



Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation

George W. E. Nickelsburg

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In the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, Christian scholars portrayed Judaism as the dark religious backdrop to the liberating events of Jesus' life and the rise of the early church. Since the 1950s, however, a dramatic shift has occurred in the study of Judaism, driven by new manuscript and archaeological discoveries and new methods and tools for analyzing sources. George Nickelsburg here provides a broad and synthesizing picture of the results of the past fifty years of scholarship on early Judaism and Christianity. He organizes his discussion around a number of traditional topics: scripture and tradition, Torah and the righteous life, God's activity on humanity's behalf, agents of God's activity, eschatology, historical circumstances, and social settings. Each of the chapters discusses the findings of contemporary research on early Judaism, and then sketches the implications of this research for a possible reinter-pretation of Christianity. Still, in the author's view, there remains a major Jewish-Christian agenda yet to be developed and implemented.

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