

## NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES AND COMMENTS

Revised in 2016 by Brian R. Keller from the resource

“*Commentaries for the Pastor’s Study*” by John F. Brug (1996)

This listing was prepared with parish pastors in mind—pastors seeking help for building a personal library to use in parish ministry. Professors have the advantage of school libraries, but often parish pastors are quite isolated and have no large theological library nearby. Most parish pastors are not able to afford the top ten commentaries on every book of the Bible. Busy pastors might be seeking to add one more commentary on a particular Bible book to read as a reference in preparing sermons and Bible studies. It is hoped that this listing might help pastors and students make decisions on which volumes to buy on a tight budget. This listing is certainly not exhaustive. It merely aims to provide a selection of options. Many more books could be mentioned, and new volumes appear constantly.

Volumes marked with an asterisk (\*) are recommended for purchase. That does not mean total agreement with everything stated in the commentary. That also does not mean that there is nothing useful in the other commentaries listed. Often the ones marked with an asterisk are simply more useful for confessional Lutheran pastors serving in parish ministry.

Volumes marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) are especially recommended for confessional Lutheran pastors. Other commentaries may be listed for reference and information. A pastor might want to obtain it from a theological library when working on a paper. Or, if a pastor is not satisfied with his current collection, he might want to consider adding it. A mention of a commentary in this list might simply mean that it was regarded as significant for a specific limited purpose. Individual judgments may differ, of course. This list contains the input of professors and pastors from the past and present. Input is welcomed. Lord willing, we may update and revise in the future.

### New Testament Single Volume / Study Bibles

- *\*The Concordia Self-Study Commentary (RSV text, 1979)* – The asterisk is particularly for Martin Franzmann’s notes on the NT, which can be useful for preparing Bible study materials.
- *Concordia Self-Study Bible (NIV84 text)*
- *The Lutheran Study Bible (ESV text)*
- *(Lord willing, in the future there may be a study Bible to go along with the EHV text.)*

### New Testament Sets

**\*\*People’s Bible** – These popular commentaries are recommended not only for laity, but can be useful for pastors and teachers too. The Bible text is from NIV 1984. These volumes will not be mentioned below because they are technically not exegetical works. The set is recommended for purchase.

**\*Lenski** – In spite of weaknesses Lenski remains the standard confessional Lutheran commentary on the whole New Testament. Although it is now dated, this set remains a useful part of a pastor’s library. He tends to be too rigid in his assertions about grammatical points, and his doctrinal comments are not always on the beam in the areas of election and objective justification. He is not at his best in the key book of Romans. Lenski is mentioned below because this is an exegetical commentary. It is still worth it for confessional Lutheran pastors to get the set.

**\*Concordia Commentary (CC)** – This set is not yet complete. Some volumes are more helpful than others. The New Testament volumes have not been as consistent as the Old Testament ones. The most recent ones seem quite useful so subscribing as the volumes appear might be worth it now.

**Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT)** – This is one of the most helpful recent exegetical commentaries for translation work. It is usually worth consulting. Of course, the

doctrine is not confessional Lutheran so the usual cautions are in order. Choosing individual volumes might be better than getting the set.

\**New Testament Commentary (NTC)* (Hendriksen/Kistemaker) (Baker). Overall this is one of the more helpful commentaries for pastors, although it lacks the linguistic depth of some other series. The doctrine is clearly conservative Reformed (i.e., Calvinistic). It's still worth getting the whole set.

*New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)* (Eerdmans). This series aims to be a scholarly, evangelical commentary on the Greek text. Emphasis is on exegesis rather than exposition or application. The series is often useful for detailed exegesis and up-to-date information and bibliography, but it too often makes concessions to redaction criticism and other critical views. "Broadly within the Evangelical tradition." Some volumes are more useful and reliable than others. Some of the volumes might be more expensive than they are worth to a parish pastor.

*New International Commentary (NICNT)* (Eerdmans). Doctrinal position is generally conservative and Reformed. Not all volumes are of equal quality. Some of the earlier volumes of the series are being replaced by newer works. Some of the newer volumes are not as conservative as some of the older ones.

*Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (PNTC)* has some useful volumes. Some are better than others.

*Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (ZECNT)* has some useful volumes. Some seem better than others.

*Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC)* (Zondervan). This conservative commentary covers the New Testament in only five volumes. It has now been updated. It is basically pre-millennial, but tries to present all views fairly. These are less useful for NT exegetical work. It might be a backup in some cases.

*New International Biblical Commentary (NIBC)* (Hendrickson). Evangelical but generally quite brief. Not all volumes are equal in quality or reliability.

*The New American Commentary (NAC)* is a new, relatively conservative Baptist series. More useful for the Old Testament than the New.

Of briefer commentaries, some of the *Tyndale* commentaries can be backups. Not all are of equal quality.

*The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (IVP) is a compendium of patristic thought.

As in the Old Testament some volumes of more liberal commentaries like the *Anchor Bible*, *Black's/Harper*, and *Hermeneia* series provide useful linguistic and historical data and information on recent critical scholarship. Some volumes of the *International Critical Commentary (ICC)* are useful for the same reason. The *Word Bible Commentaries* on the New Testament are somewhat less critical than those on the Old, but don't be fooled by the Evangelical label. Liberal, massive multi-volume commentaries seem to be the rule of the day. Size is not to be equated with quality or usefulness, particularly for parish pastors. Sometimes newer does not mean better. Use good judgment.

### Gospels

- \*Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, NPH, original date 1905. A Lutheran standard.
- \*Wenzel Commentary I, Arrow Publishing, 1935-37, 1988 reprint.
- Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. For background gleaned from the rabbinic writings.

### MATTHEW

- \*Lenski
- \*Gibbs, CC, 2006/2010 – (Mt 1:1 – 20:34) 3<sup>rd</sup> volume is still coming.

- \*Morris, PNTC, 1992. Generally helpful.
- Turner, BECNT, 2008.
- France, NICNT, 2007 – highly rated, but not as useful or reliable as those above
- Keener, Eerdmans, 1999 – massive, “socio-historical context” – use discretion.
- Nolland, NIGTC, 2005.
- Osborne, ZECNT, 2010.
- Hendriksen, NTC, 1973. Solid, but not spectacular.
- Carson, EBC, 1984.
- M. Franzmann, *Follow Me*, CPH, 1961. Good on themes.
- Davies/Allison, 3 vols. *ICC* (1988, 1991) critical.
- Luz, 1989-2004, German, critical.
- Blomberg, NAC, 1992, mid-level commentary. Likely not worth it for a pastor.
- Hagner, WBC, 1993/1995 critical.

**MARK:** There is a room for another confessional Lutheran commentary.

- \*Lenski is probably the best choice for now
- Voelz, CC – not as useful as it might be for the parish; can’t rely on the textual criticism
- Hendriksen, NTC, 1975. Maybe as a backup to Lenski.
- France, NIGTC, 2002 – maybe best choice of non-Lutheran technical commentaries
- Stein, BECNT, 2008 – non-Lutheran technical, not quite as good as others in BECNT
- Edwards, PNTC, 2001 – a competitor with France and Stein
- Strauss, ZECNT, 2014.
- Wessel, EBC, 1984. Less critical than others. Relatively brief. Maybe as a backup.
- Lane, NICNT, 1974. Moderately critical. Now dated and somewhat overrated.
- Brooks, NAC, 1991, brief. Probably can skip this one.
- Gundry, Eerdmans, 1993, not recommended.

#### **LUKE**

- \*Arndt, CPH, 1956.
- \*Bock, BECNT, 2 volumes. Thorough, non-Lutheran technical commentary
- \*Lenski
- Just, CC, 1996. Unusual interpretations. Not recommended here.
- Marshall, NIGTC, Eerdmans, 1978. Non-Lutheran technical, but not as useful as Bock.
- Hendriksen, NTC, 1978. Worth having as a backup.
- Garland, ZECNT, 2011.
- Green, NICNT, Eerdmans, 1997, superseded Geldenhuys, 1951.
- Morris, TNT, 1988. A useful little backup.
- Fitzmeyer, AB, 1981, 1985. Liberal scholarship.
- Nolland, 3 volume *Word* commentary (1989-93).
- Godet is the most useful of the older commentaries.

#### **JOHN**

- \*Lenski
- \*Weinrich, CC
- \*Morris, *NICNT*.
- \*Köstenberger, BECNT.
- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1953.
- Keener, Hendrickson, 2003, 2 vols.

- Michaels, NICNT, 2010.
- Carson, PNTC, 1991.
- Borchert, NAC, 1996. Fairly light treatment. There are better choices.
- Barrett, Westminster, 1978. Liberal.
- Brown, *AB*, 2 vol., 1966, 1970 liberal.

## ACTS

- \*Lenski
- \*Bock, BECNT, 2007 – not quite as thorough as his work on Luke
- \*Bruce, NICNT, 1990. Generally useful.
- \*Kistemaker, NTC, 1990.
- Peterson, PNTC, 2009. Highly rated.
- Schnabel, ZETNC, 2012. Highly rated. Very thorough.
- Longenecker, in *EBC* Vol 9, 1981.
- Marshall, *TNT*, 1983. Not as useful as others.
- Barrett, New *ICC*, T & T Clark, 1994-98, 2 volumes.

## ROMANS

- \*\*Kuske, NPH.
- \*Middendorf, CC, ch. 1-8. (Romans 9-16 is coming summer 2016).
- \*Stoekhardt – Synodical Conference classic. German and English
- \*Franzmann, CPH, 1968 (Popular).
- Lenski – not at his best on Romans, but useful to own.
- Moo, NICNT, 1996. Still rated as best non-Lutheran technical commentary.
- Morris, PNTC, 1988. Detailed, evangelical.
- Kruse, PNTC, 2012.
- Schreiner, BECNT, 1998. – not as useful as some of the other volumes in this series
- Murray, NICNT, Eerdmans, 1959/1965. Evangelical Reformed. Now dated.
- Hendriksen, NTC, 1980. Evangelical Reformed. Now dated.
- Cranfield, New *ICC*, (T&T Clark), 1975/1980. 2 vol. Liberal. Now dated.
- Sanday & Headlam, old *ICC*, 1895, T.&T Clark. An old standard.

## 1 CORINTHIANS

- \*Lenski
- \*Lockwood, CC, 2000. Expect LCMS doctrine in key areas. A good Lutheran effort.
- Garland, BECNT, 2003 – non-Lutheran “general” commentary
- Thiselton, NIGTC, 2000 – non-Lutheran technical, top-rated on the Greek
- Ciampa & Rosner, PNTC, 2010 – not recommended here (overall)
- Fee, NICNT, 1988/94. Unfortunately wavers on key doctrinal points.
- Grosheide, NICNT, 1953. Not outstanding.
- Hodge, Eerdmans, 1857/1965. Conservative Reformed.
- Barrett, *B/H*, 1968. Moderate-Liberal. Another candidate for best technical.

## 2 CORINTHIANS

- \*\*Meyer, NPH, 1963.
- \*Lenski
- Harris, NIGTC, 2005 – top rated non-Lutheran technical commentary on the Greek.
- Guthrie, BECNT, 2015.

- Seifrid, PNTC, 2014. (author is now a professor at Concordia, St. Louis)
- Harris, EBC, 1976.
- Barnett, NICNT, 1997. Evangelical. (Replaces Hughes, 1962).
- Garland, NAC, 2000. One of the better NAC volumes.
- Kistemaker, *NTC*, 1974.
- Barrett, *B/H*, 1973/93. Considered top-notch, but moderately liberal.
- Furnish, *AB*, 1984. Liberal. Considered leading recent work.
- Plummer, ICC, 1915. Liberal. Better than some in this series.

## **GALATIANS**

- \*\*Luther (*Formula of Concord* describes it as a “beautiful and glorious exposition.”)
- \*Das, CC, 2014.
- \*Lenski
- \*Koehler, NPH, 1909/1957. Brief.
- \*Wenzel Commentary II – treatment by a Confessional Lutheran pastor
- Bruce, *NIGTC*, 1982 - for Greek text.
- Schreiner, ZECNT, 2010.
- Fung, *NICNT*, 1988. Replaces Ridderbos, *NICNT*, 1953.
- Longenecker, *WBC*, 1990. Rated more highly than most of *WBC*. A lot on rhetoric.
- Betz (*HERM*), 1980, is rated best of the liberal volumes
- Older, but still useful: John Brown; Lightfoot; Burton (ICC).

## **EPHESIANS**

- \*Habeck, NPH, 1985.
- \*Stoeckhardt, CPH, 1910. German. (English, 1952/1987).
- \*Winger, CC, 2015 – one of the most useful CC volumes on the NT
- \*Lenski
- Hendriksen, Baker, 1967.
- O’Brien, PNTC, 1999. One of the most useful non-Lutheran commentaries
- Thielman, BECNT, 2010.
- Arnold, ZECNT, 2010.
- F.F. Bruce, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1984, (With Ephesians/Philemon).
- Dockery, *NAC*, 1996. Workmanlike.
- Lincoln, *WBC*, 1990, liberal. Against Pauline authorship.
- Robinson, Macmillan, 1904, one of the better older commentaries.

## **PHILIPPIANS**

- \*Lenski
- \*Wenzel Commentary II - – treatment by a Confessional Lutheran pastor
- \*O’Brien, *NIGTC*, 1991, is now considered the standard.
- Hansen, PNTC, 2009.
- Hendriksen, Baker, 1962. (With Colossians/Philemon)
- Bruce, *NIBC*, 1989. Brief and to the point.
- Silva, *WEC*, 1988. BECNT, 1992.
- Fee, *NICNT*, 1995. Opinionated and interesting.
- Hawthorne, *WBC*, 1983. More Evangelical than most of *WBC*, but some oddities.
- Martin, *NCB*, 1980. Moderate.
- Lightfoot, Macmillan, 1913, is one of the better older commentaries.

## COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON

- \*Deterding CC
- \*Lenski
- \*Wenzel Commentary II - – treatment by a Confessional Lutheran pastor
- Moo, PNTC, 2008.
- Pao, ZECNT, 2012.
- O'Brien, *WBC*, 1987.
- Hendriksen, Baker, 1964, (With Philippians/Philemon).
- F.F. Bruce, *NICNT*, Eerdmans, 1984, (With Ephesians/Philemon).
- Dunn, *NIGNT*, 1996. Does not equal O'Brien.
- Harris, *EGGNT*, 1991. A guide to exegesis.
- Moule, *Cambridge Gk Testament Commentary*, 1957, many insights.

## 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS No really solid treatment of the Antichrist.

(see \*\*Kuske, PB for help on the Antichrist and other key doctrines)

- \*Lenski
- \*Hendriksen, *NTC*, 1955, (With Pastorals).
- \*Bruce, *WBC*, 1982. His usual solid job.
- Green, PNTC, 2002.
- Weima, BECNT, 2014.
- Shogren, ZECNT, 2012.
- Wanamaker, *NIGTC*, 1990. Top-rated scholarly.
- Morris, *NICNT*, 1959/1994. Replaced by Fee, *NICNT*, 2009.
- Marshall, *NCB*, 1983.

## 1 & 2 TIMOTHY AND TITUS

- \*Lenski
- \*Knight, *NIGTC*, 1992. Very thorough and useful, conservative, but Calvinistic.
- \*Hendriksen, Baker, 1957. Conservative.
- \*Luther's Works, *AE* Vol. 28, 29.
- Towner, *NICNT*, 2006.
- Mounce, *WBC*, 2000.
- Fee, *NICNT*, 1988.
- Kelly, B/H, 1963/ Hendrickson, 1987. Moderate.
- Guthrie, *TNT*, 1957/1999 rev. Conservative. Brief.
- Stott, IVP, 1996. Quite useful, but not at the level of Knight
- Marshall, 1999, new ICC, does not treat as Pauline.
- Stoeckhardt, Titus. Lutheran standard. Mimeo only.

## PHILEMON – see Colossians above

- \*Nordling CC
- \*Lenski
- \*Wenzel Commentary II - – treatment by a Confessional Lutheran pastor
- Moo, PNTC, 2008.
- O'Brien, *WBC*, 1987.
- Pao, ZECNT, 2012.
- Hendriksen, 1964, (With Colossians/Philippians).

- Also Bruce and Martin above.

## HEBREWS

- \*Lenski
- \*Bruce, NICNT, Eerdmans, 1964/1990/1997. His usual steady work.
- O'Brien PNTC – highly rated non-Lutheran commentary
- Kistemaker, NTC, Baker, 1984. Typical of the series.
- Ellingworth, *NIGTC*, 1993, is now the standard Evangelical commentary.
- Hughes, Eerdmans, 1987 – useful for history of interpretation.
- Lane, *WBC*, 1991, 2 vol., is less technical.
- Attridge, *HERM*, 1989, is a highly rated liberal commentary.

## JAMES

- \*Lenski
- \*Moo, PNTC, 2000. A solid, non-Lutheran commentary.
- \*McCartney, BECNT, 2009. Useful non-Lutheran commentary.
- McKnight, NICNT, 2011.
- Kistemaker, NTC, 1986, (Includes 1-3 John).
- Blomberg/Kamell, ZECNT, 2008.
- Mayor, Macmillan, 1913, Kregel reprint 1990. Still one of best.
- Mitton, Preliminary *NICNT*, 1966. Useful.
- Davids, *NIGTC*, 1982. Moderate. Detail on the Greek.
- Martin, *WBC*, 1988. Moderate.

## 1 PETER

- \*\*Kuske
- \*Lenski
- \*Stoekhardt, CPH, 1921. German.
- Jobes, BECNT, 2005.
- Kistemaker, NTC
- Davids, *NICNT*, 1995. Competent.
- Schreiner, NAC, 2003 – One of the best of this series.
- Michaels, *WBC*, 1988. Moderate.
- Grudem, *TNT*, 1987.

## 2 PETER and JUDE

- \*\*Kuske, NPH
- \*Giese, CC, 2012
- \*Lenski
- Kistemaker, NTC
- Davids, PNTC, 2006
- Green, BECNT, 2008.
- \*Green, *TNT*, 1968. Detailed, Evangelical.
- Mayor, is still best on the Greek, but is o/p.
- Bauckham, *WBC*, 1983. Rated as the standard, but liberal.

## 1, 2, & 3 JOHN

- \*Lenski
- \*Schuchard, CC, 2012.
- \*Yarbrough, BECNT, 2008
- Kruse, PNTC, 2000.
- Marshall, *NICNT*, 1978/1995. Evangelical-Moderate.
- Jobes, ZECNT, 2014.
- Akin, NAC, 2001.
- Stott, *TNT*, 1960/1988. Still useful.
- Kistemaker, NTC.
- Ross, Early *NICNT*, (Includes James), 1954.
- Smalley, *Word*, 1984, discussion of Greek text.
- Stoeckhardt. Concordia Mimeo.

### REVELATION

- \*\*Becker, *The Distant Trumpet Call*, NPH, 1985. Excellent.
- \*Poellot, CPH, 1962. Excellent for laity.
- \*Brighton, CC, 1999. A solid Lutheran effort.
- \*Lenski – useful Lutheran work.
- Aune, WBC, 3 vols, 1998. for Greek help
- Kistemaker, NTC, 2001.
- Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, Baker, 1939/1967.
- Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh*, 1967. Very detailed.
- Mounce, *NICNT*, 1997 and Beale, *NIGTC*, 2000, Evangelical.
- Osborne, BECNT, 2002.