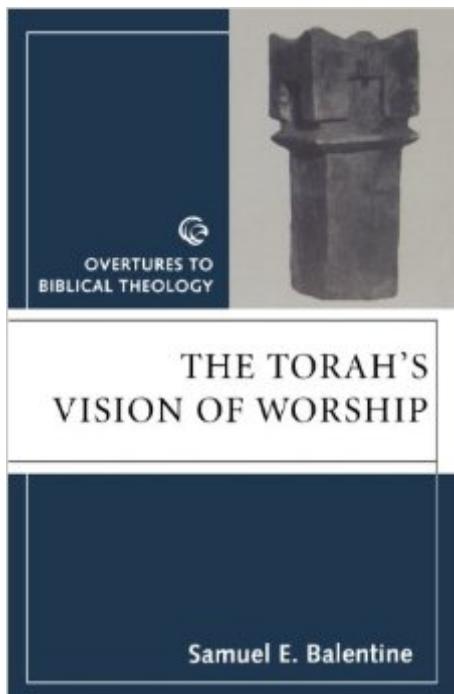


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The Torah's Vision Of Worship (Overtures To Biblical Theology)



Synopsis

A complement to the author's earlier *Overtures to Biblical Theology* study on prayer, this volume addresses the topic of worship as articulated in the first five books of the Bible. Rather than a history of Israelite religion, Ballentine's volume examines the "vision" of worship expounded in the Torah in relation to priesthood, creation, liturgy, and covenant. He concludes by discussing the contemporary situation of experiencing God's hiddenness and a world caught in despair. Ballentine proposes that a fresh look at the Torah offers possibilities of counter-imagination and hope.

Book Information

Series: *Overtures to Biblical Theology*

Paperback: 284 pages

Publisher: Fortress Press (July 30, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0800631552

ISBN-13: 978-0800631550

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,027,064 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #186 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Sacred Writings > Torah #842 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life #908 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Sacred Writings > Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

Customer Reviews

Ballentine gives a good explanation of the Torah in a Persian context. He is critical of the traditional historical-criticism of the Torah and suggests a political context. He believes that the Torah was written after the Jews had returned from captivity and were still under the occupation of the Persian government. The goal of the Torah (according to Ballentine) was to continue the encounter with Yahweh in worship while supporting Persian politics. I think that the strength of this book is on the emphasis of worship in the Torah. The Persian context gives rise to the need for an experience of Yahweh in a restored nation. The Sabbath, tabernacle, and Decalogue are bedrock events in Israelite history that the Torah appeals to in the life of the Jews. These events are rehearsed during festivals and the Sabbath worship. The goal of the Torah was to create a community that continually encountered Yahweh and His people in cult worship. This perspective makes Leviticus become a

book that prepares the Israelite to meet and worship God. The concepts of holiness and ritual purity remind the community that worship is a central part of their life and walk with Yahweh. I think that this book has made a tremendous contribution to worship in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Traditionally worship has been understood as a response of the community to a powerful God. Balentine indicates that worship became the community's method of remembering and reliving the history and covenant of God. For Balentine worship should become that central part of the community's lifestyle. Worship is not an event to attend but a reenacting of the grace and power of God and His community. Worship should play a more important role in the believer's life since it is a reminder of the reason and purpose in their life.

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