



# Homilies on Numbers (Ancient Christian Texts)

By Origen

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## Homilies on Numbers (Ancient Christian Texts) By Origen

Origen of Alexandria (185-254), one of the most prolific authors of antiquity and arguably the most important and influential pre-Nicene Christian theologian, was a man of deep learning and holiness of life. Regrettably, many of his works are no longer extant, in part due to the condemnation of his ideas by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553. The condemnation, however, took little account of his historical circumstances and the tentative nature of his speculations. The anathemas were more likely directed toward sixth-century Origenist views than to the views of Origen himself, though clearly he expounded some views that would be judged unacceptable today. Origen's numerous homilies provide the oldest surviving corpus of Christian sermons and shaped exegesis for succeeding centuries. With Jerome he was one of the early church's great critical and literal exegetes. Devoutly he sought to develop a spiritual exegesis of the Old Testament grounded in the revelation of Jesus Christ. The *Homilies on Numbers* presented here offer a splendid example of his spiritual interpretation of Old Testament texts. He asks, What foreshadowing, what warning, what instruction, what encouragement, reproof, correction or exhortation, do we find in the narratives of Numbers for our benefit as Christians? Here, based on Baehren's critical Latin text, is the first English edition of these homilies, ably translated with explanatory notes by Thomas P. Scheck.

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## Homilies on Numbers (Ancient Christian Texts) By Origen Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #587972 in Books
- Published on: 2009-12-13
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 10.00" h x .90" w x 7.00" l, 1.40 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 196 pages



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Presented in clear, accessible English, this translation of Origen's commentary on the Book of Numbers is organized according to the Biblical text so both can be read side-by-side as Origen himself intended.  
(Reference & Research Book News, February 2010)

#### About the Author

Origen was an early Christian scholar, theologian, and one of the most distinguished of the early fathers of the Christian Church.

Thomas P. Scheck (PhD, University of Iowa) is associate professor of theology at Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Florida. He is the author of *Origen and the History of Justification* and *Erasmus's Life of Origen*. He is also the translator in the Fathers of the Church series of *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 volumes) and *St. Jerome: Commentary on Matthew*. Recently Scheck published new translations of St. Jerome's Commentaries on Isaiah and Ezekiel in the Ancient Christian Writers series.

Christopher A. Hall (PhD, Drew University) is the director of Renovaré Institute of Christian Spiritual Formation. He is associate editor of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, and his books include *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers*, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, and *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*. Hall previously served at Eastern University for over twenty years in several roles, including chancellor, provost, dean of Palmer Seminary, dean of the Templeton Honors College, distinguished professor of theology, and director of academic spiritual formation. He and his wife, Debbie, live in Pennsylvania and have three grown children.

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