

# Commentaries on Genesis

The following is a personal selection of Commentaries on Genesis with some comments as and when I have time to add them. I hope this will be of help to those creating reading lists on Genesis and those embarking on Genesis research. The comments and classification are purely my own idiosyncratic notes based on how the commentary handles the Flood Story. I strongly recommend you form your own decisions on a wider basis! © E.A. Harper 2009 (for books and articles specifically on the Flood Narrative see separate recommended reading list) Suggestions for inclusion to this list and comments welcome but I reserve the right to handle these as I feel appropriate.

Commentaries on Genesis .....	1
Commentated Translations .....	1
Devotional Commentaries .....	2
Heavyweight Commentaries (Hebrew an asset).....	2
Historic Commentaries .....	2
Jewish Commentaries .....	3
Midweight Commentaries suitable for University Level 1 .....	3
Non-English Commentaries (no English versions) .....	4
One Volume Commentaries .....	4
Other Commentaries.....	4
Septuagint Genesis .....	4
Short Commentaries .....	4
Special Focus Commentaries .....	5
Study Bibles.....	5
Alphabetical Index of Authors .....	5

## ***Commentated Translations***

Alter, Robert. *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. New York: WW Norton & Co, 1996.

An attempt to give a new translation with specific attention to the literary features of the Book. It has 50 pages explaining the failures of modern English translations to capture the literary and stylistic features of the Hebrew text and explaining the principles for this translation. On the flood story, the translation feels a little archaic and awkward as it tries to capture the Hebrew style, and I'm not sure one really gains a better feel than with the standard translations but if you don't read Hebrew then it is worth reading this and noting where the texts differ. The comments are fairly minimal and give nothing that can't be found in more extensive commentaries. The rabbinic material and literary structures chiasm etc, get most of the attention. There is no attempt to give differing views.

Speiser, E. A. *Genesis: Introduction, Translation and Notes*. 2nd ed. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday 1964

A classic translation and commentary with a Jewish perspective. A moderate historical critical commentary but with some interpretative and theological comments. There is an extensive introduction on critical approaches to Genesis 1960s style. The body of the commentary gives a translation, textual notes and comments. Not perhaps the best in the Anchor series, primarily because the comments are so short and with a historical-critical and ANE comparative bent. The notes are helpful for more detailed exegesis.

Zlotowitz, Meir and Scherman N., eds. *Bereishis Genesis: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologised From Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2nd ed. New York: Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1980.

I have not used this but it is said to be an extensive compilation of traditional Jewish insights but with no concessions to any modern insights.

### ***Devotional Commentaries***

Longman III, Tremper. *How to Read Genesis*. Leicester: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Not strictly a commentary but guidance for reading the Book of Genesis as literature and within the Ancient Near Eastern context, nevertheless it does go through Genesis section by section although not doing much more than an expanded paraphrase. Conservative but not quite fundamentalist.

Roop, Eugene F. *Genesis*. Scottdale: Herald, 1987.

Unable to comment as I have not used this

Walton, John H. *Genesis*. NIV Application Commentary. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.

Aiming to be a contemporary application of Genesis that shows God in control from creation to covenant it deals with the text in three sections: Original Meaning, Bridging Contexts, and Contemporary Significance. I haven't used this and so can't comment further.

### ***Heavyweight Commentaries (Hebrew an asset)***

Cassuto, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part 1 From Adam to Noah Genesis I - VI:8. Part 2 From Noah to Abraham*. 1944; 1949 Jerusalem: the Magnes Press.

A detailed and influential exegetical commentary on Genesis from a strong Jewish perspective. It is very negative about historical-critical studies but has deep insights into the text. Always worth consulting for exegetical insights and often comments on words that other commentaries pass over. For detailed study a must!

Gunkel, Hermann. *Genesis*. 3rd ed. Translated by Mark E Biddle. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910; reprint, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997.

A classic German historical critical commentary, which I always enjoy consulting even when its historical speculations seem fancifully dated. Gunkel is well known as a pioneer of form criticism and a study of the historical origin and form of texts in their pre-compositional stage. This influence can be seen here. His substantial introductory chapters deal with the 'forms' of the legends, their artistry and history of transmission. He deals with the J and P accounts separately which is a little trying for the flood narrative but the study is detailed and nuanced and deals with ANE stories as far as they were known at the time.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentaries. Texas: Word Books, 1987.

A significant conservative commentary on Genesis that is essential to consult. Not fundamentalist, but it does tend to ignore source-critical issues in favour of a unified canonical and structuralist reading. It follows the standard Word format: Bibliography, Translation, Notes, Comment, Explanation (the final section of which can be a bit repetitive). The Bibliography is extensive and helpful though getting dated. The notes are good for exegetical work, although I don't always find all the exegetical difficulties commented which I would have expected at this level. For the flood narrative this is a must read for its detailed comparative work with the ANE material and for its structuralist suggestions.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

This large, detailed commentary is a must read for scholarly work but somehow it is always slightly disappointing. Its really interesting ideas can usually be found to have originated with Gunkel. However it does provide a much needed summary of German thinking especially on historical-critical issues and makes accessible what is often not available in translation.

### ***Historic Commentaries***

Calvin, John. *Genesis*. The Crossway Classic Commentaries. Nottingham: Crossway Books, 2001.

Available at <http://www.ccel.org>. Not afraid to fill in the gaps, Calvin embellishes the story into a great tale which makes for fascinating reading. Although he goes beyond the text and can be carried away by Reformation issues, nevertheless he reads the text carefully and his reconstructions are insightful.

Delitzsch, Franz. *A New Commentary on Genesis*. Translated by Sophia Taylor. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1888.

Awaiting comments

Dillmann, August. 6th ed. Vol. 1, *Genesis Critically and Exegetically Expounded*. Translated by W. B. Stevenson, 1892; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897.

Written at the height of source critical subdivision this commentary dwells on Dillman's source critical conclusions (He uses A, B & C for P, E & J) and begins with a preface on why Genesis cannot be a unity. Driver, Samuel Rolles. *The Book of Genesis*. 15th ed. 1904; reprint, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1948.

Awaiting comments

Holzinger, H. Vol. 2, *Genesis*, Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1898.

Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

Ibn Ezra. *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Genesis*. Edited by H Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver. New York: Menorah Publishing, 1988.

Awaiting comments

Rabbi Saadia Gaon's *Commentary on the Book of Creation*. trans Linetsky. New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc, 2002.

Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

Rashi

Available at [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm). Worth reading for its ingenious Jewish solutions to the problems within the text of which it is very aware.

Skinner, J. *Genesis*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912.

Awaiting comments

### ***Jewish Commentaries***

Berlin, Adele and Brettler, Mark Zvi, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*.

see Levenson, Jon D in Study Bibles

Cassuto, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part 1 From Adam to Noah Genesis I - VI:8. Part 2 From Noah to Abraham*. 1944; 1949 Jerusalem: the Magnes Press.

see Heavyweight Commentaries

Hershon, Paul Isaac. *Genesis: With a Talmudic Commentary*. Translated by Rev. M. Wolkenberg. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1883.

Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

Ibn Ezra. *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Genesis*.

see Historic Commentaries

Jacob, Benno. *Das Erste Buch Der Tora, Genesis*. Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1934.

see Non-English Commentaries

Plaut, W. G. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981

see Short Commentaries

Rashi *Genesis* London: Hebrew Compendium Publishing Co. 1928

see Historic Commentaries

Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989

see Midweight Commentaries

Speiser, E. A. *Genesis* 2nd ed. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1964

see Commentated Translations

Zlotowitz, Meir and Scherman, N., eds. *Bereishis Genesis* 2nd ed. New York: Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1980

see Commentated Translations

### ***Midweight Commentaries suitable for University Level 1***

Amos, Clare. *The Book of Genesis*. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004.

Awaiting comments

Arnold, Bill T. *Encountering the Book of Genesis*. Michigan: Baker Books, 1998.

Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.

Awaiting comments

Fretheim, Terence. "Genesis." *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Awaiting comments

Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Awaiting comments

- Hartley, John E. *Genesis*. New International Biblical Commentary. Massachusetts: Hendrickson 2000.  
Awaiting comments
- Kissling, Paul J. *College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis*. Missouri: College Press, 2004.  
Awaiting comments
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989  
Awaiting comments
- Towner, Sibley. *Genesis*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 2001.  
Awaiting comments
- Turner, Laurence A. *Genesis*. Readings: A New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.  
Awaiting comments
- von Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis: A Commentary* [Das Erste Buch Mose: Genesis]. rev 9th ed Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973.  
Awaiting comments. Always praised for its theological insight
- Waltke, Bruce K. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.  
Awaiting comments

### ***Non-English Commentaries (no English versions)***

- Jacob, Benno. *Das Erste Buch Der Tora, Genesis*. Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1934.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this
- Procksch, Otto. *Die Genesis/ Übersetzt Und Erklärt*. Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1924.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this
- Seebass, Horst. *Genesis I. Urgeschichte (1,1-11,26)*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this
- Soggin, J.A. *Das Buch Genesis: Kommentar*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

### ***One Volume Commentaries***

### ***Other Commentaries***

### ***Septuagint Genesis***

- Brayford, Susan. *Genesis*. Septuagint Commentary Series. Leiden: Brill, 2007.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

### ***Short Commentaries***

- Armstrong, Karen. *In the Beginning: A New Interpretation of Genesis*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.  
Awaiting comments
- Davidson, R. *Genesis 1-11*. Cambridge Bible Commentary - NEB. Cambridge University Press, 1973.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this
- Gowan, Donald E. *From Eden to Babel: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis 1-11*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.  
Awaiting comment
- Kidner, Derek. *Genesis*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1967  
Awaiting comment
- Plaut, W. G. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this
- Rogerson, John. *Genesis 1-11*. Old Testament Guides. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this
- Scullion, J.J. *Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers and Preachers* Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1992.  
Unable to comment as I have not yet used this

### ***Special Focus Commentaries***

Brodie, Thomas L. *Genesis As Dialogue. Literary, Historical and Theological Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Awaiting comment

Coats, George. *Genesis: With an Introduction to Narrative Literature*. FOTL. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.

Awaiting comments

Cotter, David W. *Genesis*. BERIT OLAM Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2003.

Awaiting comment

Louth, Andrew and Conti, Marco eds. *Genesis 1-11: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Awaiting comment

McKeown, James. *Genesis*. The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Awaiting comment

### ***Study Bibles***

Levenson, Jon D. "Genesis." In *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, 8-101. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Awaiting comment

### ***Alphabetical Index of Authors***

Alter, Robert .....	1
Amos, Clare .....	3
Armstrong, Karen .....	4
Arnold, Bill T .....	3
Berlin, Adele.....	3
Brayford, Susan .....	4
Brettler, Mark Zvi.....	3
Brodie, Thomas L.....	5
Brueggemann, Walter.....	3
Calvin, John.....	2
Cassuto, Umberto .....	2, 3
Coats, George .....	5
Conti, Marco.....	5
Cotter, David W.....	5
Davidson, R .....	4
Delitzsch, Franz .....	2
Dillmann, August .....	3
Driver, Samuel Rolles .....	3
Fretheim, Terence.....	3
Gowan, Donald E .....	4
Gunkel, Hermann .....	2
Hamilton, Victor P.....	3
Hartley, John E .....	4
Hershon, Paul Isaac .....	3
Holzinger, H .....	3
Ibn Ezra .....	3
Jacob, Benno.....	3, 4

Kidner, Derek .....	4
Kissling, Paul J .....	4
Levenson, Jon D .....	3, 5
Longman III, Tremper. ....	2
Louth, Andrew .....	5
McKeown, James.....	5
Plaut, W. G .....	3, 4
Procksch, Otto.....	4
Rabbi Saadiah Gaon .....	3
Rashi .....	3
Rogerson, John .....	4
Roop, Eugene F .....	2
Sarna, Nahum M.....	3, 4
Scherman, N. ....	1, 3
Scullion, J.J.....	4
Seebass, Horst.....	4
Skinner, J .....	3
Soggin, J.A.....	4
Speiser, E. A .....	1, 3
Towner, Sibley.....	4
Turner, Laurence A.....	4
von Rad, Gerhard.....	4
Waltke, Bruce K .....	4
Walton, John H.....	2
Wenham, Gordon J .....	2
Westermann, Claus .....	2
Zlotowitz, Meir .....	1, 3

Alter, Robert, 1
Amos, Clare, 3
Armstrong, Karen, 4
Arnold, Bill T, 3
Berlin, Adele, 3

Brayford, Susan, 4
Brettler, Mark Zvi, 3
Brodie, Thomas L, 5
Brueggemann, Walter, 3
Calvin, John, 2

Cassuto, Umberto, 2, 3  
Coats, George, 5  
Conti, Marco, 5  
Cotter, David W, 5  
Davidson, R, 4  
Delitzsch, Franz, 2  
Dillmann, August, 3  
Driver, Samuel Rolles, 3  
Fretheim, Terence, 3  
Gowan, Donald E, 4  
Gunkel, Hermann, 2  
Hamilton, Victor P, 3  
Hartley, John E, 4  
Hershon, Paul Isaac, 3  
Holzinger, H, 3  
Ibn Ezra, 3  
Jacob, Benno, 3, 4  
Kidner, Derek, 4  
Kissling, Paul J, 4  
Levenson, Jon D, 3, 5  
Longman III, Tremper., 2  
Louth, Andrew, 5

McKeown, James., 5  
Plaut, W. G, 3, 4  
Procksch, Otto., 4  
Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, 3  
Rashi, 3  
Rogerson, John, 4  
Roop, Eugene F, 2  
Sarna, Nahum M, 3, 4  
Scherman, N., 1, 3  
Scullion, J.J, 4  
Seebass, Horst, 4  
Skinner, J, 3  
Soggin, J.A, 4  
Speiser, E. A, 1, 3  
Towner, Sibley, 4  
Turner, Laurence A, 4  
von Rad, Gerhard, 4  
Waltke, Bruce K, 4  
Walton, John H, 2  
Wenham, Gordon J, 2  
Westermann, Claus, 2  
Zlotowitz, Meir, 1, 3