, 1998. xl/680 pp.

Propp's commentary has some unique features compared to other volumes in the series. For one thing, each section begins with comments on text, source, and redaction criticism. Also, contrary to the practice of most biblical scholars, Propp marks a speculative remark as speculation (other scholars will judge that some of his unmarked comments are equally speculative!). His opening translation is quite literal, even awkwardly so. Many readers will find these features a bit confusing and off-putting, but there are some excellent insights into the text. MS\*\*\*\*

Sarna, N. M. *Exodus*. JPS Torah Commentary. Jewish Publication Society, 1991. 304 pp.

Sarna is one of the masters of commentary-writing on the Torah. This volume is noticeably shorter than the others in the series and lacks their vitality. Nonetheless, the serious student should consult it. MS\*\*\*

### Leviticus

Bellinger, W. H., Jr. *Leviticus, Numbers*. NIBCOT. Hendrickson/Paternoster, 2001. 338 pp.

This is a fine commentary that provides an interesting and significant reading of the Books of Leviticus and Numbers. The series does not allow Bellinger to display it very often, but serious research lies behind his accessible prose. Bellinger does not ignore New Testament connections, but this part could have been strengthened. LM\*\*\*\*

Demarest, G. W. *Leviticus*. CC. Word, 1990. 286 pp.

Demarest confesses that he struggled to come to grips with the meaning and significance of this biblical book. The results are often satisfying, and he provides a helpful introduction to the relevance of Leviticus, especially geared to those teaching or preaching from it. The commentary should be supplemented by a more academic volume for serious study. LM\*\*\*

Gerstenberger, E. *Leviticus*. OTL. Westminster John Knox, 1996. 456 pp.

Situates the material late, to the fifth century B.C. Writes very clearly on a level that even laypeople will be able to understand, though some of the technical discussions will not be of interest to them. This is a good, solid commentary from a critical perspective, but other commentaries on the book are better. MS\*\*\*

Harrison, R. K. *Leviticus*. TOTC. Inter-Varsity, 1980. 252 pp.

Harrison is one of the most competent Old Testament evangelical scholars today. The commentary is too short to compete with Wenham's volume, but still well worth having. LM\*\*\*

Hartley, J. E. *Leviticus*. WBC. Nelson/Paternoster, 1992. lxxiii/496 pp.

This commentary is substantial in quality as well as quantity. Hartley approaches his task with the tools of the philologist, literary scholar, and theologian. The approach to authorship is extremely helpful. There is also a lengthy introductory essay on the history of interpretation of the book. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Knight, G. A. F. *Leviticus*. DSB. Westminster, 1981. 173 pp.

While moderately critical in his approach to Leviticus, Knight provides a helpful exposition of what the book means in its Old Testament context and devotes considerable attention to its relevance for the Christian. One of the better volumes of the series. LM\*\*\*\*

Levine, B. A. *Leviticus*. JPS Torah Commentary. Jewish Publication Society, 1989. xlvi/284 pp.

Levine writes with the educated layperson in mind. His writing style is accessible, while he treats topics that the scholar would be interested in. Levine is one of the true experts on Leviticus and presents a stimulating and important study of the book within its context in the ancient world. He is also theologically sensitive. MS\*\*\*\*

Milgrom, J. *Leviticus 1–16*. AB. Doubleday, 1991. *Leviticus 17–22*. AB. Doubleday, 2000. *Leviticus 23–27*. AB. Doubleday, 2001. xviii/1,163 pp., xvii/624 pp., and xxi/818 pp.

Milgrom divides Leviticus into three parts. This first volume of his commentary covers the section owing its origin to P; the second volume covers the section that he argues comes from H (the Holiness Code). However, he is most concerned with the final form of the text, not its prehistory. Milgrom is clearly the world's leading expert on Leviticus. He writes from a moderately critical point of view, informed by his wealth of knowledge of early Jewish interpretation. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Noordtziĳ, A. *Leviticus*. BSC. Zondervan, 1982. xi/280 pp.

This commentary is a translation of a Dutch original and presents a basic evangelical approach to the text, although Noordtziĳ believes that some of the laws are post-Mosaic. He is theologically sensitive and responsible. MS\*\*\*

Porter, J. R. *Leviticus*. CBC. Cambridge University Press, 1976. x/232 pp.

This is a brief but well-written study of a difficult biblical book. Porter presents a clearly critical position on Leviticus. He shows sensitivity to theological issues and to the relevance of the book for today. LM\*\*\*

Rooker, M. F. *Leviticus*. NAC. Broadman & Holman, 2000. 352 pp.

Rooker writes in an engaging style and has an eye on making the book relevant for the Christian reader by pointing out connections to New Testament theology. LM\*\*\*\*

Snaith, N. H. *Leviticus and Numbers*. NCB. Reprint, Sheffield, 1977. xii/352 pp.

Snaith is a competent Hebraist, so it is not surprising that the strength of this volume is in textual criticism and philology. The commentary suffers from the restraints of the series. It is really a brief, sketchy commentary on the RSV. Although there is little theological reflection, the text is clearly written from a critical perspective. S\*\*

Wenham, G. J. *The Book of Leviticus*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1979. xiii/362 pp.

Wenham has provided a fascinating and extremely helpful discussion of what most Christians regard as a drab book. He does an excellent job in explaining the holiness laws and their function in ancient Israel. It is a well-written commentary. MS\*\*\*\*\*

### **Numbers**

Ashley, T. R. *The Book of Numbers*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1993. xvi/667 pp.

While Wenham's short commentary is excellent, the NICOT format allows Ashley to delve more deeply and widely into the issues surrounding this important, though neglected, book of the Pentateuch. Ashley writes in a very readable style. He not only deals with the technical problems of the book, but also demonstrates the relevance of the book for theology. He interacts with previous scholarship, but not obsessively. MS\*\*\*\*

Bellinger, W. H., Jr. *Leviticus, Numbers*. NIBCOT. Hendrickson/Paternoster, 2001. 338 pp.

See under Leviticus.

Brown, R. *The Message of Numbers*. BST. Inter-Varsity, 2002. 288 pp.

A readable and informed study of this often-neglected book. In keeping with the series, Brown emphasizes the theological meaning and the contemporary significance of the book. LM\*\*\*

Budd, P. J. *Numbers*. WBC. Nelson/Paternoster, 1984. xxxii/□409 pp.

This is a well-researched and thought-out commentary. It employs a source-critical methodology in a way that will offend some evangelicals. It is weak in biblical theology. S\*\*

Cole, R. D. *Numbers*. NAC. Broadman, 2001. 590 pp.

A substantial, well-written commentary that navigates the scholarly literature well, incorporating what is good and rejecting what is bad, while still keeping its individual contribution. Cole gives an excellent argument in favor of an essential or core Mosaic authorship of Numbers. The book's real strength is in its sensitive theological reading. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Gray, G. B. *Numbers*. ICC. T & T Clark, 1903. lii/489 pp.

This commentary is highly technical, very critical, and somewhat dated. Its valuable points have been incorporated into other, more recent commentaries. S\*\*

Harrison, R. K. *Numbers*. WEC. Moody, 1990. xvi/452 pp.

This is the first Old Testament volume to appear in Moody's new series. This particular volume takes a verse-by-verse approach (as opposed to Silva's Philippians commentary in the same series). It emphasizes exegesis and exposition, in this case with a strong focus on history and Near Eastern background, although there are many insightful theological comments as well. Harrison competently defends a traditionally orthodox approach to the book. However, he often addresses side issues rather than the real heart of the passage at hand. MS\*\*\*

Levine, B. *Numbers 1–20*. AB. Doubleday, 1993. *Numbers 21–36*. AB. Doubleday, 2000. xvi/528 pp. and xxii/624 pp.

About Levine's erudition there is no doubt, and all serious students of Numbers must have this book. But Levine is not only convinced but also serious about his study of sources in the Book of Numbers. Those more concerned about the final form of the book will find the introductory material especially tedious. S\*\*\*\*

Milgrom, J. *Numbers*. JPS Torah Commentary. Jewish Publication Society, 1990. lxi/520 pp.

This commentary is a masterpiece of erudition. The seventy-seven excurses are themselves worth the money. Milgrom gives the reader a careful study of the details and general message of the book. He is concerned to share the insights of medieval Jewish commentators, insights inaccessible to those who do not read postbiblical Hebrew. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Noordtzijs, A. *Numbers*. BSC. Zondervan, 1983. ix/304 pp.

Originally published in Dutch in 1953, this commentary is particularly helpful in the area of theology. Other commentaries would be more helpful in the legal portions of Numbers. MS\*\*\*

Olson, D. T. *Numbers*. Interp. John Knox, 1996. 196 pp.

No one has had a larger influence in recent years on our understanding of the theological theme of the book of Numbers than Olson. He exposites the book in the light of the theme of wilderness wandering and in the light of the structure formed by the two census accounts in chapters 1 and 26. Here we see judgment on the old generation of rebellion and the rise of the second generation of hope. He does reflect a traditionally critical view that the book essentially was composed after the exile and reflects the concerns of that time. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Philip, J. *Numbers*. CC. Word, 1987. 364 pp.

Philip is a prominent Scottish church leader who writes in an engaging style about the theology and significance of this rather neglected book. The commentary is backed by solid scholarship. Philip writes anecdotally, with the pastor primarily in mind. LM\*\*\*\*

Riggins, W. *Numbers*. DSB. Westminster, 1983. 252 pp.

Riggins does a good job relating the ancient biblical world to the modern one laypeople readily understand. He emphasizes the theological and practical aspects of Numbers. In keeping with the purpose of the series, he does not get much into introductory issues. LM\*\*\*

Snaith, N. H. *Leviticus and Numbers*. NCB. Reprint, Sheffield, 1977.

See under Leviticus.

Wenham, G. J. *Numbers*. TOTC. Inter-Varsity, 1981. 240 pp.

Wenham does a wonderful job making this often neglected book come alive theologically. It is lamentable that the confines of the series have restricted the length of this commentary. Highly recommended for students, pastors, and scholars. LM\*\*\*\*\*

## Deuteronomy

Brown, R. *The Message of Deuteronomy: Not by Bread Alone*. BST. Inter-Varsity, 1993. 331 pp.

This commentary, written by an English Baptist minister, is very helpful in its attempts to bridge the ancient text and modern social and ethical situations. It is not a deeply researched volume. It also adopts a rather topical theological approach to the text, which has its place, but it could have been much improved by a thematic, biblical-theological analysis. LM\*\*

Christensen, D. L. *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*. WBC. Nelson/□Paternoster, 2001. *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*. WBC. Nelson/□□Paternoster, 2002. cxii/458 pp. and li/440 pp.

Christensen first published a commentary on Deuteronomy 1–11 in this series, and the first volume, which covers 1:1–21:9, is a revision and expansion of that earlier work. This commentary is not for the timid. It is technical and also presents new theories about the nature of Deuteronomy. It is too early to call it idiosyncratic, but before the minister and student invests in this commentary over others that may be more helpful in terms of theological message, it is best to let scholars take a few years to sift through his ideas. The low rating reflects this fact and is clearly not a reflection on the author's obvious brilliance. MS\*\*

Clifford, R. *Deuteronomy with Excursus on Covenant and Law*. OTM. Michael Glazier, 1982. 193 pp.

Clifford, well-known for his scholarly articles, dates the Book of Deuteronomy late and gives a two-hundred-year period of composition. He identifies the genre of the book as “speech modelled on covenant formulary” (3). The excursus is short but covers an important topic. Readable. LM\*\*\*

Craigie, P. C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1976. 424 pp.

Craigie is among the best of recent evangelical interpreters. His work on Deuteronomy is no exception to the high quality of his work. He is an astute theologian and philologist. He adopts a firmly evangelical approach to the Book of Deuteronomy, evident in his insistence on the essential unity of the book based on the treaty analogy. LM\*\*\*\*

Cunliffe-Jones, H. *Deuteronomy*. TBC. SCM, 1951. 191 pp.

The author attempts to bring home to laypeople the complex issues surrounding the critical study of the book. He asserts that, since the book was written before Jesus Christ, “we must expect to find in it defects and distortions as well as true affirmations of faith.” LM\*\*

Driver, S. R. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*. 3d ed. ICC. T & T Clark, 1901. xcv/434 pp.

In many ways, this commentary is outdated. It retains its value because of Driver's ability as a philologist. Represents a turn-of-the-century critical view. S\*\*

Maxwell, J. C. *Deuteronomy*. CC. Word, 1987. 351 pp.

The focus of this commentary is the relevance of Deuteronomy today. Of course, such a concern is admirable, but in this case it sometimes results in stretching the text's original purpose. Nonetheless, Maxwell's comments are usually on the mark. LM\*\*\*

Mayes, A. D. H. *Deuteronomy*. NCB. Sheffield, 1979. 416 pp.

Shares some of the shortcomings of the series in that it comments on the RSV and is too brief. It is among the best, however, in the series. Comes from a critical perspective. LM\*\*\*

McConville, J. G. *Deuteronomy*. Apollos Old Testament Commentary. Inter-Varsity, 2002. 544 pp.

McConville is one of the leading evangelical Old Testament scholars working today. He interacts extensively with the modern history of interpretation of the Book of Deuteronomy. The treatment is theologically sensitive. He provides a fresh approach to the book, an approach that needs serious consideration, although both conservatives and critics alike will find obstacles to acceptance. His writing is very accessible. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Merrill, E. H. *Deuteronomy*. NAC. Broadman, 1994. 477 pp.

This early contribution in the New American Commentary series is well-written and informative. It is particularly noteworthy in its consistent evangelical approach and in its thoroughgoing use of the covenant concept in the exposition of Deuteronomy. The scholarship on which it is based strikes one as a little dated. For instance, the use of the Hittite treaty form for early dating of the book (a conclusion with which I agree) does not take into account the flexible structure of the Hittite treaty itself. MS\*\*\*

Miller, P. D., Jr. *Deuteronomy*. Interp. John Knox, 1990. xv/□253 pp.

Miller is theologically concerned and sensitive to literary form in this helpful and well-written study. His approach is moderately critical, and his writing style is engaging. He deals with academic questions and cites previous studies, but his primary concern is with the meaning of the canonical text. M\*\*\*\*\*

Payne, D. F. *Deuteronomy*. DSB. Westminster, 1985. 197 pp.

Payne writes clearly and nontechnically in this highly informative commentary. He divides the book into more than eighty sections and gives each a catchy title. This commentary remains open to the question of date. Nonetheless, it acknowledges that the book's message is especially relevant to times of political disaster. Payne examines Deuteronomy as a book of law, as a sermon, and as history. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Ridderbos, J. *Deuteronomy*. BSC. 1950/51; Zondervan, 1984. 336 pp.

Ridderbos, one of the best Dutch Old Testament scholars of the previous generation, has contributed a formidable conservative defense against critical theories of Deuteronomy. He defends essential Mosaic authorship, while also recognizing the work of a later redactor. In the commentary proper, Ridderbos is theologically sensitive and exegetically insightful. He relates this Old Testament book to our New Testament situation. ML\*\*\*\*\*

Thompson, J. A. *Deuteronomy*. TOTC. Inter-Varsity, 1974. 320 pp.

Although brief, this commentary is stimulating and full of helpful information. Thompson makes good use of the treaty analogy to Deuteronomy. He deals with many of the critical issues of the book from an evangelical perspective. Contains a thoughtful essay on the difficult question of the date of the book. Some good discussion of the theology of the book. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Tigay, J. H. *Deuteronomy*. JPS Torah Commentary. Jewish Publication Society, 1996. xlix/548 pp.

A well-written and beautifully produced commentary that provides the Hebrew text, a translation, notes, and expository comments. The history of interpretation, particularly in Jewish tradition, is called upon to help elucidate the text. The approach to questions of history of composition is a moderately critical one. MS\*\*\*\*\*

von Rad, G. *Deuteronomy*. OTL. Westminster/SCM, 1966. 211 pp.

Von Rad was one of the chief figures in Old Testament studies in the 1950s and beyond. He helped shape the method of study for the field during that time. This brief (especially considering the central importance of Deuteronomy to von Rad's research) commentary illustrates his approach and many of his most significant conclusions. His approach combines source, form, and redaction criticism. He concludes that while the final form of Deuteronomy is associated with Josiah's reform, the book was the product of northern Levites. S\*\*\*

Weinfeld, M. *Deuteronomy 1–11*. AB. Doubleday, 1991. xiv/□448 pp.

The first volume of Weinfeld's commentary illustrates his erudition and insight into this biblical book. Deuteronomy's first eleven chapters, Weinfeld writes, contain history and sermon; the rest of Deuteronomy concentrates on law and will be the focus of the second volume. All the introductory material is found in the first volume (with exception of discussion of text). Weinfeld writes from a critical point of view, believing that much of the material in Deuteronomy is ancient, but that it received a major redaction during the Hezekiah and Josiah reforms. There is much interesting literary and theological discussion surrounding the relationship between the book and covenant/loyalty oaths. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Wright, C. K. *Deuteronomy*. NIBCOT. Hendrickson/Paternoster, 1996. 350 pp.

Wright, a well-known biblical ethicist, does well with the Book of Deuteronomy with a special emphasis on his area of expertise and interest. He has a refreshing belief in a "substantial Mosaic legacy" of the book. He is sensitive to the book's trajectory to the New Testament. LM\*\*\*\*

### **Joshua**

Auld, A. G. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. DSB. Westminster, 1984. 290 pp.

A short but insightful and extremely readable exposition. In a brief introduction, Auld expresses a skeptical view concerning historicity, but his theological sensitivities redeem the volume. LM\*\*\*

Boling, R. G., and G. E. Wright. *Joshua*. AB. Doubleday, 1982. xvii/580 pp.

Wright's untimely death prevented his full participation in this project; most of the work is that of his well-known student Boling (who also did the Judges commentary for this series). The commentary is critical in its approach to the text and theology of Joshua. The history and archaeology of Israel are emphasized. MS\*\*

Butler, T. *Joshua*. WBC. Nelson/Paternoster, 1983. xliii/□304 pp.

A well-researched and thought-through commentary. Full of philological, textual, and exegetical information and insight. An evangelical, but not traditional, viewpoint on the book. MS\*\*\*\*\*

Goslinga, C. J. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. BSC. Zondervan, 1986. 558 pp.

This commentary was translated from a Dutch original that dates from the late 1920s and early 1930s. Although it may not take into account the most recent scholarship, it is an excellent commentary from an evangelical-Reformed standpoint. Strong on theology. MS\*\*\*

Gray, J. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. NCB. 1967; rev. ed., Sheffield/Marshall Pickering, 1986. 427 pp.

Follows Noth in attributing both Joshua and Judges to the Deuteronomist (and assumes a seventh-century date for Deuteronomy). Gray believes that Joshua is of limited value as a historical work. He believes that Judges is a more sober account of history. S\*

Hamlin, E. J. *Joshua: Inheriting the Land*. ITC. Handsel, 1983. xxiii/207 pp.

This is an engagingly written exposition of Joshua that looks at the book as a continuation of the exodus pattern. Hamlin examines the conquest in the light of the theme of the liberation of the oppressed and asks how the text is relevant for today. The book imbibes of a moderate historical criticism to make its point. M\*\*\*

Harris, J. G., C. Brown, and M. Moore. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. NIBCOT. Hendrickson/Paternoster, 2000. xxxiii/□398 pp.

Though the authors of the three parts of the book are different they are aligned in their “canonical historical approach” to their subject matter, with good results. LM\*\*\*

Hess, R. S. *Joshua*. TOTC. Inter-Varsity, 1996. 320 pp.

This is one of the best TOTC commentaries and one of the best on the Book of Joshua. Hess, an acknowledged expert on ancient Near Eastern literature and Israelite history, defends the essential authenticity of the historical memory of the book. He also is an adept interpreter of the literary and theological aspects of the book. LM\*\*\*\*\*

Hoppe, L. *Joshua, Judges*. OTM. Michael Glazier, 1982.

A popularly oriented theological study of the final form of the text. Hoppe helpfully orients his readers to the concept of the Deuteronomic history. He is less successful in dealing with the important theological concept of holy war. LM\*\*

Howard, D. M., Jr. *Joshua*. NAC. Broadman, 1998. 464 pp.

This commentary is one of the best on Joshua, though the field is not particularly strong. Nonetheless, Howard’s contribution is well-written, well-researched, and well-thought-out. He adopts a relatively conservative approach to the history that is particularly admirable in this age of skepticism. He is also quite good at pointing out theological themes. LM\*\*\*\*

Huffman, J. A., Jr. *Joshua*. CC. Word, 1986. 282 pp.

Huffman follows the format of the series to a tee. He effectively relates the book to modern lay concerns. By use of anecdote and illustration, Huffman stimulates thinking about how to communicate the book’s message. It is important, however, to use this commentary with a more content-oriented commentary at hand. LM\*\*\*

Madvig, D. H. *Joshua*. EBC 3. Zondervan, 1992.

This commentary is a good, basic retelling of the biblical story, filling in some of the gaps. Not a lot of theological reflection. LM\*\*

Miller, J. M., and G. M. Tucker. *The Book of Joshua*. CBC. Cambridge University Press, 1974. x/206 pp.

The authors give a careful description of the literary composition of the book from a critical perspective. They concentrate on the Deuteronomistic redaction, which they think is the strongest voice in the book. They exaggerate supposed contradictions in the book and use archaeology to inform their commentary. LM\*\*

Nelson, R. *Joshua*. OTL. Westminster John Knox, 1997. xviii/310 pp.

Nelson has a low view of the historical worth of the book. Employs both diachronic as well as synchronic analyses, but the commentary has a kind of “old school” critical feel. S\*\*

Soggin, J. *Joshua*. OTL. Westminster, 1972. xvii/245 pp.

Soggin, an Italian scholar writing in the German tradition, emphasizes historical and archaeological studies. Not much theological comment. S\*\*

Woudstra, M. *The Book of Joshua*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1981. xiv/396 pp.

Woudstra gives a very good exegetical analysis of the book. He also has an excellent biblical-theological sense. There are some good literary observations, but much more could be done in this area. LM\*\*\*