

Resensies/Reviews

Gatti, N & Ossum-Batsa, G 2011.

Journeying with the Old Testament.

Bern: Peter Lang. (Das Alte Testament im Dialog vol 5). 189pp. Paperback.
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This book is the result of many years of teaching the Old Testament in Africa especially in the country of Ghana at two Ghanaese universities. The aim of the book is to provide the student/reader with a general introductory study of the Old Testament. The intended audience of the book is clearly students with questions put and exercises recommended to see whether the work has been mastered in a sufficient way.

The book is divided into six different “steps” as the authors call the sections in the book. In step 1 the student is introduced to the world of the Old Testament with a geographical overview combined with the major military and political powers at play in the ancient Near East during Old Testament times. Step 2 pays attention to the canon of the Old Testament providing the student with a brief overview of the formation of the Hebrew canon as well as the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament. The next three sections deal with the three different parts of the Old Testament in more detail. In the part on the Torah students are introduced to the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Torah as well as the Documentary Hypothesis. The part on the prophets deals with the former and latter prophets respectively and the writings are dealt with as a reflection and celebration of life. A brief discussion of the literary forms found in the respective parts of the Old Testament is also given. Each section closes with a brief bibliography for more interested readers.

Step 6 is about studying the Old Testament in Africa and is perhaps the most valuable chapter in the book. Different viewpoints and perspectives on the way in which the Old Testament is studied in an African context are given.

The book is the product of lesson notes from the authors “transformed into a tool that could be of use to a wider readership”. It seeks to fill a gap between scholarly introductions to the Old Testament and the more popular ones also found. It is no doubt a most useful book especially within the South African context where there is a marked “turn to Africa” in the curriculum followed at theological institutions. In the end one wonders if not too little has been said. Perhaps in a second edition of the book it can be elaborated into a more comprehensive format.

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