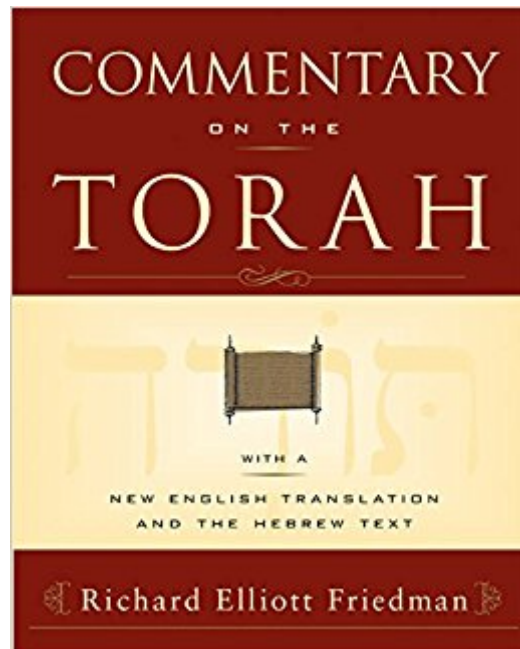


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Commentary On The Torah



Synopsis

In this groundbreaking and insightful new commentary, one of the world's leading biblical scholars unveils the unity and continuity of the Torah for the modern reader. Richard Elliott Friedman, the bestselling author of *Who Wrote the Bible?*, integrates the most recent discoveries in biblical archaeology and research with the fruits of years of experience studying and teaching the Bible to illuminate the straightforward meaning of the text -- "to shed new light on the Torah and, more important, to open windows through which it sheds its light on us." While other commentaries are generally collections of comments by a number of scholars, this is a unified commentary on the Torah by a single scholar, the most unified by a Jewish scholar in centuries. It includes the original Hebrew text, a new translation, and an authoritative, accessibly written interpretation and analysis of each passage that remains focused on the meaning of the Torah as a whole, showing how its separate books are united into one cohesive, all-encompassing sacred literary masterpiece. This landmark work is destined to take its place as a classic in the libraries of lay readers and scholars alike, as we seek to understand the significance of the scriptural texts for our lives today, and for years to come.

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Customer Reviews

In days of yore, Bible commentary was not done by the person who did the translation. Thus, both the Hertz and Plaut commentaries used the translation of another. Recently, some scholars have done both, and *Commentary on the Torah* (Richard Elliot Friedman, HarperCollins, 2000) is a

splendid example. It covers the entire Humash (5 Books of Moses). Those of you familiar with him as the author of *Who Wrote the Bible?* may be surprised that, with rare exceptions, the question of the origins of the Bible does not arise. He is solely concerned with what the text means. Indeed, he repeatedly views the Humash as a unified whole, tracing the development of themes across books, and emphasizing how language in one book is meant to reflect language used in another. His gaze is so fixed on the text itself that midrashic elaboration (seen frequently in Plaut) and defenses of the text (seen so much in Hertz) are largely absent. He wants the text understood in its own terms, as seen, for example, by his repeated efforts to show how the Bible distinguishes between offenses in the sacred and non-sacred zones. This is in one sense a personal commentary. While his views are informed by much scholarship, he clearly speaks in his own voice; you seldom see "Tradition says..." or "Rashi explains ... " (and even then, it's done generally to distinguish his views from earlier ones). Indeed, sometimes he uses the first person "I", which is uncommon in serious Torah commentary. This is also reflected in what he chooses to write about. Not as full a commentary as Hertz; sometimes dozens of verses can go by without comment. But when he has points to make, (e.g. in the first three verses of Deuteronomy) then he takes the space needed.

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