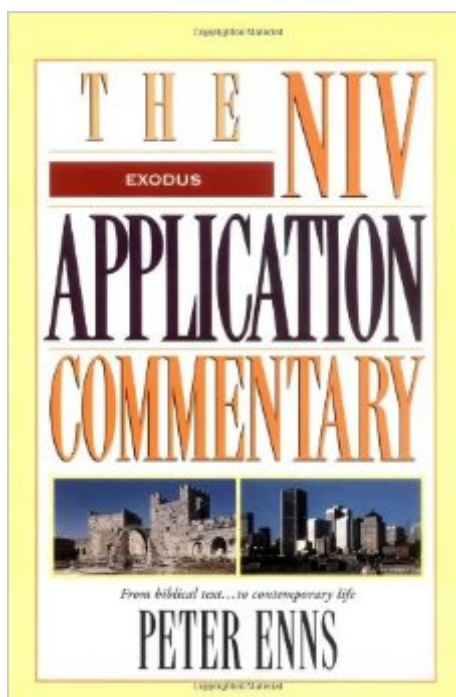


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Exodus (The NIV Application Commentary)



Synopsis

Most Bible commentaries take us on a one-way trip from our world to the world of the Bible. But they leave us there, assuming that we can somehow make the return journey on our own. In other words, they focus on the original meaning of the passage but don't discuss its contemporary application. The information they offer is valuable--but the job is only half done! The NIV Application Commentary Series helps us with both halves of the interpretive task. This new and unique series shows readers how to bring an ancient message into a modern context. It explains not only what the Bible means but also how it can speak powerfully today.

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Customer Reviews

Up until recently, there haven't been a lot of evangelical commentaries on Exodus. Most of us have either used the 30 year old commentary by Brevard Childs, or we have used Walter Kaiser's commentary (which is not bad by any stretch, but not as detailed as one might wish). I am pleased to report that the new commentary by Peter Enns fills an important gap. It follows the familiar three part format of the NIV Application series (Original Meaning, Bridging the Horizons, Contemporary Significance). But where this commentary excels is in the insights into the text and its relation of the book of Exodus to the rest of the biblical canon. I like how Enns relates the deliverance of the baby Moses from the water to his leading the Israelites through the water of the Red Sea. In both instances, God saves his people through the water. He also compares this with the Noah's ark story. Enns also does a good job at relating the stories in Exodus to some of the events in the life of

Jesus (their special birth narratives, their both being used of God to deliver their people). In his discussion of the Ten Commandments, Enns brings out truth and meaning that may not have been apparent to the casual reader. He notes that these commandments were given because being a part of God's chosen people has ramifications for our relationship to God as well as our relationships with one another. He also stresses that when we preach these commandments, that we keep in mind that they are a message for people who are already saved, not a message for those who need to be saved. I also appreciate how Enns discusses the Pauline usage of material in Exodus, namely Exodus 34:29-34. This commentary deserves to be used side by side with Doug Stuart's recent offering on Exodus. These two books should satisfy the expositor of Exodus for years to come. Rev. Marc Axelrod

As I have been preaching through Exodus, I've learned to turn to this resource early in my readings. This is because Enns is excellent in the way he handles application. He weaves NT citations into the application rather well. However, I've found myself wanting more than he gives in this part of his commentary each time I've used this book. Please let me explain. (I struggled between a 3 & 4 star for this book...) Basically I believe it's a very good commentary, but could be fuller in its handling of the NT applications related to the passage and that there should be more interaction with ancient near eastern parallels to the objects mentioned in Exodus. For an example, let me cite Exodus 34:29-35, the section that covers Moses' veil. This passage is commented on with an application to the superiority of the New Covenant by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3. However, I think he misses Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians when he says that it is "odd, to say the least, that Paul's understanding of the significance of the veil in Exodus seems to be to prevent the people from seeing the full glow of the radiance:". I think that Paul is not looking at this account from Moses' perspective as Enns contends, but from the perspective that the law of Moses is the covenant of 'death' and 'condemnation'. Paul did not miss the fact that Moses' account talks about the veil being used to prevent the people from seeing the full glow of the radiance of his face (2 Cor 3:7 Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?). Enns doesn't mention this, oddly! In fact I was left disagreeing with his conclusions. I think he misses the spiritualization that Paul draws out from the passage when Paul then goes on to talk about the veil over the hearts of the Jews who read Moses to this day. He presupposes and states that Moses goes out to the tent of meeting to obtain another 'dose' of God's glory. His arguments were unconvincing and didn't seem to fit the text I have studied in some

cases. I feel that the New Testament passages that comment on the text of the Old Testament portion at hand ought to have a fuller handling in the NIVAC series than I usually find. I think with Enns it's spotty. Usually I'm very blessed by what I find in this volume, but sometimes left wanting. He combines 35 through 40:33 with 25 to 31. I don't like that and would prefer to see a separate chapter for 35-40. Applications abound from that section, and can be drawn out in many relevant ways (see *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* for some examples. For great material on the ancient near east parallels in Exodus, I highly recommend the new *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary) which ought to be on every pastor's shelf! The idea that the term in the Hebrew 'qaran' basically means 'to have horns' and the fact that an ancient Cylinder seal picturing two 'gods' with horns on their helmets and light emanating from their shoulders in near east antiquity is relevant to this passage as a potential interpretive key. Although Enns connects the translation of 'qaran' to Medieval artistry showing Moses with horns, he does not identify the fact that ancient artifacts depict deity with horns and radiant light emanating from their bodies. And so he dismisses the horn theory relevancy without dealing with the concept that Moses may have had a sort of divine presence as a result and that his skin may have been hardened to the point of even looking like horns. Or that the text could be making a word play intentionally to allude to this topic! This is surprising since John Walton, editor of the ZIBBC, was a consulting editor on this volume! This illustrates a weakness I feel this commentary has. It does not interact enough with the ancient near east background of the Old Testament for my tastes. I love commentaries that take us into the ancient world where 'regular folks' don't know how to dig up the relevant artifacts. I wish this one did that! On the section about the Tabernacle, Enns does some interesting things. He brings out the concept of 'sacred space', which is perhaps one of the most important concepts for understanding Exodus! And he discusses the NT application that the Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit...therefore sacred spaces are all around the world today. But he misses the other NT application about divisiveness (1 Cor 3). When he talks about the Tabernacle in his application section, he oddly remains Old Testament in his language by talking over and over about 'going to church'! The problem with this is that we, the believers, in the New Covenant are the 'temple of the Holy Spirit'. The church building is never connected to the Tabernacle concept in the Old Testament. It is a common error to make this leap and I think demonstrates a lack of depth of thought when it comes to the application of one of the most critical concepts in Exodus! We as the church are the temple of the Holy Spirit. So we do not 'go to church'...per se...we take the church to the church building or where-ever we corporately go as a group. And of all the passages to bring out this

point...this one is it! The 'sacred space' OT Tabernacle which was a physical structure has now become the 'people of God's Kingdom'. Maybe I'm making too big of a point about this, but it seems to me an important point for so many Christians who think of their church building as a sacred space, but their own bodies as their own space. We must start seeing the church body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and we must stop being divisive in our mentality. It is the perfect place to bring in Paul's argument against divisiveness in 1 Cor 3! That's what I mean when I say that I have been left wanting several times in this commentary. Yet, many of his points are excellent and worth meditating on. He returns to Genesis in his final discussion of the Tabernacle/Temple theme, and that is good, but I would prefer to see something tying in to the future eschatological hope of full face to face fellowship with God (Rev 21...God and the Lamb are the temple in the New Jerusalem). That takes the spiritualization of the Tabernacle/Temple theme to its ultimate conclusion in scripture that there will be NO TEMPLE...and we shall dwell with God directly! It's certainly a fulfillment of the passages in Exodus...and the hope of face to face fellowship with our God should be a hope that drives us to purify ourselves! None of that is discussed, although he does an excellent job of bringing in the application of 1 Corinthians 6 dealing with cutting off sexual immorality. In summary this is a good commentary, just make sure you have other ones you are using to supplement it for Exodus studies! I give it a four star.

As with all of the other fine commentaries in this series it breaks each section of Scripture into 3 sections: 1) an "original meaning" section which gives a thoughtful interpretation of the passage. 2) a "bridging contents" section which draws forth timeless theological principles that are applicable for God's people in any place, time, and era and 3) The "contemporary significance" section which is intended to give the modern reader a "bonifide" (not moralistic i.e., "do this...don't do that...be like him...don't be like them..) application based on what it meant to the original readers. Although the author doesn't deal with interpretive issues in-depth (because this isn't the aim of the series), he does do a fine job of getting to the "interpretive" heart of the matter (although, at times, I felt he overdid the "re-creation" motif). Along the way He shows how the book of Exodus written so long ago is of vital significance to God's people today. This work fills a great gap in evangelical literature on the book of Exodus and gives relevant application for readers of all theological persuasions. In all, this book and the series of which it is a part, is a tremendous resource for the Pastor/teacher/layman!

Peter Enns has contributed a wonderful addition to the literature on the book of Exodus with this

latest commentary. His book is a fine blend of theology, scholarship, and practicality. Some very helpful insights are brought up throughout the text. Add to that a very readable style of writing and you have an excellent reference work for pastors and teachers!

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