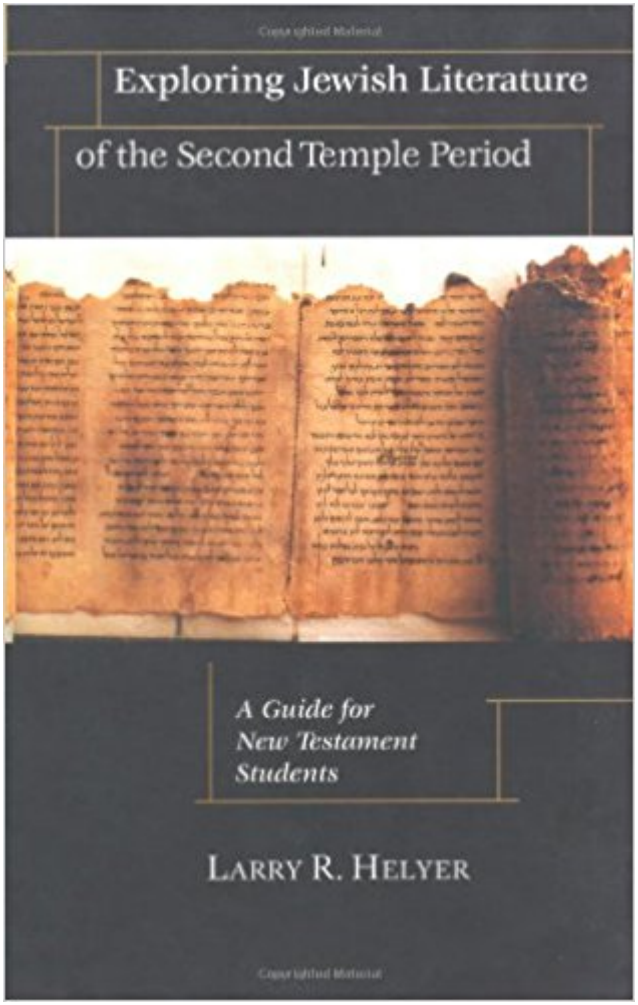
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Exploring Jewish Literature Of The Second Temple Period: A Guide For New Testament Students (Christian Classics Bible Studies)



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Synopsis

From the crisis of the Babylonian exile to the rise of rabbinic Judaism--a span of over six hundred years--the Jewish people produced a wealth of literature that lies outside the Hebrew Bible. Today it goes under names such as apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, Josephus and Philo, apocalyptic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Mishnah and targums. But line by line, scroll by scroll, it represents the history and theology, the hopes and prayers of a living and diverse Judaism. It is an engrossing subject in and of itself, but for students of the New Testament it offers an invaluable context for understanding the words and actions of Jesus as well as the conversion and thinking of Paul. Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period is an introduction to this literature and places it within its historical context. Riding the explosive growth of knowledge of this period, Larry R. Helyer guides students to the heart of the matter. What were the pressures and realities, the questions and dreams that nurtured and provoked these written expressions? And how does this literature throw light on the text of the New Testament and origins of Christianity?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"In this comprehensive and well-informed volume, Larry Helyer provides an exemplary introduction to the world of Second Temple Judaism, its history and its literature. What is distinctive about Helyer's work is his deliberate reading of this material with the New Testament in mind. In so doing he is able to show how deeply Jewish the New Testament is and how knowledge of this material

can enrich our reading of the New Testament. This book is impressive not only for the high quality of its scholarship but also for its exceptional clarity and judiciousness. Especially commendable are Helyer's positive attitude to things Jewish and his adamant rejection of anti-Semitism. Highly recommended!" (Donald A. Hagner, George Eldon Ladd Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary)"There are many useful books on Second Temple Jewish literature, for which reason I nearly passed this book by. But once I began actually examining it, I recognized the thoroughness of Larry Helyer's acquaintance with the sources and how carefully he has prepared this book with New Testament students in mind. I believe it will provide an excellent resource for those who want access to the most important materials for New Testament study." (Craig S. Keener, Professor of New Testament, Palmer Seminary)"The literature of Second Temple Judaism is so vast that few college or seminary students ever receive a decent introduction to it at all. Here, in one volume, are references to judicious samplings from every major corpus, complete with introduction and background, and detailed explanation of relevance for New Testament studies. A wonderful gift for students and professors alike. Perhaps many will now actually teach, and teach substantially, on the topic!" (Craig L. Blomberg, Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary)

For twenty nine years Larry R. Helyer was professor of biblical studies at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. Now retired, he continues to write on theological topics and serve as an adjunct professor in the United States and abroad. He is the author of Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period.

Though well written for the layman and an enjoyable read, I did feel, however, that the author sometimes attempted, though with reserve, to make connections between the 2nd temple literature and Christianity in ways that were forced. Some of the literature simply not conducive to a better understanding of Christianity, not even relevant; therefore, attempts to find similar sayings or theology between the literature and the Bible is unnecessary. I mean, there's always going to be some similarity on the general, every-day life, but that's not of any contribution to or comparison of the Bible's content or the Christian life.Again, the author did note that some of the literature pretty much irrelevant to a biblical or Christian context, but to then list what could be similarities between the literature and Christian thought seemed forced.Over all, however, it was a very good read.

Received the product as expected (as ordered) and the shipping was prompt and the product

arrived in excellent condition. Thank you. Very comprehensive book with lots of information.

I went into this book fairly hopeful; I'm interested in the literature written in the intertestamental period, and have never had much occasion to really dig into reading works like the apocryphal and pseudopigraphical writings of the Jews. Unfortunately, Helyer's book disappoints for a student desirous of anything other than Helyer's own summaries and outlines.In the early sections, Helyer at least implies that he's going to generously excerpt the works to which his titling and mammoth book refer. Further, with the book clocking in at over 500 pages, it seems only natural to expect large portions of at least the major works of these times to be quoted. This is not the case, though. For every paragraph of quoted text, there are at least 5 or 10 pages of Helyer's own thoughts, commentary, introduction, and notes. You get a much greater sense of Helyer's style than the style of the works cited; you get a much better sense of Helyer's opinions than an ability to form your own.The most useful portion of this work for me was a good reference as to which collections of the early Jewish works might be worth buying. Unfortunately, I'll have to make those purchases and then read these works myself. Very disappointing.

This book pretends to cover Jewish literature of the Second Temple Period. However it covers only a subset of it. I could hardly believe it (but on the other hand I have already had similar experiences with the editor, IVP). For example Helyer does not seem to know about important literature such as pseudo-orphic poetry. Another kind of example is very important literature which is only very partially covered (the so important Sibylline oracles are hardly covered, only book V is spoken of). I suspect that the cause may be that Helyer still identifies ancient Judaism too much with modern Judaism (i.e. the Pharisean strand) so that he spends too much much space on rabbinic Judaism or rather fundamentalist strands (related to the Dead Sea Scrolls). On the contrary the Jewish literature of the time was very broad, rich, open and enlightened by Hellenism. Only Philo gets an acceptable treat, the huge bulk of Hellenic Judaism is savaged or ignored. Would it be that Hellenism is not fit for fundamentalism?The book would be OK (the advantage being that it is low-level, very accessible) if the subject had been limited, e.g. strands of rabbinic or cultic kinds, or hardly influenced by Hellenism (and then excise the part on Philo). But with such a broad title, the books totally fails to cover the huge subject claimed.Extensive surveys of the Jewish literature of the time are found in very expensive volumes such as those by Albert-Marie Denis published at Brill's or Peters'. A cheap, intelligent and accessible introduction is John Collins'Ã Â Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora (The Biblical Resource

Series)Ã Â (Eerdmans, 2000), e.g. covering the judaic Sibylline and Orphic literature. Collins, although not pretending to be a survey, will help the readers of the current book realize the kind of things they are missing if relying on Helyer's book.

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