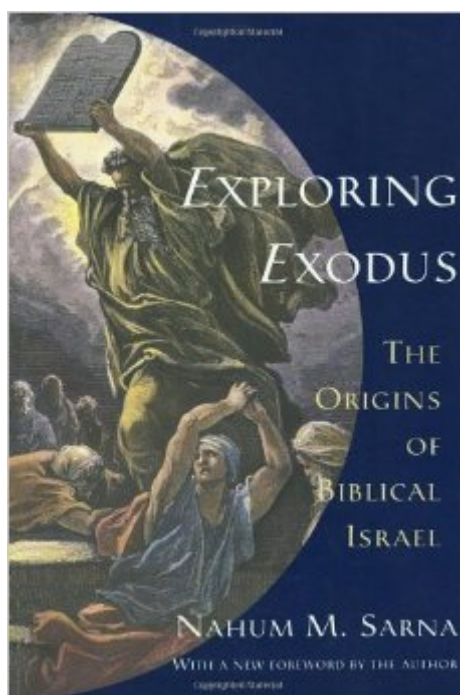


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Exploring Exodus: The Origins Of Biblical Israel



Synopsis

Sarna examines the distinctiveness of the Exodus narrative in light of ancient Near Eastern history and contemporaneous cultures--Egyptian, Assyrian, Canaanite, and Babylonian. In a new Foreword to the 1996 edition, Sarna takes up the debate over whether the exodus from Egypt really happened, clarifying the arguments on both sides and drawing us back to the uniqueness and enduring significance of biblical text.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sarna's book guides the reader through Exodus, and tries to place it in the context of other Middle Eastern cultures (while at the same time not ignoring the key differences between Israel and its polytheistic neighbors). The book is full of interesting little tidbits: for example, "Mose" (meaning "son" or "one who is born" in Egyptian) was commonly a part of ancient Egyptian names, and kings had names like "Thut-mose" (so it makes sense that the Egyptians would name a baby "Moses" or some variant thereof). Basically a work of history rather than theology--that is, it doesn't really purport to address the big questions of who wrote Exodus, etc. Rather, it shows readers how Exodus made sense to ancient readers familiar with heathen customs.

This is a commentary on the book of Exodus by the Jewish scholar, Nahum M. Sarna. Each chapter deals with large literary units rather than the typical verse by verse exegesis. His focus is mostly on historical and cultural backgrounds to the narrative's setting drawing upon a broad knowledge of the ancient Near East. In fact, this was the book's strength. You won't find raw theology here nor will

you be left with simple historiography but rather what Sarna calls historiosophy.

This book is essentially a commentary on Exodus but framed in such a way that it can be read without having the text constantly in front of you. The main sources for the commentary are the results of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern scholarship which he uses to place the narrative in its context and supplement on what is found therein. He admits at the outset that "the Torah is not a book of history but one that makes use of history for didactic purposes" (xi) and tries to show by means of this background material what these purposes were. In 9 chapters he does this and very successfully. His suggestions based on similarities (or differences) between other ancient material are at the very least fascinating and in many cases quite persuasive. His approach is critical but not overly so, he is careful in his suggestions and generally engages the primary sources without making sweeping generalizations. Especially the chapter that compares laws from the Torah with that of other cultures I found very interesting. I would recommend the book to people interested in looking at parts of the narrative from the perspective of the Ancient Near East. Both the similarities and differences yield a very interesting picture. Grade: 8 out of 10

I really enjoyed this book. I read the books my daughter brings home from college. This is one of them. I probably would not have read it if it were not for that, but I am glad I did. This book provides some interesting perspectives on the Exodus. One of the many things that I liked about this book is that it provided the context of other cultures of the time. The author also takes on some of the inconsistencies of the scriptures. What was most refreshing for me in reading this book, however, is that most of the things that I have read concerning the scripture have been from a Christian perspective. This book is written from the Jewish perspective which was another interesting element to the book for me.

I first read this book ...and his Genesis work..in library copies for a study group. I am buying both because the insight and the language literally transported me! Do not read this alone because you will want to share thoughts. Even when you are alone, you will want to return to a line and say it aloud. This will be a cherished book regardless of your professed faith. I plan to give extra copies as gifts! The only reason it is four stars is because Exodus is getting five!

As advertised, this book came in very good condition. And, as with Sarna's "Genesis," it is well written, well researched, and insightful.

This is very clearly written, and a great resource to consult. (This comment is regarding the Kindle version). Definitely worth the price.

a treatise of the bible as to when where and whether the issue in the portion could have happen and where

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