

# Bible Commentaries for Preachers

by Derek Tidball

Choosing a Bible commentary is in many ways a very personal matter; what suits one will not suit another. This list is written from the viewpoint of a preacher, rather than an academic scholar. I have disciplined myself to selecting a few commentaries for each book of the Bible, although I could have selected many more. I've occasionally referred to other significant general volumes. These should not only provide a rich resource to feed exegesis and spark thought for preaching but would also serve as an excellent foundation for a wider library in the future.

The first named volume in each case is, in my opinion, the best buy. A list of abbreviations can be found at the end.

The quality of any series is inevitably varied but the twelve volumed *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Abingdon Press, mid-90s onwards) is consistently good, written by top-rate scholars but with preachers in mind. Each exegetical section is followed by 'Reflections' which prove stimulating for preaching. I refer to it directly below only once, but commend it for any book you might be studying.

William Barclay has now been replaced by Tom Wright's series *Matthew (etc.) for everyone* (SPCK). John Goldingay is replacing the various OT volumes of the *Daily Study Bible* which are still available through Westminster John Knox, many of which I have found very valuable for preaching.

Don't forget the series of IVP Dictionaries, four covering the OT and 3 the NT together with an additional *Dictionary of NT Background*. A related useful volume might be IVP's *New Dictionary of biblical Theology*.

Equally, don't forget the Bible Speaks Today Themes Series (IVP) – 17 volumes so far and scheduled for two new volumes per year – which are designed for preachers and expound the key biblical texts on the theme.

OOP books are now much more easily available and can usually be tracked down through [Abebooks.com](http://Abebooks.com)

## **Genesis**

Brueggemann (Int); Kidner (TOTC); Wenham (WBC)

## **Exodus**

Fretheim (Int); Ellison (DSB); Motyer (BST)

## **Leviticus**

Wenham (NICOT); Hartley (WBC); Tidball (BST); Ballentine (Int)

## **Numbers**

Brown (BST); Wenham (TOTC); Riggans (DSB); Olsen (Int)

## **Deuteronomy**

Wright (NIBC); Brown (BST); Craigie (NICOT); Payne (DSB)

## **Joshua**

Hamlin (ITC); Davis (CFB); Hess (TOTC); Auld (DSB)

## **Judges**

Wilcock (BST); Jackman (MOT); Davis (CFB); Butler (WBC)  
*Note: Leon Wood, Distressing Days of the Judges (Zondervan)*

## **Ruth**

Atkinson (BST); Auld (DSB); Jackman (MOT)

## **1 & 2 Samuel**

Brueggemann (Int); Payne (DSB); Davis (CFB 2 vols); Evans (BST)

## **1 & 2 Kings**

Brueggemann (KPG); Auld (DSB); Davis (CFB, 2 vols); Nelson (Int); Hobbs (WBC)

## **1 & 2 Chronicles**

Allen (MOT); McConville (DSB); Wilcock (BST); Selman (TOTC)

## **Ezra**

Kidner (TOTC); McGonville (DSB); Frensham (NICOT); Cave (CBG); Williamson (WBC)

## **Nehemiah**

Kidner (TOTC); McGonville (DSB); Frensham (NICOT); Cave (CBG); Brown (BST)

## **Esther**

McGonville (DSB); Reid (TOTC); *Note: Dianne Tidball, Esther: A True First Lady (CFB)*

## **Job**

Atkinson (BST); Janzen (Int); Gibson (DSB)

## **Psalms**

Grogan (TH); Kidner (2 vols) (TOTC); Mays (Int); Van Gemeren (EBC); Knight (2 vols) (DSB)\*; Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Augsburg OT Studies); Brueggemann, *The Psalms & the Life of Faith* (Fortress) - a must.

*Note: two older works: A. B. Rhodes (Layman's Bible Commentaries: SCM)\*; Spurgeon, The Treasury of David (various editions)\*. Shorter version of Spurgeon is available in the Crossway Classics series.*

## **Proverbs**

Kidner (TOTC); Aitken (DSB); Lane (CFB); Murphy (WBC)  
*Note: Daniel Estes, Hear My Son (IVP) and Atkinson (BST)*

### ***Ecclesiastes***

Davidson (DSB); Longman (NICOT); Eaton (TOTC); Kidner (BST)

*Note:* Tidball, *That's Just The Way It Is* (CFP)

### ***Song of Solomon***

Longman (WBC); Gledhill (BST); Carr (TOTC);

### ***Isaiah***

Motyer (IVP); Webb (BST); Knight (2 vols) (ITC); Goldingay (NIBC). On Isaiah 40-66 see Westermann (OTL) and Hanson (Int). An older classic worth having is George Adam Smith (Exp Bib).

### ***Jeremiah***

Brueggemann (ITC); Thompson (NICOT); Davidson (2 vols) (DSB)

*Await Wright in revised BST, due 2014.*

### ***Lamentations***

Davidson (shared vol with Jeremiah) (DSB). W. Kaiser, *Grief and Pain in the Plan of God* (CFB)

### ***Ezekiel***

Stuart (MOT); Craigie (DSB); Wright (BST); Blenkinsopp (Int)

### ***Daniel***

Longman (AC); Goldingay (WBC); Wallace (BST); Russell (DSB); Baldwin (TOTC) *Note:* D.S. Russell, *Daniel: An Active Volcano* (St Andrews Press)\*

### ***The Twelve Prophets***

Craigie (DSB)\*

*Note:* George Adam Smith (Exp Bib) – second hand.

### ***Hosea***

Stuart (Hosea-Jonah) (WBC); Kidner (BST); Hubbard (TOTC); Beeby (ITC); Mays (OTL)

### ***Joel***

Stuart (Hosea-Jonah) (WBC); Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT)

### ***Amos***

Motyer (BST); Stuart (Hosea-Jonah) (WBC); Mays (OTL)

### ***Obadiah***

Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT); E. Achtemeier (Minor Prophets 1) (NIBC); Baker, Alexander & Waltke (TOTC)

### ***Jonah***

T. E. Fretheim, *The Message of Jonah* (Augsburg); Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT); Baker, Alexander & Waltke (TOTC)

### **Micah**

Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT); E. Achtemeier (Minor Prophets 1) (NIBC); Baker, Alexander & Waltke (TOTC)

### **Nahum**

E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

### **Habakkuk**

E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int); Lloyd-Jones, *From Fear to Faith* (IVP)

### **Zephaniah**

E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

### **Haggai**

Baldwin (Hag-Mal) (TOTC); E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

### **Zechariah**

Baldwin (Hag-Mal) (TOTC); E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

### **Malachi**

Baldwin (Hag-Mal) (TOTC); E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

### **The Gospels & Life of Christ**

N.T. Wright, *Jesus & the Victory of God* (SPCK) (and his various shorter works on Jesus)

Ken Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* (SPCK)

Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Marshall Pickering)

Richard Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus?* (SPCK)

Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean* (SCM)

### **Matthew**

France (TNTC & NICNT); Green (BST); Carson (EBC); Blomberg (NAC)

### **The Sermon on the Mount**

D. Carson (BCL); R. Guelich (WBC); Stott (BST); Lloyd-Jones (IVP)

### **Mark**

Edwards (PNTC); Williamson (Int); France (NIGTC).

*Note:* Morna Hooker, *The Message of Mark* (Epworth).

### **Luke**

J. Green (NICNT); Stein (NAC); Craddock (Int); Geldenhuys (NICNT)\*

*Note:* on the parables in Luke, K. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant* (Paternoster).

### **The Parables**

C. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Apollos); D. Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (H&S)

### **John**

Carson (PNTC); Milne (BST); Kruse (TNTC), R. Brown (AB); Beasley-Murray (WBC). *Note:* Carson, *Jesus & his friends* (Paternoster)

## **Acts**

Marshall (TNTC); Schnabel (ZECNT) Stott (BST); Dunn (Epworth); Willimon (Int)  
*Note:* M. Green, *30 Years that changed the world* (IVP) and *Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Howard Marshall & David Peterson (Eerdmans)

## **Romans**

Moo (NICNT); Dunn (WBC); Stott (BST); Zeisler (SCM); P. Achtemeier (Int)  
*Note two very different authors:* Lloyd-Jones (12 vols, BOT) and Wright (NIB)

## **1 Corinthians**

Hays (Int); Ciampa & Rosner (PNTC); Fee (NICNT)  
*Note:* Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes* (SPCK); Carson, *The Cross & Christian Ministry* (IVP) & *Showing the Spirit: An exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Paternoster);

## **2 Corinthians**

Furnish (AB); Barnett (NICNT); Haffemann (AC); Best (Int)  
Get hold of the older work by James Denny (Exp Bib) if you can.

## **Galatians**

George (NAC); Stott (BST); Dunn (Black's); Longnecker (WBC)

## **Ephesians**

O'Brien (PNTC); Barth (AB); Stott (BST); Arnold (ZECNT). For supreme mastery read Lloyd-Jones (Banner of Truth)

## **Philippians**

Hansen (PNTC); Fee (NICNT); Marshall (Epworth); Motyer (BST).

## **Colossians**

O'Brien (WBC); Wright (TNTC); Dunn (NIGTC)  
*Note:* Clinton Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism* (Baker), Brian Walsh & Sylvia Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed* (IVP) and Tidball, *The Reality is Christ* (CFP)

## **1 & 2 Thessalonians**

Marshall (NCB); Johnson (AB); Wanamaker (NIGTC); Stott (BST).  
Again get James Denny (Exp Bib), second hand.

## **1 & 2 Timothy / Titus**

Stott (BST); Oden (Int); Fee (NIBC); Wall (TH); Towner (NICNT)  
*Note:* M.F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Epistles* (Cambridge).

## **Philemon**

See Colossians.

## **Hebrews**

Long (Int); Lane (WBC); Hughes (Eerdmans); Guthrie (TNTC)

## **James**

Motyer (BST); Johnson (AB); Moo (TNTC); or Moo (PNTC)

*Note: James, Bauckham (Routledge) and Tidball Wisdom from Heaven (CFB) T. Manton (BofT) is very rewarding still.*

### **1 Peter**

Marshall (IVP); Davids (NICNT); Grudem (TNTC)

### **2 Peter**

M. Green (TNTC); J. Green (TH); Davids (PNTC); Lucas & C. Green (BST)

### **1, 2 & 3 John**

Marshall (NICNT); Stott (TNTC); Eaton (CFP); Kruse (PNTC)

*Note: Lloyd-Jones (Crossway).*

### **Jude**

M. Green (TNTC); Green (TH); Davids (PNTC); Lucas & C. Green (BST)

### **Revelation**

Beasley-Murray (NCB); Boring (Int); Caird (Black's); Mounce (NICNT)

*Note: W Hendricksen, More than Conquerors (Baker) & A. Boesak, Comfort & Protest (St Andrews Press).*

## Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible (Doubleday)
BCL	Bible Classics Library (Paternoster)
BOT	Banner of Truth
BST	Bible Speaks Today (IVP)
CBG	Crossway Bible Guides (IVP)
CFP	Christian Focus Publications (Christian Focus)
DSB	Daily Study Bible (St Andrews Press)
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary (12 vols) (Zondervan)
Exp Bib	Expositor's Bible (Hodder & Stoughton) (Second hand)
Int	Interpretation (John Knox Press)
ITC	International Theological Commentary (Eerdmans)
KPG	Knox Preaching Guides (John Knox Press)
MOT	Mastering the Old Testament (STL) (Previously the Communicators' Commentary or Preachers' Commentary published by Thomas Nelson)
NAC	New American Commentary (Broadman & Holman)
NCB	New Century Bible (Eerdmans/Marshall Pickering)
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible (Abingdon)
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary (Hendrikson)
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans)
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament (as above)

NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary (Eerdmans)
OTL	Old Testament Library (SCM)
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary (Apollos)
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (IVP)
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary (IVP)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary (Word)
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

**John Wesley wrote to one of his preachers:** ‘What has exceedingly hurt you in time past, nay, and I fear, to this day, is, want of reading. I scarce ever knew a preacher read so little. And perhaps, by neglecting it, have lost the taste for it. Hence your talent in preaching does not increase. It is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with meditation and daily prayer. . . . O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercise. You may acquire the taste which you have not: what is tedious at first, will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you.

***Support your local Christian bookshop – or they won’t be around much longer.***