Bible Commentaries for Preachers
by Derek Tidball

Choosing a Bible commentary is in many ways a very personal matter; what suits one will not suit another. This list is written from the viewpoint of a preacher, rather than an academic scholar. I have disciplined myself to selecting a few commentaries for each book of the Bible, although I could have selected many more. I've occasionally referred to other significant general volumes. These should not only provide a rich resource to feed exegesis and spark thought for preaching but would also serve as an excellent foundation for a wider library in the future.

The first named volume in each case is, in my opinion, the best buy. A list of abbreviations can be found at the end.

The quality of any series is inevitably varied but the twelve volumed *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Abingdon Press, mid-90s onwards) is consistently good, written by top-rate scholars but with preachers in mind. Each exegetical section is followed by “Reflections” which prove stimulating for preaching. I refer to it directly below only once, but commend it for any book you might be studying.

William Barclay has now been replaced by Tom Wright’s series *Matthew (etc.) for everyone* (SPCK). John Goldingay is replacing the various OT volumes of the *Daily Study Bible* which are still available through Westminster John Knox, many of which I have found very valuable for preaching.

Don’t forget the series of IVP Dictionaries, four covering the OT and 3 the NT together with an additional *Dictionary of NT Background*. A related useful volume might be IVP’s *New Dictionary of biblical Theology*.

Equally, don’t forget the Bible Speaks Today Themes Series (IVP) – 17 volumes so far and scheduled for two new volumes per year – which are designed for preachers and expound the key biblical texts on the theme.

OOP books are now much more easily available and can usually be tracked down through Abebooks.com

**Genesis**
- Brueggemann (Int); Kidner (TOTC); Wenham (WBC)

**Exodus**
- Fretheim (Int); Ellison (DSB); Motyer (BST)

**Leviticus**
- Wenham (NICOT); Hartley (WBC); Tidball (BST); Ballentine (Int)
**Numbers**
Brown (BST); Wenham (TOTC); Riggans (DSB); Olsen (Int)

**Deuteronomy**
Wright (NIBC); Brown (BST); Craigie (NICOT); Payne (DSB)

**Joshua**
Hamlin (ITC); Davis (CFB); Hess (TOTC); Auld (DSB)

**Judges**
Wilcock (BST); Jackman (MOT); Davis (CFB); Butler (WBC)
*Note: Leon Wood, Distressing Days of the Judges (Zondervan)*

**Ruth**
Atkinson (BST); Auld (DSB); Jackman (MOT)

**1 & 2 Samuel**
Brueggemann (Int); Payne (DSB); Davis (CFB 2 vols); Evans (BST)

**1 & 2 Kings**
Brueggemann (KPG); Auld (DSB); Davis (CFB, 2 vols); Nelson (Int); Hobbs (WBC)

**1 & 2 Chronicles**
Allen (MOT); McConville (DSB); Wilcock (BST); Selman (TOTC)

**Ezra**
Kidner (TOTC); McGonville (DSB); Frensham (NICOT); Cave (CBG); Williamson (WBC)

**Nehemiah**
Kidner (TOTC); McGonville (DSB); Frensham (NICOT); Cave (CBG); Brown (BST)

**Esther**
McGonville (DSB); Reid (TOTC); Note: Dianne Tidball, Esther: A True First Lady (CFB)

**Job**
Atkinson (BST); Janzen (Int); Gibson (DSB)

**Psalms**
Grogan (TH); Kidner (2 vols) (TOTC); Mays (Int); Van Gemenen (EBC); Knight (2 vols) (DSB)*; Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Augsburg OT Studies); Brueggemann, *The Psalms & the Life of Faith* (Fortress) - a must.
*Note: two older works: A. B. Rhodes (Layman’s Bible Commentaries: SCM)*; Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David* (various editions)*. Shorter version of Spurgeon is available in the Crossway Classics series.

**Proverbs**
Kidner (TOTC); Aitken (DSB); Lane (CFB); Murphy (WBC)
*Note: Daniel Estes, Hear My Son (IVP) and Atkinson (BST)*
Ecclesiastes
Davidson (DSB); Longman (NICOT); Eaton (TOTC); Kidner (BST)

Note: Tidball, *That's Just The Way It Is* (CFP)

Song of Solomon
Longman (WBC); Gledhill (BST); Carr (TOTC);

Isaiah
Motyer (IVP); Webb (BST); Knight (2 vols) (ITC); Goldingay (NIBC). On Isaiah 40-66 see Westermann (OTL) and Hanson (Int). An older classic worth having is George Adam Smith (Exp Bib).

Jeremiah
Brueggemann (ITC); Thompson (NICOT); Davidson (2 vols) (DSB)

Await Wright in revised BST, due 2014.

Lamentations

Ezekiel
Stuart (MOT); Craigie (DSB); Wright (BST); Blenkinsopp (Int)

Daniel
Longman (AC); Goldingay (WBC); Wallace (BST); Russell (DSB); Baldwin (TOTC) Note: D.S. Russell, *Daniel: An Active Volcano* (St Andrews Press)*

The Twelve Prophets
Craigie (DSB)*

Note: George Adam Smith (Exp Bib) – second hand.

Hosea
Stuart (Hosea-Jonah) (WBC); Kidner (BST); Hubbard (TOTC); Beeby (ITC); Mays (OTL)

Joel
Stuart (Hosea-Jonah) (WBC); Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT)

Amos
Motyer (BST); Stuart (Hosea-Jonah) (WBC); Mays (OTL)

Obadiah
Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT); E. Achtemeier (Minor Prophets 1) (NIBC); Baker, Alexander & Waltke (TOTC)

Jonah
T. E. Fretheim, *The Message of Jonah* (Augsburg); Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT); Baker, Alexander & Waltke (TOTC)
Micah
Allen (Joel-Micah) (NICOT); E. Achtemeier (Minor Prophets 1) (NIBC); Baker, Alexander & Waltke (TOTC)

Nahum
E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

Habakkuk
E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int); Lloyd-Jones, From Fear to Faith (IVP)

Zephaniah
E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

Haggai
Baldwin (Hag-Mal) (TOTC); E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

Zechariah
Baldwin (Hag-Mal) (TOTC); E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

Malachi
Baldwin (Hag-Mal) (TOTC); E. Achtemeier (Nahum-Mal) (Int)

The Gospels & Life of Christ
N.T. Wright, Jesus & the Victory of God (SPCK) (and his various shorter works on Jesus)
Ken Bailey, Jesus through Middles Eastern Eyes (SPCK)
Philip Yancey, The Jesus I Never Knew (Marshall Pickering)
Richard Burridge, Four Gospels, One Jesus? (SPCK)
Gerd Theissen, The Shadow of the Galilean (SCM)

Matthew
France (TNCT & NICNT); Green (BST); Carson (EBC); Blomberg (NAC)

The Sermon on the Mount
D. Carson (BCL); R. Guelich (WBC); Stott (BST); Lloyd-Jones (IVP)

Mark
Edwards (PNTC); Williamson (Int); France (NIGTC).
Note: Morna Hooker, The Message of Mark (Epworth).

Luke
J. Green (NICNT); Stein (NAC); Craddock (Int); Geldenhuys (NICNT)*

The Parables
C. Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables (Apollos); D. Wenham, The Parables of Jesus (H&S)

John
Carson (PNTC); Milne (BST); Kruse (TNCT),R. Brown (AB); Beasley-Murray (WBC). Note: Carson, Jesus & his friends (Paternoster)
Acts
Marshall (TNTC); Schnabel (ZECNT) Stott (BST); Dunn (Epworth); Willimon (Int)
Note: M. Green, 30 Years that changed the world (IVP) and Witness to the Gospel, ed.
Howard Marshall & David Peterson (Eerdmans)

Romans
Moo (NICNT); Dunn (WBC); Stott (BST); Zeisler (SCM); P. Achtemeier (Int)
Note two very different authors: Lloyd-Jones (12 vols, BOT) and Wright (NIB)

1 Corinthians
Hays (Int); Ciampa & Rosner (PNTC); Fee (NICNT)
Note: Bailey, Paul through Mediterranean Eyes (SPCK); Carson, The Cross & Christian
Ministry (IVP) & Showing the Spirit: An exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14 (Paternoster);

2 Corinthians
Furnish (AB); Barnett (NICNT); Haffemann (AC); Best (Int)
Get hold of the older work by James Denny (Exp Bib) if you can.

Galatians
George (NAC); Stott (BST); Dunn (Black’s); Longnecker (WBC)

Ephesians
O’Brien (PNTC); Barth (AB); Stott (BST); Arnold (ZECNT). For supreme mastery read Lloyd-
Jones (Banner of Truth)

Philippians
Hansen (PNTC); Fee (NICNT); Marshall (Epworth); Motyer (BST).

Colossians
O’Brien (WBC); Wright (TNTC); Dunn (NIGTC)
Note: Clinton Arnold, The Colossian Syncretism (Baker), Brian Walsh & Sylvia Keesmaat,
Colossians Remixed (IVP) and Tidball, The Reality is Christ (CFP)

1 & 2 Thessalonians
Marshall (NCB); Johnson (AB); Wanamaker (NIGTC); Stott (BST).
Again get James Denny (Exp Bib), second hand.

1 & 2 Timothy / Titus
Stott (BST); Oden (Int); Fee (NIBC); Wall (TH); Towner (NICNT)
Note: M.F. Young, The Theology of the Pastoral Epistles (Cambridge).

Philemon
See Colossians.

Hebrews
Long (Int); Lane (WBC); Hughes (Eerdmans); Guthrie (TNTC)

James
Motyer (BST); Johnson (AB); Moo (TNTC); or Moo (PNTC)
Note: *James*, Bauckham (Routledge) and Tidball *Wisdom from Heaven* (CFB) T. Manton (BoFT) is very rewarding still.

1 Peter
Marshall (IVP); Davids (NICNT); Grudem (TNTC)

2 Peter
M. Green (TNTC); J. Green (TH); Davids (PNTC); Lucas & C. Green (BST)

1, 2 & 3 John
Marshall (NICNT); Stott (TNTC); Eaton (CFP); Kruse (PNTC)
Note: Lloyd-Jones (Crossway).

Jude
M. Green (TNTC); Green (TH); Davids (PNTC); Lucas & C. Green (BST)

Revelation
Beasley-Murray (NCB); Boring (Int); Caird (Black’s); Mounce (NICNT)

Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible (Doubleday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCL</td>
<td>Bible Classics Library (Paternoster)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOT</td>
<td>Banner of Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>BST</td>
<td>Bible Speaks Today (IVP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBG</td>
<td>Crossway Bible Guides (IVP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFP</td>
<td>Christian Focus Publications (Christian Focus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSB</td>
<td>Daily Study Bible (St Andrews Press)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBC</td>
<td>The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (12 vols) (Zondervan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exp Bib</td>
<td>Expositor’s Bible (Hodder &amp; Stoughton) (Second hand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation (John Knox Press)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>International Theological Commentary (Eerdmans)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPG</td>
<td>Knox Preaching Guides (John Knox Press)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOT</td>
<td>Mastering the Old Testament (STL) (Previously the Communicators’ Commentary or Preachers’ Commentary published by Thomas Nelson)</td>
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<td>NAC</td>
<td>New American Commentary (Broadman &amp; Holman)</td>
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<td>NCB</td>
<td>New Century Bible (Eerdmans/Marshall Pickering)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIB</td>
<td>The New Interpreter’s Bible (Abingdon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIBC</td>
<td>New International Biblical Commentary (Hendrikson)</td>
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<td>NICOT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICNT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the New Testament (as above)</td>
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John Wesley wrote to one of his preachers: ‘What has exceedingly hurt you in time past, nay, and I fear, to this day, is, want of reading. I scarce ever knew a preacher read so little. And perhaps, by neglecting it, have lost the taste for it. Hence your talent in preaching does not increase. It is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with meditation and daily prayer. . . . O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercise. You may acquire the taste which you have not: what is tedious at first, will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you.

Support your local Christian bookshop – or they won’t be around much longer.