

EXCERPT

IVP Academic

The Old Testament in Seven Sentences
A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic
Introductions in Seven Sentences

May 28, 2019 | \$16, 184 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5225-3

It's easy to see the Old Testament as confusing, out-of-date, or irrelevant. Using seven key sentences drawn straight from the Old Testament, Christopher J. H. Wright fits the pieces together, shows us the coherent whole, and points us toward Jesus. This short survey shows God's faithfulness and love for his people and illuminates how the Old Testament Scriptures prepared for the identity and mission of Jesus.

Why These Seven Sentences?

Let me offer a word about how I came to choose my seven sentences. The first three more or less chose themselves. We have to begin with creation, as the whole Bible does, and think about what the stories of Genesis 1–11 tell us about the world, God, ourselves, and our terrible plight as rebels against our Creator.

And then we have to move on to that triggering moment when God calls and chooses Abraham and gives him that promise that really governs the rest of the Bible—through the story of Israel, onward and outward to all nations in the whole earth. Paul calls our second sentence “the gospel” (Galatians 3:8).

From there we have to see the exodus as the greatest event of redemption in the Bible until the cross of Christ. In the same book we read about the covenant that God makes with Israel and the way of life that he calls the Israelites to observe (the law) in response to God's saving grace. But it is all based on what God has done for them—hence our third sentence.

The fourth was more difficult, since there is a huge chunk of history after the exodus. We can't ignore it, but we can't tell it in full—just a summary. However, in the middle of it comes the next-most important covenant in the Bible—the one God makes with King David, since that points us eventually to King Jesus (as the apostle Paul was fond of saying). David grabbed the fourth sentence.

Having come that far, it seemed that we must tackle the great block of the books of the prophets. That seemed to split into two parts. Much of what the prophets have to say is challenging the people to turn back to God, to live in the way he wants, and warning them that if they do not do so, they will face horrendous judgment and destruction. Thus, for our fifth sentence I chose a well-known verse from Micah, one of those prophets who exposes the social depravity and injustice of the nation in contrast to what God truly wants from them. It is a verse that influenced Jesus also (Matthew 23:23) and inspires a lot of Christian ministry and mission today.

But the prophets also bring a message of hope beyond judgment. They have good news to share as they look into God's future, for Israel and for the world, as God will keep his promise through Israel for all the nations on earth. The New Testament word for “gospel” actually comes from the Old Testament (in the Greek translation that was often used in the days of Jesus and the other disciples, especially Paul). My sixth sentence is a gospel word about God's salvation, both for the exiles of Israel and also for “all the ends of the earth.” It is a sentence that Paul quotes (Romans 10:15) and has inspired various hymns and songs.

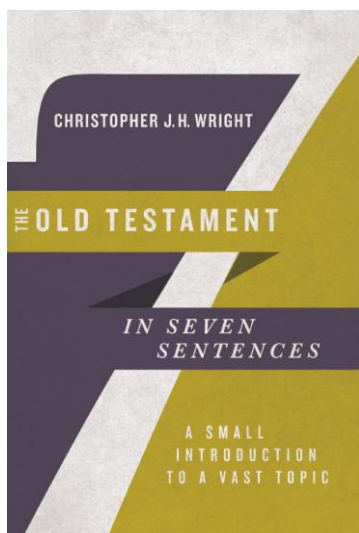


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Christopher J. H. Wright (PhD, Cambridge) is international ministries director of the Langham Partnership, providing literature, scholarships, and preaching training for pastors in Majority World churches and seminaries. He has written many books including commentaries on Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel, *The Mission of God*, *Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit*, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, and *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*. He was chair of the Lausanne Theology Working Group from 2005-2011 and the chief architect of The Cape Town Commitment from the Third Lausanne Congress, 2010.

The book of Psalms is probably still the favorite part of the Old Testament for many people, even those who never read much else in the rest of it. As I mentioned above, it is the primary book in the third section of the Hebrew canon, the Writings. It wasn't hard to choose as our seventh sentence what is also probably many people's favorite verse from their favorite psalm. And that provided a way to access both to the book of Psalms itself and the Wisdom books in the same part of our Bible.

I hope you will enjoy just reading the book itself, but for best results, it really will be helpful, whenever convenient, to read the book with your Bible close at hand so that you can check out some of the references that I have scattered in to support the points being made. After all, the whole point of choosing these seven sentences is to encourage you to read a lot more of them in the Bible itself.

—Adapted from the introduction

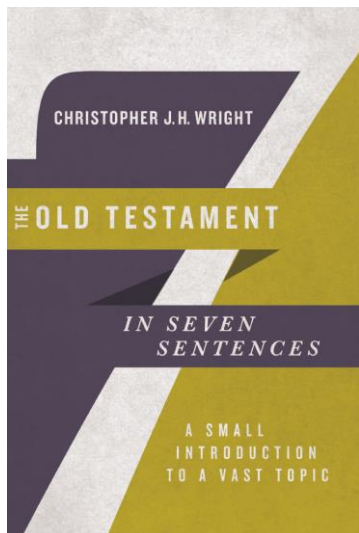


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ENDORSEMENTS



The Old Testament in Seven Sentences

A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic

Introductions in Seven Sentences

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The accessible Introduction in Seven Sentences primers act as brief introductions to an academic field, with simple organization: seven key sentences that give readers a birds-eye view of the most pivotal truths on that subject. Titles include *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences*, *The New Testament in Seven Sentences* (October 8, 2019) and *Philosophy in Seven Sentences* (2016).

Introduction in Seven Sentences

"The Old Testament in Seven Sentences sounds like an impossible task, but Chris Wright makes it work beautifully, capturing the central features of the Old Testament in a way that is both rich and accessible. I'm not surprised really—Wright is one of our best, most mature thinkers about the Bible today. His book gives readers an essential and impressive orientation to the life-giving message of the Old Testament. I recommend it highly."

—Tremper Longman III, distinguished scholar and professor emeritus of biblical studies, Westmont College

"Communicating the essence of the Old Testament to the Christian believer is a challenge. Christopher Wright has creatively met the challenge, summarizing its major themes under seven simple headings. These headings, beginning with creation and concluding with Psalms and Wisdom, lay out in easy-to-remember terms the history of salvation as it exists in the Old Testament and as it is fulfilled in Christ. With this as a guide, readers will find their way through an exciting but daunting journey, finding out how Jesus is the completion of the hope of Israel."

—Duane Garrett, John R. Sampey Professor of Old Testament Interpretation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"What a fantastic title! What an imaginative project! What a delightful way into the Old Testament! What a great gift for anyone who is bewildered by the Old Testament and thinks they might be able to get into it if only they had some signposts!"

—John Goldingay, professor of Old Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary

"Wright's The Old Testament in Seven Sentences is a tour de force, capturing the heart of the Old Testament, its epic drama, and God's passion for his people with clarity and depth. Wright takes readers on a journey through the mountains and valleys of the Old Testament, sharing vistas of its beauty, its pain, and its picture of God's continuing plan of redemption and mission for God's people, culminating in Jesus Christ and the new creation of all things."

—Beth Stovell, associate professor of Old Testament at Ambrose University, national catalyst for theological and spiritual formation for Vineyard Canada



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