

Old Testament Commentary Survey

FIFTH EDITION

Tremper Longman III



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To
Bruce Fisk, Charles Farhadian, Maurice Lee, Bill Nelson,
Caryn Reeder, Helen Rhee, Curt Whiteman, Telford Work
Religious Studies Department, Westmont College

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Preface to the Fifth Edition

As I said at the beginning of the fourth edition, time flies, and it did again. It's 2013 as I finish this fifth edition of the commentary survey that came out for the first time in 1991. The second edition appeared in 1995, the third in 2003, and the fourth in 2007. I had hoped to bring out this edition earlier, but it was not to be.

More commentaries have appeared, and so the selection of commentaries for purchase and use continues to grow larger, especially for some biblical books. It is therefore helpful to get a preliminary, though brief, assessment of such matters as intended audience, emphases, theological and methodological perspective, and quality.

As before, a number of excellent and good commentaries have been published in the past few years. There are also a number of mediocre ones but only the rare bad commentary. It's not easy writing commentaries, as I know now that I am the author of a number of them (appendix B). I continue to hope that future commentaries produced for use by Christian pastors in the church would include more reflection on how the Old Testament message is appropriated by the New Testament. I have more reason than ever to think my hope will be realized since I have developed as General Editor a new series for Zondervan that will have that as a main focus. Lord willing, by the next edition of this commentary series I will be evaluating the first volumes in that series.

Most of the popular commentaries are reviewed in these pages, but I have had to be selective. As I have done with each successive edition, I have omitted a number of commentaries that I reviewed in the previous edition to make room for new evaluations. If I have omitted one of your favorites, I apologize.

My hope is that this commentary survey will help students of the Bible choose those commentaries that are right for them, so they might more fully understand the Word of God.

Acknowledgments

When I began this project many years ago, I thought it would take a minimum amount of time and serve a limited readership. Many of my students had asked for my opinion on commentaries, but one of them, Eric Bauer, kept pestering me to compile a list and to make it available in our seminary bookstore. I figured I could devote a few minutes each day to writing a brief review of the best commentaries I know on certain biblical books. To make a long story short, Allan Fisher, director of publications at Baker, caught wind of my efforts and asked me to expand the list into a counterpart to Don Carson's *New Testament Commentary Survey*. I did not realize how much work was involved, but now that it is over, I would like to express my appreciation to both Eric and Allan for their encouragement to write this guide. The second edition was produced under the editorship of Jim Weaver. My good friend Jim Kinney edited the third, fourth, and now the fifth edition. Brian Bolger and his team always do an excellent job preparing the manuscript for publication.

I have now taught at Westmont College for fourteen years after eighteen years at Westminster Theological Seminary. I dedicated the fourth edition to my close friends and colleagues in the Old Testament Department there: Alan Groves, Peter Enns, Doug Green, and Mike Kelly. Mike and Doug are still there; Pete is teaching at Eastern

University. I am sad to report that Al died at an early age of melanoma soon after the publication of the fourth edition. We miss you, Al.

I would like to dedicate this edition to my present colleagues at Westmont College in the Religious Studies Department: Bill Nelson (OT), Bruce Fisk and Caryn Reeder (NT), Telford Work, Curt White-man, and Maurice Lee (Theology), Helen Rhee (Church History), and Charles Farhadian (World Religions). I could not ask for more collegial and intellectually stimulating people with whom to work.

Abbreviations

Bible Versions

NIV	New International Version	RSV	Revised Standard Version
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Categories

L	Layperson
M	Minister
S	Scholar

Commentary Series

ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture	BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary	BSC	Bible Student's Commentary
AYBC	Anchor Yale Bible Commentary	BST	The Bible Speaks Today

BTCB	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible	NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary	NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
CC	Continental Commentaries	OTL	Old Testament Library
ComC	Communicator's Commentary	OTM	Old Testament Message
CsBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentary	OTS	Old Testament Studies
DSB	The Daily Study Bible	PC	The Preacher's Commentary
EvBC	Everyman's Bible Commentary	REBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary: Revised Edition
FOTL	Forms of the Old Tes- tament Literature	SHBC	Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary
ICC	International Critical Commentary	TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
Interp	Interpretation	THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
ITC	International Theo- logical Commentary	TOTC	Tyndale Old Testa- ment Commentaries
NAC	New American Commentary	UBCS	Understanding the Bible Commentary Series
NCB	New Century Bible	WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary	WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible		
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commen- tary on the Old Testament		

Introduction

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wears the body.

—Eccles. 12:12 (NIV)

While surveying the many commentaries listed in this guide, this verse came to mind more than once. Sometimes it seemed as if a new commentary appeared every week.

Upon more rational reflection, however, I found that there is a dearth of commentaries on the Old Testament. This situation is not simply because some commentaries are of little worth, but also because there are only a few commentaries on the books of the Old Testament, although this situation is changing. Furthermore, no single commentary, no matter how exhaustive, can provide all the information the reader might want and need. In addition, commentaries are addressed to specialized audiences. A commentary written with the needs of the layperson in mind often will not interest the scholar, while one written for a scholarly audience is often of no use to the layperson. Ministers have enough training to be interested in answers to technical questions but also want help in making the text relevant to the people in their congregation.

Who Should Read This Guide?

There are many commentaries available. As a specialist in Old Testament, I do not think I have been asked any question more frequently than “What’s the best commentary on . . . ?”

This guide is for anyone, layperson or minister, who desires to buy a commentary. It lists a number of works available for each book of the Old Testament, briefly summarizes their emphases and viewpoints, and evaluates them. This guide will be especially helpful to seminary students beginning to build the reference library that will be crucial to their preaching and teaching ministries.

Evaluation

Some might disagree with me in the value I assign to individual commentaries. It is accordingly of some interest to know what I value in a commentary and the perspective from which I write.

I represent an evangelical approach to the Old Testament and, accordingly, give high marks to good commentaries that come from a similar perspective. However, it is important to emphasize the adjective *good*. I can appreciate and learn from writers who write from a perspective different than my own, but I am particularly hard on shallow or incompetent commentaries that come from the perspective I advocate.

I evaluate commentaries on a 1-to-5 scale. One or two stars indicate that the commentary is inferior or deficient, and I discourage its purchase. Four or five stars is a high mark. Three, obviously, means a commentary is good but not great. I also use half stars in order to refine the system of evaluation. Please note that my own commentaries are unrated. For a separate listing of my commentaries, see appendix B.

I also indicate who would most benefit from the commentary under consideration. There are three categories: L(ayperson); M(inister) (seminary students should consider themselves in this category); and S(cholar). I provide page counts for each volume, with small roman numerals indicating the pages of introductory material.

For a similar guide to the New Testament, please consult D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey*, 7th ed. (Baker Academic, forthcoming).

The Use and Abuse of Commentaries

There is a right way and a wrong way to use a commentary. Actually, there are two wrong ways. The first is to ignore completely the use of commentaries. Some people do not consult commentaries because they believe that, since all Christians are equal as they approach the Scriptures, scholars have no privileged insight into the biblical text. The second error is to become overly dependent on commentaries. “These people have devoted their whole lives to the study of the Bible. How can my opinion measure up to theirs?”

Those holding the first position are wrong because they forget that God gives different gifts to different people in the church. Not all people are equally adept at understanding the Bible and teaching it to others (1 Cor. 12:12–31). Those holding the second position err in the opposite direction. They forget that God has given believers the Spirit by which they can discern spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14–16).

The right way to use a commentary is as a help. We should first study a passage without reference to any helps. Only after coming to an initial understanding of the passage should we consult commentaries.

Neither should we let commentaries bully us. Many times they will be of great help, but sometimes the reader will be right and the commentaries will be wrong.

One-Volume Commentaries

One-volume commentaries are commentaries on the whole Bible bound in one volume. They generally have between 1,000 and 1,500 pages. While their comments on individual books are too short to provide insight into a text, such volumes are handy to have around for a quick orientation to a book or passage of Scripture. They are relatively inexpensive and are good choices for laypeople who do not want to invest in a series. There are also some excellent study Bibles available that basically function as one-volume commentaries. The three best out there right now are the *NIV Study Bible*, the *NLT Study Bible*, and the *ESV Study Bible*.

Berlin, A., and M. Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Oxford, 2003. 2181 pp.

This study Bible is of great interest not just to Jewish but also to Christian readers of the Bible. The editors and contributors are all top-flight scholars who know how to write to a general audience. As the introduction points out, there is not one single Jewish interpretive approach to the text, and most of the contributors represent a moderate critical approach to the text, but they are also conversant with and discuss earlier Jewish interpretive approaches to the text. LM★★★

Burge, G. M., and A. E. Hill, eds. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Baker Books, 2012. 1648 pp.

This commentary is the most up-to-date and best available, and there are pictures! For reasons of disclosure, I did the Micah commentary, but the contributors are generally very good, including some well-known names like Mark Boda, Roy Gane, Victor Hamilton, Andrew Hill, Robert Holmstedt, Walter Kaiser, Elmer Martens, Elaine Phillips, Richard Schultz, Gary Smith, and Willem VanGemeren (not to mention the New Testament contributors). LM★★★★★

Carson, D. A., R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, and G. J. Wenham, eds. *New Bible Commentary: Twenty-First Century Edition*. InterVarsity, 1994. 1455 pp.

This volume is a thorough revision of the earlier *New Bible Commentary Revised*. It brings the latter up-to-date through the work of many leading Old and New Testament scholars. The introductory and general articles are helpful and well written. LM★★★★★

Dunn, J. D. G., and J. Rogerson, eds. *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. Eerdmans, 2000. 1649 pp.

Utilizing the talents of scholars representing a broad theological spectrum, the Eerdmans commentary provides readers with a concise, stimulating, sometimes provocative reading of the biblical text. LM★★★★★

Walton, J. H., V. H. Matthews, and M. W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. InterVarsity, 2000. 832 pp.

This easy-to-use reference book concentrates on the ancient Near Eastern background that otherwise is so difficult for the modern lay reader but that is also incredibly illuminating. LM★★★★★

Commentary Sets and Series

Publishers have found that commentaries sell best in a set. There are a number of commentary sets currently in production. The following list serves two purposes. First, it describes more fully and evaluates those sets that are written by one or two authors. Second, it describes the method of other sets by multiple authors. The individual volumes found in this second group are described and evaluated in the following section, which proceeds book by book through the Bible. It should be noted that sets with a number of different authors often vary in quality. It is often best to choose among commentaries rather than committing oneself to a single set of commentaries. The asterisks indicate those series whose individual volumes I try to include consistently.

***Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries (AYBC). Ed. D. N. Freedman.
Doubleday. Reprinted by Yale University Press.**

The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries is an indispensable tool for scholars and certain ministers, but it often fails in its attempt to communicate with laypersons. It usually emphasizes philology, historical background, and text, rather than theology. The volumes range in quality from excellent to horrible. MS★★★

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament (ACCS). Ed. T. C. Oden. InterVarsity.

In the past ten or fifteen years, early interpretation has received renewed interest especially from those of us who value the theological significance of the biblical passages. These volumes, produced by historical theologians and church historians, present excerpts from early interpretations of a text to give the flavor of interpretive tendencies of the past for readers who do not have the time to extensively research the voluminous primary material. MS★★★★

***Apollos Old Testament Commentary (AOTC).** Ed. D. W. Baker and G. J. Wenham. InterVarsity.

The Apollos commentary now has five contributions (Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, and Daniel), and these hold much promise for the future. The commentaries are clearly written and conversant with the best scholarship. The purpose of the series is to keep “one foot firmly planted in the universe of the original text and the other in that of the target audience.” MS★★★★

***Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms (BCOTWP).** Ed. T. Longman III. Baker Academic.

Delimiting this series to Psalms and Wisdom allows concentration on distinctive elements of those genres. The focus is on theological message. As of 2012 and the publication of my Job commentary, the series is now complete. LM★★★★

Berit Olam. Ed. D. W. Cotter. Michael Glazier.

This series is just under way and provides a focus on the literary analysis of the books. This means different things to the contributors, as may be seen by comparing J. T. Walsh’s close reading of 1 Kings with D. Jobling’s postmodern analysis of 1 Samuel. MS★★★

***The Bible Speaks Today (BST).** Ed. J. A. Motyer (Old Testament), J. Stott (New Testament), and D. Tidball (the new BST Bible Themes). InterVarsity.

The purpose of this set is to write on the biblical text in a way that engages the reader. In other words, its volumes can be read cover to cover; they are not simply reference tools. The series is readable, accurate, and relevant. LM★★★★

***Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (BTCB).** Ed. R. R. Reno. Brazos.

As the title to the series implies, these volumes take a decidedly theological approach to the text. Written by theologians and propelled by a distaste for the historical-critical (and seemingly for a historical-grammatical) method, sometimes the commentaries seem to have little contact with the text itself, though some volumes are very helpful. MS★★★

Calvin's Commentaries. 22 vols. Reprint, Baker.

These commentaries find their origin in Calvin's sermons, but they are learned and theologically insightful. It is no wonder that Calvin is called the "prince of expositors." Calvin does comment on language occasionally, but one will have to consult a more recent commentary because of discoveries in the Hebrew language. He does not cover the whole Old Testament; there are no volumes for Judges through Job. The five-volume commentary on Psalms is wonderful. Unfortunately, Calvin harmonizes Exodus to Deuteronomy. LMS★★★★★

Cambridge Bible Commentary (CBC). Ed. P. R. Ackroyd, A. R. C. Leaney, and J. W. Packer. Cambridge University Press.

This series is composed of short and readable commentaries on all the books of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. They intend to bring the fruits of contemporary scholarship to educated laypersons. The volumes also intend to explicate the New English Bible, which is the base of the commentary. They concentrate on

both historical and theological issues. A selection of volumes includes R. E. Clements on Exodus; P. R. Ackroyd on Samuel; R. J. Coggins on Chronicles; J. D. W. Watts on the Minor Prophets; and R. N. Whybray on Proverbs. LM★★★

Concordia Commentary (ConC). Concordia Publishing House.

The Concordia Commentary reflects a conservative Lutheran perspective. Though the Lutheran perspective comes through loud and clear, the reader does not have to be Lutheran to benefit from the often-insightful exegesis. The Old Testament volumes have an emphasis on how the text “promotes Christ,” which should prove helpful to ministers who want to preach Christ from the Old Testament. LM★★★★

Continental Commentaries (CC). Augsburg/Fortress.

This series translates into English leading German commentaries from various series. They are critical commentaries that on occasion are fairly technical, though not to the level of Hermeneia. Though technical and critical, the careful reader can benefit greatly from the number of significant theological insights on the various books. Not many volumes have yet appeared, and they are not in a rush, it appears, to get them out. MS★★★

Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (CsBC). Ed. P. W. Comfort. Tyndale.

This new series is based on the New Living Translation and seeks to exposit the text. The text is interpreted section by section, and each section is followed by more specific exegetical notes. The series is now complete and is a very helpful midsize commentary. LM★★★★

The Daily Study Bible (DSB). 24 vols. Ed. J. C. L. Gibson. Westminster John Knox.

The DSB is the Old Testament counterpart to Barclay’s New Testament commentaries. The name derives from the fact that the commentators have divided the text (RSV) into portions that can

be read in a single day's devotional. The commentary is directed toward the layperson and encourages an expositional and theological reading of the text. LM★★★★

Expositor's Bible Commentary: Revised Edition (REBC). Ed. D. Garland and T. Longman III. Zondervan.

This is a revised edition of the popular commentary series that originally was edited by Frank Gaebelin but now is edited by David Garland and yours truly. Each volume comments on more than one book (except *Psalms* by VanGemeren, which is a stand-alone). About 40 percent of the contributions are updates and revisions by authors who produced the first edition in the late seventies and eighties, but about 60 percent are totally new works. As of 2012, the series is now complete. LM★★★★

***Forms of the Old Testament Literature (FOTL). Ed. R. Knierim and G. M. Tucker. Eerdmans.**

When completed, this series will have twenty-four volumes. The title of the series indicates its focus on a form-critical approach to the text. Judged in the light of their purpose, these are excellent commentaries. Scholars will find these books invaluable. S★★★★

***Hermeneia. Ed. F. M. Cross et al. Fortress/SCM.**

A number of the volumes in this series are translations of original German works, although there are some English contributions. The quality of the series is high. It intends to deliver the best of historical and critical scholarship, and it usually succeeds. There are some classic works in this series. S★★★★

International Critical Commentary (ICC). T&T Clark.

These are highly technical studies of philology and text. They are best used by specialists and retain their value in spite of their age. A new series is presently being written. S★★★

International Theological Commentary (ITC). Handzel.

This is a series of short commentaries written from a third-world perspective. The purpose is both to shake off some of the assumptions of Western readers and to connect the text with contemporary issues. It often provides interesting insight into the Bible. At other times, however, these volumes are scarcely distinguishable from traditional commentaries. LM★★

***Interpretation (Interp). Ed. J. L. Mays. Westminster John Knox.**

This series bridges the gap between scholarly investigation and contemporary relevance. Moderately critical, the series is readable and interesting. LM★★★★

***JPS Torah Commentary. Ed. N. M. Sarna. Jewish Publication Society.**

The series, as the title indicates, will cover only the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The commentary prints the Hebrew text and gives copious comments on philology, history of research (with very interesting comments from rabbinic material), and theology. The content and the production of the volumes are first-rate. MS★★★★★

***Keil-Delitzsch*. 10 vols. Eerdmans.**

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch were orthodox Lutheran Old Testament scholars from Germany in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their expositions, although dated, are solid and competent. They often give helpful theological commentary as well. This set is fairly inexpensive and makes a good backbone to a minister's library. LM★★★★★

Knox Preaching Guides. Ed. J. H. Hayes. Westminster John Knox.

These short paperbacks offer assistance to ministers as they prepare to preach. They include a number of notable contributors, such as W. Brueggemann, J. J. Collins, W. Roth, E. Achtemeier, and J. G. Gammie, and are moderately critical for the most part. M★★★

Layman's Bible Commentary. Westminster John Knox.

Short, concise commentaries written for the layperson by critical scholars of the past generation. LM★★

***Leupold's Commentaries.* Baker.**

Leupold was a conservative Lutheran who wrote on many Old Testament books (Genesis, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah). Leupold's work has value, but he tends to write more like a systematic theologian than a biblical exegete. LM★★

****The Minor Prophets.* Ed. T. McComiskey. Baker.**

In most series, the Minor Prophets are given short shrift. This series intends to give the Minor Prophets their due. While not every contribution is the best on its particular book, this is the best anthology of commentaries on the Minor Prophets available. MS★★★★★

****New American Commentary (NAC).* Ed. E. Ray Clendenen. Broadman.**

This relatively new series is making a strong entry into the field of commentaries. Based on the NIV text, it is an expository commentary with an emphasis on the theological message of the Bible as a whole. It adopts a clear evangelical approach to the text. Most of the volumes in the series have appeared and are highly competent, and some are outstanding (see Block on Judges and Ruth for instance). MS★★★★

****New Century Bible (NCB).* Ed. R. E. Clements (Old Testament). Sheffield.**

The New Century Bible is a predominantly British project based on the RSV. Many of the volumes seem restricted by the format. As a series, it is weak. There are, however, some very fine volumes. The volumes range from moderately critical to heavily critical. LM★★

***New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (NIBCOT).** Ed. R. L. Hubbard Jr. and R. Johnston. Hendrickson/Paternoster.

See under Understanding the Bible Commentary Series.

***New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT).** Ed. R. L. Hubbard Jr. Eerdmans.

This series was originally begun in the 1950s under E. J. Young's editorship but was stalled after the editor produced his three-volume Isaiah commentary. Young's commentary has since been removed. The series is evangelical and scholarly but written in a way that laypeople can understand. Technical issues as well as theological commentary are found in these commentaries. R. Hubbard has taken over since the death of R. K. Harrison. MS★★★★

***New International Version Application Commentary (NIVAC).** Ed. A. Dearman, R. L. Hubbard Jr., T. Longman III, and J. H. Walton. Zondervan/Hodder & Stoughton.

NIVAC comments on each unit under three topics: original meaning, bridging contexts, and contemporary significance. Excellent for the preacher. LM★★★★

New Interpreter's Bible (NIB). Ed. L. E. Keck et al. Abingdon.

This series replaces the long-honored original *Interpreter's Bible* that was produced in the 1950s. The format is a cross between a set and individual book commentaries. The Old Testament is covered in six volumes. The commentary has two sections: a more technical exegetical section and an expository section. A diversity of theological viewpoints is represented, but whether evangelical or not, all the contributors seem committed to the theological authority of the text. LM★★★

***Old Testament Library (OTL).** Ed. P. R. Ackroyd et al. Westminster John Knox/SCM.

This is a distinguished collection of commentaries written in the critical tradition. Many, but not all, are translations of earlier German works. OTL includes, besides the commentaries, Eichrodt's *Theology*, Beyerlin's study of related ancient Near Eastern texts, and Soggin's history. MS★★★

Old Testament Message (OTM). Ed. C. Stuhlmuehler and M. McNamara. Michael Glazier.

OTM is planned to be a twenty-three-volume set, geared for lay-people. While each volume is written by a Catholic scholar, it is hoped by the editors that the appeal will be much broader. The method is moderately critical with a premium on clarity, theology, and relevance. LM★★★

The Preacher's Commentary (PC). Nelson.

First known as the Communicator's Commentary and then as Mastering the Old Testament, Thomas Nelson now publishes it as the Preacher's Commentary. This energetic commentary is directed toward pastors and other Christian leaders who teach. For the most part, the volumes meet their intended goal and are backed by solid scholarship. The volumes are very readable. LM★★★

Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary (SHBC). Smyth and Helwys.

SHBC is a very user-friendly commentary series. It even comes with a CD-ROM. The contributions so far come from scholars who can be described as moderately critical and theologically sensitive. The series has some excellent contributions (Brueggemann on Kings; Fretheim on Jeremiah) and some that are not helpful at all (Biddle on Deuteronomy). The biggest problem with this series is the price of the volumes. LM★★

Torch Bible Commentaries (TBC). Ed. J. Marsh, A. Richardson, and R. G. Smith. SCM.

This series is very similar in intent, scope, and approach to the Cambridge Bible Commentaries. The contributors were asked to make the results of modern scholarship accessible to educated laypeople within the church. Two notable contributions include J. H. Eaton on Psalms and C. R. North on Isaiah 40–55. The commentary is based on the Authorized Version. LM★★★

Two Horizons Old Testament Commentaries (THOTC). Eerdmans.

Like the Brazos series (see above), this series intends to feed the interest in theological exegesis, but this series, in my opinion, does a much better job of it. Written primarily by biblical scholars, there is rich and illuminating interest in the biblical text itself. The one exception is the Joshua volume which was half written by a theologian, and that half is problematic. The first half of each volume is an exposition of the text, and the second half a lengthy and interesting theological reflection. MS★★★★

***Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC).** Ed. D. J. Wiseman. InterVarsity.

These commentaries are authored by respected English, South African, Australian, Irish, and American evangelical scholars. They are in the main directed toward a nonspecialist audience. They emphasize exegesis. They are brief, but usually informative. The second generation TOTC commentaries are beginning to appear with David Firth as main editor and me as consulting editor. Over the next ten or so years new volumes will appear for every book. The first volume on Deuteronomy by Woods has been published and is reviewed in this volume. LM★★★★

***Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (UBCS).** Ed. R. L. Hubbard Jr. and R. Johnston. Baker Books.

This series is committed to what the editors call “believing criticism,” which tries to navigate between a kind of criticism that never

gets to the meaning of the final form of the text and a theological dogmatism. Previously published as New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (NIBCOT). LM★★★★

***Word Biblical Commentary (WBC).** Ed. J. D. W. Watts (Old Testament). Nelson/Paternoster.

These commentaries are written by evangelicals identified in the preface as those committed “to Scripture as divine revelation, and to the truth and power of the Christian gospel.” This definition allows for the wide-ranging approaches to the Bible found in the series. Not everyone will be satisfied that a given commentary is evangelical in its theological orientation, although most of the volumes clearly are. These commentaries are very learned and provide their own translation with philological, textual, and literary notes. Theological message is also treated, but, with a few exceptions, these theological comments rarely bridge the gap to the New Testament. MS★★★★

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary. Ed. J. H. Walton. Zondervan.

This wonderful resource (for reasons of disclosure, I should mention that I did Proverbs) speaks exclusively about the cultural background of the various Old Testament books. Beautifully illustrated, the commentary comes in five volumes. The contributors are experts in the Old Testament and the ancient Near East and are all evangelicals. LM★★★★