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By Thomas W. Mann

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The first five books of the Bible contain many of its most famous stories, populated by vivid characters altogether human in their triumphs and failings-and an equally complicated deity. Many works of Western art and literature appeal to these stories, from Michelangelo's painting of Adam and Eve to a novel like William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*. The three great Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) are rooted here. So is much of Western political theory and constitutional polity, for a good half of these books contains legislation (*torah*) of various kinds, as indicated by the ancient title: the book of the Torah. Law and narrative together render the character of the ancient covenant community known as Israel, as well as the God who rules over that community. In this revised and expanded version of his popular book of 1988, Mann engages literary criticism and theology in attending both to the composite nature of the Torah (or Pentateuch) and to its final, canonical shape. Mann's study provides a lucid introduction to the heart of the Hebrew Bible, suitable for students and general readers, but also of interest to biblical scholars.

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Editorial Review

Review

Mann's study of the foundational texts of biblical faith has long been a reliable staple of pedagogy and interpretation. In it he combines a well-honed capacity for critical judgment with an acute theological sensibility, all of which is presented in an accessible format. For these reasons this new edition is a welcome offer. In it he has . . . added materials that could not have been on the horizon in the first edition. This book will evoke many grateful readers. --Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary

Praise for the first edition:

I would find this volume extremely useful in introducing my students to this basic part of the Old Testament. I am quite excited about this project. --Patrick D. Miller, author of *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*

A sound piece of work. Its holistic, final-form approach reflects the major trend in biblical criticism. It is perceptive, sensitive, thoughtful, and stimulating. --David Gunn, coauthor of *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Thomas W. Mann has taught at Princeton Theological Seminary, Converse College, Salem College, and Wake Forest University. For twenty-three years he was also the minister of Parkway United Church of Christ in Winston Salem, North Carolina. He is the author of *The Book of the Former Prophets* (Cascade Books, 2011), a sequel to this book; *Deuteronomy* (1995); and *God of Dirt: Mary Oliver and the Other Book of God* (2004).

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