

Shepherd, Dancer, Poet, King - Telling and Singing the Stories of King David
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BASIC READING

Alter, Robert, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1999, 410 pages.

A fine place to start exploring David's story, a readable, comprehensive presentation of 1 and 2 Samuel. Alter's translation is clear and contemporary. His translator's notes on the text are on each page with the text, so the reader can progress slowly (by reading along with both scripture and notes) or speedily (by reading scripture only) or somewhere in between, dipping into the notes now and then. The book includes Alter's thoughtful "To The Reader" introduction discussing the context and significance of the story. I think it's particularly helpful to read Alter because he writes from inside the Jewish tradition of scholarship; Christians need this perspective to keep us honest in our work with the text. *P.G.S.*

Fox, Everett. *Give Us a King!: Samuel, Saul, and David: A New Translation of Samuel I and II*. 1st ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1999.

A new translation in free verse by Everett Fox, a professor of Judaic and biblical studies at Clark University, who is also known for his well-regarded translation, *The Five Books of Moses* (1995). A nice complement to Alter's translation. *J.K.*

Steussy, Marti J., *David, God, and the Word*, published in *Word & World*, v. 25 #4, Fall 2003, Luther Seminary, 9 pages. This article is available online at: http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/23-4_David/23-4_Steussy.pdf

A fast ten pages on how to think about the David material. When Christians deal with the Hebrew scriptures, we tend to talk as though the vision of God that is articulated in the Old Testament is deficient or incorrect - bloodthirsty, angry, cruel. Steussy's brief but important article goes straight to the heart of this. Why is God envisioned in such an ethically troubling way in the David stories? How are we meant to respond? Please read this! *P.G.S.*

Brueggemann, Walter, *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory*, Fortress Press, 1985, 127 pages.

How does a Bible story tell the truth? Brueggemann says, in its own way, on its own terms, and in its own time. This is his exploration of the different truths that are remembered and expressed in the David stories - a wonderful book. Available used under \$10.00. *P.G.S.*

Pinsky, Robert, *The Life of David (Jewish Encounters Series)*, Schocken Books, 2005, 209 pages.

Pinsky's reflections on the story. He's a wonderful writer - this is a novel-like book. The text of the story is not included. Available used for under \$10.00. *P.G.S.*

FOR DEEPER STUDY

Borgman, Paul. *David, Saul, and God: Rediscovering an Ancient Story*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

In this 2008 book on David, Borgman (English, Gordon College) focuses on the patterns throughout the entire story of David and uses them in his search to understand the character of God, who rejected Saul but found David "a man after his own heart." *Choice Reviews* calls the book "clearly organized and beautifully written, this book is unpretentious but learned, giving ample evidence (in lengthy endnotes) of Borgman's dialogue with other critics." *J.K.*

Brueggemann, Walter, *First and Second Samuel: Interpretation, A Biblical Commentary for Preaching and Teaching*, John Knox Press, 1990, 362 pages.

This commentary is based on Brueggemann's sensitivity to the story and its social and historical context (rather than a detailed examination of, say, translation issues or comparison of differing original manuscript sources). P. Smith considers this book to be an indispensable companion for telling the stories in 1 and 2 Samuel - it tells you, for any given story, what is at stake. *P.G.S.*

Fokkelman, J. P. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*. Assen, The Netherlands ; Dover, N.H: Van Gorcum, 1981. v. 1. King David (II Sam. 9-20 & I Kings 1-2) -- v. 2. The crossing fates (I Sam. 13-23 & II Sam. 1) -- v. 3. Throne and city (II Sam. 2-8 & 21-24) -- v. 4. Vow and desire (I Sam. 1-12).

An exquisitely detailed literary analysis of the David stories, word by word, phrase by phrase, by one of the leaders of structural analysis in the field of biblical studies. Not for the faint-hearted, perhaps, but, it can be very instructive background reading for selected stories. *J.K.*

Steussy, Marti. *David: Biblical Portraits of Power*, University of South Carolina Press, 1999, 251 pages.

This book follows how David's story and imagery is threaded throughout the Hebrew scriptures -- in Samuel, Chronicles, and the Psalms, but in many other texts as well. One of Steussy's great strengths is her sensitivity to the "conversations" among the texts of the Hebrew scripture. The book is written for an educated reader who is not necessarily familiar with biblical scholarship, and Steussy introduces and explains her scholarship and the scholarship of those she cites. *P.G.S.*

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Cavanaugh, William T. "Does Religion Cause Violence," published in *Harvard Divinity Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2 & 3 (Spring/Summer 2007). About ten pages. This article is available online at:
http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news/bulletin_mag/articles/35-23_cavanaugh.html

Since the David story is soaked in blood, the presenter of these stories to contemporary listeners may run into the popular attitude that religious beliefs cause warfare and violence. Cavanaugh takes this idea apart in a truly satisfying way, arguing that nations have always used religions as smokescreens to hide the violence they initiate in their own political self-interest. Even if you can't chew through the whole article, it is well worth your time to read the first few pages. *P.G.S.*

FEMINIST RESOURCES FOR STUDYING AND TELLING THE DAVID STORIES

There is extensive material in this category! Here are a few things to get you started.

In 2004 the World Council of Churches prepared a book of study materials on violence against women, structured around the story of the rape of Tamar, David's daughter, by her brother Ammon. (*Some of this material was presented at Lambeth last year.*) *P.G.S.* has a pdf copy & will gladly email it to any interested party.

Frymer-Kemsky, Tikva, *Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of Their Stories* - Careful and thoughtful narrative criticism by a Jewish biblical scholar. It's a little chewy, but well worth the effort. The book is organized by typology of character, not by story, so you do have to hunt around to find the women in the David stories, but this approach gives a perspective on the characters that is fresh and insightful. About \$11 at Amazon. *P.G.S.*

Jacobson, Diane L., "And Then There Were the Women in His Life: David and His Women" published in *Word & World*, v. 25 #4, Fall 2003, Luther Seminary, 9 pages. This article is available free online at:
http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/23-4_David/23-4_D_Jacobson.pdf

This is fast, helpful, insightful groundwork for studying and telling about the women in David's story, with many helpful pointers to further reading.

Diane Jacobson's bibliography on reading David through a feminist lens is online at:

<http://www.luthersem.edu/djacobso/>

Click on the Harlots and Heroines-Bibliography link. *P.G.S.*

*This annotated bibliography was prepared by Jennie Kiffmeyer and Pamela Grenfell Smith for their workshop **Shepherd, Dancer, Poet, King - Telling and Singing the Stories of King David** offered at Under One Roof, a conference sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, in March 2009.*

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Heller, Joseph, ***God Knows***, Simon and Schuster, 1997 (paperback edition), 368 pages.

On his deathbed, David reflects on his long life and concludes that God owes him an apology. "Some Promised Land. The honey was there, but the milk we brought in with our goats. To people in California, God gives a magnificent coastline, a movie industry, and Beverly Hills. To us He gives: sand. To Cannes He gives a plush film festival. We get the PLO." Available used online for \$1.00 or so.

The person suggesting these next two books wrote, "The importance and great influence of oral communication (storytelling) on the development of the Old and New Testaments - to truly understand the gospels, they must be seen as based in orality."

Horsley, Richard A., ***Jesus in Context: Power, People and Performance***. Fortress Press, 2008, 256 pages.

From the back cover, "Historical-critical investigations of the Gospels and of the historical Jesus have always assumed the centrality of the Gospels as written texts. Richard A Horsley overturns that assumption, showing that the Jesus traditions were formed as popular traditions and transmitted through oral performance, not through the textual work of a scribal elite. In order to understand Jesus and the movement around him, then, we must attend to the dynamics of power, social memory, the interaction of "great" and "little" traditions, and the moral economy of peasant society in Roman Judea and Galilee."

Horsley, Richard A., ***Scribes, Visionaries, and the Politics of Second Temple Judea***. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, 224 pages.

Library World writes: "Judaism and Christianity both arose in times of empire, with roots in Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. In order to understand these religious movements, one must first understand the history and society of these imperial cultures. In these formative years, wisdom and apocalyptic traditions flourished as two significant religious forms. In this book, the author, a distinguished New Testament scholar, analyzes the function and meaning of these religious movements within their social context, providing essential background for the development of early Judaism and early Christianity."