

INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE with CD-ROM by John J. Collins 2004. Fortress Press, P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209 trade paper xii+613 pages ISBN 0-8006-2991-4 www.fortresspress.com.

Tracing its history from Benedict Spinoza to today, Alan Levenson explores the factors that shaped what is the modern Jewish Bible and its centrality in Jewish life today. *The Making of the Modern Jewish Bible* explains how Jewish translators, commentators, and scholars made the Bible a keystone of Jewish life in Germany, Israel, and America. Levenson argues that German Jews created a religious Bible, Israeli Jews a national Bible, and American Jews an ethnic one. At each site, scholars wrestled with the demands of the non-Jewish environment and their own indigenous traditions, trying to balance fidelity and independence from the commentaries of the rabbinic and medieval world. The ten chapters of this scholarly volume, yet one that is easily accessible to the non-scholar, is divided into three parts: (1) The Emergence of Modern Jewish Bible Studies in Germany; (2) Zionism and the Creation of a National Bible; and (3) The Flowering of Jewish Bible Studies in North America. It examines in depth the documentary hypothesis of the nineteenth century, and the influence of Luther's and other Christian translations. Bible collectors will find interesting and useful information about American translations by such best-selling American Jewish commentators and translators as Robert Alter, Harold Bloom, and David Rosenberg. Abigail Gillman, Boston University, writes: "Levenson's accessible study of the creative forces of biblical translation and scholarship in Germany, Israel, and twenty-first century America argues that the Bible continues to be the indispensable point of entry into classical Jewish learning."

Used primarily as an introductory textbook, John Collins' volume will also have great usefulness and interest to all students of the Bible and to Bible collectors. The twenty-nine chapters are divided into four parts: (1) The Torah/Pentateuch. (2) The Deuteronomistic History, (3) Prophecy; and (4) The Writings. The twenty black-and-white illustrations are placed together at the center of the book and include The Cyrus Cylinder; King Darius seated on his throne; Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found; and a model of Herod's temple. Because the book is designed for the non-scholar and student, instead of a bibliography and footnotes, each chapter has a list of selected books for further reading that the author finds most useful. Although there is no index, there is a very helpful seven-page Glossary. Alan T. Levenson is the Schusterman/Josey Professor of Jewish Intellectual and Religious History at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of several books, including *Modern Jewish Thinkers: An Introduction*. John J. Collins is the Holmes Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale University (New Haven). His many publications include *Daniel* (Hermeneia,

1993), and *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1997). His many roles include being a past president of the Society of Biblical Literature.

PROVOKING THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: A Storyteller's Commentary Year C by Richard W. Swanson 2006. The Pilgrim Press, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100 \$35.00 hardcover 367 pp. ISBN 0-8298-1689-5 www.thepilgrimpress.com.

The appendix of this second book in the *Provoking the Gospel* storytelling commentary series contains the author's own translation of the Gospel of Luke. This feature alone will appeal to Bible collectors as well as students of the Gospel of Luke. The book is composed of three chapters plus an index that identifies the location of each text in the cycle established by the Revised Common Lectionary. It also includes a companion DVD with illustrations of the process of script analysis and the performance that lies behind this way of storytelling. Representative examples of translation are chapter 1:1-3: "Whereas many put their hand to set in order a plotted narrative about the matters brought to completion among us, / just as they handed over to us, those who became from the outset eyewitnesses and towers of the argument, / so also it seemed good to me, since I had understood from above all things sharply, an orderly narrative to you to write, mighty Theophilus (God lover)." And this, the last eight verses of the Gospel: "Then he opened their minds to understand the writings. / He said to them: It stands written: The meshiach suffers and rises out of the corpses in the third day. / It is proclaimed, on his name, change-of-mind and release of sins into all the Gentiles. You begin from Jerusalem. / You are witnesses of this. / Look: I, I send the promise of my father on you. You, you sit in the city until when you are clothed in power out of the heights. / He led them out, up toward Bethany; he lifted his hands; he blessed them. / It happened: As he blessed them, he separated from them; he was being carried up into heaven. / They worshipped him; they returned into Jerusalem with great joy. / They were through all times in the Temple. They blessed Elohim."

The first two chapters give background and importance of storytelling. The remaining chapters are "storytelling" commentary. The author compares the Gospel of Mark, the first in this commentary series, with Luke, this way: "Luke is different. The language is smooth and flowing, the episodes are longer, the complexes of scenes are more clearly complexes and not snatched handfuls. The whole thing seems to be, well, more whole."

Dr. David Trobisch of Bangor Theological Seminary, gives this evaluation of the book: "Richard Swanson has delivered an invaluable guide for the story teller, full of helpful suggestions on how to unlock the subtext to the story, how to understand and bring to life the perspectives of the different characters, and most of all how to place and embed the story firmly in the Jewish context of the time