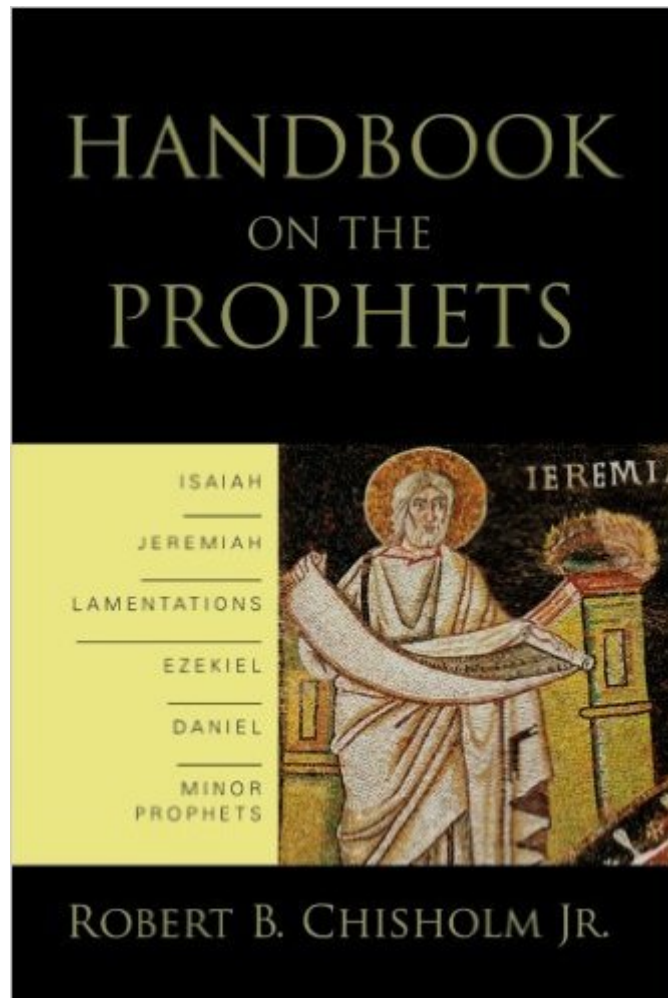


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Handbook On The Prophets



Synopsis

The prophetic books of the Bible contain some of the most difficult passages in the entire Old Testament. Veteran professor Robert Chisholm guides readers through the important and often complex writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Minor Prophets, examining the content, structure, and theological message of each book. Rather than attempting to provide a detailed verse by verse commentary, this handbook focuses on the prevailing themes and central messages of the prophetic books. It considers how the message of the prophets would have been heard in their respective historical communities and considers the prophets' continuing importance for contemporary study. Now available in paperback.

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Customer Reviews

Like the other books in this series, 'Handbook on the Prophets' is a highly useful and accessible text. Baker Book House also published 'Handbook on the Pentateuch' many years ago, which has become a widely read book, and 'Handbook on the Historical Books' just a few years ago. Chisholm's book is a welcome part of this collection. This is not a verse by verse commentary on the prophetic books of the Hebrew scripture. Rather, this is a more general commentary that looks at pericopes (logical blocks of text that flow together) as units. Each chapter (or, in the case of the minor prophets, sub-chapter) has an introduction that gives the basic historical and social background, pertinent linguistic and literary information, and general structural and contextual themes. The longest chapter, as befits its subject among the prophets, is on Isaiah. This gives a

good indication of the kind of commentary Chisholm produces. In the discussion on the authorship of Isaiah, he puts forward the theory that the author of 'First Isaiah' (Isaiah 1-39) is different from the author of 'Second Isaiah' (Isaiah 40-66); perhaps there is even an 'Third Isaiah' (Isaiah 56-66) distinct from the other two. However, Chisholm prefers the more traditional idea that there is but one author of Isaiah. Rather than dealing with the multiple-author theory, he rather sets it forward as a scholarly possibility, but concentrates his writing on the single-author text. From this, one can see from this that Chisholm's interpretative framework is a more traditional and conservative one, but not one that does excludes alternatives. One of the strengths of this text lies in the bibliographies -- this commentary is not a book by scholars for scholars, but does not ignore that consideration.

(PLEASE NOTE - THIS REVIEW WAS POSTED UNDER JOSH PLAZAK'S NAME, MY ROOMMATE, ACCIDENTALLY) Chisholm's commentary proved insightful and will be a good resource for me in the future regarding my studies in The Word. I look forward to reading some more of his work now that I am a little more familiar with his hermeneutical slant and doctrinal leanings. The overall outlines of each prophetic book was helpful. However, he or the editor grouped the Minor Prophets in one large heading which made it difficult to reference them as single books (the tops of the pages only said "Minor Prophets" and not the specific minor prophet). Even so, the outlines of some of the books by Chisholm were unique when compared to other scholars' outlines, making it helpful to see the book more comprehensively. Chisholm made helpful textual analyses throughout his commentary, citing various places where questionable translating occurred in certain versions (often the NIV). He also showed his acumen analyzing the Hebrew text itself. These were often very technical footnotes which would be of value, I would assume, for those who are well versed in studying the ancient Hebrew text. His one leaning that seemed questionable, though, was his tendency that seemed to generalize large portions of prophetic scripture as merely language used for exaggerated effect. It is not that Chisholm did not evaluate and comment on various opinions on texts that he believed were better off seen as exaggerations - he did take time to do this. However, in some cases his stance to see certain passages as merely "exaggerations for effect" seemed to ignore or not account better for specific details that implicitly seemed to require more of an explanation than one of hyperbole.

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