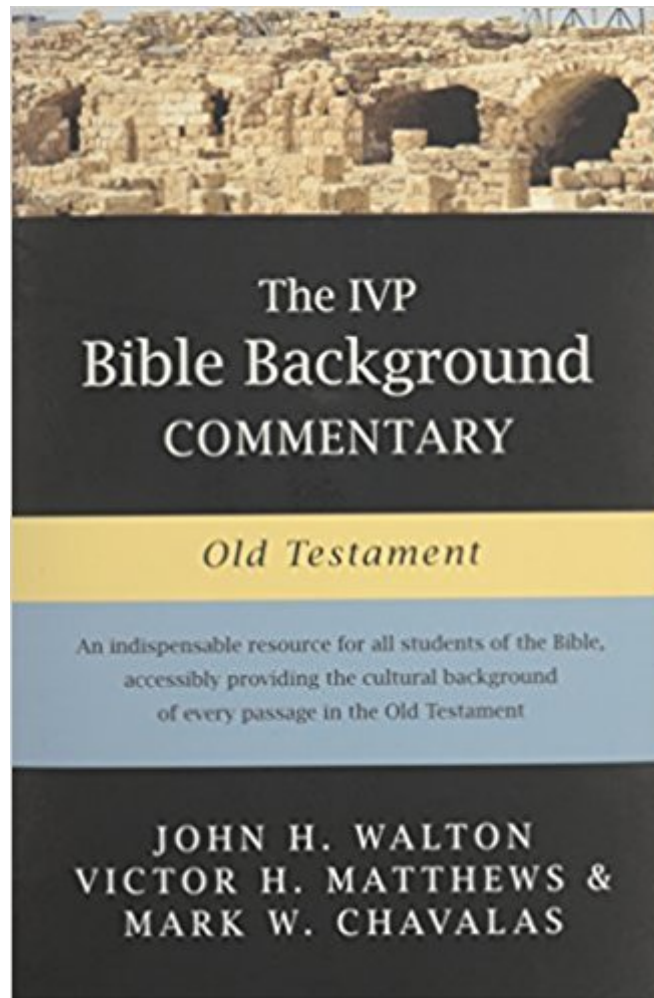




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The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament



Synopsis

Preaching's Preacher's Guide to the Best Bible Reference for 2014 (General Reference) How can we account for the "Book of the Law" suddenly being discovered during Josiah's renovation of the temple (2 Chron 34:14)? We know from Egypt and Mesopotamia that it was common to seal important documents--including theological documents--in the masonry or foundations of a palace or temple in order to inform a future king who might undertake restoration of the building. What might the psalmist have had in mind when praising God for removing our transgressions "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps 103:12)? In an Egyptian hymn to Amun-Re, the deity is praised for his judgment of the guilty. As a result of the god's discernment the guilty are assigned to the east and the righteous to the west. What is meant by God "weighing the heart" (Prov 21:2)? In Egyptian religious tradition we find the notion of the dead being judged before the gods. As the soul is examined, the dead person's heart is weighed in a scale against a feather symbolizing Truth. If the answers are correct and the heart does not outweigh the feather, the soul may enter the realm of everlasting life. The narratives, genealogies, laws, poetry, proverbs and prophecies of the Old Testament are deeply rooted in history. Archaeologists, historians and social scientists have greatly advanced our knowledge of the ancient world of the Bible. When we illuminate the stories of Abraham or David, the imagery of the Psalms or Proverbs, or the prophecies of Isaiah or Jeremiah with this backlight of culture and history, these texts spring to new life. The unique commentary joins The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament in providing historical, social and cultural background for each passage of the Old Testament. From Genesis through Malachi, this single volume gathers and condenses an abundance of specialized knowledge--making it available and accessible to ordinary readers of the Old Testament. Expert scholars John Walton, Victor Matthews and Mark Chavalas have included along with the fruits of their research and collaboration a glossary of historical terms, ancient peoples, texts and inscriptions maps and charts of important historical resources expanded explanations of significant background issues introductory essays on each book of the Old Testament The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament will enrich your experience of the Old Testament--and your teaching and preaching from Scripture--in a way that no other commentary can do.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Users of Craig Keener's IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament will be delighted to have a companion volume on a period both more remote in time and exotic in cultural background. . . . This volume . . . fills a need not addressed by any other book I know. It will open the eyes of lay readers to the vast and still largely untapped resources of ancient Near Eastern archaeology and texts for the understanding of the Old Testament. I predict a warm and enthusiastic reception for the book." (Harry A. Hoffner Jr., Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago)"This volume [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Genesis--Deuteronomy, a precursor to this new, complete OT volume] provides Bible readers who have little knowledge of the ancient world an abundance of information on the sociocultural background of texts throughout the Pentateuch. The authors present the materials in a clear, concise, straightforward manner. . . . This book is a splendid tool that provides ready access to the cultural background of the books of the Pentateuch." (Themelios)

John H. Walton (PhD, Hebrew Union College) is professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College and Graduate School. Previously he was professor of Old Testament at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago for twenty years. Some of Walton's books include *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, *The Lost World of Scripture*, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, *The Essential Bible Companion*, *The NIV Application Commentary: Genesis* and *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (with Victor Matthews and Mark Chavalas). Walton's ministry experience includes church classes for all age groups, high school Bible studies and adult Sunday school classes, as well as serving as a teacher for "The Bible in 90 Days." John and his wife, Kim, live in Wheaton, Illinois, and have three adult children. Victor H. Matthews is dean

of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs and professor of religious studies at Missouri State University (Springfield, Missouri). He has written several books on the Old Testament, including *Manners and Customs in the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to Life in Bible Times*, (with James Moyer) *The Old Testament: Text and Context* and (with Don C. Benjamin) *The Social World of Ancient Israel*. Mark W. Chavalas is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin--La Crosse. He is also editor of *Emar: The History, Religion, and Culture of a Syrian Town in the Late Bronze Age*, (with John L. Hayes) *New Horizons in the Study of Ancient Syria* and (with K. L. Younger Jr.) *Syria-Mesopotamia and the Bible*.

This book is a Biblical review containing many good insights that can be very helpful in adding to an understanding of the Bible. The book is set up as a comparative study which greatly enhances its usefulness in expanding the reader's knowledge of the Biblical text. It is easy to read and follow, and the concepts presented are not complex. While I would not recommend reading it like a history book, it is reference material, the concepts are tied together and enhanced in key locations. The expanded explanations are excellent. For example, *Ancient Near Eastern Mythology and the Old Testament* on page 30 is a very good review of how the Biblical text and myths of the ancient world tie together. It gets three stars because of terrible editing and for some slants in its content. This is not a resource for purely fundamentalist explanations of the Bible. It is a somewhat "progressive" take on Biblical archeology and must be read with that in mind. For example, when dealing with Genesis it does not discuss the meaning of the word day as it applies to whether the day is a 24 hour section of time or perhaps another period of time. It seems the authors avoided this controversy for a reason. Nonetheless, the authors believe the Bible is the word of God and try to communicate to the reader the facts about the ancient near east and its views of gods and sacrifice and other human problems. Knowing how different the Biblical view is from the surrounding cultures is critical for understanding how Israel stood out from the non-moral gods of the other cultures. The contrast and comparison method is outstanding in its teaching potential. The book is filled with spelling errors. On page 37, for example, it uses "dean" instead of "clean" on two separate occasions. On page 507 it puts in "nit" for "not" and on page 512 "day" is put in for "clay". The problem isn't these few examples, it is the fact that the book is replete with such problems. I don't believe a proof reader could miss so many errors, as often the same error is repeated multiple times on the same page. This indicates the text was not proofed. Note this is in the Kindle edition.

A volume from a library of reference works from Intervarsity Press (IVP), this offers a general

overview of the background against the Old Testament was lived out and written. Not technical, but filled with excellent comments that explain how Bible passages are better understood with a bit of knowledge of the background panorama against which events took place or daily customs were practiced and were the subject of Biblical writing. Highly recommended. (There is also a volume for the NT which is equally recommended.)

This is most often the first commentary I reach for in studying a passage of Scripture. When I am away from my library this book (along with the NT companion volume which in some ways is even better) this is the only commentary that I even think of taking with me in printed and bound form. Some may find this set disappointing because they do not explore the meaning of a passage nor all of the scholarship related to it. What they do give, they give very well indeed, and that is a reasonably thorough top-level survey of the historical, cultural, and archaeological factors that are relevant to the passage in a compact, yet useable form. Included are citations and summaries of literature and historical facts that shed light on a passage. For the deepest levels of research and study, this book is no substitute for a complete library and good old fashioned grunt work, but to begin to get the meaning of a passage or a set of passages it is hard to imagine a better place to start. It can be useful in helping me to decide where to devote my time doing more exhaustive research, or as a quick "sanity check" to ensure that as I begin to survey a longer section of Scripture I am not reading meanings into any one verse that might be foreign to the original writer and his peers or otherwise going off in an incorrect direction. A good complement to a more conventional set of commentaries - highly recommended tool for filling the holes in many day to day Bible studies.

Great for your study library when studying scriptures and preparing for bible teaching lessons.

The IVP Bible Background Commentary should be understood not so much as a commentary but as an expanded version of the reference notes that you can find in many Bibles. A commentary should provide the reader assistance with understanding and interpreting the text with an intent for application. However, you do not find the overall description of the text, its themes and possible applications in this "commentary". Instead, it basically just lists reference information (which is good stuff) by verse. For example, the section on Micah starts off with a description of the city of Moresheth. If you want to find out more about Micah as a person, you're out of luck. In addition, the authors seem to take positions on several issues without letting the reader know that there are other

alternatives. For example, if you thought that Daniel's prophecies might have something to say about the end times before Christ's return, you won't find it here where the notes pretty much describe them as describing them as referring to the Greek empires which arose after the death of Alexander the Great. However, I do fault myself. In the preface of this book, it is stated that this book's sole purpose is to provide background information to the text. You can read the preface on by double clicking on the image. I would strongly recommend potential purchasers doing that to make sure that this book is what you are expecting. However, I also fault the authors for using the word "commentary" in the title.

Love this commentary! Glad I finally bought it!

great

I liked this book as an addition to several other commentaries that I have. It contains quite a bit of fresh information that I have not seen in other resource material.

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