

OT introductions abound, but Hess's *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical* introduction clearly stands out as one of the best in terms of its scope and synthesis. Many OT introductions tend to present some, but not all, of the different categories of topics covered by Hess's volume. To my knowledge at least, no modern OT introduction covers as much ground and synthesizes as much material as Hess does in this volume. This alone makes Hess's volume truly unique.

In spite of its vast scope, this book is a joy to read. Hess writes clearly and engagingly and avoids technical jargon, making this an accessible textbook for students regardless of whether or not they have prior knowledge of the OT. Framing each biblical book according to the same four basic categories creates a well-structured presentation of the OT that is easy for students to follow.

Another obvious strength of this volume, indicated above, is Hess's attention to the many different ways in which the OT has been read. The sections on pre-modern readings as well as gender and ideological criticism are especially helpful in that they offer an evangelical assessment of approaches to reading the OT that are probably unfamiliar to most readers. Such an approach situates the OT within a context much broader than the typical OT introduction, which instead tends to frame its presentation of the OT from a Western perspective. Accordingly, Hess's volume is especially appropriate for seminaries that wish to highlight Christianity's global context and rich, diverse heritage.

Thus, Hess's *The Old Testament* would serve well as the primary textbook for a graduate-level introduction to the Hebrew Bible. My only potential concern is that despite its great accessibility otherwise, this volume's length of approximately 700 pages (without bibliography) could be overwhelming for some audiences, particularly students at seminaries that tend to be less academically minded. However, if this is the case, the instructor can simply have the students skim or even skip over sections that may pose difficulty; thus, this potential concern is ultimately of little consequence.

In sum, Hess's *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction* is a truly remarkable introduction to the OT. It surpasses other OT introductions by virtue of its vast scope, and yet it remains accessible and easy to read. I highly recommend it as an introductory textbook for graduate-level study of the OT.

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*How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology.* By Jason S. DeRouchie. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017, xxxv + 583 pp., \$30.00.

Jason DeRouchie's masterful guidebook equips the reader for the interpretation and application of the OT. DeRouchie serves as professor of OT and biblical theology at Bethlehem College and Seminary. His colleague, Andrew Naselli, wrote the NT companion volume, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (P&R, 2017). Portions of DeRouchie's volume were adapted from his journal articles and books, which include his coauthored volume,

*A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Broadman & Holman, 2009), and a volume he edited, *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* (Kregel, 2013).

The front matter includes fifty-five glowing blurbs from Christian leaders. The book divides into five main parts: Text: "What Is the Makeup of the Passage?" (Part 1); Observation: "How Is the Passage Communicated?" (Part 2); Context: "Where Does the Passage Fit?" (Part 3); Meaning: "What Does the Passage Mean?" (Part 4); Application: "Why Does the Passage Matter?" (Part 5).

Each chapter commences with an overview of the contents and a partially-expanded outline of the interpretive process. The chapters discuss the significance of the topic at hand, procedures to follow, and pitfalls to avoid. An array of graphics and wisely-chosen examples, such as Exod 19:4–6, enhance the discussions. In order to accommodate everyone, the discussions are rated according to their level of difficulty: *easy*, for all readers; *moderate*, for intermediate interpreters with or without a knowledge of Hebrew; and *challenging*, for advanced interpreters with some knowledge of Hebrew. Each chapter concludes with a set of lists: key words and concepts, questions for further reflection, and resources for further study. The best resources are marked by a star. The back matter contains an appendix ("The Kingdom Bible Reading Plan"), a glossary, a substantial bibliography (thirty-seven pages), an index of Scripture, and an index of subjects and names.

DeRouchie proposes a twelve-step process for doing exegesis and theology: (1) genre; (2) literary units and text hierarchy; (3) text criticism; (4) translation; (5) clause and text grammar; (6) argument-tracing; (7) word and concept studies; (8) historical context; (9) literary context; (10) biblical theology; (11) systematic theology; and (12) practical theology. As the reader can see, DeRouchie places textual criticism early in the process (Step 3). By comparison, many interpreters postpone textual criticism until near the end of the exegetical process because textual critical decisions depend upon the evaluation of internal evidence (e.g. syntax, rhetorical factors, and lexical data). Early in the process, the practitioner is not yet acquainted with the passage well enough to make an informed textual decision. Moreover, step twelve is labeled "practical theology." We probably ought to retire that term from our Christian curriculum and vocabulary because it gives the impression that biblical theology and systematic theology are not practical. Nowadays, many people roll their eyes when they hear the word *theology* because they perceive it to be impractical and irrelevant. As Christian educators, we are not helping our cause by creating a false distinction. All theology is practical.

To motivate his audience, the author offers ten reasons why the OT is important for Christians (pp. 6–11). He even makes a case that the OT has more relevance for Christians than it did for OT saints (pp. 416–22). In addition, DeRouchie expounds four benefits of original-language study (pp. 11–14). However, he not only affirms that a knowledge of Hebrew benefits interpretation but demonstrates it time and again by providing numerous exegetically significant examples throughout the book. Such examples include the following: (1) a word study of *הַבָּל* ("vanity") in Ecclesiastes (pp. 286–91); (2) a text-critical analysis of Amos 6:12 (pp. 131–33); (3) a grammatical study of the verbless clauses in Deut 6:4 (pp. 214–18); (4) a

study of genre in relation to the interpretation of Prov 22:6 (pp. 89–92); and (5) a study of text blocks in relation to the fivefold (not tenfold) תולדות structure of Genesis (pp. 107–9).

DeRouchie anticipates resistance from his readership on key points, so he provides argumentation that supports his approach to an issue. For instance, he gives seven reasons why the Masoretic Text should be emended cautiously (pp. 147–48), three problems with the threefold division of the law (pp. 436–39), three mistakes to avoid when engaging extrabiblical historical texts (pp. 306–7), and three constraints of published English translations that should prompt exegetes to produce their own translations (p. 165).

Regarding Hebrew verbs, the author emphasizes that context determines the tense of a verb (pp. 192–94). Furthermore, *qatal* verbs portray the action as a whole, whereas *yiqtol* verbs express the action in terms of process (p. 191). In the production of expository outlines, DeRouchie encourages his readers to create message-driven outlines (rather than content-driven outlines) because they better reflect the argument of the passage (p. 267).

Special attention goes to the discovery of the Messiah in the OT: “We want to find Christ, but only where God intends him to be found” (p. 58). In one example, DeRouchie explains how the NT apostles viewed the individual of Psalm 16 as Jesus himself rather than as King David. Concerning the typological reading of the psalm, one must ask, “Is it appropriate to use the term ‘typological’ of a statement that was not true of the ‘type’ itself?” (pp. 72–73 n. 42). The bibliography omits Hengstenberg’s classic, *Christology of the Old Testament* (repr. Kregel, 1956).

Theologically, DeRouchie’s interpretations coincide with progressive covenantalism, a mixture of covenant theology and dispensational theology (cf. pp. 367–68). For him, the first coming of Christ looms large in the fulfillment of OT prophecies: “We must read the Old Testament as Christians and not as though Christ had not come” (p. 366). He believes that some OT prophecies anticipate the church age: “The Prophets in part predict the present age of the church” (p. 60). Concerning Zeph 3:9–10, he states, “I believe that we can see Zephaniah’s prophetic prediction already being fulfilled today in the church of Jesus, even as we the saints await its full realization” (p. 409).

DeRouchie summarizes the message of the Bible in one sentence: “God reigns, saves, and satisfies through covenant for his glory in Christ” (pp. 351–52). He summarizes the Psalter this way: “The Psalms supplanted messianic music to the saints of old—music designed to nurture hope for the coming kingdom” (p. 75).

The author maintains a high view of Scripture. Commendably, he upholds the historicity of Scripture and its uniqueness among other ANE documents (pp. 27, 34–38). He also advocates a “submissive and constructive approach” to Scripture rather than a “critical and destructive approach” (p. 348).

Concerning the dual authorship of Scripture, DeRouchie embraces *sensus plenior* (God’s intent > the human author’s intent) rather than *confluence* (God’s intent = the human author’s intent). As he puts it, “The ultimate divine intent of Old Testament texts (with respect to both sense and referent) may legitimately transcend any given human author’s immediate written speech, while organically

growing out of it and never contradicting it” (p. 362). Further, he states, “The divine authorship of Scripture allows for later texts to clarify, enhance, or deepen the meaning of earlier texts” (p. 367). One’s view on dual authorship carries tremendous implications for how one perceives the relationship of the OT and NT.

A few statements regarding the composition of Scripture could be improved. DeRouchie refers to “the divinely inspired Old Testament authors” (p. 10; cf. p. 417). Technically speaking, God inspired the *writings*, not the *writers*. The writings possess the quality of inspiration (2 Tim 3:16), whereas the writers were moved (superintended) by the Spirit (2 Pet 1:21). Moreover, DeRouchie indicates that the OT was composed within a span of one thousand years, and that the Bible was composed within a span of fifteen hundred years (p. 349). These numbers imply that DeRouchie denies a patriarchal date for the composition of the book of Job.

In DeRouchie’s opinion, the Masoretes placed *superior* readings in the margins of the codices (*qere*) (p. 139). According to other scholars, however, the Masoretes put *spurious* readings in the margins in order to warn future copyists of past errors in transmission. DeRouchie claims that the *ketiv* is pointed with the vowels of the *qere* (p. 139). He also affirms that the Masoretes favored non-messianic readings (pp. 130, 147–48).

Whether or not one agrees with DeRouchie’s interpretive conclusions, this work stands out as the finest book available for instruction in the exegetical methodology of the OT. His guidance is thorough, clear, sophisticated, pedagogically excellent, and worship oriented. DeRouchie’s contribution will no doubt help popularize the study of macrosyntax, a neglected topic in the traditional Hebrew grammars. I enthusiastically recommend the book.

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*Biblical Theology: The God of Christian Scriptures.* By John Goldingay. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016, 608 pp., \$60.00.

John Goldingay is known for many of his writings, particularly for his three-volume work entitled *Old Testament Theology*. In *Biblical Theology: The God of Christian Scriptures*, John Goldingay continues his good work from *Old Testament Theology*, broadening his focus to biblical theology. What he produces is a compelling one-volume biblical theology that covers the overarching picture of Scripture.

From the outset of the work, Goldingay defines clearly what he means by biblical theology. He declares this to be “the understanding of God and the world and life that emerges from these two Testaments” (p. 13). Throughout his volume, Goldingay faithfully develops this definition. His work contains eight chapters all beginning from the perspective of who God is. They are entitled “God’s Person,” “God’s Insight,” “God’s Creation,” “God’s Reign,” “God’s Anointed,” “God’s Children,” “God’s Expectation,” and “God’s Triumph.” He also devotes attention to both the OT and NT through each of the chapters.