

# OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES FOR THE PASTOR'S STUDY

*Ninth Edition*

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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! Application 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 now appearing on CD-ROMs or by download. More purely on-line commentaries are appearing. 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 9th 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 published in *WLQ*, Jan. 1996, the fourth in *WLQ*, Summer 2001, the subsequent versions have been electronic only.) 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.

*Old Testament Commentary Survey* (Fifth Edition, Baker, 2013) by Tremper Longman III, *New Testament Commentary Survey* (Baker, Seventh Edition, 2013) by D.A. Carson, and *A Guide to Selecting and Using Bible Commentaries* (Word, 1990) by Douglas Stuart are recommended as additional sources of information on hundreds of commentaries. Stuart 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 on older commentaries. 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*. An online rating of commentaries from a somewhat liberal perspective is the Codex Old Testament Commentary Survey. <http://biblical-studies.ca/ot-commentaries>

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 and then Evangelical commentaries with a high view of Scripture.

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, and a distinctly Lutheran series is well underway from Concordia. The proliferation of Evangelical commentaries 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 or online.

Since the quality of volumes within 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 avoid commitment to one-author sets is that authors tend to repeat themselves when writing on similar subjects. So if, for example, 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. Whenever possible, the original publication date and 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* based on the NIV serves the purpose of a one-volume commentary and is a better choice than any of the one-volume commentaries on the market. *Lutheran Study Bible* based on the ESV is a more recent Concordia project but is somewhat weak on archaeology. 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.

\*\**The Concordia Commentary* (Concordia) is still in progress, but the initial volumes are all best buys for Lutheran pastors. It appears that this series will become the commentary which provides an up-to-date replacement for Keil and Delitzsch as the Lutheran standard.

\**New International Commentary (NICOT)* (Eerdmans). Some early volumes are being replaced by new works. 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. It was once 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, particularly for the historical books. 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. May be millennial in some volumes.

\**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 economical way to get up-to-date information on the whole OT. A set to back up your first commentary on each book. Now available on CD-ROM.

\**Expositor’s Bible Commentary – Revised Edition (REBC)* (Zondervan). Now updated and revised with 60% of the volumes by new authors. Useful but not heavy duty.

\**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 Lutheran 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 copyright, it is often included on CD-ROM collections such as the *Ages Library*. It’s also available online for free in the E-sword package: <http://www.e-sword.net/commentaries.html>

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.

\**New International Version Application Commentary (NIVAC)* (Zondervan). As the title suggests, it focuses more on application than on detailed exegesis of the Hebrew text, though some volumes offer more exegesis than others. Volumes vary in quality and thoroughness.

Some volumes of Word’s *Communicator’s Commentary (ComCom)* 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.

*Reformed Expository Commentary* aims to give careful attention to the biblical text, to present doctrinal conclusions compatible with the Reformed faith, and to provide practical applications of the doctrines found in the Bible. This is not an in-depth exegetical commentary. There are a number of references to the Hebrew text, however, and the busy pastor who is seeking a sampling of such insights will appreciate them.

So far only three 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 progressing slowly.

The first few volumes of \**The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary (WEC)*, a series begun by Moody and rumored to be completed by Baker, looked promising, but this series too seems to be on permanent hiatus.

*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament (ACCOT)* (InterVarsity) –a compilation of patristic commentary on the Old Testament.

*New International Biblical Commentary (NIBCOT)* (Hendrickson) Now renamed *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (UBCS)*(Baker). Aims at “believing criticism.”

*Apollos Old Testament Commentary (AOTC)* (Intervarsity) Just getting underway with five volumes..

*Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms (BCOTWP)*—some good volumes and some disasters. Series now complete.

The following series are weak theologically, but are often 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 –now published by Yale)—some horrible, some quite useful, especially on the historical books.

*Continental Commentaries (ContCom)* (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 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 beginning to appear (*NICC*).

Many of the Old Testament commentaries of the \**Word Bible Commentary (WBC)* 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 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: *Brazos*, *Berit Olam*, *The New Century Bible*, *Interpretation*, *Interpreter’s Bible*, *New Interpreter’s 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 \**NET* is an online translation rather than a commentary but its notes have a lot of linguistic and textual information which is useful to the exegete.

## ABBREVIATIONS

The Anchor Bible (AB)

Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (BCOTWP)

The Bible Speaks Today (TBST)

Bible Student’s Commentary (BSC)

Communicator’s Commentary (ComCom)

\*\*Concordia Commentary (Concordia)

Continental Commentaries (ContCom)  
 Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC)  
 \*Expositor's Guide to the Historical Books (EGHB)  
 Hermeneia (HERM)  
 International Critical Commentary (ICC)  
 JPS Torah (JPST)  
 \*Keil-Delitzsch (KD)  
 \*New American Commentary (NAC)  
 New Century Bible Commentary (NCBC)  
 \*New International Commentary (NICOT)  
 New International Biblical Commentary (NIBCOT)  
 New International Version Application Commentary (NICAC)  
 People's Bible (PB)  
 Reformed Expository Commentary  
 The Old Testament Library (OTL)  
 \*Tyndale Old Testament (TOT)  
 Word Bible Commentary (WBC)  
 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament (ACCOT)  
 \* indicates most recommended series

## THE BEST VOLUMES ON SPECIFIC BOOKS

### THE PENTATEUCH

**GENESIS** For a commentary which covers the whole book, 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. Hamilton and Wenham are the most highly rated, recent, Evangelical commentaries on the whole book.

\*Lawrenz and Jeske, NPH, 2004, fills the need for a sound treatment of Genesis 1-11. At present there are no plans to extend this commentary beyond the first eleven chapters.

\*Hamilton, *NICOT, Genesis 1-17*, 1990; *Genesis 18-50*, 1995. Good overview of different view points, but sometimes wishy-washy on taking a stand on key issues.

\*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, *11:26-50:26*, 2005. Less technical than Wenham and Hamilton, but better on key issues in Genesis 1-11. Falters on the days of creation. May be the best choice for pastors on the whole book.

Arnold, *NCBC*, 2009. Emphasis on linguistic and cultural contexts and survey of current scholarship.

Waltke and Fredrichs, *Genesis*, Zondervan, 2001. Highly rated but disappointing on key issues.

Walton, *NIVAC*, 2001. Weak on NT connections.

Hartley, *NIBCOT/UBCS*, 2000. Solid Evangelical treatment. Brief.

Others to consider as backups:

\**EBC Vol 2* (1989, 2008). Includes Sailhammer's useful treatment of Genesis.

\*Leupold, Baker, 1949. American Lutheran.

Sarna, *JPST*, 1989. Jewish commentary, helpful with the Hebrew.

Cassuto, Magnes, 1964. Conservative 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** We need help here. 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:

\*Hamilton, Baker, 2011. Useful on text. The best option for now.

\*Currid, 2 vols, Evangelical Press, 2000. Fairly good on text and application.

\**EBC* Vol 2, 1989, 2008, Includes treatment of Exodus by Kaiser.

Enns, *NIVAC*, 2000. Useful but not great. Light on the Hebrew, rather open on the issue of Mosaic authorship.

Childs, *OTL*, 1974. Moderately liberal, but useful for linguistic information, this is the most highly regarded commentary on Exodus.

Propp, Exodus 1-18: A New Translation and Commentary, and Exodus 19-40: A New Translation and Commentary. AB. Doubleday, 1998 and 2006. Highly rated but critical,

Cassuto, Mages, 1951, is helpful with the Hebrew.

Sarna, *JPST*, 1990. Jewish commentary, helpful with the Hebrew.

Jacob, Ktav, 1992 reprint. Traditional Jewish commentary.

Carasik, *The Commentators' Bible: the JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot, Exodus*, Philadelphia, Pa: Jewish Publication Society, 2005. Rabbinic comments on the Hebrew.

Houtman, Kampen Kok, 1993—3 volume Dutch commentary being translated to English.

Bruckner, UBCS, 2008. Brief.

(As backups—\*Wendland, *People's Bible*, 1984. Cole, *TOT*, 1973, and Keil)

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

\*\*Kleinig, Concordia, 2003. The best choice for pastors.

\*Wenham, *NICOT*, Eerdmans, 1979. Previous best. Still Useful.

\*Hartley, *WBC*, 1992. Makes too many concessions to critical views but is helpful on interpretation of the Hebrew text.

\*Rooker, *NAC*, 2000. Brief. Good evaluation of critical views. Makes NT connections.

Kiuchi, *AOTC*, 2007. On ritual and law.

Gane, *NIVAC, Leviticus and Numbers*, 2004. On ritual.

Milgrom, *AB, Leviticus 1-16*, 1991, *Leviticus 17-22*, 2000, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2001 is helpful on the Hebrew text and rabbinic interpretation but critical.

Carasik, *The Commentators' Bible: the JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot, Leviticus*, Philadelphia, Pa: Jewish Publication Society, 2009. Rabbinic comments on the Hebrew.

Levine, *JPST*, 1989, is also helpful on the Hebrew.

(*EBC* Vol 2 by Harris, *REBC* by Hess; or Harrison, *TOT*, 1980, make good backups).

**NUMBERS** Things are looking up here:

\*Harrison, *WEC*, 1990, is the best available overall, but

\*Ashley, *NICOT*, 1993, is most helpful on difficult passages.

\*Cole, *NAC*, 2000. A bit lighter on the Hebrew, but fairly solid. Non-committal on numbers.

Milgrom, *JPST*, 1990, is helpful on the Hebrew text.

Levine, *AB, Numbers 1-20*, 1993, *Numbers 21-36*, 2000, is helpful on the Hebrew but critical.

(Good backups—\*Wenham, *TOT*, 1982, and *EBC* Vol 2 by Allen.)

Not recommended: Budd, *Word*.

**DEUTERONOMY** Still a little thin here:

\*Craigie, *NICOT*, 1976. Best overall for now.

\*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 but critical.  
Weinfeld, *AB, Numbers 1-11*, 1991, highly rated but critical.  
Wright, NIBC UBCS, Hendrickson, 1996. Evangelical ethics.  
Christensen, WBC, 2001, 2002. Avoid. Some provocative ideas.  
McConville, *Apollos/Intervarsity*, 2002. Some provocative ideas.  
(Good backups—\*Thompson, *TOT*, 1974; *EBC* Vol 3, 1992, ; Braun, *The People's Bible*).

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

### JOSHUA

\*\*Harstad, Concordia, 2005. Best buy for a pastor.  
\*Howard, *NAC*, 1998. Second best.  
\*Woudstra, *NICOT*, 1981. Still a contender for second place.  
\*Davis, *No Falling Words, EGHB*, Baker, 1988. Briefer. Stimulating style.  
\*Hess, *TOT*, 1996, Good overview of viewpoints. Straddles on issue of miracle of sun.  
Butler, *WBC*, 1983, and Boling, *AB*, 1982, for bibliographies and technical information, but both too critical.  
(Backup—*EBC* Vol 3 )

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

\*\*Webb, *NICOT*, 2012. The best bet for now.  
\*Block, *NAC*, 1999. Fairly simple but useful. Contender for top spot.  
\*Davis, *Such A Great Salvation, EGHB*, Baker, 1990. Good for pastors. Brief.  
Boda, *REBC*, 2013, helpful.  
Younger, *NIVAC*, 2002. More on the original text than most of this series.  
Butler, *WBC*, Thomas Nelson, 2009. Evangelical study of all aspects of exegesis.  
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 give you everything you need on Ruth:

\*\*Wilch, Concordia, 2006. The best choice.  
\*Hubbard, *NICOT*, 1988. Previous best choice.  
Bush, *WBC*. 1996, with Esther.  
(Backups—Block, *NAC on Judges*. Cundall/Morris, *TOT*, 1968. *EBC*, Vol 3.)  
Also Campbell, *AB*, 1975. Useful on the social background.  
Sasson, *JSOT*, 1989, is useful on the Hebrew.

Things are looking somewhat better for the next six books than they did a few years ago, but no heavy weights are available.

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

\*Tsumura, 1 Samuel, *NICOT*, 2007. A new Evangelical commentary, skeptical of critical views. So-so.  
\*Bergen, *NAC*, 1996. Helpful, but relatively brief.  
\*Gordon, Zondervan, 1986/8. Evangelical, quite helpful. More detailed than Baldwin.  
\*Baldwin, *TOT*, 1988. Brief, but quite helpful.  
\*Davis, *Looking on the Heart: 1 Samuel 1-14, 15-31*. *EGHB*, Baker, 1994. Briefer. Stimulating style.  
Firth, *AOTC*, 2009, Highly rated, worth a look.  
Youngblood in *EBC* 3, Zondervan, 1992. *REBC* 2009  
Arnold, *NIVAC*, 2004. Interesting on application, light on exegesis.  
Klein, 1 Sam, *WBC*, 1983, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2009. Useful on textual criticism, but liberal.  
Anderson, 2 Sam, *WBC*, 1989. Somewhat less liberal than Klein, but so-so. Helpful on text.

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.

Provan, *NIBCOT UBCS*, 1995. Highly rated. Brief

Wiseman, *TOT*, 1993. Brief, but quite good.

\**EBC Vol 4* (1988) *REBC*, 2009, by Paterson and Austel is brief, but useful.

Konkel, *NIVAC*, 2006. Application.

Devries, 1 Kg, *WBC*, 1985. Too critical,

Hobbs, 2 Kg, *WBC*. 1985, Hobbs is better than Devries.

Cogan/Tadmor, *AB*, 1 Kg, 2001, 2 Kg, 1988. Helpful on historical background.

(Backup—Keil Delitzsch)

**1 and 2 CHRONICLES** Still waiting for a good commentary.

Hill, *NIVAC*, 2003. Treats as historical but with some critical concessions. On application,

\*Thompson, *NAC*, 1994. Rather brief. So-so.

\*Selman, *TOT*, 2 Vol, 1994. Another steady *TOT* contribution.

\*P. Wendland, *People's Bible*, 1994, 1998. Valuable for help with the interpretation.

\**EBC Vol 4* by Payne. Not ideal, but useful. *REBC* by Mabie, 2010.

Braun, 1 Ch, *WBC*, 1986. Liberal, but help with the Hebrew.

Dillard, 2 Ch, *WBC*, 1987. Less liberal than most of *WBC*. Better than Braun.

Japhet, *OTL*, 1993. May be more useful than the *WBC* volumes. Good on Hebrew, weak theology.

Williamson, *NCBC*, 1982. More useful than most of this series.

Koppers, *AB*, 2002, 2004. More useful on the text than the theology.

Williamson, *NCB*, 1982. Maybe useful in a weak field,

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

\*\*Steinmann, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, Concordia, 2010. Best buy for Lutheran pastors.

\*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. Useful on history and scholarship.

(Backup--*EBC Vol 4*, 1988, by Yamauchi. Quite good. *REBC*, 2010)

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

\*Baldwin, *TOT*, 1984. Her usual steady performance.

Reid, *TOT*<sup>2</sup>, 2008. Replaces Baldwin.

\*Jobes, *NIVAC*, 1999. Generally good.

\*Breneman, included in the Ezra-Nehemiah volume cited above.

Also in *EBC Vol 4*, 1988, by Huey. *REBC*, Phillips, 2010.

Bush, *WBC*, 1996. Highly rated on the technical issues. Includes Ruth.

Moore, *AB*, 1971. For linguistic and historical information, but weak otherwise.

Berlin, *JPSBC*, 2001. Good on literary qualities.

## POETICAL BOOKS

**JOB** One of the most difficult books in Hebrew. No recent, in-depth Evangelical option.

\*Hartley, *NICOT*, 1988. Best overall for exegesis. Not great.

\*Andersen, *TOT*, 1976. Good, but limited in size.

\* Longman, *BCOTWP*, 2012, a recently released Evangelical commentary.



Alden, *NAC*, 1993. Less comprehensive than Hartley, but perhaps useful for pastors.  
 \*Honsey, *People's Bible*, 1992, will be most helpful to the pastor on the theology. Christo-centric.  
 (Backup--\**EBC* Vol. 4 by Smick. *REBC*, 2010.)  
 \*Zuck, *Sitting With Job*, Baker, 1992, is not a commentary but a useful volume of essays on topics from Job.  
 Konkel, *Cornerstone*, 2006. Useful notes on translation problems.  
 For additional help with the Hebrew of this very difficult book see:  
 \*Clines, *WBC*, 1989, 2003, 2006 is very detailed and helpful on Ch 1-20, 21-37, 38-42 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" but liberal.  
 Gordis, *Ktav*, 1965 & 1978; Pope, *AB*, 1965; Dhorme, T. Nelson, 1967 reprint for help with the Hebrew.

## **PSALMS**

\*\*Brug, *Psalms 1 and II*, NPH, 2005. Lutheran with focus on Messianic prophecy.  
 Wilson, *NIVAC*, Vol.I, 2002. 5\*.  
 \*Kidner's treatment (*TOT*, 2 vol, 1973, 1975) is brief, but useful.  
 \*In *EBC* Vol 5 (1991) *REBC*, 2008, the treatment by VanGemeren is useful, but brief.  
 Delitzsch (3 volumes, 1867) remains a standard.  
 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.  
 Hossfeld and Zenger. (Herm ) *Psalms 2*, 2005, is expected to become the standard for critical commentaries.  
 Goldingay, 3 volumes, *BCOTWP*, 2006-2008, is disappointingly liberal. Not recommended except for grammar, etc.

**PROVERBS** Some recent good developments. Three pretty good choices.

\*\*Steinmann, *Concordia*, 2009. Best buy for Lutheran pastors.  
 \*Waltke, *NICOT*, 2 volumes, Chapters 1-15, Chapters 16-31, 2004, 2005. An in-depth Evangelical commentary.  
 \*Longman, *BCOTWP*, 2006. One volume. Second to Waltke.  
 \*Garrett, *NAC*, 1993. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Songs*. Brief but helpful on all three.  
 \*Kidner, *TOT*, 1964. Brief, but helpful.  
 Koptak, *NIVAC*, 2003. Light on exegesis.  
 In *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.  
 Fox, *AB*, Volume 1:1-9: 2000, 11-31, 2009. Expected to become the critical standard. 5\*  
 Murphy, *Word*, 1998, best academic commentary on Proverbs from a more critical perspective.  
 McKane, *OTL*, 1970. For linguistic help, but too critical and hard to use.  
 Clifford, *OTL*. 1999, a replacement for McKane.  
 An older commentary is Bridges, 1846, *Banner of Truth* reprint (1968).

**ECCLESIASTES** The recently published *Concordia Commentary* leaps to the top.

\*\* Bollhagen, *Concordia*, 2011. A solid Lutheran exegetical and pastoral commentary.  
 \* Bartholomew, Baker *COOTWP*, 2009. A recent Evangelical exegetical treatment. 5\* Supplanted by *Concordia*

\*Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC 1993. Brief but useful.  
 \*Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes*, TBST, 1988. Good on the message.  
 \*Eaton, *TOT*, 1983. Traditional approach. Brief.  
 \*Wolff, *WLQ* April & July 1981, Winter and Summer 1982. Brief Commentary.  
 J. Schuetze, *Nowhere Man*, NPH Bible class.  
 Zuck, *Reflecting with Solomon*, Baker, 1994, topical articles, various viewpoints.  
 Longman, *NICOT*, 1998, is helpful on the Hebrew but weak theologically.  
 Seow, *AB*, 1997. May be more useful than Longman, but not very readable.  
 Leupold (1952/1966). Lutheran, but treats the book as post-exilic.  
 Bridges, 1860, Banner of Truth reprint (1961). Traditional and Christo-centric.  
 Zorn, *Gottestrost* is a useful German work.  
 For linguistic help see Murphy, *WBC*, 1992; Fox, Jewish Publication Society, 2004; Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up*, Eerdmans, 1999; Crenshaw, *OTL*, 1987; Gordis, *Koheleth: The Man and His World*, Schocken, 1951.  
 (Backups—*EBC* 5 (1991) by Wright is somewhat helpful. *REBC*, Shepherd, 2008. 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.

\*\*Mitchell, CPH, 2003. A massive exegetical work from a Lutheran Christological perspective. 800 pp.  
 \*\*Brug, NPH, 1995, tries to give balanced view of both approaches. Very brief. 100 pp. For Bible class.  
 \*Hess, Baker (BCOTWP), 2005. A good exegetical treatment. Midway between the CPH and NPH volumes in size. Good as a second exegetical commentary.  
 Garrett, *WBC*, 2004. More scholarly version of the *NAC* volume below.  
 Longman, *NICOT*, 2001. Helpful on Hebrew and history. Downplays Solomonic authorship and unity of book.  
 \*Gledhill, *TBST*, 1994. Quite good on the “natural” interpretation.  
 \*Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC 1993.  
 Speckard, *WLQ*, 1965-1966, spiritual 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. Help with the Hebrew. Top-rated liberal commentary.  
 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. *REBC*, 2008, by ‘Schwab )

## THE PROPHETS

**ISAIAH** No ideal, recent commentary on the whole book is yet available. Most recent efforts are too critical, including Watt’s two volumes in *WBC*. The Concordia is on the way.

\*\* Lessing, *Is 40-55*, Concordia, 2011.  
 \*\*Pieper, *Isaiah II*, Northwestern Publishing House, original 1919. Chapters 40-66 only. A Lutheran classic.  
 \*Oswalt, new *NICOT*, *Isaiah 1-39*, 1986, *Isaiah 40-66*, 1998. Perhaps most useful overall on the Hebrew of the complete treatments. (Also in *NIVAC*, 2003).  
 \*Young, 3 volumes, early *NICOT*, Eerdmans, 1952-1965. Still useful though Oswalt is its intended replacement.

Motyer, InterVarsity, 1994. An evangelical, one-volume treatment. A good second choice,

\*Motyer, *TOT*, 1999. Brief, but a good second choice.

Smith, Isaiah 1-39. NAC, Broadman & Holman, 2007.

Leupold, Baker, 2 vols. 1968-1971.

Critical: Blenkinsopp, *AB*, 2000, 2002, and 2004.

Goldingay, *UBCS*, 2001. Too critical.

(Backup—*EBC* Vol 6, 1986, also covers the major prophets. *REBC*, 2008, by Grogan)

**JEREMIAH** No standout volume. Some good linguistic help, but weak theology.

\*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.

Dearmann, *NIVAC*, 2002. Rated highly. Light on technical issues.

Lundbom, *AB*, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 1999. 21-36, 2004, 37-52, 2004. Five star on technical issues.

Fretheim, *SHBC* (Smith & Helwys), 2004. 5\* on text.

Allen, *OTL*. Westminster John Knox, 2008.

Holladay, 2 Vol, *HERM*, 1986, 1989. Liberal, highly rated linguistically.

King, *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Commentary*. Westminster John Knox, 1993.

Also McKane, new *ICC*, 1986.

(Backup—Harrison, *TOT*, 1973. Brief. Huey, *NAC*, 1993. Brown, *REBC*, 2010)

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

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

Berlin, *OTL*, 2002. Given 5\* on literary.

House, *WBC*, 2004. On interpretation.

Dobbs-Allsop, *Interpretation*, 2002. *CAVE*.

See Dearman and Huey above. Ferris in *REBC* 7.

**EZEKIEL** Millennialism is a problem with many evangelical commentaries on the prophetic books.

\*\*Hummel, 2 volumes, Concordia, 2005, 2007. Sound Lutheran treatment.

\*Block, *NICOT*, 2 volumes, 1997-1998. Most highly rated until CPH appeared.

\*Taylor, *TOT*, 1969. Mildly critical. Brief.

Dugaid, *NIVAC*, 1999. Less academic.

Cooper, *NAC*, 1994. Not much depth. Millennial. Avoid.

Stuart, *CC*, 1989. So so.

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 useful for detailed exegesis, but is theologically unsound.

Allen, *WBC*, 1990, 1995; and Greenberg, *AB*, 1983, 1997, also provide some help with the Hebrew.

**DANIEL**

\*\*Steinman, Concordia, 2008. Best buy for Lutheran pastors.

\*Young, Eerdmans, 1949. Sound on prophecy, somewhat dry.

\*Baldwin, *TOT*, 1978. Another balanced careful work.

Longman, *NIVAC*, 1999. Evasive on critical issues.

Leupold, Baker, 1949/1969 reprint. Conservative Lutheran.

Goldingay, *WBC*, 1989. Lots of technical help, but very liberal.

Collins, *HERM*, 1993. Ditto.

**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. Not repeated below.
- \*Laetsch, Concordia, 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 brief, solid treatments:
  - \*Hubbard, *Hosea*, 1989. One of the more thorough *TOT*.
  - \*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** Dearman, *NICOT*, 2010. 5\* on the text.  
Freedman and Anderson, *AB*, 1980. Helpful on the text.  
Kidner, *TBST*, 1981. Lively interpretation.  
Wolff, *Herm.*, 1974 on text. Critical.  
Macintosh, *ICC*, 1997. Critical.
- JOEL** \*Finley, *Joel, Amos, and Obadiah*, *WEC*, 1990. Evangelical.  
Wolff, *Herm.*, 1977 on text. Critical. Includes Amos.
- AMOS** \*\*Lessing, Concordia, 2009. Best buy for Lutheran pastors.  
\*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." Better than Wolff.
- OBADIAH** \*Raabe, *AB*, 1996. A massive study of this little book and of prophecy.
- JONAH** \*\*Lessing, Concordia, 2007. Best buy for Lutheran pastors.  
Limburg, *OTL*, 1993. Good on literary form.
- MICAH** Waltke, Erdmans, 2007, 5\* on text.  
Freedman and Anderson, *AB*, 2000.  
Hillers, *HERM*, 1983. Liberal. Useful on the Hebrew text.
- NAHUM** \*Maier, Concordia, 1959 & Baker reprint. Solid Lutheran.  
Patterson, *WEC, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, WEC*, 1991.  
Robertson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, (NICOT)*. 1990. So-so.
- HABBAKUK** Fuerbringer, *The Eternal Why*, Concordia, 1947.  
Armerding in *EBC 7. REBC 8*, 2008.  
Anderson, *AB*, 2001.
- ZEPHANIAH** See Baker, *TOT*, above.  
Berlin, *AB*, 1994. Literary.
- HAGGAI** Verhoef, *Haggai, Malachi, (NICOT)*, 1987.  
Boda, *NIVAC*, 2004. Also on Zechariah. 5\*
- ZECHARIAH** Leupold, Baker, 1956/1965. Lutheran.  
Meyers, *AB*, 2 volumes on Haggai and Zechariah. 1987, 1993. On history and archaeology.
- MALACHI** Kaiser, *God's Unchanging Love*, Baker, 1984. Model of exegetical method.  
Hill, *AB*, 1998. Technical. Makes NT connections.

**MESSIANIC PROPHECY**

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