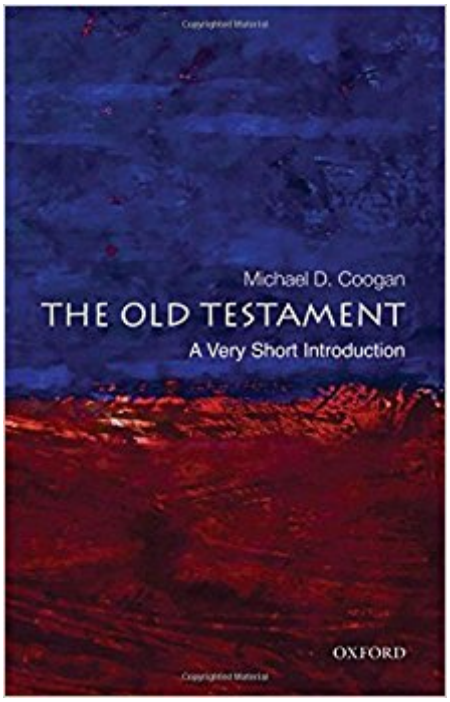
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The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction



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Synopsis

Eminent biblical scholar Michael D. Coogan offers here a wide-ranging and stimulating exploration of the Old Testament, illuminating its importance as history, literature, and sacred text.Coogan explains the differences between the Bible of Jewish tradition (the "Hebrew Bible") and the Old Testament of Christianity, and also examines the different contents of the Bibles used by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and Protestants. He looks at the rise of modern biblical scholarship as well as the recovery of ancient Near Eastern literatures and their significance for biblical interpretation. Coogan explores the use of invented dialogue and historical fiction in the Old Testament, the presence of mythic elements in apparently historical accounts, and the relationship of ancient Israelite myths to those of their neighbors. The book considers the Old Testament's idea of divine justice, especially in Ecclesiastes and Job, and looks at notions of the afterlife in the ancient Near East and in ancient Israel. Coogan highlights the significance of the history and literature of the Old Testament and describes how non-biblical evidence, such as archaeological data and texts, has placed the Old Testament in a larger and more illuminating context. The book also discusses law and ritual in the Bible as well as the biblical understandings of prophecy.Here then is a marvelous overview of one of the great pillars of Western religion and culture, a book whose significance has endured for thousands of years and which remains vitally important today for Jews, Christians, and Muslims worldwide.About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, and Literary Theory to History. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given topic. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how it has developed and influenced society. Whatever the area of study, whatever the topic that fascinates the reader, the series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

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Customer Reviews

"By skillfully examining well-selected biblical texts, Coogan has offered readers a valuable window into the complexity, beauty, and importance of the Hebrew Bible. Through compelling analogies, he clarifies the meaning of the Bible, and allows the modern student to appreciate this complex ancient collection in its context."--Marc Zvi Brettler, Dora Golding Professor of Biblical Studies, Brandeis University, and Author of How to Read the Jewish Bible (Oxford), and co-editor of The Jewish Study Bible (Oxford)."This book is a remarkable achievement. Accessible, informative, and authoritative, it packs into its small size an amazing amount of information, not only about the literature of the Old Testament and its cultural and historical context, but also about the methods of biblical scholarship that revolutionized the understanding of the Old Testament during the last two centuries. It is an ideal introduction for a wide range of readers: the non-religious who are curious about this cultural monument, Jews and Christians who want an orientation to their complex scriptures, and students seeking an overview of the Old Testament in critical perspective."--Carol Newsom, Candler Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, Emory University"Marked by an astonishing comprehensiveness, this book presents established facts and contested issues alike with irenic clarity. Balancing panoramic views with deeper exegetical probes, Coogan deftly interweaves insights gleaned from Canaanite, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian texts, archaeology, reception history from Ben Sira to Luther to Kierkegaard, and contemporary feminist criticism. The result is a compelling invitation to readers who seek to understand the ancient sociopolitical conflicts, rituals, and theologies that animate the Old Testament."--Carolyn Sharp, Associate Professor of Hebrew Scriptures, Yale Divinity School

Michael Coogan is Lecturer in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament at Harvard Divinity School and Director of Publications for the Harvard Semitic Museum. He has also taught at Stonehill College, Wellesley College, Boston Colle, the University of Waterloo, and Fordham University. One of the leading biblical scholars in the United States, he is editor of The New Oxford Annotated Bible, and is a

contributor to such standard reference works as The Encyclopedia of Religion, HarperCollins Bible Dictionary, and The New Jerome Biblical Commentary. Collaborative works that he conceived and edited include The Oxford Companion to the Bible, The Illustrated Guide to World Religions, and The Oxford History of the Biblical World.

Loved this!!! I think Prof. Coogan hits a home run with this book. He has a lot of ground to cover in a short intro but he does it well. He puts the texts into their historical settings but also shows how literary and textual criticism come into play, needfully. He also touches on rhetorical criticism. Overall this book is very interesting and provides a great overall look at the Hebrew Bible/OT. I will give copies to friends who don't want something in depth like I usually read but will read something like this and will benefit from it with a better understanding.

This was a very decent overview. Not much penetrating analysis, but that is not the point of the book. I would have liked it to feel a little more organized, but it was well written and does the job of a veery short introduction.

I needed this book for a semester study of the history of the Hebrew Bible. Coogan's writing is easy to follow. He gives a good summary of the history of the OT, the background of the various types of literature, some archaeological information ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ in other words, a nice simple, well rounded summary. I'll refer back to it often and use its information as a jumping off point for more in depth research elsewhere.

Michael Coogan explains the Testament in ways I have not heard since I was in Bible School. If you want an indepth view of the New Testament from an intellectual view rather than from religious dogma, this book is your start on on that journey.

An excellent intro study as it gives an overview prepertory to an indepth study for beginners of the old covenant.

Very good overview

Marvelous book!!!!!!

Very nice and looks new.

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