



The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible: Understanding Jewish and Christian Scriptures

Joel S. Kaminsky, Joel N. Lohr, Mark Reasoner

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The Bible has profoundly influenced the western world. Many of its characters and stories are well known and yet, oddly enough, wide swaths of the Bible are unknown and misunderstood. The laws and teaching contained within it have shaped contemporary thinking and jurisprudence in ways many do not realize. Equally important, two of the world's largest religions—Judaism and Christianity—consider the Hebrew Bible to be sacred and to contain enduring truths about beginnings and creation, life and death, the world, and what it means to be human.

Introductions to the Bible tend toward extensive discussion with little to introduce the beginner to the Bible's tremendous influence on contemporary society or to the complexities of reading ancient religious literature. Further, few discuss the differing ways Jews and Christians approach those parts of the Bible that they share in common or how each group appropriates materials from this common scriptural pool in divergent, conflicting, and often complex ways.

As classroom teachers of introductory courses on the Bible, the authors of this volume will acquaint students with the tremendous influence that the Bible has had on culture and to address some of the critical questions in user-friendly, faith-respecting ways, in order to maximize students' appreciation of the biblical text and their understanding of it.

This introduction will introduce the beginner to the Bible with simplicity and precision, in an engaging manner. It will provide the reader with a quick overview of the issues related to reading and studying the Bible as an academic discipline while simultaneously illustrating the importance of the Bible for religion, western jurisprudence, ethics, and contemporary conceptions of the family, morality, and even politics.

A CHOICE Magazine Outstanding Academic Title of 2014.

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