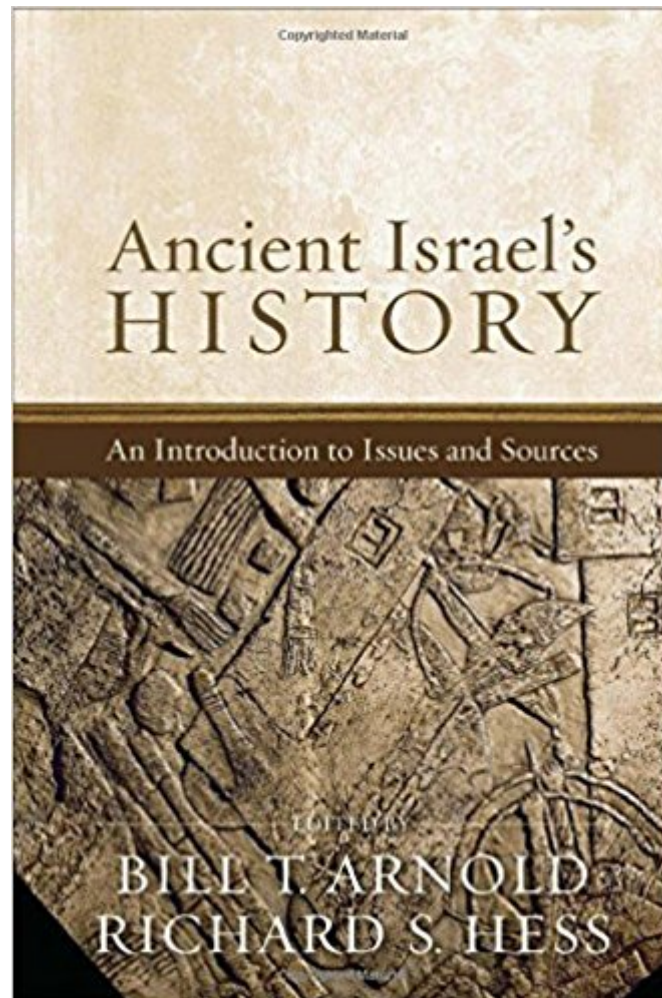


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# Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction To Issues And Sources



## Synopsis

The history of Israel is a much-debated topic in Old Testament studies. On one side are minimalists who find little of historical value in the Hebrew Bible. On the other side are those who assume the biblical text is a precise historical record. Many serious students of the Bible find themselves between these two positions and would benefit from a careful exploration of issues in Israelite history. This substantive history of Israel textbook values the Bible's historical contribution without overlooking critical issues and challenges. Featuring the latest scholarship, the book introduces students to the current state of research on issues relevant to the study of ancient Israel. The editors and contributors, all top biblical scholars and historians, discuss historical evidence in a readable manner, using both canonical and chronological lenses to explore Israelite history. Illustrative items, such as maps and images, visually support the book's content. Tables and sidebars are also included.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 560 pages

Publisher: Baker Academic (November 18, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801039304

ISBN-13: 978-0801039300

Product Dimensions: 6.7 x 1.3 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #130,380 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #174 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Criticism & Interpretation > Old Testament #406 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study > Old Testament #550 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Old Testament

## Customer Reviews

"An excellent resource for those interested in taking seriously all the evidence, both biblical and extrabiblical, bearing on the history of ancient Israel and in thinking carefully about how to weigh that evidence and integrate it into a coherent account."--Iain Provan, Regent College, Vancouver  
"An engaging examination of the current state of research, Ancient Israel's History finely balances the biblical text and extrabiblical sources while exploring critical interpretive issues and methodological questions. It is comprehensive and readable and will be a valuable addition to the library of students

and researchers alike. This volume will be part of my students' curriculum."--Lissa M. Wray Beal, Providence University College and Theological Seminary

"In this incredibly thorough volume, an international and esteemed team of contributors offer us exactly what was promised: a state-of-the-art review of research relating to the history of ancient Israel.Â This book picks its way between the Scylla of overwrought skepticism and the Charybdis of naïve fideism. The result is a copiously documented, user-friendly, and up-to-date treatment that will prove to be a most useful textbook for both introductory students and seasoned teachers alike."--Brent A. Strawn, Emory University

"A superb collection orienting readers to historical data and debates relevant to ancient Israel--judiciously weighed, accessibly presented."--Mark J. Boda, McMaster Divinity College and McMaster University

"Debates surrounding the history of ancient Israel are lively these days, making this volume most welcome. Substantive essays penned by leading authorities in their respective subject areas not only provide convenient summaries of available evidence but also offer mature reflections on what all this evidence means for the historian. The attractiveness of the volume is enhanced by the inclusion of numerous charts, maps, photos, and sidebars. To have so much learning and sensible analysis collected in one volume is a significant achievement. I shall be recommending this book!"--V. Philips Long, Regent College, Vancouver

"This is an outstanding work that will provide students and scholars alike with a fine introduction to the multifaceted issues and sources that are crucial to interpreting and reconstructing a history of ancient Israel.Â This is achieved through an impressive cadre of scholars contributing their individual expertise."--K. Lawson Younger Jr., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Bill T. Arnold (PhD, Hebrew Union College) is Paul S. Amos Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He is the author or editor of nine books and coauthor (with Bryan E. Beyer) of *Encountering the Old Testament*. Richard S. Hess (PhD, Hebrew Union College) is Earl S. Kalland Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Denver Seminary in Littleton, Colorado, and editor of the *Denver Journal*. He is the author or editor of more than twenty-five books, including *Israelite Religions* and *Song of Songs* in the Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms.

This book steers a well-articulated middle course between the two approaches to Biblical history. It avoids the dogmatic approach of critics who automatically pronounce the Bible guilty of error until proven innocent, yet even its most conservative contributors do a thorough job identifying unresolved issues. It provides the very latest in discoveries and scholarship (right up through 2013).

The most significant omission is any reference whatever to Esther or its contents, which stands in stark contrast to the rest of the OT material (it also fails to investigate the historicity of Daniel, apart from the parts that are self-identified as prophecy). If I remove Daniel BodiÅÊÂ Â™s treatment of David as a deliberate schemer and usurper in his chapter on Saul, I find the rest of the book to be a thoroughly balanced and constructive treatment of subjects such as pre-history and patriarchal times (Bill Arnold), the Exodus (James Hoffmeier), Joshua (Lawson Stone), Judges (Robert Miller), the United Monarchy (Steven Ortiz), the ninth century (Kyle Greenwood), the eighth century (Sandra Richter), and the seventh century (Brad Kelle), just to name a few. To compare value for the dollar, this volume was worth more than three days at SBL.

I've read a handful of books on Ancient Israel, this is not one of the easiest to read but it does offer many useful insights. Instead of doing a broad covering of the major events, these authors pick a handful of points to cover and dig deeply into them. I appreciated this approach because it read less like a history book and more like a series of specialized lectures. Now, this book should be coupled with something more comprehensive. However, a great tool for any students of the Bible!

It is very informative about the current state of research on ancient Israel. Well written, offers different perspectives but avoids skepticism, which plagues current historiography of early Israel. I particularly enjoyed the part by Steven Ortiz on the united monarchy. He nicely merged the archeological and written sources drawing conclusions supportive for the biblical view of David's and Solomon's kingdom.

An excellent set of essays which methodically assemble the ancient near eastern texts and other evidence with the biblical data to describe the historical situations which the Hebrew Bible describes.

This book is one of two textbooks used in my Introduction to OT class. We are only in our second week of classes, however from browsing through the book I can see a lot of useful information.

IÃÊÂ Â™m really out of depth when it comes to the Old Testament, however I am keen to grow in this area, and thus wanted to read this book to help me grow in my understanding of the Old Testament especially of itÃÊÂ Â™s historical context. This reference material therefore comes as a very helpful tool in this pursuit. To be frank, having very little exposure to the current research of the

Old Testament, this book seemed at first to be an insurmountable task, this was not helped by the introduction which was slightly technical. However, as I ploughed through the various chapters I found them to be very readable and informative. The authors reviews several scholars on the various books of the bible, bringing to the readers a summary and history of what has been discuss in the scholastic world. Each book of the bible is given an in-depth review and also contains many helpful side-notes that help illuminates various topics that are relevant to the biblical book (e.g. the ANE city of Alalakh in Genesis or the Role the Sinaitic Covenant played in Israel). What was very helpful was also the fact that each chapter aims to give a rough guide to the whole biblical book instead of just providing the background materials. So as one reads through Genesis, one will be given additional information on the various events in Genesis as it progresses along. Although it has been very helpful, I do find that this book is meant for Old Testament scholars or seminary students. Lay persons will benefit from this, but will need to be prepared to work through the materials. For pastors who intends to do a preaching series on the Old Testament, they can consider to consult the chapter on the book they are going to preach. As it stands, the book is around 460 pages (not counting the 100 pages of references material) which can be daunting for many. But, for those who really want to grow in their understanding of the Old Testament, or are pursuing a research topic in the Old Testament, it book will be of much value too them. Rating: 4.25 / 5 Disclaimer: I was given this book free from the publisher in exchange for an honest review

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