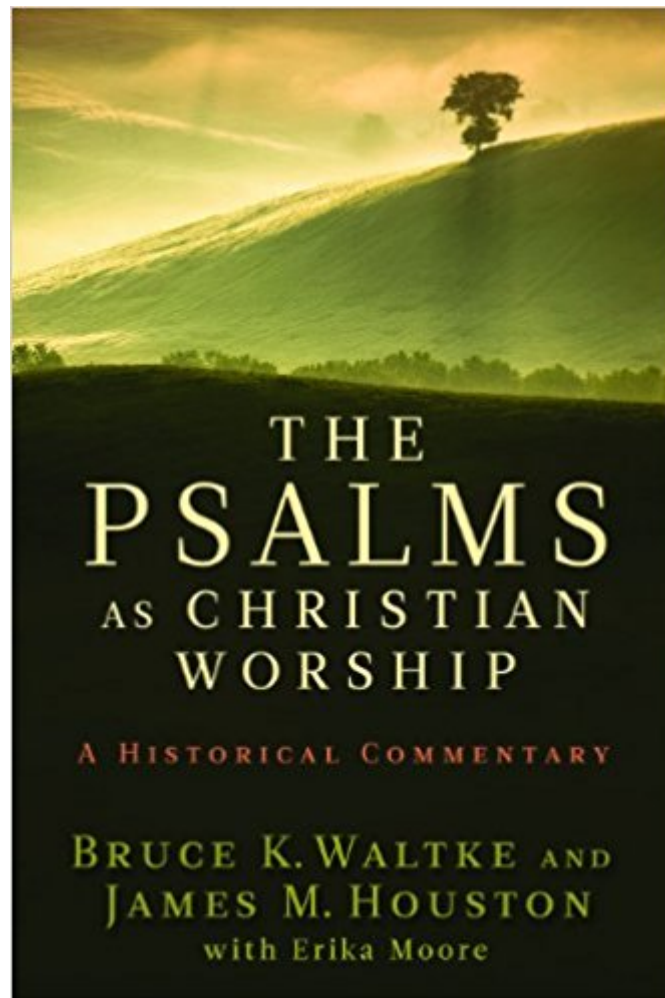


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The Psalms As Christian Worship: An Historical Commentary



Synopsis

This commentary uniquely combines a verse-by-verse exposition of the Hebrew text of selected Psalms with a history of their interpretation in the Church from the time of the apostles to the present. / Bruce K. Waltke begins the collaboration by first skillfully establishing the meaning of the chosen psalms through careful exegesis in which each text is interpreted in light of its historical backgrounds, its literary form, and the poet's rhetoric. James M. Houston then expounds each text's relevance in conjunction with the Church's interpretation of it throughout her history. To further the accuracy of this interpretation, he commissioned fresh translations of numerous Latin and Middle English texts. / The authors' purpose in creating this volume was not merely to produce a masterful commentary. Rather, they wished to aid in enriching the daily life of the contemporary Christian and to deepen the church's community. Waltke and Houston here bring together the two voices of the Holy Spirit heard infallibly in Scripture and edifyingly in the Church's response in a rare and illuminating combination.

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Customer Reviews

Bruce K. Waltke is Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Knox Theological Seminary, Fort Lauderdale, and professor emeritus of biblical studies at Regent College, Vancouver. James M. Houston is founding principal and former chancellor of Regent College and was the college's first professor of spiritual theology.

I can hardly add to the praise given in the first two reviews, and I am not fit to pass judgement on the scholarship, but this volume breathes a reverent spirit and rich integrity that speak of God's presence. Reading the footnotes to the translation is (I suppose) like visiting a class in the exegesis of selected Psalms. The footnotes often refer to "IBHS," which I presume to be *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. What can one say of the text, especially the commentary? Perhaps this: it is one of the finest books I have read in the past fifty years. Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It contains a historical retrospect about using psalter in Jewish life and then in early Christian life. For me, the most important part is that one with the place that psalter has in the Orthodox Church. The biggest part of the book contains commentaries and interpretation of selected psalms by Bruce K. Waltke. (Sorry for my English)

As other reviewers have stated this is a unique commentary which is very helpful in understanding the Psalms. It looks at ancient to modern interpretations of the Psalms with a particular bent against modern critical understandings of the Psalms (in part the removal of Messianic prophecy and Jesus from the psalms). Each psalm then contains an immensely helpful commentary by the authors with a particular emphasis on the Hebrew text. The downside of this book is that it covers very few psalms. It looks at Psalm 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 51, 110 and 139. The limited scope of this commentary (about 8% of the psalms) is why I gave it 3 stars. Most readers will want to understand the rest of the psalms as well, so at minimum other commentaries will be needed alongside of this one.

1. A CROWN JEWEL This is not just another commentary on the book of Psalms, it is the Crown Jewel of two of the world's finest scholars, representing over five decades of scholarship. James Houston has beautifully documented the historical tale of each psalm like no one else, and made accessible ancient material that has yet to be translated for the English reader. Bruce Waltke is unrivaled in the care and precision he gives to exegesis. There is no stone left unturned in the breadth of scholarship; each and every Hebrew word is plumbed to its depths and, in typical Waltke fashion, summarized in a concise sentence that summarizes decades of research. Because of the detail and depth given to each psalm, only 13 psalms are covered; but the diverse selection gives the reader a broad scope of the type of psalms in the Psalter, not to mention the necessary tools for

further study. 2. IT IS UNIQUE IN ITS PRESENTATION No other commentary integrates... a. the historical voice of the Psalter that bathes the student in humility and appreciation for the faithful witnesses of the past, many of whom memorized the entire Psalter and viewed the Psalms as vital to their spirituality, with... b. a comprehensive history of Biblical interpretation and evaluation of modern approaches that allows the student to navigate his or her way through the complex sea of modern scholarship with... c. accurate exegesis that, contrary to the vast majority of modern commentaries, begins by carefully and methodically substantiating the validity of David's authorship and with it, the historical superscripts as vital to understanding the original voice of the poem. Understanding that these petitions were primarily the prayers of Israel's king to further God's kingdom both in breadth (among the nations) and in depth (among God's people) makes the Psalms come alive, not to mention unraveling vast difficulties in interpretation. (For example, Waltke gives great help how to interpret and apply the so-called "imprecatory psalms"). Along with the grammatical-historical approach, Waltke enriches us with... d. the proper use of modern literary criticism, literary structures, and subtle nuances of Hebrew poetic techniques, and it doesn't stop there. To these multiple layers we are given... e. passionate canonical application in the life of Jesus and the church (a rare find in Old Testament commentaries). I sincerely doubt this volume will ever be surpassed. My only disappointment with the book is that it was published as a paperback and not a hardback. This makes it difficult to read without breaking the spine, as well as difficult to write in or take notes in the margin, not to mention subjecting it to shorter life span.

I'm only a short way into the book, but am already greatly blessed, it is well worth the read if you are interested in the Psalms at all. I highly recommend it.

There are many commentaries on the Psalms. This one is ideal for lay readers, and does much to enhance a true love for God and for the Psalms.

Dr. Walke is a world class Hebrew scholar. However, the lay person will probably find that much of the work is of interest to other scholars but not to the average reader.

Not an easy read by any means, but well worth the effort -- Waltke rewards the reader with insights both deep and wide.

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