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A TREASURE TROVE OF RICH INSIGHTS ABOUT
THE GREATEST STORIES EVER WRITTEN

Leading Scholars Explore the Historical and Literary Forces in the Bible in Their New Book

Unlikely heroes. Courageous women. Bloody battles. Miraculous triumphs. The Hebrew Scriptures, known also to Christians as the Old Testament and to Jews as the Tanakh, have given the world some of the greatest literature it has ever known. Passed down for centuries through the oral tradition, compiled between 500 and 100 BCE, and finalized around the time of Jesus, the various books of the Hebrew Bible took shape under a variety of authors, cultures, and time periods, influencing the formation of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike.

In *The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us* (HarperOne; November 2011; $29.99; Hardcover), leading biblical scholars Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine open our eyes to this diverse history, shedding new meaning on the Bible’s long-celebrated texts.

Knight and Levine provide readers with the tools to decode Biblical texts and demonstrate the nuanced ways in which the Hebrew Scriptures have shaped society, past and present. They highlight the Biblical themes with which readers continue to wrestle in the modern day: human evil and God’s response; war and peace; law and society; politics and economics; belief and practice; gender and sexuality; Israel and the Nations; practical wisdom and apocalyptic vision.

*The Meaning of the Bible* will fascinate observant Jews, faithful Christians, world historians, and readers of great literature. Knight and Levine illuminate one of the greatest collections of literature known to humankind, whose stories are as illuminating today as they were 2,500 years ago.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Douglas A. Knight is Drucilla Moore Buffington Professor of Hebrew Bible and Professor of Jewish Studies in the Divinity School, College of Arts and Science, Graduate Department of Religion, and Program in Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He received a B.A. from Ottawa University (Ottawa, KS), M.Div. from California Baptist Theological Seminary (Covina, CA), and Dr.theol. from Georg-August-Universität (Göttingen, Germany). He has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Program, the National Science Foundation, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and the German Academic Exchange Service. He also received the Thomas Jefferson Award from Vanderbilt University. Professor Knight’s most recent books include *Law, Power, and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Westminster John Knox Press), *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 3rd edition (Society of Biblical Literature), and the edited series *Library of Ancient Israel* (Westminster John Knox Press).

Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, and Professor of Jewish Studies at the Divinity School, College of Arts and Science, Graduate Department of Religion, and Program in Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN; she is also Affiliated Professor, Woolf Institute, Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge UK. Holding a B.A. from Smith College, M.A. and Ph.D. from Duke University, and honorary
doctorates from the University of Richmond, the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, the University of South Carolina-Upstate, Drury University, and Christian Theological Seminary. Professor Levine has been awarded grants from the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council of Learned Societies. Her recent books include *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (HarperOne), the edited *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton), the fourteen-volume edited series *Feminist Companions to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* (Continuum), and the edited *Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford).

**ADVANCE PRAISE FOR THE MEANING OF THE BIBLE**

“Amy-Jill Levine and Douglas A. Knight have combined to write a book on the Bible that is as academically brilliant as it is marvelously entertaining. By placing our scriptures into their original Jewish context they have opened up startling and profound new insights. This is a terrific book.”
— John Shelby Spong, author of *Re-Claiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World*

“Knight and Levine have written a winsome, accessible introduction to the theological thought of the Hebrew Bible. With a congenial exhibit of critical scholarship, they remain, in their thematic approach, at a descriptive level. But they allow room for and affirm the ways in which the biblical text can fund and form on-going interpretations in faith, both Jewish and Christian. This sort of irenic, thoughtful linkage of criticism and interpretation within a confessing tradition is exactly what we most need in Scripture reading.”
— Walter Brueggemann, Professor Emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary

“From its superb introduction to its perfectly worded conclusion, this book does it all. Whether your interest in the Bible is historical or literary, specific texts or broad themes, this book has it—and conveys its relevance for today. The authors are learned, respected scholars who, above all, in giving their perspectives and interpretations, write clearly. Their uncomplicated, attractive style makes learning a pleasure. I recommend this book for general readers, for students, for teachers - well, basically, for everybody.”
— Richard Elliott Friedman, author of *Who Wrote the Bible?* and *The Bible Now*

“A helpful resource for both Jews and Christians, conservatives and liberals, religious leaders and social reformers. Its authors provide new knowledge on the Bible’s rich diversity of teaching on sexuality, familial and ethnic discord, political corruption, religious infidelity, economic exploitation as well as the nature of God, faith, love, and social justice. It is both enlightening and inspiring.”
— Peter J. Paris, the Elmer G. Homrighausen Professor of Christian Social Ethics, Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary

“A book we have needed for years - learned and accessible, clearly organized by the topics readers care about, and fully engaged with current discussions of deep and broad significance. It will ‘work’ everywhere and with everyone, Jews and Christians, committed or curious, in and out of the classroom. Knight and Levine know what they are talking about, and just as important, know how to talk about it.”
— William Brosend, Executive Director, the Episcopal Preaching Foundation

“If anyone thinks the fruit of biblical scholarship is esoteric and heavy reading, direct that person to this book. In it, Knight and Levine demonstrate both their scholarly proficiency and their expertise as seasoned educators. Unlike traditional introductions that focus primarily on historical, literary, or theological aspects of the Bible, here the material is treated thematically, with important historical, literary, and theological data woven together, thus revealing the rich yet complex character of the various themes. Despite the volume of information gathered in these pages, the authors have managed to present it in a style that is eminently readable without minimizing its multifaceted character. This book should appeal to a broad audience.”
— Dianne Bergant, CSA, Catholic Theological Union
“At last we have a text rich in information, creative in approach, and accessible to students and general readers of the Bible. Knight and Levine have done a marvelous job of taking very sophisticated material and presenting it in an illuminating and thoroughly engaging way that bespeaks of excellent scholarship by two distinguished teachers. I look forward to using this superb volume in my own Biblical Traditions and Cultures course.”
— Carol J. Depsey, OP, Ph.D, Professor of Theology, University of Portland, and author of Reading the Bible, Transforming Conflict

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