

**Study Guide for *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* and
A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible by John J. Collins**

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Note: Since most commentary titles are simply the title of the biblical book, the form for most commentaries in a series is as follows: author, series, and date. I have spelled out the titles of commentaries that are not in a series. Commentaries that cover multiple biblical books (e.g., Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, BerO, 2000) are listed under each book they treat.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>Bib Int</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica (Old Testament series)
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ITC	International Theological Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LXX	Septuagint (Greek version)
MT	Masoretic text
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NIB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OEANE	<i>Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> . Edited by E. M. Meyers. 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997
OTL	Old Testament Library
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	SBL Early Jewish Literature Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLWAW	SBL Writings from the Ancient World
VTE	Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

Introduction

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How does the Protestant Old Testament differ from the Hebrew Bible?
2. How does the Catholic Old Testament differ from the Protestant canon?
3. What are Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Deuterocanonical books, and the Septuagint (LXX)?
4. What are the oldest manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible?
5. Why is the Greek translation important for the text of the Hebrew Bible?
6. What new light has been shed on the formation of the Hebrew Bible by the Dead Sea Scrolls?
7. According to the Bible's own chronology, when did the Exodus take place?
8. Why is the Bible's own chronology regarded as problematic?
9. According to modern scholars, when was the Torah or Pentateuch completed?
10. When did the canon of the Hebrew Bible take shape?
11. What is form criticism? Redaction criticism?

One-Volume Commentaries

Barton, John, and John Muddiman, editors. *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001.

Brown, Raymond E., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, editors. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1990.

Dunn, James D. G., and John Rogerson, editors. *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Farmer, William R., editor. *The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1998.

Mays, James L., editor. *The HarperCollins Bible Commentary*. Rev. ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000.

Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe, editors. *Women's Bible Commentary*. Expanded edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998.

Online Resources

iTanakh (R. Christopher Heard)—an index of internet resources for the study of the Hebrew Bible

<http://www.itanakh.org/>

Old Testament Gateway—an annotated academic directory to websites on the Old Testament

<http://otgateway.com/>

Chapter 1. The Near Eastern Context

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Who were the Sumerians?
2. What is Akkadian? Ugaritic?
3. For what was Hammurabi famous? When did he live?
4. When were the Egyptian pyramids built?
5. What are the Amarna letters?
6. Who was Akhenaten? When did he live?
7. Identify: Atrahasis, Tiamat, Enkidu, Utnapishtim.
8. How does the myth Enuma Elish relate to the political order in the ancient Near East?
9. What are the main episodes in the cycle of myths relating to the Canaanite god Baal? How might they be explained?
10. In what ways did Egyptian accounts of creation differ from those of Mesopotamia?

Online Resources

ETANA—guide to resources on the ancient Near East <http://www.etana.org/>

Ancient Near Eastern Maps (Oriental Institute)

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/computer-laboratory/oriental-institute-map-series>

The Old Testament and the Ancient Near East (Ralph W. Klein)

<http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/>

Websites Relating to the Ancient Near Eastern World (K.C. Hanson)

<http://www.kchanson.com/LINKS/ancweb.html>

Chapter 2. The Nature of the Pentateuchal Narrative

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why do scholars distinguish different sources in the Pentateuch?
2. What are the major identifying characteristics of the J source? Of the E source?
3. What is the profile of the P source? Of D?
4. What is the importance of the reform of King Josiah in 621 B.C.E. for dating the sources of the Pentateuch?
5. What are some current criticisms of the documentary hypothesis?

Chapter 3. The Primeval History

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What are the main similarities and differences between the Atrahasis myth and Genesis 1–11?
2. In what ways does the story of Gilgamesh shed light on the story of Adam and Eve?
3. How should we understand the role of the serpent in the story of Adam and Eve?
4. Does the story of Adam and Eve imply a doctrine of original sin? Does it imply that women should be subordinate to men?
5. In what ways does the flood story in Genesis differ from other flood stories of the ancient Near East?
6. What are the main differences between the Priestly account of creation in Genesis 1 and the Yahwist (J) account in Genesis 2–3?
7. What are the main themes that run through the primeval history (Genesis 1–11) in the Yahwist source?

Commentaries

Alter, Robert. *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. 1996.

Brueggemann, Walter. NIB 1. 1994.

Cotter, David W. BerO. 2003.

Fox, Everett. SB 1. 1995.

Hamilton, Victor P. 2 vols. NICOT. 1990, 1995.

Janzen, J. Gerald. ITC. 1993.

Sarna, Nahum M. JPSTC. 1989.

Wenham, Gordon G. 2 vols. WBC 1, 2. 1987, 1994

Westermann, Claus. CC. 1984.

Chapter 4. The Patriarchs

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What dates are implied for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the Bible's internal chronology? Why are these dates problematic?
2. What was the contribution of Hermann Gunkel to the understanding of the patriarchal stories?
3. How does the religion of the patriarchs differ from the religion of Israel as it is described in later books such as Deuteronomy?
4. Discuss the role of deception in the stories of Abraham and Jacob. How would you address the ethical problems presented by these stories?
5. How would you address the ethical problem presented by the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22?
6. What purposes are served by the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38?
7. What are the main themes in the Joseph story? What function does this story fill in the unfolding story of Israel?

Commentaries

Alter, Robert. *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. 1996.

Brueggemann, Walter. NIB 1. 1994.

Cotter, David W. BerO. 2003.

Fox, Everett. SB 1. 1995.

Hamilton, Victor P. 2 vols. NICOT. 1990, 1995.

Janzen, J. Gerald. ITC. 1993.

Sarna, Nahum M. JPSTC. 1989.

Wenham, Gordon G. 2 vols. WBC 1, 2. 1987, 1994

Westermann, Claus. 2 vols. CC. 1985, 1986.

Chapter 5. The Exodus from Egypt

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What evidence is there for an exodus of Hebrews out of Egypt in the latter part of the second millennium B.C.E.?
2. Who were the Hyksos?
3. How does archaeological evidence support the biblical story of the Exodus, or put it in question?
4. What is the genre of the narratives in Exodus 1–18? What are the problems in using them as historical sources?
5. What are the oldest traditions that relate the God YHWH to Mount Sinai? What can we learn from them about the early religion of Israel?
6. How do you understand the encounter between Moses and YHWH at the burning bush?
7. How do you understand the story of the crossing of the sea? Can the poem in Exodus 15 be used as an historical source?
8. Why is God regarded as a warrior in Exodus?

Commentaries

- Coats, George W. FOTL 2A. 1999.
Durham, John I. WBC 3. 1987.
Fox, Everett. SB 1. 1995.
Fretheim, Terence E. IBC. 1991.
Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. NIB 1. 1994.
Meyers, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 2005
Propp, William H. C. AB 2. 1999, 2006.
Sarna, Nahum M. JPSTC. 1991.

Chapter 6. The Revelation at Sinai

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why are Hittite treaties important for understanding the Mosaic covenant?
2. How do you understand the development of monotheism in Israel? What evidence is there for the worship of the goddess Asherah?
3. What is the difference between apodictic and casuistic law?
4. What is the Book of the Covenant? When is it likely to have originated?
5. What is the attitude to slavery in the laws of Exodus? To adultery?
6. Is biblical law relevant to modern discussions of the death penalty?
7. What are the major festivals in the cultic calendar of Exodus? What well-known biblical festivals are missing from this calendar?

Chapter 7. The Priestly Theology: Exodus 25–40, Leviticus, and Numbers

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Where can the Priestly source be identified? What are the distinguishing characteristics?
2. What is the Holiness Code (H)? How does it differ from P?
3. What is the importance of the Tabernacle in the Priestly account of early Israel?
4. What kinds of sacrifices are distinguished in Leviticus? What are their various functions?
5. How do you understand the ritual for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16?
6. What is the relation between Priests and Levites in the Priestly source?
7. What is the importance of purity in the Priestly theology?
8. What is the relation between moral issues and ritual purity in the Holiness Code?
9. How does the Priestly calendar differ from the calendar in the Book of the Covenant?
10. How do you address the ethical issues raised by the story of Phinehas in Numbers 25?

Online Resources

Klein, Ralph W. "Back to the Future: The Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus."

Interpretation

<http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/Tabint.htm>

Commentaries

EXODUS

Propp, William H. C. AB 2A, 2006.

LEVITICUS

Fox, Everett. SB 1. 1995.

Fretheim, Terence E. NIB 1. 1994.

Gerstenberger, Erhard S. OTL. 1996.

Hartley, John E. WBC 4. 1992.

Levine, Baruch A. JPSTC. 1989.

Milgrom, Jacob. 3 vols. AB 3, 3A, 3B. 1991, 2000, 2001.

Milgrom, Jacob. CC. 2004.

Sherwood, Steven K. BerO. 2001.

NUMBERS

Ashley, Timothy R. NICOT. 1993. Budd, Philip J. WBC 5. 1984.

Dozeman, Thomas B. NIB 2. 1998.

Fox, Everett. SB 1. 1995.

Levine, Baruch A. 2 vols. AB 4, 4A. 1993, 2000.

Milgrom, Jacob. JPSTC. 1990.

Sakenfeld, Katherine Doob. ITC. 1995.

Sherwood, Steven K. BerO. 2001.

Chapter 8. Deuteronomy

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What is the structure of the book of Deuteronomy?
2. What light is shed on Deuteronomy by ancient Near Eastern treaties?
3. What are the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon?
4. How does the book of Deuteronomy relate to the reforms of King Josiah?
5. In what ways did the centralization of the cult change the religion of ancient Israel?
6. In what ways do the laws of Deuteronomy differ from those of the Book of the Covenant?
7. In what ways does the cultic calendar of Deuteronomy differ from other cultic calendars in the Pentateuch?
8. What is the role of prophets according to Deuteronomy?
9. What is the role of the king in Deuteronomy?
10. What is the relation of Deuteronomy to the wisdom tradition?
11. Who were the likely authors of Deuteronomy?
12. What are the main arguments for the relative priority of P and D? How do you assess them?

Commentaries

Christiansen, Duane L. WBC 6A. 1991.

Clements, Ronald E. NIB 2. 1998.

Fox, Everett. SB 1. 1995.

Miller, Patrick D. IBC. 1990.

Sherwood, Steven K. BerO. 2001.

Tigay, Jeffrey H. JPSTC. 1996.

Weinfeld, Moshe. AB 5. 1991.

Chapter 9. Joshua

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What is the Deuteronomistic History? What are its unifying themes?
2. What is the archeological evidence for the origin of Israel in Canaan?
3. What archeological evidence is there for the conquest described in the book of Joshua?
4. What different models for the origin of Israel have been proposed in modern scholarship? How do you assess them?
5. What is the importance of the Amarna letters for discussions of the origin of Israel?
6. What is the understanding of holy war in Joshua?
7. What is the understanding of holy war in Joshua?
8. How do you understand the story of the destruction of Jericho?
9. What is the herem or ban? What historical evidence is there for such a practice?
10. How do you address the moral problem of the commands to slaughter the Canaanites?

Commentaries

- Butler, Trent C. WBC 7. 1983.
Coote, Robert B. NIB 2. 1998.
Hawk, L. Daniel. BerO. 2000.
Nelson, Richard D. OTL. 1997

Chapter 10. Judges

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How does the picture of early Israel found in Judges relate to the story of the conquest in Joshua?
2. How does Israel appear to be organized in the period of the Judges?
3. In what ways has the Deuteronomistic editor shaped the stories of the Judges?
4. For what traits are the judges praised?
5. How do you address the ethical problems presented by such stories as the killing of Sisera by Jael, or the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter?
6. What attitudes toward kingship do we find in the stories in Judges?
7. Why is the story of Samson included in the canonical scriptures?

Commentaries

Brettler, Marc Zvi. OTR. 2002.

McCann, J. Clinton. IBC. 2002.

Olson, Dennis T. NIB 2. 1998.

Schneider, Tammi J. BerO. 2000.

Chapter 11. 1 Samuel

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What attitudes toward kingship do we find in 1 Samuel? How do you account for the variation among them?
2. How is Samuel portrayed in 1 Samuel? How does his role relate to that of the judges? To that of later prophets?
3. What is the significance of the story of the capture of the ark?
4. How do you understand the relationship between Saul and Samuel?
5. What purposes are served by the various accounts of the emergence of David?
6. How do you understand the relationship between David and Saul? Between David and Jonathan?
7. How do you address the ethical issues raised by David's early career as an outlaw and mercenary?

Commentaries

- Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel*. 1999.
- Anderson, A. A. WBC 11. 1989.
- Birch, Bruce C. NIB 2. 1998.
- Brueggemann, Walter. IBC. 1990.
- Campbell, Antony F. FOTL 7. 2003.
- Cartledge, Tony W. SHBC. 2001.
- Fox, Everett. *Give Us A King! Samuel, Saul, and David: A New Translation of Samuel I and II*. 1999.
- Jobling, David. BerO. 1998.
- Klein, Ralph W. WBC 10. 1983.

Chapter 12. 2 Samuel

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What steps does David take to consolidate his position as king? What ethical issues are raised by his actions?
2. What role does the Deuteronomistic editor play in shaping the books of Samuel?
3. How do you understand the promise to David? How does it relate to the Mosaic covenant? To the theology of the Deuteronomistic history?
4. What is the role of the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel?
5. What is the royal ideology of Judah? Where is it attested?
6. What is the relation of the Davidic king to God in the royal ideology?
7. What is the importance of the promise to David, and of the royal ideology, for later Judaism and Christianity?
8. How do you address the ethical problem presented by David's affair with Bathsheba?
9. How do you understand the succession narrative? How does it portray David?

Online Resources

Hanson, K. C. "When the King Crosses the Line: Royal Deviance in Levantine Ideologies." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 26 (1996) 11–25.
<http://www.kchanson.com/ARTICLES/king.html>

Commentaries

- Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel*. 1999.
- Anderson, A. A. WBC 11. 1989.
- Birch, Bruce C. NIB 2. 1998.
- Brueggemann, Walter. IBC. 1990.
- Campbell, Antony F. FOTL. 2003.
- Cartledge, Tony W. SHBC. 2001.
- Fox, Everett. *Give Us A King! Samuel, Saul, and David: A New Translation of Samuel I and II*. 1999.
- Jobling, David. BerO. 1998.
- Klein, Ralph W. WBC 10. 1983.

Chapter 13. 1 Kings 1–16: Solomon and the Divided Monarchy

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How are the books of Kings shaped by the Deuteronomistic editors?
2. What is the nature of David's deathbed advice to Solomon?
3. What are presented as the main accomplishments of King Solomon?
4. How do modern historians assess the reign of Solomon?
5. What is the character of Solomon's wisdom?
6. What is the role of the temple in the religion of Judah, according to the Psalms?
According to 1 Kings?
7. What factors led to the division between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah?
8. How are the actions of Jeroboam in setting up sanctuaries in northern Israel portrayed in 1 Kings? How do you assess them?

Online Resources

Gezer Calendar (tenth century B.C.E.; Israelite)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/gezer.html>

Commentaries

- Brueggemann, Walter. SHBC. 2000.
Cogan, Mordechai. AB 10. 2001.
Cogan, Mordechai, and Hayim Tadmor. AB 11. 1988.
Cohn, Robert L. BerO. 2000.
De Vries, Simon J. WBC 12. 1985.
Fritz, Volkmar. CC. 2003.
Hobbs, T. R. WBC 13. 1985
Long, Burke O. FOTL 10. 1991.
Nelson, Richard D. IBC. 1987.
Seow, Choon-Leong. NIB 3. 1999.
Walsh, Jerome T. BerO. 1996.

Chapter 14. 1 Kings 12—2 Kings 25: Tales of Prophets and the End of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What picture do we get of the working of prophecy in Israel from the story of Micaiah ben Imlah in 1 Kings 22?
2. What historical value can be attributed to the stories of Elijah and Elisha?
3. In what ways do the stories about Elijah symbolize the conflict between YHWH and Baal?
4. How do you evaluate the action of Elijah in killing the prophets of Baal?
5. What is the function of the story of Elijah's journey to Mt. Horeb in 1 Kings 19?
6. What is the function of the story of Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings 21?
7. Compare and contrast the stories about Elisha with those about Elijah.
8. What ethical issues are presented by the story of Jehu's coup?
9. What extra-biblical evidence do we have for the end of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah?
10. How is the end of these kingdoms evaluated in 2 King?

Online Resources

Sennacherib Prism (c. 689 B.C.E.; Neo-Babylonian)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/meso/sennprism1.html>

Tel Dan Inscription (ninth to eighth century B.C.E.; Galilee)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/teldan.html>

Commentaries

- Brueggemann, Walter. SHBC. 2000.
Cogan, Mordechai. AB 10. 2001.
Cogan, Mordechai, and Hayim Tadmor. AB 11. 1988.
Cohn, Roger L. BerO. 2000.
De Vries, Simon J. WBC 12. 1985.
Fritz, Volkmar. CC. 2003.
Hobbs, T. R. WBC 13. 1985.
Long, Burke O. FOTL 10. 1991.
Nelson, Richard D. IBC. 1987.
Seow, Choon-Leong. NIB 3. 1999.
Walsh, Jerome T. BerO. 1996.

Chapter 15. Amos and Hosea

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What evidence do we have for the phenomenon of prophecy in the ancient Near East outside of Israel and Judah?
2. What do we know about prophecy in Israel before the eighth century B.C.E.?
3. What evidence is provided by the Book of Amos about the career of the prophet?
4. How does Amos use the convention of oracles against other nations?
5. How does Amos use the tradition of the Exodus?
6. What is the attitude of Amos toward the sacrificial cult?
7. In what ways has the Book of Amos been shaped by a redactor?
8. How do you understand the accounts of Hosea's marriage to Gomer?
9. How is the religion of northern Israel depicted in the Book of Hosea?
10. How is YHWH's relationship with Israel depicted in the Book of Hosea?
11. In what ways was the Book of Hosea shaped by a Judean editor?

Online Resources

Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (ninth century B.C.E.; Assyrian)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/meso/obelisk.html>

Mesha Stele (ninth century B.C.E.; Moabite)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/mesha.html>

Winged Spirit Pollinating Date Palm (ninth century B.C.E. Assyrian)—Alice Ritari
<http://www.kchanson.com/PHOTOS/wingedspirit.html>

Commentaries

AMOS

Andersen, Francis I., and David Noel Freedman. AB 24A. 1989.

Coggins, R. J. NCBC. 2000.

Jeremias, Jörg. OTL. 1998.

Paul, Shalom M. Hermeneia. 1991.

Stuart, Douglas. WBC 31. 1987.

Sweeney, Marvin A. BerO. 2000.

Wolff, Hans Walter. Hermeneia. 1977.

HOSEA

Stuart, Douglas. WBC 31. 1987.

Sweeney, Marvin A. BerO. 2000.

Wolff, Hans Walter. Hermeneia. 1974.

Chapter 16. Isaiah

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How much of the Book of Isaiah can be attributed to the eighth-century prophet?
2. How is the role of the prophet depicted in the call vision in Isaiah 6?
3. How do you understand Isaiah's prophecy to Ahaz in Isaiah 7?
4. What role do the promise to David and the royal ideology play in the theology of Isaiah?
5. How do you understand the oracles about the future of the kingship in Isaiah 9 and 11?
6. What advice did Isaiah give King Hezekiah in the context of the invasion of Sennacherib?

Online Resources

Siloam Inscription (late eighth century B.C.E.; Jerusalem)—K. C. Hanson

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/siloam.html>

Widow's Petition Ostrakon (ninth to seventh century B.C.E.; Israelite)—K. C. Hanson

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/petition.html>

Commentaries

ISAIAH 1–66

Childs, Brevard S. OTL. 2001.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. AB 19. 2000.

Oswalt, John N. NICOT. 1986.

Sweeney, Marvin A. FOTL 16. 1996.

Tucker, Gene M. NIB 6. 2001.

Watts, John D. W. 2 vols. WBC 24, 25. 1985, 1987.

Wildberger, Hans. CC. 3 vols. 1991, 1997, 2002.

Chapter 17. The Babylonian Era: Jeremiah and Lamentations

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the composition of the Book of Jeremiah?
2. Compare and contrast the call of Jeremiah with those of Isaiah and Ezekiel.
3. How does the Book of Jeremiah relate to the Deuteronomistic reform?
4. What is Jeremiah's attitude to the kingship?
5. How does Jeremiah relate to prophets who took opposing positions?
6. What is the attitude to Babylonian rule in the Book of Jeremiah?
7. What hope for the future is there in the Book of Jeremiah?
8. How do you understand the confessions of Jeremiah and their depiction of the role of the prophet?
9. How do you understand the literary structure of Lamentations?
10. How might Lamentations have functioned in antiquity?
11. What value can be found in Lamentations for today?

Online Resources

Byt Yhwh Inscription (ninth to seventh century B.C.E.)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/bytyhwh.html>

Ekron Inscription (seventh century B.C.E.)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/ekron.html>

Nabopolassar Cylinder (seventh century B.C.E.; Neo-Babylonian)—Carlos Museum
<http://carlos.emory.edu/COLLECTION/NEAREAST/neareast01.html>

Yavneh-Yam Inscription (seventh century B.C.E.; Judahite)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/yavneh.html>

Commentaries

JEREMIAH

Brueggemann, Walter. 2 vols. ITC. 1988, 1991. Carroll, Robert P. OTL. 1986.

Craigie, Peter C. et al. WBC 26. 1991. Fretheim, Terence E. SHBC. 2002.

Holladay, William L. 2 vols. Hermeneia. 1986, 1989. Keown, Gerald L. et al. WBC 27. 1995.

King, P. J. *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Companion*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.

Lundbom, Jack R. AB 21A. 1999. McKane, William. 2 vols. ICC. 1986, 1996.

Miller, Patrick D. NIB 7. 2001.

LAMENTATIONS

Berlin, Adele. OTL. 2002. Gerstenberger, Erhard S. FOTL 15. 2001.

O'Connor, Kathleen M. NIB 6. 2001. Provan, Iain W. NCBC. 1991.

Chapter 18. Ezekiel

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the structure of the Book of Ezekiel?
2. Compare and contrast the call vision of Ezekiel with those of Isaiah and Jeremiah.
3. How do you understand the use of symbolic actions by Ezekiel?
4. How does Ezekiel understand the destruction of Jerusalem?
5. How is Jerusalem depicted in the Book of Ezekiel?
6. What is Ezekiel's view of individual, as opposed to collective, responsibility?
7. What is his view of the kingship?
8. In what ways is Ezekiel indebted to the Priestly tradition?
9. What is his view of the future?
10. What values are upheld in his vision of the restoration of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 40–48?

Online Resources

Ralph W. Klein. "Faithful and Free: Ezekiel's Response to the Exile." In *Israel in Exile. Overtures to Biblical Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

<http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/faithful.htm>

Ishtar Gate (sixth century B.C.E.; Neo-Babylonian)—K. C. Hanson

<http://www.kchanson.com/PHOTOS/ishtargate.html>

Lion Figure from the Ishtar Gate (sixth century B.C.E.; Neo-Babylonian)—K. C. Hanson

<http://www.kchanson.com/PHOTOS/gatedetail1.html>

Commentaries

EZEKIEL

Allen, Leslie C. WBC 29. 1990.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. IBC. 1990.

Block, Daniel Isaac. 2 vols. NICOT. 1997. Brownlee, William H. WBC 28. 1986.

Darr, Kathryn Pfisterer. NIB 6. 2001

Hals, Ronald M. FOTL 19. 1989.

Chapter 19. The Additions to the Book of Isaiah

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the formation of the Book of Isaiah?
2. What is the role of the Persian king Cyrus in Second Isaiah?
3. How does Second Isaiah use the theme of the new exodus?
4. How do you understand the figure of the suffering servant in Second Isaiah?
5. How do you understand the critique of idols in Second Isaiah?
6. In what ways does Third Isaiah (Isaiah 56–66) differ from Second Isaiah?
7. What is the attitude of Third Isaiah to the rebuilding of the temple and to the sacrificial cult?
8. What is the vision of the future in Third Isaiah?
9. How are mythological motifs used in Isaiah 24–27?
10. How is death said to be defeated in Isaiah 24–27?
11. In what ways is the entire Book of Isaiah shaped by an editor?

Online Resources

Cyrus Cylinder (sixth century B.C.E.; Persian)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/meso/cyrus.html>

Lachish Letter #3 (sixth century B.C.E.; Judahite)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/lachish3.html>

Commentaries

Baltzer, Klaus. *Hermeneia*. 2001.
Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *AB 19A*. 2002.
Oswalt, John N. *NICOT*. 1998.
Seitz, Christopher R. *NIB 6*. 2001

Chapter 20. Postexilic Prophecy: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Jonah

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What is the historical context of the book of Haggai?
2. What does Haggai see as the role of the temple in the community?
3. In what ways do the prophecies of Zechariah differ from those of earlier prophets?
4. Does Zechariah envision a restoration of the kingship? What is his view of leadership in the restored community?
5. What are the main concerns of the book of Malachi?
6. How do you understand what Malachi has to say about divorce?
7. What is the vision of the future in the Book of Malachi?
8. How do you understand the development of the motif of the Day of the Lord?
9. In what ways is the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets shaped by an editor? What unifying themes run through it?

Online Resources

Ralph W. Klein. "The Day of Yahweh." *Concordia Theological Monthly* 39 (1968) 517–25.

http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/day_of_yahweh.htm

Persepolis and Ancient Iran (Persia; 999 photos)—Oriental Institute

<http://oi-archive.uchicago.edu/museum/collections/pa/persepolis/>

Commentaries

HAGGAI

Floyd, Michael H. *FOTL* 22. 2000.

Peterson, David L. *OTL*. 1984.

Smith, Ralph L. *WBC* 32. 1984.

Sweeney, Marvin A. *BerO*. 2000.

Verhoef, Pieter A. *NICOT*. 1987.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *CC*. 1988.

ZECHARIAH

Floyd, Michael H. *FOTL* 22. 2000.

Meyers, Carol L., and Eric M. Meyers. *AB* 25C. 1993.

Peterson, David L. *OTL*. 1984, 1995.

Smith, Ralph L. *WBC* 32. 1984.

Sweeney, Marvin A. *BerO*. 2000.

MALACHI

Floyd, Michael H. *FOTL* 22. 2000.

Hill, Andrew E. *AB* 25D. 1998.

Peterson, David L. *OTL*. 1995.

Smith, Ralph L. *WBC* 32. 1984.

Sweeney, Marvin A. *BerO*. 2000.

Verhoef, Pieter A. *NICOT*. 1987.

JOEL

Barton, John. OTL. 2001.

Coggins, R. J. NCB. 2000.

Crenshaw, James L. AB 24C. 1995.

Stuart, Douglas. WBC 31. 1987.

Sweeney, Marvin A. BerO. 2000.

Chapter 21. Ezra and Nehemiah

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What are the constituent parts of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah? What sources were incorporated?
2. What are the problems in using the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as historical sources?
3. According to the book of Ezra, what problems did the Judeans who returned from exile encounter when they tried to rebuild the temple?
4. What problems did Ezra encounter when he came to Jerusalem, and how did he address them?
5. How do you address the ethical problems presented by the actions of Ezra?
6. What problems did Nehemiah encounter when he came to Jerusalem?
7. What are the arguments for the relative dating of Ezra and Nehemiah?
8. What light do the books of Ezra and Nehemiah shed on the cultic calendar of the Second Temple period?

Online Resources

Cyrus Cylinder (sixth century B.C.E.; Persian)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/meso/cyrus.html>

Passover Letter from Elephantine (c. 419 B.C.E.) —K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/passover.html>

Persepolis and Ancient Iran (Persia; 999 photos)—Oriental Institute
<http://oi-archive.uchicago.edu/museum/collections/pa/persepolis/>

Petition to Authorize Elephantine Temple Reconstruction (c. 407 B.C.E.)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/templeauth.html>

Quit Claim after Divorce from Elephantine (c. 440 B.C.E.)—K. C. Hanson
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/quitclaim.html>

Commentaries

- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. OTL. 1988.
Davies, Gordon F. BerO. 1999.
Klein, Ralph W. NIB 3. 1999.
Throntveit, Mark A. IBC. 1992.
Williamson, H. G. M. WBC 16. 1985.

Chapter 22. The Books of Chronicles

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the structure of the books of Chronicles?
2. What is the importance of the genealogies at the beginning of 1 Chronicles?
3. In what ways does the portrayal of David in 1 Chronicles differ from that in the books of Samuel?
4. How does the portrayal of Solomon differ from the account in 1 Kings?
5. How does Chronicles treat the history of the divided kingdoms?
6. What is the importance of the temple cult and the priesthood in Chronicles?
7. How is Hezekiah portrayed in Chronicles?
8. What is the relationship of Chronicles to Ezra and Nehemiah?
9. What purpose can we ascribe to Chronicles?

Online Resources

Klein, Ralph W. "David: Sinner and Saint in Samuel and Chronicles."

<http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/artwes.htm>

Klein, Ralph W. "Narrative Texts: Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah."

In *Blackwell's Companion to the Bible*

<http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/Narrative.htm>

Commentaries

Allen, Leslie C. NIB 3. 1999.

Braun, Roddy. WBC 14. 1986.

De Vries, Samuel J. FOTL 11. 1989.

Dillard, Raymond B. WBC 15. 1987.

Japhet, Sara. OTL. 1993.

Chapter 23. The Psalms and Song of Songs

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What are the main divisions of the book of Psalms?
2. What are the different kinds of psalms?
3. What understanding of life and death is implied in the psalms of lament?
4. How is the kingship of God portrayed in the Psalms?
5. What is the theology of human kingship in the Psalms?
6. How do you address the ethical problem presented by appeals to God for vengeance?
7. What is the role of the wisdom psalms in the editing of the Psalter?
8. How do you understand the structure of the Song of Songs?
9. What is the significance of the Song of Songs for biblical sexual ethics?

Commentaries

PSALMS

- Allen, Leslie C. WBC 21. 1983.
Clifford, Richard J. AOTC. 2002, 2003.
Craigie, Peter C. WBC 19. 1983.
Gerstenberger, Erhard S. 2 vols. FOTL 14, 15. 1988, 2001.
Kraus, Hans-Joachim. 2 vols. CC. 1988, 1989.
McCann, Clinton. NIB 4. 1996.
Schaefer, Konrad. BerO. 2001.
Tate, Marvin E. WBC 20. 1990

SONG OF SONGS

- Bergant, Dianne. BerO. 2001.
Keel, Othmar. CC. 1994.
Longman, Tremper III. NICOT. 2001.
Murphy, Roland E. Hermeneia. 1990.
Pope, Marvin. AB 7C. 1977.
Weems, Renita J. NIB 5. 1997.

Chapter 24. Proverbs

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What relation does the wisdom tradition as presented in the Book of Proverbs have to Solomon or to later kings of Judah?
2. How do you understand the setting in life of proverbial wisdom?
3. What is the relationship between Israelite wisdom, as found in Proverbs, and Egyptian instructions?
4. How do you understand the composition of the Book of Proverbs?
5. What are the objectives of proverbial wisdom?
6. What kind of ethic does it typically advocate?
7. How do you view the portrayal of women in the Book of Proverbs?
8. In what ways does Proverbs 1–9 differ from the rest of the book?
9. How do you understand the figure of the “strange woman” in Proverbs 7?
10. How do you understand the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8?

Commentaries

Clifford, Richard J. OTL. 1999.

Fox, Michael V. AB 18A. 2000.

McKane, William. *Proverbs: A New Approach*. OTL. 1970.

Murphy, Roland E. WBC 22. 1998.

van Leeuwen, Raymond C. NIB 5. 1997.

Whybray, R. N. NCBC. 1994.

Chapter 25. Job and Qoheleth

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the structure and composition of the Book of Job? Are there secondary additions, and what is the relation between the prologue and the dialogues?
2. What is the role of Satan in the prologue?
3. How do Job's friends explain his situation?
4. How does Job respond to the arguments of his friends?
5. What is the function of the poem in Job 28?
6. How does God address Job's situation from the whirlwind?
7. How does the restoration of Job resolve or not resolve the problems addressed by the book?
8. What is the understanding of death in the Book of Qoheleth?
9. How do you understand the teaching on the right times in Qoheleth 3?
10. What kind of approach to life does Qoheleth advocate?
11. How do the epilogues relate to the rest of the book?

Commentaries

JOB

- Clines, D. J. A. WBC 17. 1989.
Habel, Norman C. OTL. 1985.
Hartley, John E. NICOT. 1988.
Newsom, Carol A. NIB 4. 1996.
Pope, Marvin. AB 15. 1973.

QOHELETH

- Brown, William P. IBC. 2000.
Crenshaw, James L. OTL. 1987.
Longman, Tremper III. NICOT. 1998.
Fox, Michael V. *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes*. 1999.
Krüger, Thomas. Hermeneia. 2004.
Lohfink, Norbert. CC. 2002.
Murphy, Roland E. WBC 23A. 1992.
Seow, C. L. AB 18C. 1997.
Towner, W. Sibley. NIB 5. 1997.
Whybray, R. N. NCBC. 1989.

Chapter 26. The Hebrew Short Story: Ruth, Esther

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What virtues are portrayed in the Book of Ruth?
2. What are the implications of Ruth for relations between Judeans and Gentiles?
3. What is the perspective of the Book of Jonah on Israelite prophecy?
4. What are the implications of Jonah for how we should view Gentiles?
5. What does fidelity to Judaism entail in the Book of Esther?
6. What historical problems are encountered by any attempt to treat the Book of Esther as history?
7. What are the ethical values of the Book of Esther, and how do you assess them?
8. What are the literary conventions of the court tale, or the story about an Israelite or Judean at the court of a foreign king?

Commentaries

RUTH

- Bush, Frederic W. WBC 9. 1996.
Campbell, Edward F. AB 7. 1975.
Farmer, Kathleen A. Robertson. NIB 2. 1998.
Hubbard, Robert L. Jr. NICOT. 1988.
Lacocque, André. CC. 2004.
Linafelt, Tod. BerO. 1999.
Nielsen, Kirsten. OTL. 1997.

JONAH

- Limburg, James. OTL. 1993.
Sasson, Jack M. AB 24B. 1990.
Simon, Uriel. JPSBC. 1999.
Stuart, Douglas. WBC 31. 1987.
Sweeney, Marvin A. BerO. 2000.
Wolff, Hans Walter. CC. 1986.

ESTHER

- Beal, Timothy K. BerO. 1999.
Berlin, Adele. JPSBC. 2001.
Bush, Frederic W. WBC 9. 1996.
Crawford, Sidnie White. NIB 3. 1999.
Levenson, Jon D. OTL. 1997.

Chapter 27. Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the composition of the Book of Daniel?
2. What are the implications of Daniel 1–6 for the way a Judean should live in the Diaspora?
3. What is an apocalypse?
4. How is mythological imagery used in Daniel 7–12?
5. How does Daniel 7–12 differ from earlier biblical prophecy?
6. How do the visions of Daniel address the situation of Jews who were undergoing persecution in the second century B.C.E.?
7. In what ways does the theology of Daniel's visions differ from that of the court tales in chapters 1–6?
8. How is the resurrection of the dead conceived in the Book of Daniel?
9. What were the causes of the Maccabean revolt?
10. In what ways does the account of Maccabean history in 1 Maccabees differ from that of 2 Maccabees?

Commentaries

DANIEL

- Collins, John J. FOTL 20. 1984.
Collins, John J. Hermeneia. 1993.
Goldingay, John E. WBC 30. 1989.
Hartman, Louis F. and Alexander A. DiLella. AB 23. 1978.
Lacocque, André, The Book of Daniel. Atlanta: John Knox, 1979.
Montgomery, James A. ICC. 1927.
Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. NIB. 1996.
Towner, W. Sibley. IBC. 1984.

1 MACCABEES

- Doran, Robert. NIB 4. 1996.
Goldstein, Jonathan A. AB 41. 1976.

2 MACCABEES

- Doran, Robert. NIB 4. 1996.
Goldstein, Jonathan A. AB 41A. 1983.

Chapter 28. The Deuterocanonical Wisdom Books: Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What light does the preface to Ben Sira shed on the formation of the canon?
2. What was Ben Sira's attitude to women?
3. How did Ben Sira understand the relation between wisdom and Torah?
4. How does Ben Sira address the problem of theodicy, or the justice of God?
5. How does Ben Sira see the role of the scribe in Judean society?
6. What are the main themes in his Praise of the Fathers in chapters 44–50?
7. When was the Wisdom of Solomon written?
8. In what ways does it differ from other biblical wisdom books?
9. How does Wisdom make use of Greek philosophy to describe the role of wisdom in the world?
10. What is the understanding of death in the Wisdom of Solomon?

Commentaries

BEN SIRA

Crenshaw, James L. NIB 5. 1997.

Skehan, Patrick W., and Alexander A. DiLella. AB 39. 1987.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Kolarcik, M. NIB 5. 1997.

Winston, David. AB 43. 1979.

BARUCH

Moore, Carey A. AB 44. 1977.

Saldarini, Anthony J. NIB 6. 2001.

Chapter 29. From Tradition to Canon

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How do you understand the formation of the canon?
2. How can such concepts as inspiration and revelation be understood in light of the historical understanding of the scriptures?
3. What do you find to be enduring values in the biblical text?