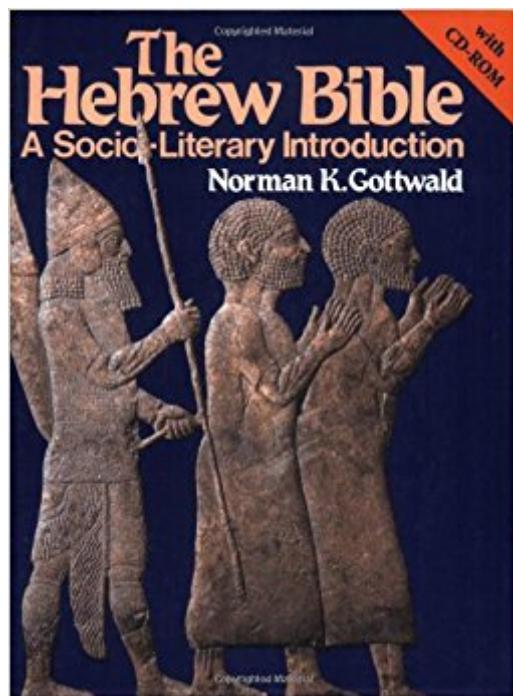


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The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction With CD-ROM



Synopsis

Along with an overview of the Hebrew Bible, including introductions to each book, Gottwald provides social analysis of ancient Israel and how these books fit into that society. His acute treatment of literary genres, social conflicts, and contemporary scholarship makes this an indispensable textbook and reference work. The volume contains many charts, study questions, and other aids, now enhanced by the new CD-ROM, which contains copious aids: • complete, searchable text of the book • glossary hyperlinked to the text of the book • NRSV hyperlinks • student assignments and discussion questions • a wealth of internet links • notetaking, bookmarking, and highlighting capabilities

Book Information

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Norman K. Gottwald is Professor of Old Testament Emeritus at New York Theological Seminary. He is the author of numerous works, including *The Tribes of Yahweh*, *All the Kingdoms of the Earth*, *A Light to the Nations*, and *The Politics of Ancient Israel*.

I used this for a research paper. Not easy to find topics. Difficult to read....and the author has trouble getting to the point. Meh...I'd give it 2 stars but maybe if I was smarter and a better reader I would enjoy it more. It does have some very good points and information. It just needs to be written better as far as conciseness.

Norman Gottwald and George Mendenhall the two well-known pioneers of the sociological approach to the origins of Ancient Israel, Mendenhall being Gottwald's "mentor." (Although, Gottwald promotes an almost Marxist view of peasant revolution for Israel and Mendenhall has detached himself from that extreme view) this introduction does take this approach. Yet, there is much more to it and the defendable theory does not intrude noticeably. The book discusses religious and analytic (or "critical"--a misleading term) approaches to the Hebrew Bible, that is, the Tanak. The reader is not insulted by the use of confessional Christian terminology like "Old Testament," "BC/AD;" yet, Christian views are represented. On the literary side of the introduction Gottwald stays true and speaks of literary types reminiscent of Georg Fohrer. The student is referred to reading assignments in ANET (Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament, Pritchard) and also the currently out of print Macmillan Bible Atlas (Aharoni and Avi-Yonah----a standard w/o a worthy replacement!). There are some mediocre line (b&w) maps (why it's a four instead of five stars) but many good and useful charts and tables. I cannot say enough about their helpfulness. I bought this textbook when it was first published and it is worth having in hardback (the textbook style cover) because I still use and refer to it often and have not worn it out. The paperback edition would have died long ago. I am preparing introductory courses for the Yahwistic Bible Society in Tanak and Biblical Hebrew, and though I refer to many texts, this and the introduction by L. Boadt (a Catholic scholar--I mention this because I am not a Christian and his intro is from the viewpoint of Catholicism, and the Catholic Christian canon of scripture with deuterocanonicals, and I still consider it excellent) are always nearby. Gottwald is very factual, direct, serious, no frills. Boadt is very readable for the non-specialist, even pleasant and sometimes entertaining for what can be a dry subject. Don't depend on one introduction, and you might consider the major angles. A useful selection might include Gottwald (or Bandstra), Boadt, and R.K. Harrison (fundamentalist Christian. Out of print . . . but can be found at overstock bookstores like Book Warehouse). Gottwald would be a good basis for an intro course. It often is used as the textbook for university Bible intro courses.

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