



Alexander, T. Desmond and David W. Baker, eds.

Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

I've been flipping through this particular volume for close to a week now and I've enjoyed it thoroughly. Since I'm more of a New Testament guy I'm not really familiar with most of the contributors to this volume, and most of those I do know, I know in name only. Nevertheless, I've already gleaned much from these new found scholars. John Goldingay's entry on "Hermeneutics" (387-400) is wonderful. In it he covers ten types of interpretation that include but are not limited to: Christological, Doctrinal, Devotional, and Midrashic interpretations of the Pentateuch. Meaty stuff to say the least. John Walton's article on the "Flood" (315-26) was evenhanded and extremely well-written. I especially appreciated his insight that:

Science is not in a position to make demands on the text, nor are interpreters in a position to import scientific concerns and perspectives into the text to satisfy their own worldviews. [. . .] Some feel they are protecting the reputation of the Bible by devising scientific theories that account for the details of the traditional interpretation of the text. Too often, however, these theories prove to be implausible and are easily discredited by the scientific thinkers whom they intend to win over. (320)

Whether global or local (or the other two options that Walton lists, i.e., *regional* or *known world*), Christian apologists need to stop forcing science on what Walton rightly identifies as a non-scientific text. I'm sure that this volume and the three I've yet to get will aid my studies immensely in the years to come.

One of the main things that I love about all of these volumes are the bibliographies at the end of each entry. The size of my library has increased substantially in running down references after reading these articles. I also appreciate the manner in which the articles are written, i.e., they're substantial enough for scholars but simple enough for motivated non-scholars. I've spoken to many a seminarian who has sung praises in honor of the

IVP Dictionary Series, and I'm just another voice in an already large choir. I suggest that if you don't have the books in this series that you go out and get them, soon!