

# FOR THE STUDENTS: HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to help you get the most out of *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*—to further your understanding of the biblical narrative and to spark your critical thinking about the personalities, themes, and genres of writing in the Bible, and the various ways of interpreting these. Each section of the guide corresponds to a chapter in the book and includes key terms, key figures, primary sources, a summary of the key points of each chapter, and additional readings with close reading tips and questions for discussion and reflection.

Before you begin reading the text, or after reading a chapter to ensure you understood the main ideas, read the *Key Points*. These offer a basic overview of each chapter's major themes and issues.

Also before you read each part, it might be useful to note the *Key Terms* and *Key Personalities* listed in the corresponding section of this guide. These are the headings for a selected list of terms (concepts particular to a biblical book or period, names of important geographical locations, terms important for exegesis or interpretation, etc.) and one of significant individuals. You will want to be at least familiar with these by the time you have finished reading the section. Many of the key terms are listed in the glossary of the textbook as well.

Excerpts from primary sources are included as often as possible, including biblical and extra-biblical sources. The primary source readings in this study companion were selected with the goal of introducing you, by way of the texts themselves, to the important themes in biblical interpretation. They were selected with the hope that through them you will get even a brief glimpse of the richness and complexity of the ancient world. Please consider them an invitation to go further in your explorations of biblical studies.

The *Study Companion* ends with a guide to writing exegetical research papers. In this last chapter you will find a helpful step by step guide, beginning with selecting your text, and ending with polishing your final draft. You will be introduced to a number of methods of text analysis, including: literary criticism, source criticism, form criticism, socio-historical interpretation, and history of interpretation. The guide also includes bibliographies of reference works, commentaries, online resources, and periodical literature, which will all be helpful supplements to your own reading of the text.