



The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary

John H. Sailhamer

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Most scholars studying the first five books of the Bible either attempt to dissect it into various pre-pentateuchal documents or, at the very least, analyze Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy as separate, self-contained documents. The Pentateuch As Narrative focuses on the narrative and literary continuity of the Pentateuch as a whole. It seeks to disclose how the original Jewish readers may have viewed this multivolume work of Moses. Its central thesis is that the Pentateuch was written from the perspective of one who had lived under the Law of the Covenant established at Mount Sinai and had seen its failure to produce genuine trust in the Lord God of Israel. In this context, the Pentateuch pointed the reader forward to the hope of the New Covenant, based on divine faithfulness. Throughout the commentary Dr. Sailhamer pays close attention to and interacts with a wide range of classical and contemporary literature on the Pentateuch, written by Jews, Catholics, and Protestants.

The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary Details

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Josue Manriquez says

This is a very detailed commentary on the Pentateuch, focusing much on its cohesion and coherence as one whole narrative. I do not agree with all Sailhamer's views, so it's important to read this book with discernment. As a whole, however, this is an excellent commentary.

Jay says

Fantastic commentary on the pentateuch (my favorite section of the Bible). Sailhamer really ties these books into the greater narrative of the bible. He uses the Hebrew to show variances in modern translations (which was what I really enjoyed). On the whole, if you are having a hard (or just want a new look) understanding the importance of the Pentateuch in your current life, give this a go; it will bring you some clarity.

William says

This is a must read for anyone preaching through any of the books of the Pentateuch. While it's not a technical commentary, Sailhamer's literary insights into the plotting and narrative structure of the Pentateuch are extremely insightful and helpful.

Collin Mayjack says

This is one of the best works in Old Testament studies that I have come across. Sailhamer's approach of taking the Pentateuch as a single literary volume is fantastic, and so helpful for understanding the Pentateuch well. The introduction alone (about 80 pages) is well worth the buy.

Alienjoe211 says

This was required reading for a class on the Pentateuch through my Bible College. The best part of reading a 500+ page book is always finishing it! A narrative covering the first five books of the Bible would have to be that long. The good news is that as I searched for significant details, I found parallels with the New Testament as well. Sailhamer managed to tie the two together well.

Bendick Ong says

The two books that are recommended in our class on the pentateuch in the seminary are, victor p. hamilton's

handbook on the Pentateuch and John H. Sailhamer the Pentateuch as narrative, and I've enjoyed both. Think the both should be read together as they complement each other well. Hamilton's book is easy to read given the reader-friendly format and fonts (which are important too – many writers dismiss that!) and of course the well-organised contents. Devoting one part for each of the five books in the Pentateuch and further dividing each part into five sections, Hamilton addresses many issues pertaining to the Pentateuch. It also comes with solid bibliographies for each of the sub-sections. One of my assignments in class was to write a short paper on each of the 5 books and I have quoted Hamilton quite extensively. Appreciate his insights.

Sailhamer's book is less academic in the sense that it does not have long footnotes and impressive bibliographies – which means it is not as good a resource book compared to Hamilton's. However, by itself, it is a very good read. It is one of those books that one could read on a couch over a cup of coffee with lots of moments of eureka! And it is one with lots of depth too. I would recommend one to start with Sailhamer and use Hamilton to complement it. If one has mastered these two books, one could be said to be very familiar with the themes and contents of the Pentateuch. I wish to do that, and thus am reading Sailhamer again for the second time. It is always a pleasurable treat reading Sailhamer.

Daniel Goodman says

Sailhamer's thesis is simple: The Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) should not be read as individual volumes disconnected from one another but as a single literary story. In the form of a condensed commentary, Sailhamer journeys through the Pentateuch and shows convincingly demonstrates its literary unity.

During my reading, I was constantly blown away at his insight. Truly a unique commentary.

In the end, this a wonderful resource for those interested in interpreting and studying the Pentateuch. A perfect reference to keep on the shelf!

D J Cadenhead says

This completely overwhelming convincing and thoroughly researched tome built by a Spiritual Giant (Thou a man), taught one of the most brilliant linguists I have met, best teachers I have known, and convinced me that he, (Dr. Sailhamer) had a grasp on God's (w)Holy Word that may have set him a bit apart from the masses during his time, (not so long ago). This Brilliant Academician persevered and stood by his, then Hypothetical, thoughts and ideas like a Scarlet Oak. I applaud gentleman who thoroughly researched and irrefutably proved that despite what might dampen the spirits of lesser men, by withstanding hefty criticism, succeeded in producing an understanding of the Older Testament and the Newer Testaments extant Christological interrelated-ness spiritual giants that (IMHO) stand nigh unequaled by anyone but possibly three or four of today's most respected evangelical Academician. A must read for the spiritually God-Bound *doulos* who wishes to understand the *Logos* as a volume that was, and is, *Theopneustos*.

Will says

This view literally changed the way I read Scripture...permanently. Sailhamer approaches the Pentateuch as

literature in a way that unlocks the books as a unit.

Mark Taylor says

Anyone teaching the Bible needs to have this book on their shelf. I go back to it time and time again. It will open entire new doors for you that lead to greater understanding and appreciation of the Pentateuch.

James Harmeling says

This is a great resource for a condensed commentary on the first five books of the Bible highlighting the literary aspects involved. Sailhamer does not get into various disputes about authorship, historicity, or date of composition. Instead, he takes the text at face value and easily walks the reader through the story with all its textures and deliberate literary devices.

Isaac Brickner says

This will challenge the way anyone reads the five books of Moses. Great insights, and a helpful approach to the Pentateuch.

Ben Flegal says

Although he has a different perspective on canonization than I hold to (he holds that the final forms of the books are the inspired ones, and they developed into those forms over time), Sailhamer presents a good example of the Pentateuch's being interpreted as what it is - narrative literature. His insights as he compares passages to each other, noting allusions, similarities, and contextual markers, are invaluable to one studying the books of Moses. I learned much from reading this book.

Guillaume Bourin says

This is really excellent, especially his work on the compositional strategy of the Pentateuch.
