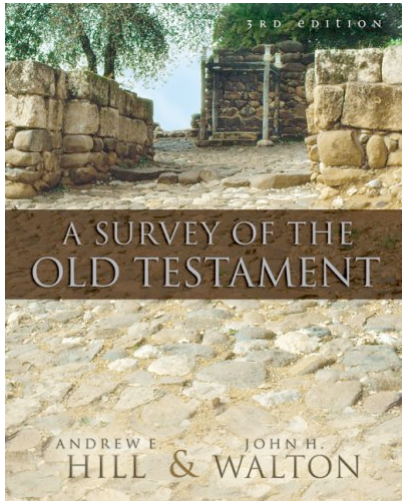


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Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton

A Survey of the Old Testament

3rd edition

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. Pp. 799. Hardcover.
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William Barrick
The Master's Seminary
Sun Valley, California

Teachers of seminary level Old Testament introduction face two challenges. One involves deciding what to teach. The other is choosing the textbook(s) to cover the appropriate material. Responding to these challenges, a teacher first must identify the intended scope of topics to be covered in the course. Short curriculums include the following topics: canonicity, textual criticism, higher-critical methodologies, and archaeology. Longer curriculums add inspiration and inerrancy, ancient Near Eastern history and culture, and ancient Near Eastern and Palestinian geography. Choosing the shorter or longer curriculum depends on the presence or absence of the topics as separate required courses in the students' curriculum. Absence of any of these seven topics in the required curriculum for the basic seminary degree (the Master of Divinity, for example) creates pressure on Old Testament introduction to fill the vacuum and to round out the student's exposure to the breadth of Old Testament studies. Old Testament introduction must be distinguished from Old Testament survey (a problem further aggravated by the title of Hill and Walton's volume), which includes more special introduction topics such as authorship, date, background, structure, and theme for individual Old Testament books. Overlapping topics between Old Testament survey and Old Testament introduction provides yet another test for Old Testament introduction teachers—how to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Second, the professor must find the textbook(s) that cover the chosen range of topics for Old Testament introduction. Such a textbook must not only cover the topics in the

chosen curriculum (short or long) but must be up-to-date. Some potential textbooks (e.g., Gleason Archer's *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* [3rd ed.; Moody Press, 2007]) have not changed substantially in thirty or forty years. Later editions often merely append some excurses and upgrade the graphics and appearance. However, many still omit major Old Testament introduction topics such as history and geography and focus on the Documentary Hypothesis rather than exposing the student to the wider range of higher-critical methodologies. R. K. Harrison's magisterial opus, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (repr., Hendrickson 2004), just like Archer's volume, has not kept up with all of the changes in the field since its first edition in 1969. Other potential textbooks fall into the category of Old Testament survey (e.g., Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* [2nd ed.; Zondervan 2006]) or represent only a collection of essays without internal coherence (e.g., Baker and Arnold, *The Face of Old Testament Studies* [Apollos/Baker, 1999]).

Andrew Hill is Professor of Old Testament Studies at Wheaton College (1984–present), and John Walton taught for twenty years at Moody Bible Institute before joining Wheaton Graduate School as Professor of Old Testament (2001–present). In *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Zondervan, 1991, 2000, 2009), Hill and Walton arrange the materials for Old Testament introduction in a more integrated fashion than either Archer or Harrison. Rather than dividing their text into general and special introductions, they mix the two together. In keeping with a longer-curriculum approach, chapter 2 focuses on Old Testament geography (34–54), chapter 9 on Old Testament historical backgrounds (180–201), chapter 19 on archaeology (356–71), and chapter 26 on the formation (text, transmission, and canon) of the Old Testament (480–99). Teachers will find it advantageous to expand on these chapters in their lectures and/or course syllabi. For example, in the study of Palestinian geography, students should know something about the orographic effect on the weather patterns, something Hill does not cover. Likewise, the chapter on archaeology excludes any explanation of methods of field archaeology, another topic for which the teacher must provide material.

In my view, the advantages of *A Survey of the Old Testament* include an evangelical stance, up-to-date presentation of significant information, integration of the examination of higher-critical methodologies with specific Old Testament sections most affected (see also “Appendix A: Critical Methodologies,” 753–60; and “Appendix B: The Composition of the Pentateuch,” 761–69), balanced presentation of the variety of existing viewpoints (e.g., the date of the exodus from Egypt, 105–8), annotated bibliographies (concluding each section of the text; e.g., 73–75), visual presentations of key issues by means of charts and tables (e.g., “Comparison of Chronological Systems,” 66), and the fact that it represents most of the topics desirable for a long curriculum. Each chapter concludes with “Questions for Further Study and Discussion” as well as a bibliography: “For Further

Reading.” Throughout the volume Hill and Walton helpfully associate the Old Testament discussion with the New Testament (e.g., 117, 118, 120), providing a sense of the unity of the biblical canon—but without ignoring the issues involved in the New Testament use of the Old Testament.

Well-chosen full-color photos, maps, and charts illustrate the third edition’s text—a grand improvement over previous editions. Hill and Walton have updated chapter bibliographic entries under “For Further Reading.” For example, at the end of chapter 4, “Genesis” (97–98), Walton adds nine entries (those of Alter, Arnold, Hartley, Hess, Longman, Mathews, Waltke, Walton, and Wenham) and eliminates eight (those of Damrosch, Heidel, Lambert and Millard, Millard, Miller, Rendsberg, and VanGemeren). Unfortunately, the form of the entries is inconsistent especially with volumes within a series. Some chapters abbreviate the series titles, but other chapters omit them entirely. In this reviewer’s opinion, every entry that is part of a series should include the series title’s acronym (e.g., AB for Boling’s *Joshua* and NICOT for Woudstra’s *The Book of Joshua* [233]).

Hill and Walton’s second edition concludes its final section (“Epilogue”) with two chapters (“Toward the New Testament,” 555–61; “What We Have Learned,” 562–70). The third edition expands the section to three chapters: “What We Have Learned” (a brief Old Testament theology; 715–27), “Responding to God” (basic Old Testament ethics; 728–41); and “The Journey to Jesus” (revised “Toward the New Testament”; 742–52). Topics added in the third edition’s “Glossary” (770–74) include “anthropomorphism,” “covenant,” “Levant,” “Mesopotamia,” “Pentateuch,” “Septuagint,” “theophany,” and “Torah.” Two topics have been deleted: “kinsman-redeemer” and “levirate marriage.”

As Eccl 12:12 reminds readers, “the writing of many books is endless” (NASU). Even though this volume is in its third edition, the following weaknesses still remain: denial of Mosaic authorship to large sections of the Pentateuch (60, 79, 104, 165), absence of any reference at all to sources dealing with the creation-science debate in Gen 1–11 (97–98), omission of any potential deep-water crossings of the Red Sea (map, 109), omission of the “Berekhyahu son of Neriyahu” bulla from the City of David (see photo and caption, 538) as a reference in contemporary materials to an Old Testament individual by name (368), skepticism about Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes (457), failure to provide more detailed responses to critical views on the historical accuracy and integrity of Jonah (631–35) and the unity of Isaiah (520–22), silence on the literary significance of the superscription and subscription to Hab 3 as applicable to a fuller consideration of psalm headings (420–32, 664), omission of Dan 2:4–7:28 from the list of Aramaic sections of the Old Testament (481, but cf. 333), absence of Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2nd ed.; Fortress, 2001) in the “For Further Reading” at the end of

“Formation of the Old Testament Scriptures” (499), and ending the volume on a negative note saying that “the question of historical reliability [of the Pentateuch] remains” (769). Stating that the “current form” of the Pentateuch’s poetic sections “range from the thirteenth to the eleventh centuries BC” (60, cf. 377) leaves the reader without an explanation of how this squares with a fifteenth-century date for the exodus in the chart on page 103. In addition to these matters, the authors (or, was it an editor’s decision?) fail to provide the readers with a Scripture index—one way to effectively diminish the academic usefulness of a textbook.

This volume continues to be a delight to utilize as the primary required textbook for seminary-level Old Testament introduction. Its contents generate a lot of discussion and provide a foundation for further study and research. Students benefit significantly from the visual information conveyed by its photos and charts. This reviewer’s personal search for and evaluation of all books currently in print as potential textbooks for Old Testament introduction resulted in the choice of Hill and Walton’s third edition. It stands at the top of its class. For supplementary material, the reviewer recommends Victor H. Matthews, *Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Baker, 2007) and the laminated key for *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Zondervan, 2007).