



# Religion and Culture in Ancient Israel

*J. Andrew Dearman*

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## **Religion and Culture in Ancient Israel** J. Andrew Dearman

Religion in ancient Israel didn't develop in a vacuum; it was influenced by the Near Eastern culture around it as much as it in turn influenced that culture. Dearman explores that dynamic interplay in this thought-provoking study. Using archaeological and literary evidence (both biblical and extrabiblical) he shows how distinctive Old Testament traditions (such as the paradoxical role of the prophets) flourished in the interaction of Israelite religion with cultural and political forces, while other traditions languished.

*"Religion and Culture in Ancient Israel* by J. Andrew Dearman is the comprehensive study of religious forms and customs that has been needed by the discipline for many years. . . . Dearman's work is a mixture of traditional and social scientific examinations of the world of ancient Israel and its social matrix. From its opening use of Clifford Geertz' definition of 'religion,' a tone is set, but not one that 'over interprets' the available sources. There is no parallelomania here, no exaggeration of archaeological data, no theological agenda, and no attempt to rehash Albright or Gottwald. Instead, Dearman provides a fresh approach, geared to both a historical and a literary examination of religious forms and phenomena in ancient Israel. . . . The goal of any textbook is to provide (1) information in a systematic manner and (2) to hold the interest of the reader so that the author's message gets across to his or her audience. Dearman has succeeded well with both of these."

—Victor Matthews, Professor of Religious Studies, Southwest Missouri State University

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