



Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch (The IVP Bible Dictionary Series)

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A 2003 LOGOS Book Award Winner! An ECPA 2003 Gold Medallion Finalist! The first five books of the Old Testament lay the foundation on which the rest of Scripture stands. Its great themes, epochal events and towering figures set down vectors on which the biblical story is played out. The very shape of the rest of the Old Testament would collapse were the Pentateuch to be removed. The structure of New Testament thought would be barely intelligible without it. Here we meet the great ancestral figures of Israel--Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--and the towering figure of Moses, whose presence dominates four of these five books. The creative act of God, the paradisaical garden, the exile of Adam and Eve, the judgment of the great flood, the call of Abraham from among the nations, the covenant of Abraham, the exodus from Egypt, the giving of the law at Sinai, the plan of the tabernacle, the varied experiences of Israel in the wilderness, and the announcement of the covenant blessings and curses--all of these and more contribute to a work of world-formative power. This dictionary explores the major themes and contours of the Pentateuch. Behind and beneath the grandeur of the Pentateuch, issues of historicity have both puzzled and beckoned. But whereas in the mid-twentieth century many English-speaking scholars were confident of archaeological support for the patriarchal accounts, the climate has now changed. In the most extreme cases, some contemporary scholars have radically challenged the antiquity of the ancestral stories, arguing for their final composition even as late as the Hellenistic era. This dictionary examines and weighs the historical issues and poses possible solutions. The documentary hypothesis, the former reigning critical consensus, is now widely rumored to be on life support with no heir apparent. Meanwhile, conservative scholars reconsider what indeed a claim to Mosaic authorship should entail. This dictionary offers an assessment of the array of questions surrounding these issues and considers some possible ways forward for evangelical scholarship. At the same time, there has been a fruitful turning to the nature, message and art of the received text of the Pentateuch. Literary studies of brief episodes, sprawling sagas, complex narrative and even the fivefold composition of the Pentateuch itself have delivered promising and exciting results. This dictionary offers both appreciative panoramas and close-up assessments of these developments and their methods. The *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* is the first in a

four-volume series covering the text of the Old Testament. Following in the tradition of the four award-winning IVP dictionaries focused on the New Testament and its background, this encyclopedic work is characterized by close attention to the text of the Old Testament and the ongoing conversation of contemporary scholarship. In exploring the major themes and issues of the Pentateuch, editors T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, with an international and expert group of scholars, inform and challenge through authoritative overviews, detailed examinations and new insights from the world of the ancient Near East. The *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* is designed to be your first stop in the study and research of the Pentateuch, on which the rest of the Bible is built.

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Editorial Review

Review

This, the first volume in the IVP Dictionary of the OT series is simple a must-have reference for anyone interested in scholarly study of the Pentateuch. At 900 plus pages, it does a good job of covering the topics that most readers would be interested in. Over 80 scholars of different denominational and scholarly backgrounds contributed essays to the volume and the quality throughout is exceptional. Highly recommended for anyone interested in the foundational books of the Old Testament. It will be going on my "recommended reading" list under OT Background and I expect to be using it and still learning from it for many years to come. (Search the Scripture (searchthescripture.wordpress.com), July 8, 2009)

"One of the main things that I love about all of these volumes are the bibliographies at the end of each entry. I also appreciate the manner in which the articles are written, i.e., they're substantial enough for scholars but simple enough for motivated non-scholars. I suggest that if you don't have the books in this series that you go out and get them, soon!" (Nick Norelli, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth (rdtwot.wordpress.com), June 16, 2008)

"A fine resource for reference and research." (The Bible Today, July/August 2007)

"I like the idea of a *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, and the decision to focus on major topics is well judged. There is a great deal of very useful discussion and analysis in the volume. It should open up the study of the Pentateuch in new ways for many a reader, and I welcome the project most warmly." (Robert P. Gordon, Regius Professor of Hebrew, University of Cambridge)

"By focusing on a single main section of Scripture, the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* allows for greater scope and in-depth handling of individual topics. Well researched and comprehensive in treatment, it will be a good addition to the library of students, pastors, scholars and laypeople." (Christopher R. Seitz, Professor of Biblical Interpretation, Wycliffe College)

"The *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* contains a wealth of important information for all students of this foundational portion of Scripture. The articles are all written by leading scholars in the field under the guidance of two preeminent Old Testament interpreters well known for their own work on the Pentateuch. This dictionary is not only informative but also readable. I highly recommend it." (Tremper Longman III, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College)

About the Author

Baker (A.B., M.C.S., M.Phil., Ph.D.) is professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio. He serves as editor for the Evangelical Theological Society Dissertation and Evangelical Theological Society Studies series as well as for Sources for Biblical and Theological Studies (Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake). He is coauthor (with Bill T. Arnold) of *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. In addition, he has written many articles, essays and commentaries.

Dr Desmond Alexander is senior lecturer in Biblical Studies at Union Theological College and associate director for Post-graduate Studies in the Institute of Theology at Queen's University, Belfast. He currently

chairs the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research, as well as Southern Theological Seminaries, a UK based charity committed to the establishment of a centre for theological education and vocational training in the south of Argentina.

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Shirley Nichols:

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