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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The Bible stands in a category of its own among the world's literature. How you view the Bible, however, depends on what spectacles you are wearing. Like statistics, the Bible can be used to prove almost anything. As a result Bible commentaries are notorious for giving the author's particular angle on the Bible as if it is the only viewpoint. In the case of *The Oxford Bible Commentary* the angle is "objectively academic." John Muddiman and John Barton are the pair of Oxford dons who have put together the latest weighty book of Biblical scholarship. Happily, they are aware of the limitations of academic comment and don't pretend the book is more than it is. Contributing scholars are mostly British and American and most of them come from a mainstream Protestant background. The articles are therefore polished, precise, and professionally pedantic. No one can fault the meticulous scholarship and wealth of detailed content. That's just what you want from a hefty Bible commentary. On the other hand, what struck me from dipping into this tome is how slippery Biblical scholarship has become. At the turn of the last century Biblical criticism shot fundamentalism full of holes, but the new generation of scholars have now shot the certainties of old fashioned Biblical criticism full of holes. As a result the articles exhibit an odd mix of solid content with honest supposition, guesswork, and shoulder shrugging. This actually makes the book better. It's refreshing to read academics who admit their uncertainties. Their honesty allows some questions to remain open-ended, and that's exciting for any serious Biblical student. --Dwight Longenecker, *Amazon.co.uk*

From Publishers Weekly

Oxford, the king of biblical reference works for scholars, releases the tome of all time in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, a line-by-line commentary edited by John Barton and John Muddiman. Its entries, penned by a team of 70 scholars, are detailed and comprehensive. The volume includes a general introduction and shorter introductions to each canonical book and to the Apocrypha. Students and scholars looking for a handy one-volume reference will appreciate this resource, which is also a relative bargain in the expensive world of biblical commentaries.

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From Library Journal

Every few years, a new Bible commentary or a new edition of an existing one appears. This allows new voices to be added to the conversation and recent developments in biblical and related studies to be showcased. For this volume, Barton (*Holy Scripture*, Oxford) and Muddiman (*New Testament*, Oxford) chose more than 70 well-known and respected biblical scholars as contributors, many of whom have written extensively in the area of their assignment. Though many of the contributions reflect moderate critical scholarship, there are some surprises. For example, traditional attributions of authorship for James and 2 Peter are accepted. The content of this volume is similar to other one-volume commentaries, with two notable exceptions. There are brief chapters on "Post-Biblical Jewish Literature" and "Extra-Cannical Early Christian Literature," dealing with such writings as the Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls and with the New Testament Apocrypha and the Apostolic Fathers, respectively. These chapters contain excerpts but no commentaries. Some contributors engage in interpretation of the text while not ignoring exegetical details; others focus almost exclusively on the latter. Both approaches provide useful information, though perhaps to different audiences. The only real drawback here is that while most chapters have bibliographies, some are quite skimpy. Highly recommended for all academic and many public libraries. Craig W. Beard, Univ. of Alabama at Birmingham Lib.

Users Review

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