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THE GOSPEL COALITION

resolved? This is Qohelet's struggle, and it resonates with any believer in a crisis of faith.
(pp. 125–27)

Hess interprets the Song of Songs as a celebration of sex as a gift of God and draws applications relevant for all believers. For instance, he notes in Song 2:8–3:5 that “the female’s devotion to her lover brings to mind the command to love God with all one’s heart” (p. 108). Longman sees Job as a model righteous sufferer for believers but ultimately of Christ the only true underserving sufferer, who patiently endures suffering under a wise and sovereign God. Longman faithfully interprets Proverbs in its OT context and also shows Christ as the epitome of God’s wisdom and how Christ is associated with lady wisdom of Proverbs.

Bartholomew’s work on Ecclesiastes is masterful, but some might disagree with his understanding of הַבְּלָה, one of the key terms in the book. Bartholomew prefers to translate הַבְּלָה as “enigma” instead of the more common “vanity.” In his opinion, the translation “enigma ... leaves open the possibility of meaning [to life as pictured in Ecclesiastes]—it is just that Qohelet with his autonomous epistemology cannot find it” (pp. 93–94).

Goldingay explains the meaning of each psalm in his Psalms commentaries, but he does not attempt to discuss the significance of the immediate and broader contexts of each. This lack is influenced by the fact that based on his own studies “the Psalter as a whole does not have a structure that helps us get a handle on its contents” (p. 36). Goldingay thus disagrees with scholars such as J. Clinton McCann and Gerald H. Wilson, who posit a careful and coherent arrangement of the Psalter. He prefers the more form critical approach of categorizing the various types of psalms (e.g., praise and lament), which taken together “suggest a structure of spirituality” (p. 37). In spite of Goldingay’s lack of attention to the shape of the whole Psalter, the commentary is rich with insights.

Accordance offers the BCOTWP set for \$299.00, so each volume on average costs approximately \$43, which is slightly less than the cost of the individual books in hardback. Considering the competitive price and the advantages of the Accordance platform, this set is worth the cost.

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WJK Library Bundle: Old Testament Library Commentaries and Companion Volumes and New Testament Library Commentaries and Companion Volumes. 68 vols. Accordance Bible Software. Altamonte Springs, FL: Oaktree Software, Inc., 2017. \$1,726.

Accordance Bible Software has recently released in digital format the 68-volume Westminster John Knox Press Old and New Testament Library Bundle. This vast liberal and semi-technical to technical collection includes the entire Old Testament Library (OTL) Commentary (31 vols) with an additional set of classic commentaries (9 vols) and companion studies (9 vols) and the nearly complete New Testament Library (NTL) Commentary (15 vols, excluding Matthew, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and James) with additional companion studies (4 vols).



Since its origin in the 1960s, the Old Testament Library has become a standard in the field for liberal-critical scholarship, serving both the educated minister and the academic. It began as English

translations from the critical German series *Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, and then it progressed with original English volumes until it covered every Old Testament book, along with a number of corollary topical studies. In 2002, the New Testament Library began, continuing the tradition of thoroughly researched liberal scholarship, and then a number of new and old related studies were added. Perhaps due to my bias or strengths, I think the quality of Old Testament volumes exceeds that of the New.

To varying degrees, all the commentaries in the series provide a fresh translation, critical portrayals of the historical world in which the books arose, attention to literary design, and a theologically perceptive exposition of the biblical text. Nevertheless, because the series bears no stated vision or set structure and includes an array of scholarly critical perspectives and interpretive approaches, the individual commentaries and studies vary greatly in quality, size, and emphases, whether addressing text criticism, grammar and syntax, historical context, literary features, structure, or theology. Some commentators shape their entire volumes around developed theories of hypothetical sources, whereas others focus almost exclusively on a book's final form. Some writers saturate their reflections with historical-cultural backgrounds or socio-scientific research (e.g., anthropology, archaeology) but do little actual work in establishing a book's overall thought-flow and message, whereas others wrestle deeply with literary features, discourse structure, theology, and inner-biblical connections. This disparity within the series, along with its critical bent, naturally makes it varied in its usefulness, especially for evangelical ministers.

This stated, many volumes in the Old Testament Library Commentary stand out for their benefit to evangelical interpreters. Brevard Childs' *Exodus* volume (1974) includes a thorough history of interpretation and remains one of the most exegetically and theologically robust commentaries on the book, attempting to balance critical methods with a final form, canonical interpretation that stretches into the New Testament. Sara Japhet's *1–2 Chronicles* (1993) is exceptional in its careful exegetical analysis and sensitivity to Chronicles as history, usually with conservative conclusions. Adele Berlin's study of *Lamentations* (2002), while never reaching into the New Testament, is among the best available in the way it establishes the book's message by assessing it in light of other ancient Near Eastern literature and by focusing on literary features like metaphor and themes like purity, mourning, repentance, and the Davidic covenant. Two other noteworthy volumes include Jon Levenson's *Esther* (1997), which matches a careful reading of what he believes is a fiction work with a conscious eye toward intertextual connections both inside and outside the Bible, and Childs's *Isaiah* (2000), which is not as thorough as his *Exodus* but focuses on the history of interpretation and a canon-conscious final-form theological message. Where one would expect Childs to address the New Testament's handling of Isaiah, he does, though often viewing it as a radical reinterpretation of the original meaning (e.g., Isa 53). While Gerhard von Rad's *Genesis* (1973) is plagued by a hypothetical reconstruction of sources, it is still useful for its theological, redemptive-historical insights. Marvin Sweeney, while moderately critical, is usually both careful and conservative in his interpretation, and his *1 & 2 Kings* (2007) does not disappoint in its attention to structure, theological agenda, and historical context. Both Richard Clifford on *Proverbs* (1999) and J. J. M. Roberts on *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (1991) are also helpful due to their extensive treatment of text criticism, grammar/philology, and historical background.

In the New Testament Library Commentary, three volumes stand out most. M. Eugene Boring's *Mark* (2006) helpfully focuses on the Gospel's theological agenda including its intentional ending at 16:8, and it includes a number of useful excurses such as kingdom of God, Markan Christology, and the use of Scripture in the Gospel. Frank Matera's moderately-critical *2 Corinthians* (2003) interacts well with secondary literature, affirms Paul's role as a gospel preacher, argues for the letter's unity, and offers

a manageable yet detailed theologically-rich exposition of the text; he fails, however, to see the Mosaic law as standing in the background to Paul's discussion in chapter 3. Luke Timothy Johnson's *Hebrews* (2006) interacts little with contemporary secondary literature but still offers an extended introduction and useful insights in the commentary from Greek grammar, Greco-Roman backgrounds, and the influence of Old Testament quotations and imagery on the author's message.

Along with the contemporary commentaries, the WJK library includes nine classic Old Testament volumes that have now been replaced but that scholars still regularly reference. Strangely missing are Martin Noth's *Exodus* (1962) and *Leviticus* (1965), but helpfully included are Gerhard von Rad's *Deuteronomy* (1966), Claus Westermann's *Isaiah 40–66* (1969), and James Mays's *Amos* (1969) and *Micah* (1976). With these, the series includes numerous supplemental volumes related to introduction, history, theology, and genre analysis. Most noteworthy in OTL are Rainer Albertz's two-volume *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (1994) and Walther Eichrodt's two-volume *Theology of the Old Testament* (1961), both of which are still standards in the field in light of their careful and thoughtful analysis. In NTL one must mention Victor Furnish's balanced and time-tested *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (2009, orig. 1968) and J. Louis Martyn's provocative, paradigm-changing *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed. (2003).

We should not downplay the significance of what Accordance has supplied in giving the WJK Library Bundle in a digital format. First, both the publisher and Amazon only allow you to purchase individual print volumes in the WJK Old and New Testament Libraries, which together take up a massive amount of shelf space and retail at \$4,442.00. In contrast, Accordance lets you access this massive amount of content anywhere on Mac, Windows, iPad, and iPhone, and you can purchase individual volumes, smaller bundles (see above), just the forty-six OTL and NTL commentaries, or all sixty-eight volumes together, the whole of which is 38% of the cost of the print volumes (\$1,726.00). Accordance is portable, flexible, and affordable. Second, Accordance is user-friendly, allowing you to search with lightning speed decades of scholarship and thousands of pages of careful study. A *reference* search takes you directly to the spot where a given commentary addresses your passage of interest. Using the *English content* search, I identified in less than five seconds all 631 instances where "Jesus <OR> Christ" occurs in the thirty-one commentary volumes in the OTL. I also found that the NTL commentaries only rarely cite major evangelical scholars. A *bibliography* search reveals that only the *John* volume cites one of D. A. Carson's authored works, and an *English content* search notes that the commentary mentions him twenty-three times. Only three volumes include authored works by G. K. Beale, but only *Revelation* actually cites him in the body (ninety-five times). Only *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* cite an essay by Thomas R. Schreiner (two times), and not one volume mentions Douglas Moo. N. T. Wright gets broader acknowledgement, showing up in eight volumes around thirty-nine times. Clearly liberal-critical scholars are not too interested in evangelical perspectives. Because the Old and New Testament Libraries use transliteration rather than Hebrew and Greek characters (except in notes), one can't as easily search for Hebrew or Greek content, but Accordance's *transliteration* search does work nicely, not requiring detailed pointing. As such, I was able to type in "Kabod" for the Hebrew term כְּבוֹד ("heaviness; glory; honor") and came up with fifty-two hits in OTL, many of which provided insightful reflection on specific Old Testament texts.

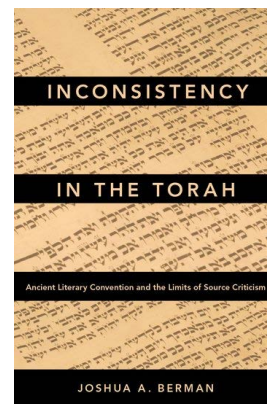
In conclusion, the WJK Old and New Testament Libraries supply a mixed quality of liberal-critical scholarship, which evangelicals can benefit from when engaged with discretion. Many of the commentaries and additional volumes are exegetically rigorous and theologically robust, and they can

supply evangelical readers with fresh translations, extended bibliographies, and careful though critical analysis of the final form of the biblical text. This series will likely not be the first stop for evangelical conservatives, but biblical scholars and graduate students need to engage with these volumes, and Accordance Bible Software has now made this more portable, flexible, affordable, and usable.

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Joshua A. Berman. *Inconsistency in the Torah: Ancient Literary Convention and the Limits of Source Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xi + 307 pp. £64.00/\$99.00.

In a seminal book from thirty years ago, R. N. Whybray observed that critical scholarship of the Pentateuch has long overlooked how “the cultural differences between ancient Israel and modern western Europe invalidate many of the judgments made by the documentary critics about what could or could not have been attributed to a single author” (*The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, JSOTSup 53 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987], 51). Secondary aspects of Whybray’s work occasioned major debates on basic methodological questions of the relationship among the sources, redactions, authors, and editors of the Hebrew Bible. Yet until the present work by Joshua Berman, professor of Bible at Bar-Ilan University, little sustained attention has been given to Whybray’s more foundational claim that source critics operate with anachronistic expectations about the sort of literary coherence that a reader should expect from an ancient text like the Pentateuch. Berman offers a wide-ranging, provocative, though occasionally uneven exploration of how Pentateuchal source critics tend to promise more than their methods can reliably deliver.



Berman’s book is structured in three parts. Part I analyzes inconsistency in narrative by situating the Pentateuch’s doublets (e.g., the somewhat divergent accounts of Israel’s wilderness wanderings in Exodus and Deuteronomy) within the literary conventions of the ancient Near East. This section explicates how diplomatic documents and history writing in the ancient Near East employ repetition and variation for intentional purposes of exhortation, rather than being signs of careless editing or haphazard textual growth. Part II treats the topic of inconsistency in law, this time setting the legal corpora of the Pentateuch alongside other ancient Near Eastern legal codes and their methods of resolving discrepancies between laws. Finally, Part III offers a proposal for reconstituting Pentateuchal criticism on the more modest foundation of recognizing the limits of what can be known. This posture contrasts starkly with some quarters of historical criticism which, since the time of Julius Wellhausen and his scholarly descendants in Germany, have formulated large-scale theories of textual evolution without attending to the Pentateuch’s analogues from the ancient Near East.

Part I displays Berman at his best when comparing apparent contradictions in the Pentateuch with ancient Near Eastern texts that exhibit similar traits (chapters 1–2). Just as Exodus 14–15 narrates two versions of Israel’s deliverance at the Sea, for example, the Kadesh Inscriptions of Rameses II offer multiple conflicting accounts of the Egyptian king’s victory over the Hittites during the thirteenth century BC. Yet the original Egyptian audience of these inscriptions would have recognized that the