

# Commentaries for the Pastor's Study

By John F. Brug

## OLD TESTAMENT 2001 Edition

The explosion in the publication of biblical commentaries mentioned in the first edition of this list, which was published in the Fall 1985 issue of the *Quarterly*, continues unabated. Liberal commentaries! conservative commentaries! scholars' commentaries! pastors' commentaries! lay commentaries! Dozens of commentary series are appearing on the market, all claiming to meet the bible student's needs. Some catalogs carry more than a dozen different commentaries on certain books of the Bible. More commentaries are also starting to appear on CD-ROMS. We can also expect the appearance of more on-line commentaries. It has become almost impossible to keep up with the latest developments because of the mass of material. It is not surprising that seminary students, who are in the process of building their theological libraries, frequently ask for a list of recommended commentaries to guide them in their purchases. This 4th edition of this list is intended to address that need and at the same time to provide up-to-date information for parish pastors who are adding to their libraries or doing research for a paper (The 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition was in *WLQ*, Jan. 1996).. The list below is based on a combination of personal use of the commentaries, consultation with other seminary professors, and the evaluations of reviewers and bibliographers.

*A Guide to Selecting and Using Bible Commentaries* (Word, 1990) by Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Commentary Survey* (Baker, 1995) by Tremper Longman III, and *New Testament Commentary Survey* (Baker, 4th Edition, 1993) by D.A. Carson are recommended as additional sources of information on hundreds of commentaries. Stuart also includes one of the best discussions of the criteria to use in selecting commentaries. *Building Your Biblical Studies Library* (Concordia, 1988) by Erich Kiehl is another useful source of information. Consult individual class bibliographies from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and *WLQ* reviews for updates and additions. For information on older commentaries not discussed in this article see C. Barber, *The Minister's Library*, or Gorman & Gorman, *Theological and Religious Reference Materials*.

Any list of commentaries is naturally subjective and open to dispute. The following criteria were used in compiling this list. Exegetical commentaries based on the original languages were given preference over commentaries based on the English text. An attempt has been made to choose recent commentaries which include up-to-date linguistic, archeological, and historical information and which include a summary or evaluation of recent scholarship and critical views concerning the biblical book. Preference is given to sound Lutheran commentaries.

For some books, especially of the Old Testament, no commentary is available which meets all these criteria. In many cases, a conservative, evangelical commentary, which has a high view of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture and which maintains a scriptural view of the authorship of the biblical books, is the best choice available. In some cases one must settle for even less, although the available selection of OT commentaries has improved in the last decade. There are now many more evangelical commentaries available on the Old Testament. This is, however, a mixed blessing since many "evangelical" commentaries make more concessions to the views of negative higher criticism than commentaries bearing such a label would have in the past. Therefore, inclusion of a commentary on this list is not an endorsement of all its doctrinal or isagogical views. The term "best rated" refers to the evaluation of academic reviewers, not to the theological worth of the volume. It is assumed that the readers will be able to sort the wheat from the chaff. Only English commentaries are included, except for a few German commentaries which are an important part of our Synodical Conference heritage. Some out-of-print books are included since students may obtain them through book auctions, and many older books are being reprinted or appearing in CD-ROM collections.

Since the quality of volumes in any series varies, as your lead commentary on each biblical book it is wise to choose the best volumes from various sets, rather than to buy one complete set. If your budget permits, you can also buy one or two of the best sets and then supplement your library with the best volumes from other series. Another reason to avoiding commitment to one-author sets is that authors tend to repeat themselves when writing on similar subjects. So if you have one writer on Matthew, get someone else on Mark and a third writer on Luke.

In choosing individual volumes consider 1) the length and thoroughness of the volume; 2) the depth of its treatment of the original text—is the author more interested in what the text says or in his own opinion about the topic the text is discussing? Does the author give special attention to the most difficult passages, or does he spend a lot of time explaining the obvious? 3) the clarity of its organization; 4) its readability—does the author provide apt statements and striking expressions useful for sermons and classes? 5) last but not least, the author's theological stance.

Volumes marked with an asterisk (\*) are more recommended. Reprints of older commentaries may be published by a different publisher than the original printing was. Whenever possible, the original publication date but the most recent publisher have been used in this list. Commentary titles are not included in the lists below unless they are markedly different from the name of the biblical book which the commentary covers.

### Old Testament Single Volume

Single volume commentaries are generally too brief to be very helpful for exegetical work. The *Concordia Study Bible* serves the purpose of a one-volume commentary and is a better choice than any of the one-volume commentaries on the market. But for those who want a one-volume commentary *The Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (1979) by Roehrs and Franzmann is the best choice.

### Old Testament Sets

The general characteristics of each set and the name of its publisher are given below. Theological classifications will not necessarily be repeated for individual volumes in the book listings unless the volume in question has a stance different from the general position of its series.

- *\*New International Commentary (NICOT)* (Eerdmans). This set is about half done, but recent progress has been slow. Some of its volumes are the best recent works on the books they cover. Others make too many concessions to negative criticism, but are still useful. Overall it is probably the best in-depth set available, but its stock seems to be falling.
- *\*The New American Commentary (NAC)* by Broadman Press competes with the *NICOT* as the best series of conservative evangelical commentaries on the Old Testament. It represents a conservative Baptist viewpoint. It is a bit less “academic” than the *NICOT*, but in some respects the volumes are more useful for pastors.
- *\*Tyndale (TOT)* (Inter-Varsity Press). This set is generally conservative and evangelical. It is now complete. Although it is semi-popular in style, it is, nevertheless, useful for some books for which there is no recent, conservative, in-depth commentary. Its inexpensive paperback format makes it one of the best choices for a second “back-up” commentary on OT books.
- *\*Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC)* (Zondervan). Six volumes cover the whole OT. Evangelical, generally conservative. Many authors are premillennialists, but this slant does not show up as often as one might expect. An economic way to get up-to-date information on the whole OT. A good set to backup your first commentary on each book. Now available on CD-ROM.
- *\*Keil-Delitzsch (KD)* (Eerdmans). Though this set is over a century old and is dated in some respects, it has not yet been replaced by a suitable series which covers the whole Old Testament. Though generally

conservative, it is not sound in all places. It is not the most readable series. Since it is no longer under copy-right, it is often included on CD-ROM collections such as the *Ages Library*.

- Although our own *\*People's Bible (PB)* is written to be a lay commentary, it should also be of great help to our pastors for sermon and Bible class preparation. It can be supplemented by other sets for exegetical work. It is normally not mentioned in the following lists, unless no conservative exegetical commentary is available on that book.
- Some volumes of Word's *Communicator's Commentary (CC)* are worthwhile on application of the text, but many are too shallow. Inter-Varsity's *The Bible Speaks Today (TBST)* has some useful volumes. Readability and practical application is their long suit.

Several new series which bear watching are just getting under way:

- So far only two volumes of Baker's *\*Expositor's Guide to the Historical Books (EGHB)* are available. Both are very fine additions to a pastor's library, but it seems this series is not progressing.
- The first few volumes of *\*The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary (WEC)*, a series begun by Moody and rumored to be completed by Baker, look promising, but this series too seems to be on hiatus.
- *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* is an interesting new series that presents high-lights from patristic biblical commentaries.
- There are not enough volumes of the new *Concordia Commentary* to offer an evaluation at this point, but it is hoped that this will provide an up-to-date replacement for Keil and Delitzsch.

The following series are weak theologically, but are often very helpful with linguistic, textual, and historical information for detailed exegesis. They also provide information on recent critical views. They are recommended more for library use than for purchase:

- *Hermeneia (HERM)* (Fortress)—all volumes are very poor theologically, some are quite useful linguistically.
- *The Anchor Bible (AB)* (Doubleday)—some horrible, some quite useful, especially on the historical books.
- *Continental Commentaries (ConC)* (Augsburg)—a few useful volumes.
- *The Old Testament Library (OTL)* (Westminster)—ditto.
- *JPS Torah Series (JPST)* (Jewish Publication Society)—some volumes of this series on the Pentateuch are very helpful with the Hebrew text and the rabbinic interpretation.
- *The International Critical Commentary (ICC)* (T&T Clark)—the original volumes are quite dated. Replacements are just beginning to appear (*NICC*).
- Many of the Old Testament commentaries of the *\*Word Bible Commentary (WBC)* which have been produced so far also fall into the liberal category. This is disappointing since it was expected that this series would be more conservative. Several of the more recent volumes of this series have been quite useful, but as a whole the series is a very mixed bag. In spite of their theological shortcomings the *Word* and *Hermeneia* volumes often provide the most help with difficulties in the Hebrew text.

The following series are generally not recommended. Some are too critical, without enough redeeming linguistic value; others are too brief: *The New Century Bible, Interpretation, Interpreters Bible, International Theological Commentary, Broadman's, Cambridge Bible Commentary, Daily Study Commentary, Good News Commentary, Torch Commentary, Moody's Everyman's Commentary*.

This list is not comprehensive.

## The Best Volumes on Specific Books

### The Pentateuch

**GENESIS** This is a tough choice, because even evangelical commentaries often waver on the crucial early chapters of Genesis. One-volume commentaries on Genesis are often skimpy on difficult points. The following works are the most highly rated, recent, evangelical commentaries:

- \*Hamilton, *NICOT, Genesis 1-17*, 1990; *Genesis 18-50*, 1995. Good overview of viewpoints, sometimes wishy-washy on taking a stand.
- \*Wenham, *WBC, Genesis 1-15*, 1987 & *Genesis 16-50*, 1994. Top-rated by most, but evasive on some key issues.
- \*Matthews, *NAC, Genesis 1-11:26*, 1996. Less technical than Wenham and Hamilton, but better on key issues in Genesis 1-11. Falters on the days of creation. The best choice for pastors overall.

Others to consider:

- \**EBC Vol 2* (1989). Includes Sailhammer's useful treatment of Genesis.
- \*Leupold, Baker, 1949. American Lutheran.
- Sarna, *JPST*, 1989. Jewish commentary, helpful with the Hebrew.
- Cassuto, Magnes, 1964. Jewish commentary, helpful on the first 13 chapters.
- Stigers, Zondervan, 1976. Evangelical.
- Don't forget *Luther's Works*, Volumes 1-8, American Edition, for theological insight.

Backups:

- Kidner, *TOT*, 1967, and Delitzsch, 1852, with reservations.
- Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, Baker, 1988, is useful for preaching ideas.

**EXODUS** No recent, conservative, exegetical commentary is available. The *Word* volume by Durham is one of the theological low points of the series. Until a worthy contender comes along, make-do with:

- \**EBC Vol 2*, 1989, which includes treatment of Exodus by Kaiser.
- \*Wendland, *People's Bible*, Northwestern Publishing House, 1984.
- Childs, *OTL*, 1974. Moderately liberal, but useful for linguistic information, this is the most highly regarded commentary on Exodus.
- Cassuto, Magnes, 1951, is helpful with the Hebrew.
- Sarna, *JPST*, 1990. Jewish commentary, helpful with the Hebrew.

Backups:

- Cole, *TOT*, 1973.
- Keil.

**LEVITICUS** Two pretty good choices are available:

- \*Wenham, *NICOT*, Eerdmans, 1979. Best overall.
- \*Hartley, *WBC*, 1992. Makes too many concessions to critical views, but is most helpful on interpretation of the Hebrew text.
- Levine, *JPST*, 1989, is also good on the Hebrew.
- Milgrom, *AB, Leviticus 1-16*, 1991, is very helpful on the Hebrew text.

Backups

- *EBC Vol 2* by Harris.

- Harrison, *TOT*, 1980.

**NUMBERS** Things are looking up here:

- \*Harrison, *WEC*, 1990, is the best available overall, but
- \*Ashley, *NICOT*, 1993, is most helpful on difficult passages.
- Milgrom, *JPST*, 1990, is very helpful on the Hebrew text.
- Levine, *AB, Numbers 1-20*, 1993, is also good on the Hebrew.

Backups:

- \*Wenham, *TOT*, 1982.
- *EBC* Vol 2 by Allen.

**DEUTERONOMY** Still a little thin here:

- \*Craigie, *NICOT*, 1976. Best overall.
- \*Merrill, *NAC*, 1994. Another useful volume from this series.
- Ridderbos, *BSC*, 1984. Many of the volumes of this Dutch series by Zondervan have been supplanted by the *EBC*, but this defense of Mosaic authorship is still useful.
- Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, Eerdmans, 1963. An interesting little commentary.
- Tigay, *JPST*, 1993. Help on the Hebrew.

Backups:

- \*Thompson, *TOT*, 1974.
- *EBC* Vol 3, 1992.
- Braun, *The People's Bible*.

### **The Historical Books**

**JOSHUA** Still could use heavy-duty evangelical treatment.

- \*Woudstra, *NICOT*, 1981. Best overall.
- \*Howard, *NAC*, 1998. A new candidate for best overall.
- \*Davis, *No Falling Words, EGHB*, Baker, 1988. Stimulating style.
- Butler, *WBC*, 1983, and Boling, *AB*, 1982, for bibliographies and technical information, but both too critical.

Backups:

- *EBC* Vol 3.
- Thompson, *TOT*.

**JUDGES** Things are looking up, but could still use a “heavy-weight.”

- \*Block, *NAC*, 1999. The best-bet for now.
- \*Davis, *Such A Great Salvation, EGHB*, Baker, 1990. Good for pastors.
- Wood, *Distressing Days of the Judges*, Zondervan, 1975. Brief.
- Cundall/Morris, *TOT*, 1968. Judges portion is too critical. Includes Ruth.
- Boling, *AB*, 1975, for help with Hebrew and background.

**RUTH** One volume will probably give you everything you need on Ruth:

- \*Hubbard, *NICOT*, 1988. Head and shoulders above the rest.

## Backups:

- Block, *NAC on Judges*.
- Cundall/Morris, *TOT*, 1968.
- *EBC*, Vol 3.
- Campbell, *AB*, 1975. Useful on the social background.
- Sasson, *JSOT*, 1989, is useful on the Hebrew.

Things are looking a better in the next six books than they did a few years ago.

**1 and 2 SAMUEL** Still missing an in-depth conservative commentary.

- \*Baldwin, *TOT*, 1988. Brief, but quite helpful.
- \*Gordon, Zondervan, 1986/8. Evangelical, quite helpful. More detailed than Baldwin.
- Klein, 1 Sam, *WBC*, 1983. Useful on textual criticism, but liberal.
- Anderson, 2 Sam, *WBC*, 1989. Somewhat less liberal than Klein, but so-so.
- McCarter, *AB*, 1980 and 1984. Liberal, some help on the text.

**1 and 2 KINGS** Still lacking an in-depth evangelical commentary.

- \*House, *NAC*, 1995. Fairly brief, but good.
- \*Wiseman, *TOT*, 1993. Brief, but quite good.
- \**EBC* Vol 4 (1988) by Paterson and Austel is brief, but useful.
- Devries, 1 Kg, *WBC*, 1985. Best of a bad lot on 1 Kings.
- Hobbs, 2 Kg, *WBC*. 1985, Hobbs is better than Devries.
- Cogan/Tadmor, 2 Kg, *AB*, 1988. Helpful on historical background.

## Backup:

- Keil Delitzsch.

**1 and 2 CHRONICLES** Still waiting for the ideal commentary.

- \*Thompson, *NAC*, 1994. Rather brief.
- \*Selman, *TOT*, 2 Vol, 1994. Another steady *TOT* contribution.
- \*P. Wendland, *People's Bible*, 1994, 1998. Very valuable for help with the interpretation.
- \**EBC* Vol 4 by Payne. Not ideal, but useful.
- Braun, 1 Ch, *WBC*, 1986. Liberal, but help with the Hebrew.
- Dillard, 2 Ch, *WBC*, 1987. Less liberal than most of *WBC*.
- Japhet, *OTL*, 1993. May be more useful than the *WBC* volumes.
- Williamson, *NCBC*, 1982. More useful than most of this series.

**EZRA and NEHEMIAH** Several good choices here.

- \*Fensham, *NICOT*, 1982. Traditional. Scholarly.
- \*Breneman, *NAC*, 1993. A little less depth than Fensham. More “popular.” Includes Esther.
- \*Kidner, *TOT*, 1979. Popular style.
- Williamson, *WBC*, 1985, is the most highly rated, but more critical.
- Blenkinsopp, *OTL*, 1988. Best rated academic commentary.

## Backup:

- *EBC* Vol 4, 1988, by Yamauchi. Quite good.

**ESTHER** Adequate resources to fill the need, but no conservative in-depth commentary is available.

- \*Baldwin, *TOT*, 1984. Her usual steady performance.
- \*Breneman, included in the Ezra-Nehemiah volume cited above.
- Also in *EBC* Vol 4, 1988, by Huey.
- Moore, *AB*, 1971. For linguistic and historical information, but weak otherwise.

### Poetical Books

**JOB** One of the most difficult books in Hebrew.

- \*Alden, *NAC*, 1993. Less comprehensive than Hartley, but perhaps the best for pastors.
- \*Hartley, *NICOT*, 1988. Best overall for exegesis. Not great.
- \*Andersen, *TOT*, 1976. Good, but limited in size.
- \*Honsey, *People's Bible*, 1992, will be most helpful to the pastor on the theology. Christo-centric.

Backup:

- \**EBC* Vol. 4 by Smick.)

For additional help with the Hebrew of this very difficult book see:

- Clines, *WBC*, 1989, is very detailed and helpful on Ch 1-20 for linguistic matters. It is the top rated commentary on Job, but is very liberal in its approach.
- Habel, *OTL*, 1985. Another candidate for "best rated."
- Gordis, *Ktav*, 1965.
- Pope, *AB*, 1965.
- Dhome, T. Nelson, 1967 reprint.

**PSALMS** There is no up-to-date exegetical commentary that does justice to this important book, especially in regard to Messianic prophecy. Brug, *People's Bible*, 1989, may have fill to in until a conservative exegetical commentary appears.

- \*Kidner's treatment (*TOT*, 2 vol, 1973, 1975) is brief, but useful.
- \*In *EBC* Vol 5 (1991) by VanGemeren is useful, but brief.
- Delitzch (3 volumes, 1867) remains a standard by necessity.
- Luther's Works, *AE* Vol 10-14 for doctrinal insights.
- Leupold's exposition (Baker, 1959/1972) is useful for Lutheran insights.
- Zorn (1921), Starke (1750), and Hengstenberg (1869) are useful German Lutheran works.
- Stoeckhardt's comments on selected psalms (1915) are also available in English.
- Lillegard's study (1954) is useful for Lutheran insights.
- Perowne (1878) and Alexander (1850) are useful evangelical classics available in reprint.
- \**WBC* (3 vol by Craigie, Tate, and Allen, 1983-1990) and *ConC* (2 vol by Kraus, 1966/1987-1989) help with up-to-date linguistic information, but are unsatisfactory theologically.

**PROVERBS** Still waiting for an in-depth, conservative treatment.

- \*Garrett, *NAC*, 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Songs*. Brief but helpful on all three.
- \*Kidner, *TOT*, 1964. Brief, but helpful.
- *EBC* 5 (1991) by Ross is useful, but very brief. Somewhat critical.
- Alden, Baker, 1983. Primarily devotional.
- Hubbard, *CC*, 1989. Topical treatment. Helpful on application.

- Delitzsch is still useful.
- McKane, *OTL*, 1970. For linguistic help, but too critical and hard to use.
- Clifford, *OTL*, 1999, a replacement for McKane.
- Murphy, *Word*, forthcoming, best academic commentary on Proverbs.
- For lack of something better it may be necessary to use Bridges, 1846, Banner of Truth reprint (1968).

**ECCLESIASTES** Each of the first three take a sound approach to this book, which raises many critical issues.

- \*Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes*, *TBST*, 1988. Good on the message.
- \*Eaton, *TOT*, 1983. Traditional approach.
- Longman, *NICOT*, 1995, is helpful on the Hebrew but weak theologically.
- Seow, *AB*, 1997. May be more useful than Longman, but not very readable.
- Bridges, 1860, Banner of Truth reprint (1961). Traditional and Christo-centric.
- Leupold (1952/1966). Lutheran, but treats the book as post-exilic.
- Zorn is a useful German work.

For linguistic help see:

- Crenshaw, *OTL*, 1987.
- Murphy, *WBC*, 1992.
- Fox, *Qoheleth and his Contradictions*, Almond, 1989.
- Gordis, *Koheleth: The Man and His World*, Schocken, 1951.

Backups:

- *IEBC* 5 (1991) by Wright is somewhat helpful.
- Also the *People's Bible* by Ehlke.

**SONG OF SOLOMON** The difficulty is choosing between commentaries that take the “natural” approach or the “spiritual” approach.

- \*Brug, *NPH*, 1995, tries to give balance of both approaches.
- \*Gledhill, *TBST*, 1994. Very good on the “natural” interpretation.
- Zorn (German) is useful on the “spiritual” interpretation.
- Fox, *The Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Song*, 1985. Highly rated on the style and the Hebrew.
- Murphy, *HERM*, 1990. Best help with the Hebrew.
- Pope, *AB* (1977) provides a massive linguistic analysis and background information, but is too critical in interpretation.

Backups:

- Carr, *TOT*, 1984, natural interpretation.
- Ehlke, *People's Bible*, 1988, balanced interpretation.
- \**EBC* 5, 1991, by Kinlaw is brief, but very good on balanced interpretation.

## The Prophets

**ISAIAH** No ideal, recent commentary on whole book. Most recent efforts are too critical including Watt's two volumes in *WBC*.

- \*Oswalt, new *NICOT*, *Isaiah 1-39*, 1986, *Isaiah 40-66*, 1998. Perhaps most useful overall on the Hebrew.
- \*Young, 3 volumes, early *NICOT*, Eerdmans, 1952-1965. Still useful though Oswalt is its intended replacement.



- \*Pieper, *Isaiah II*, Northwestern Publishing House, original 1919. Chapters 40-66 only. A Lutheran classic.
- Motyer, InterVarsity, 1994. An evangelical, one-volume treatment.
- \*Motyer, *TOT*, 1999. Brief but a good second choice.
- Leupold, Baker, 2 vols. 1968-1971.

Backup:

- *EBC* Vol 6, 1986, also covers the major prophets.

**JEREMIAH** No standout volume.

- \*Thompson, *NICOT*, 1980. More critical than other volumes in this series, but probably best overall choice here.
- \*Laetsch, Concordia Publishing House, 1952. Good Lutheran approach, but dated language.
- Holladay, 2 Vol, *HERM*, 1986, 1989. Liberal, highly rated linguistically.
- McKane, new *ICC*, 1986.

Backup:

- Harrison, *TOT*, 1973. Brief.

**LAMENTATIONS** Included in Laetsch and Harrison above.

- \*Hillers, *AB* (1972) is the most useful volume on the Hebrew text.

**EZEKIEL** No satisfactory up-to-date exegetical commentary is available. Millennialism is a problem with many evangelical commentaries on the prophetic books.

- \*Taylor, *TOT*, 1969. Mildly critical. Brief.
- \*Stuart, *CC*, 1989, may serve till something better is produced,
- Blackwood, *Ezekiel, Prophecy of Hope*, Baker, 1965. Provides useful homiletical and interpretive help, but is fairly brief.
- Keil's work is still helpful.
- Zimmerli's massive 2 vol work in the *HERM* series (1979) is most useful for detailed exegesis, but is theologically unsound.
- Allen, *WBC*, 1990, 1995; and Greenberg, *AB*, 1983, also provide some help with the Hebrew.

**DANIEL** No really outstanding exegetical commentary.

- \*Young, Eerdmans, 1949. Sound on prophecy, somewhat dry.
- \*Baldwin, *TOT*, 1978. Another balanced careful work.
- Leupold, Baker, 1949/1969 reprint. Conservative Lutheran.
- Goldingay, *WBC*, 1989. Lots of technical help, but very liberal.
- Collins, *HERM*, 1993. Ditto.

Backups:

- *EBC* Vol 7 (1985) by Archer for brief conservative treatment.
- \*Jeske, *People's Bible*, 1985.)

## Minor Prophets

The last decade has produced an embarrassment of riches here. It is now less necessary to settle for critical commentaries here. Because the different series divide the twelve books differently, it is difficult to make a consecutive listing of volumes.

### On all twelve books:

- \*The three volume set edited by McComiskey (Baker, 1992-1998) gives very detailed coverage from an evangelical perspective.
- \*Laetsch, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956. A Lutheran classic, dated language.
- \*EBC Vol. 7, 1985. Generally good. Brief. Not repeated below.
- \*The five *TOT* volumes on the minor prophets give good solid treatment:
  - \*Hubbard, *Hosea*, 1989.
  - \*Hubbard, *Joel and Amos*, 1989.
  - \*Baker/Alexander/Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*, 1988.
  - \*Baker, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 1989.
  - \*Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, 1972.
- \*The *WBC* volumes by \*Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, (1987) and by Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (1984) are more evangelical than most of this series.

### Some other selected volumes:

#### HOSEA

- Freedman and Anderson, *AB*, 1980. Helpful on the text.
- Kidner, *TBST*, 1981. Lively interpretation.

#### JOEL

- \*Finley, *Joel, Amos, and Obadiah*, *WEC*, 1990. Evangelical.

#### AMOS

- \*Smith, *Amos*, Zondervan, 1989. In-depth. Evangelical.
- Freedman and Anderson, *AB*, 1989. Massive detail on text.
- Paul, *HERM*, 1991. A lot of data on the text. "Best rated."

#### OBADIAH

- \*Raabe, *AB*, 1996. A massive study of this little book and of prophecy.

#### JONAH

- Limburg, *OTL*, 1993. Good on literary form.

#### MICAH

- Hillers, *HERM*, 1983. Liberal. Good on the Hebrew text.

#### NAHUM

- \*Maier, Concordia, 1959 & Baker reprint. Solid Lutheran.
- Robertson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, (*NICOT*). 1990.

#### HABBAKUK

- Fuerbringer, *The Eternal Why*, Concordia, 1947.

- Armerding in *EBC* 7.

### **ZEPHANIAH**

- See Baker, *TOT*, above.

### **HAGGAI**

- Verhoef, *Haggai, Malachi*, (*NICOT*), 1987.

### **ZECHARIAH**

- Leupold, Baker, 1956/1965. Lutheran.

### **MALACHI**

- Kaiser, *God's Unchanging Love*, Baker, 1984. Model of exegetical method.

### **Messianic Prophecy**

- \*Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament* ( 2 Vol), McDonald Publishing Reprint. 1854 original. In-depth exegetical articles on key passages.

## **NEW TESTAMENT\*** **2002 Edition**

This article concludes the commentary list begun in the Summer 2001 of the *Quarterly*. See that article for introductory comments to the list as a whole.

For other recommendations of New Testament commentaries consult D.A. Carson, *NT Commentary Survey*, 5th Edition, Baker 2001, and Erich Kiehl, *Building Your Biblical Studies Library*, CPH, 1988.

The new developments since the last edition of this list are rather disappointing. While there has been a whole host of in-depth Evangelical New Testament commentaries written, too many of them compromise with the historical-critical method. Thus many of them can be given only a limited recommendation. They are of more use for in-depth study of the Greek than for theological insights. In such cases descriptions such as “considered to be best” or “top-rated” refer to the commentaries’ academic reputation, rather than their theological soundness. Even conservative Reformed commentaries naturally lack the Lutheran doctrinal perspective that is helpful for a pastor’s use of New Testament commentaries. It is hoped that the new Concordia commentary series for pastors will fill some of these gaps, but so far only a few volumes have appeared.

### **New Testament Single Volume**

One volume commentaries are usually too brief to be much help to pastors. The *Concordia Study Bible* would serve well as a substitute.

### **New Testament Sets**

Since there are a number of fairly good, complete or nearly complete commentary sets for the New Testament, it is less necessary to settle for negative critical commentaries or lay commentaries as primary or secondary choices than is sometimes the case with Old Testament commentaries.

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\* Because there is relatively little change in the New Testament list, it is being updated only on the web posting.

- **\*\*Lenski** (Baker) (1940's). In spite of weaknesses Lenski remains the standard Lutheran commentary on the whole New Testament, so this set is a useful part of a pastor's library. He tends to be too rigid in his assertions about grammatical points, and his doctrinal comments are not always on the beam in the areas of election and objective justification. He is not at his best in the key book of Romans. Lenski will not be mentioned under individual volumes below since it is assumed that many will purchase the whole set.
- **\*\*New Testament Commentary (NTC)** (Hendriksen/Kistemaker) (Baker). Overall this is one of the more helpful exegetical commentaries for pastors, though it lacks the linguistic depth of some other series. Doctrine is clearly conservative Reformed (i.e., Calvinistic). Hendriksen completed the four Gospels and all of Paul, except Corinthians. Kistemaker has taken up the authorship of the series and completed Acts, I Corinthians, Hebrews, James-John, and Peter-Jude. Hendriksen's work is generally stronger than Kistemaker's. A problem which causes some difficulty in making purchases is that in the latest printing several of the commentaries which were originally published as individual volumes have been combined into single volumes with more recently completed commentaries.
- **\*New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)** (Eerdmans). This series aims to be a scholarly, evangelical commentary on the Greek text. Emphasis is on exegesis rather than exposition or application. The series is often useful for detailed exegesis and up-to-date information and bibliography, but it too often makes concessions to redaction criticism and other critical views. "Broadly within the Evangelical tradition."
- **\*New International Commentary (NICNT)** (Eerdmans). Doctrinal position is generally conservative and Reformed. Not all volumes are of equal quality. Some of the earlier volumes of the series are being replaced by newer works. Lighter than NIGTC.
- **Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC)** (Zondervan). This conservative commentary covers the New Testament in only five volumes, but provides much up-to-date information. It is a useful supplement for updating your collection. It is basically pre-millennial, but tries to present all views fairly. It is available on CD-ROM.
- **New International Biblical Commentary (NIBC)** (Hendrickson). Evangelical but generally quite brief.
- **The New American Commentary** is a new, relatively conservative Baptist series. More useful for the Old Testament than the New.
- Of briefer commentaries *Tyndale* is most useful. A few volumes of the *IVP New Testament* are helpful. Though intended for lay people our own *People's Bible* is very helpful to pastors also.
- **The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture** (IVP) is a nice compendium of patristic thought.
- As in the Old Testament some volumes of more liberal commentaries like the *Anchor Bible*, *Black's/Harper*, and *Hermeneia* series provide useful linguistic and historical data and information on recent critical scholarship. Some volumes of the *International Critical Commentary (ICC)* are useful for the same reason. The *Word Bible Commentaries* on the New Testament are somewhat less critical than those on the Old, but don't be fooled by the Evangelical label. *Eerdmans Critical Commentary*, which is just beginning to appear, will apparently give further evidence of the erosion of Erdmans products. *Eerdmans Pillar Commentary Series* apparently will be better.
- At the liberal end of the spectrum, massive multi-volume commentaries seem to be the rule of the day. Size is not to be equated with quality or usefulness, but a sampling of these is given at the end of most of the listings as a guide sources of contemporary scholarship on each book.

### Gospels

- \*Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, Northwestern Publishing House, original date 1905. A Lutheran standard.
- *\*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, Zondervan, 1984. (The Synoptics only).

- Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, McDonald reprint. Somewhat dated, but interesting on the Jewish background of the NT.
- *Wenzel Commentary I*, Arrow Publishing, 1935-37, 1988 reprint, is a distinctly Lutheran commentary with much useful information.

## MATTHEW

- \*Hendriksen, *NTC*, Baker, 1973. Solid, but unspectacular.
- \*Carson in *EBC* Vol 8, listed above. More complete than most in this series.
- Franzmann, *Follow Me*, Concordia, 1961. Not verse by verse but good on themes.
- Davies/Allison, a massive 3 volume commentary in the new *ICC* (T&T Clark) (1988, 1991) is considered the opus magnum on Matthew, but it is “moderately critical.”
- Blomberg, *NAC*, 1992, middle level commentary.
- Hagner, *WBC*, Word, 1993, 1995 is another major critical commentary.
- McNeile, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, MacMillan, 1915 is considered to be one of the older classics on the Greek text.

## MARK

- \*Lane, *NIC*, Eerdmans, 1974. Best all round.
- \*Hendriksen, *NTC*, Baker, 1975. His work on Mt is stronger.
- Cranfield, Cambridge, 1959, is considered the best of the critical commentaries.
- Mann, *AB*, 1986, is rated highly for its scholarship, but not for its theology.
- Brooks, *NAC*, 1991, is less critical but less in-depth.
- Gundry, Eerdmans, 1993, is highly touted, but not recommended here.

## LUKE

- \*Arndt, Concordia, 1956. A Lutheran standard.
- \*Just, *Concordia Commentary*, 1996. Only volume 1 is complete.
- \*Marshall, *NIGTC*, Eerdmans, 1978. Very technical. Evangelical theology.
- Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary*, 2 volumes. 1994-96 is most highly rated. In-depth.
- Green, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1997, has superseded Geldenhuys, 1951.
- Hendriksen, Baker, 1978.
- Morris, *TNT*, 1988. A useful little backup.
- Fitzmeyer, *AB*, 1981, 1985, is rated highly for its scholarship, but not for its liberal theology.
- Nolland produced the 3 volume *Word* commentary (1989-93).
- Of the old commentaries Godet is most useful.

## JOHN

- \*Leon Morris, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1959, 1995 revision. By same author: 4 volumes of *Reflections on John*, Baker, 1986-1989.
- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1953.
- Carson, *Pillar Commentary*, 1991.
- Borchert, *NAC*, 1996. Fairly light.
- Hengstenberg’s 2 volumes have been reprinted by Kregel.
- Barrett, Westminster, 1978. Liberal, but “best rated.”
- Brown, *AB*, 2 vol., 1966, 1970 is one of the more useful liberal commentaries.

## ACTS

- \*Bruce, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1989 update. In depth. By the same author, *IVP*, 1991.
- \*Longenecker, in *EBC* Vol 9, 1981. Briefer.
- \*Kistemaker, *NTC*, 1990. One of his better efforts.
- Marshall, *TNT*, 1983. More comprehensive than most of this series.
- Barrett, New *ICC*, T& T Clark, 1994-98, 2 volumes, is considered to be the standard.
- Eerdmans has produced a six-volume set on the social and historical setting of the Book of Acts, edited by B.W. Winter, 1993-98. It provides a huge amount of background information.

## Epistles

**ROMANS** An in-depth, contemporary Lutheran commentary would be nice.

- \*Stoeckhardt, Concordia, German 1907. A Lutheran standard.
- Luther, American Edition, Vol. 25. For theological insight.
- \*Morris, Intervarsity, 1988. Detailed, evangelical.
- \*Moo, *NIC*, Eerdmans, 1991-96. Rated as the best Evangelical commentary. Some use of “new perspectives.”
- \*Murray, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1959/1965. Evangelical Reformed.
- Boice, 4 vol., Baker, 1991. Reformed, but vivid imagery for preaching.
- Hendriksen, Baker, 1980. Evangelical Reformed.
- Cranfield, New *ICC*, (T&T Clark), 1975/1980. 2 vol. Most highly rated of the liberal technical commentaries.
- Sanday & Headlam, old *ICC*, 1895, T.&T Clark. An old standard.
- Franzmann, Concordia, 1968 (Popular).

**1 CORINTHIANS** The field is weak here.

- \*Fee, *NICNT*, 1988/94. Unfortunately wavers on a few key doctrinal points.
- \*Thistleton, *NIGTC*, 2000, is expected to vault into the top spot.
- Grosheide, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1953. Not outstanding.
- Hodge, Eerdmans, 1857/1965. Conservative Reformed.
- Barrett, *B/H*, 1968. Moderate-Liberal. Another candidate for best technical.

## 2 CORINTHIANS

- \*Meyer, Northwestern Publishing House, 1963. Must have.
- Harris, In *EBC* 10, 1976. One of the better commentaries in this brief series.
- Barnett, *NICNT*, 1997. Evangelical. Useful. (Replaces Hughes, *NIC*, 1962).
- Garland, *NAC*, 2000. One of the better *NAC* volumes.
- Kistemaker, *NTC*, 1974.
- Barrett, *B/H*, 1973/93. Considered to be top-notch, but moderately liberal.
- Furnish, *AB*, 1984. Liberal. Considered leading recent work.
- Plummer, *ICC*, 1915. Liberal. Better than some in this series.

## GALATIANS

- \*Koehler, Northwestern Publishing House, 1909/1957. Must buy.
- \*Luther, Vol. 26-27 American Edition. Concordia/Fortress.
- \*Bruce, *NIGTC*, Eerdmans, 1982. Considered top one on the Greek text.
- Fung, *NICNT*, 1988. Replaces Ridderbos, *NICNT*, 1953.

- Longenecker, *WBC*, 1990. Rated more highly than most of *WBC*. A lot on rhetoric.
- Betz (*HERM*), 1980, is rated best of the liberal volumes. Somewhat useful on Roman world.

Older commentaries which are still useful include:

- John Brown (1957, Sovereign Grace).
- Lightfoot (1865, Zondervan).
- Burton (ICC, 1921/1962, T&T Clark).

## EPHESIANS

- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1967. (Now bound with Galatians, 1968)
- \*Habeck, Northwestern Publishing House, 1985. For pastoral insights. Quite brief.
- \*Stoeckhardt, Concordia, 1910. German. (English, 1952/1987).
- O'Brien, Pillar, 1999, is now best rated.
- Dockery, *NAC*, 1996. Workmanlike.
- Lincoln, *WBC*, 1990, is rated best of the liberal volumes. Against Pauline authorship.
- Robinson, Macmillan, 1904, is one of the better older commentaries.

## PHILIPPIANS

- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1962. (With Colossians/Philemon)
- \*O'Brien, *NIGTC*, 1991, is now considered the standard.
- Silva, *WEC*, 1988. *BECNT*, 1992. Hopefully Baker will complete this discontinued series. Esp. good on line of thought.
- Fee, *NICNT*, 1995. Opinionated and interesting.
- Bruce, *NIBC*, 1989. Brief and to the point.
- Hawthorne, *WBC*, 1983. More Evangelical than most of *WBC*, but some oddities.
- Martin, *NCB*, 1980. Moderate.
- Lightfoot, Macmillan, 1913, is one of the better older commentaries.

## COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON

- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1964, (With Philippians/Philemon).
- \*F.F. Bruce, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1984, (With Philippians/Philemon).
- \*O'Brien, *WBC*, 1982. Evangelical. Top-rated.
- Dunn, *NIGNT*, 1996. Does not equal O'Brien.
- Harris, *EGGNT*, 1991. A guide to exegesis.
- Moule, *Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary*, 1957, has many insights.

**1 & 2 THESSALONIANS** No really solid treatment of the Antichrist.

- \*Hendriksen, *NTC*, 1955, (With Pastorals).
- \*Bruce, *WBC*, 1982. His usual solid job.
- \*Wanamaker, *NIGTC*, 1990. Top-rated scholarly.
- Morris, *NICNT*, 1959/1994.
- Marshall, *NCB*, 1983.

## 1 & 2 TIMOTHY AND TITUS

- \*Knight, *NIGTC*, 1992. Very thorough, conservative, but Calvinistic.
- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1957. Conservative.
- Luther's Works, *AE* Vol. 28, 29.

- Fee, *NICNT*, 1988. Considered to be one of the best, but non-technical.
- Kelly, B/H, 1963/ Hendrickson, 1987. Moderate, but useful.
- Guthrie, *TNT*, 1957/1999 rev. Conservative. Brief.
- Stott, IVP, 1996. Quite useful, but not at the level of Knight
- Marshall, new ICC, does not treat as Pauline.
- Stoeckhardt, Titus. Lutheran standard. Mimeo only.

### **PHILEMON**

- Hendriksen, 1964, (With Colossians/Philippians).
- Also Bruce and Martin above.

### **HEBREWS**

- \*Bruce, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1964/1990. His usual steady work.
- \*Kistemaker, *NTC*, Baker, 1984. Typical of the series.
- Ellingworth, *NIGTC*, 1993, is now the standard Evangelical commentary.
- Lane, *WBC*, 1991, 2 vol., is less technical.
- Attridge, *HERM*, 1989, is a highly rated liberal commentary.
- A good old two-volume treatment is Delitzsch.

### **JAMES**

- \*Kistemaker, *NTC*, 1986, (Includes 1-3 John).
- \*Mayor, Macmillan, 1913, Kregel reprint 1990. Still one of best.
- Moo, *Pillar*, 2000. Not as in-depth as Davids but more balanced.
- Mitton, Preliminary *NICNT*, 1966. Useful.
- Davids, *NIGTC*, 1982. Moderate. Detail on the Greek.
- Martin, *WBC*, 1988. Moderate.

### **Some different combinations here:**

#### **PETER, JUDE, and JOHN**

- \*Lenski or Volume 12 of *EBC*.

#### **1 PETER**

- \*Stoeckhardt, Concordia, 1921. German.
- Davids, *NICNT*, 1995. Competent.
- Michaels, *WBC*, 1988. Moderate.
- Grudem, *TNT*, 1987.
- Selwyn, Macmillan, 1946, on the Greek text.

#### **PETER AND JUDE**

- \*Kistemaker, *NTC*, 1987. Conservative.
- Kelly, *B/H*, 1969. Detailed, Evangelical-Moderate.

#### **2 PETER and JUDE**

- \*Green, *TNT*, 1968. Detailed, Evangelical.
- Mayor, is still best on the Greek, but is o/p.
- Bauckham, *WBC*, 1983. Rated as the standard, but liberal.



### 1, 2, & 3 JOHN

- \*Marshall, *NICNT*, 1978/1995. Evangelical-Moderate.
- \*Stott, *TNT*, 1960/1988. Still useful.
- Kistemaker, NTC.
- Ross, Early *NICNT*, (Includes James), 1954.
- Smalley, *Word*, 1984, discussion of Greek text.
- Also Stoeckhardt's notes, Hope Press translation.

### REVELATION These are soundly anti-millennial.

- \*Becker, *The Distant Trumpet Call*, Northwestern Publishing House, 1985. Excellent.
- \*Poellot, Northwestern Publishing House, 1962. Excellent for laity.
- \*Brighton, Concordia Commentary, 1999. A solid Lutheran effort.
- Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, Baker, 1939/1967.
- Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh*, Reformed Free Publishing, 1967. Very detailed.
- Mounce, *NICNT*, 1997 and Beale, *NIGTC*, 2000, are the Evangelical standards.

### ABBREVIATIONS

(includes both Old and New Testament Commentaries)

- *The Anchor Bible (AB)*
- *The Bible Speaks Today (TBST)*
- *Bible Student's Commentary (BSC)*
- Black/Harper (B/H)
- *Communicator's Commentary (CC)*
- \* *Concordia Commentary (CPH)*
- *Continental Commentaries (ConC)*
- *Exegetical Guide of the Greek New Testament (EGGNT)* (Eerdmans)
- \* *Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC)*
- \* *Expositor's Guide to the Historical Books (EGHB)*
- *Hermeneia (HERM)*
- *International Critical Commentary (ICC)*
- *IVP New Testament (IVP)*
- *JPS Torah (JPST)*
- \* *Keil-Delitzsch (KD)*
- \* *New American Commentary (NAC)*
- *New Century Bible Commentary (NCBC)*
- *New International Biblical Commentary (NIBC)*
- \* *New International Commentary—New Testament (NICNT)*
- \* *New International Commentary—Old Testament (NICOT)*
- \* *New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)*
- \* *New Testament Commentary (NTC)* (Hendriksen-Kistemaker)
- \* *People's Bible (PB)*
- *The Old Testament Library (OTL)*
- \* *Tyndale New Testament (TNT)*
- \* *Tyndale Old Testament (TOT)*

- *Word Bible Commentary (WBC)*