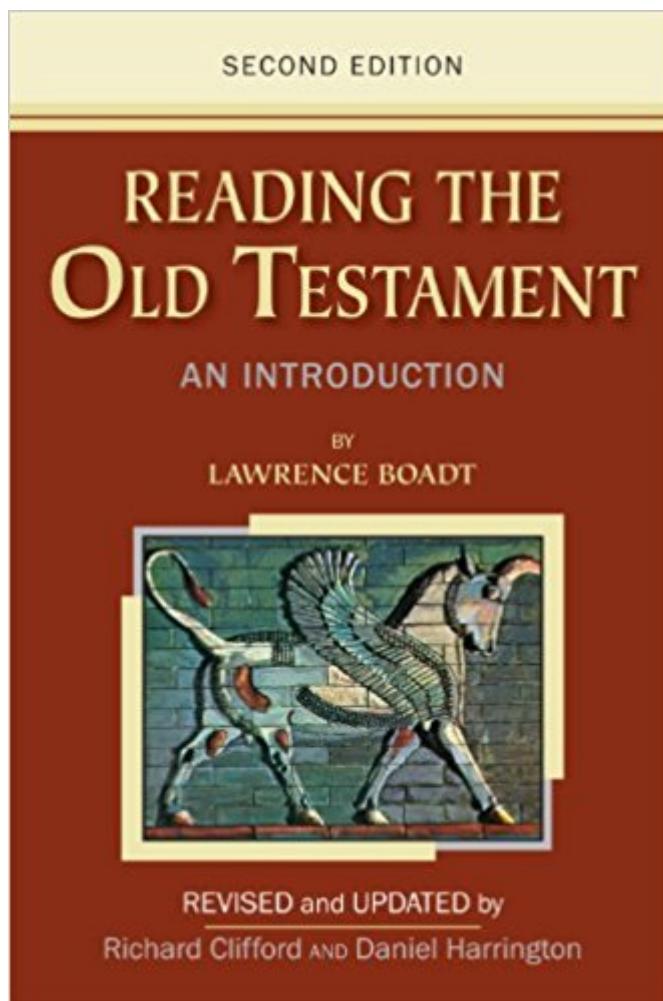


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# Reading The Old Testament: An Introduction; Second Edition



## Synopsis

Reading the Old Testament was recognized as a classic almost from its date of publication in 1984. Without in any way diminishing its famed clarity, judiciousness, and theological depth, two prominent scholars, Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington, have brought the book into the twenty-first century.

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## Customer Reviews

Larry Boadt was a longtime generative force in Old Testament study. This book, as a part of his legacy, assures that his influence will continue to be generative and rewarding for those who seriously engage his work. Here he combines in the finest way the important gains of critical scholarship and the depth of faith that arises from the text. While tracing the text in a roughly historical sequence, there are important pauses in his study along the way in order to ponder the social background and contextual data that illuminate the text. This is, in sum, a major offer for serious, faithful reading, and we may be grateful that it is now issued in a new, welcome edition

--Prof. Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia

This classic work by Lawrence Boadt has now been updated and improved by two great Catholic biblical scholars, Dick Clifford and Dan Harrington. Clifford and Harrington bring their vast wealth of biblical knowledge to improve on what was already a wonderfully clear and learned introduction to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. As they put it in their preface, We want new generations of Bible readers to use what we regard as a masterpiece of critical and religious scholarship. And we want them to

hear it in the voice of Larry Boadt. In this goal, Clifford and Harrington succeed brilliantly. This book is most highly recommended for students and lay people interested in learning and understanding God's word. --Prof. Mark S. Smith, New York University Since its appearance in 1984, Lawrence Boadt's *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* has been a standard textbook for adult students of the Bible. It has led beginners through the tangle of the ancient Near Eastern world, and it has served as a resource for those more advanced in their studies. After almost twenty years, one might expect a revision to be significantly different than the original. However, Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington found that Father's Boadt's organization, development, and interpretation have stood the test of time, thus demonstrating his exceptional biblical knowledge. The revision here is simply an updating. With this new publication students will continue to benefit from Father Boadt's expertise and insights, despite his untimely death. --Prof. Dianne Bergant, Catholic Theological Union

This book is a work of love and a Christian classic all in one. Its author, the late biblical scholar Lawrence Boadt, CSP, tells the story of God's saving work with stunning simplicity, explaining clearly and accessibly the amazing story of God's presence in Jewish history. It was Saint John Paul II who led the Christian church to a new understanding of the Old Testament as the account of God's saving work in and for the ancient Hebrew people. As John Paul told the world, the Old Testament did not exist only as a sign of the coming of Jesus, a misguided view held by Christians for centuries. Not surprisingly, Father Boadt's book dramatizes this new understanding that now unites Christian and Jewish scholars. Father Boadt wrote his introduction in 1984, but after his death in 2010, two of America's leading theologians, Richard Clifford, SJ, and Daniel Harrington, SJ., revised and updated the book.

My only complaint is that it could have been more detailed. Otherwise it's a great resource for anyone who is beginning formal study on the Old Testament. I'm not sure how useful it is for independent study. If you're studying the Old Testament independently, I would recommend reading it with "The Great Courses: The Old Testament" (Dr. Amy-Jill Levine), an audio collection that gives a complementary and more literary-focused analysis of the Old Testament. Anyway, this book should be on the shelf of any theology student.

Wonderfully written. Clear enjoyable writing that brings the Bible to life. You will get a new appreciation of the people and culture of the Bible. I really enjoyed his instruction on understanding

modern Biblical criticism and its application to understanding how the Bible is written.

“Reading the Old Testament” is the classic introduction to the Old Testament written for Christians by the late Lawrence Boadt, CSP, a highly regarded Scripture scholar who published works on Ezekiel and the Wisdom books, among other subjects. This 2012 second edition was revised and updated by Richard Clifford, S.J. and the (now deceased) Daniel Harrington, S.J., both highly esteemed biblical scholars by their own rights. One probably cannot find a better, more concise introduction to the Old Testament. It incorporates the latest archeological, sociological, cultural, literary, and theological scholarship. The text was written for classroom use, with helpful study questions at the end of each chapter, but may serve splendidly for individual study as well. I found that chapter two, on the history and geography of the Middle East, presupposes a little more knowledge of the ancient world than perhaps the average reader would have, but the purpose of the chapter is generally to physically situate the texts and peoples of the Bible and so one ought not get too thrown off by the plethora of place names and peoples. Again, the study questions help point to what is really salient. Ideally, the student, formal or informal, will have taken the time to read the brief suggested scripture passages at the head of each chapter. I admit that I often failed to do so, to my detriment. One ought not study the Old Testament without actually reading it. In this survey, Boadt offers the student a remarkably comprehensive guide to the authorship, socio-political context, literary forms, cultural borrowings, prominent ideas, themes, and theologies of each of the books of the Old Testament as well as groupings within the canon. One of the many revelations in “Reading the Old Testament” is the extent to which the Israelites borrowed from their neighbors, including aspects of temple worship and, late in the development of pre-Christian Judaism, the concept of the resurrection of the dead. Another is that, even though one can trace the evolution of ideas in the Old Testament, the consistent theme is the “person of God. The implied questions “Who is God?” “What does God do?” “Why does God do it?” fill every page and every level of tradition in the Bible” (p. 474). Boadt makes the apt point in chapter 25 that Christians ought not to look at the Old Testament as having been supplanted by the New Testament. Boadt writes, “Christians, faithful to their beliefs, must proclaim that Christ is the center and fulfillment of the Old Testament message and the highest expression of God’s self-revelation for those who have the faith to see it. But they must not believe that God has rejected what he had earlier revealed, or has withdrawn his covenant with

IsraelÃ¢Â€Â (p. 471). This is a good reminder that those of us who proclaim ourselves to be Christian must reverence the special relationship that exists between God and GodÃ¢Â€Âs chosen people, and that, moreover, we must be open to receiving the wealth of truth about GodÃ¢Â€Â in the Ã¢Â€Âgreat treasure chestÃ¢Â€Â that is the Old Testament (p. 471). The final chapter of the book provides an excellent treatment of the overall theme of the Old Testament taken as a whole, and ten major themes that emerge from the very many ideas of the 46 (in the Catholic counting) seemingly disparate works that make up the Old Testament. I highly recommend reading this chapter first as a framework for studying the Old Testament.

This book is an easy to read and understand examination of the Old Testament. Although it is thorough and enjoyable, it also offers an historically accurate interpretation without specifically religious overtones. It examines the culture and history of both the authors and audiences of each book and even chapters within the books. I especially appreciate that the author includes some of the apocryphal books. As a religious studies major I have found this work invaluable in completing and complimenting many of my courses. I have used it as a source book for several papers including a rather complicated easy on the prophets. It was extremely helpful in organizing the prophets and examining their historical timeline as well as summarizing their messages. Overall, the reader may find the work somewhat simplified, depending on one's current understanding and knowledge of the Old Testament but even experienced students of Biblical studies will find new insights and detailed analysis of this complex work.

I used this as the primary textbook for teaching an OT class. The language used is accessible and jargon is explained. The questions at the end of each chapter are good for reinforcing retention of the material, but do not really present critical thinking on the topics. It does present some thought provoking concepts, but is also influenced by the author's Roman Catholic tradition (this is neither meant to be a negative note a positive, simply an observation).

Well researched. Accessible to the non-scholar. This book is a great overview and introduction to the Old Testament and a basis for further in-depth study.

What a tremendous insight this has given. All of my adult life, I had only thought this was about names and heritage, so I had not paid it due respect. Now, I have such a different view. Somehow

the text has taken me into a vastly broader time/space continuum to view the recorded historical events through the centuries outside of the normal human lifespan. A great classroom text for the starting of some awesome group discussion. The teacher appears when the student is ready!

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