



Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250-587 BCE

Don C. Benjamin, Victor H. Matthews

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Getting a fix on the social context of the Hebrew Bible is imperative for anyone reconstructing either the "story" of the text or the "history" behind the text. Resources in this area often prove overspecialized and arcane, and can require highly sophisticated skills in cultural anthropology or Semitic languages just to read the table of contents. *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250-587 B.C.E.* offers those interested in learning about the biblical world a more userfriendly framework for viewing the broader picture; at the same time it relies upon the latest methodologies of cultural anthropology and biblical analysis in its presentation. Painting a picture in broad but precise strokes, the authors portray the landscape of ancient Israel in new and exciting colors that expert and student alike will appreciate. *Social World of Ancient Israel* takes a unique look at the most prominent social institutions of the world of early Israel and the period of the monarchy, and then shows how properly understanding these social institutions is essential for sound biblical interpretation. Immersing the reader into five major areas of daily life in antiquity politics, economics, diplomacy, law, and education Matthews and Benjamin explore the ways in which knowing how "players" function in these institutions, such as "father/mother," "prophet/wise one," "host/stranger," can shape our understanding of earliest Israel. Perhaps most significantly, the book gently exposes the inefficiency of past anthropological models for interpreting the relationships, attitudes and social conventions of earliest Israel. Its corrective insights will enable scholar and student alike to plot new approaches for studying the Hebrew Bible and the ancient people of Israel.

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