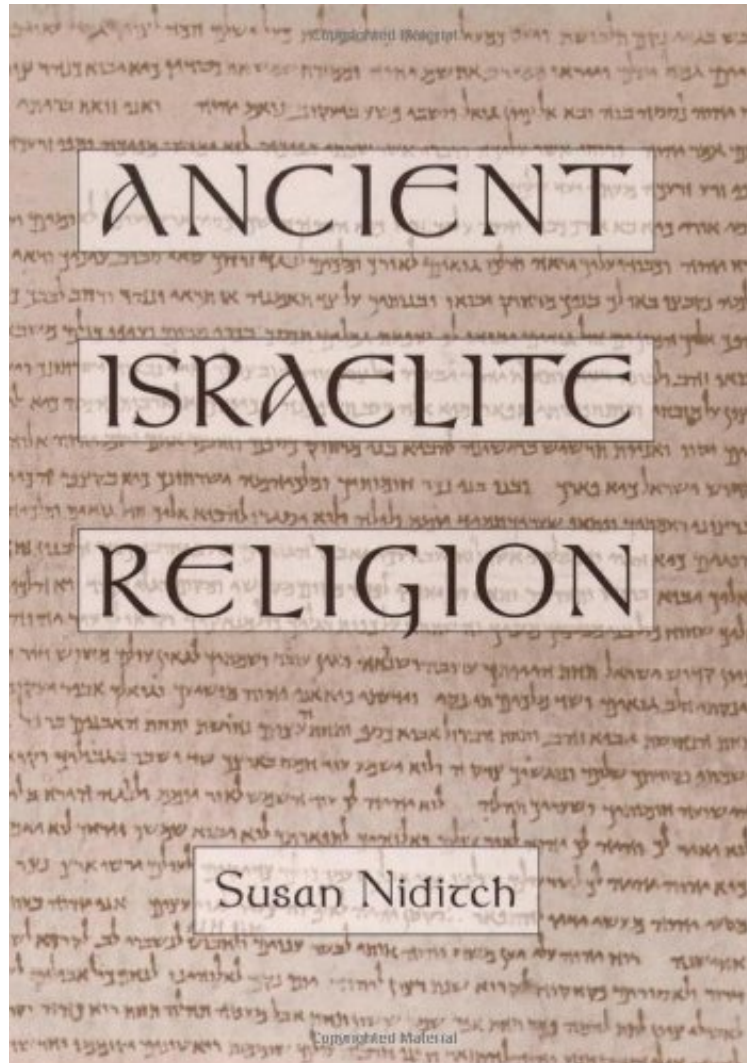


Ancient Israelite Religion

Susan Niditch

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Susan Niditch : Ancient Israelite Religion before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ancient Israelite Religion:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Starting point By L. Crabtree Easy to read. I've just begun to study this area. I began with this one. I'm zipping right through it 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Ancient Israelite Religion By Todd P. Phillips This is readable, and a useful tool for becoming familiar with the ancient Israelite religion written by a well-known biblical scholar. 10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Toward an Understanding of Religion in Ancient Israel By Anthony Sherbondy This is an excellent, gentle introduction to an ancient religion. Some of the more controversial themes, for example child sacrifice, are touched on but not fully

discussed. Niditch maintains throughout the book a non-pedantic style allowing the reader to gain an overall appreciation of the insights offered by modern scholarship (Ugarit texts, etc.) without getting lost in an endless sea of footnotes and references.

Ancient Israelite Religion offers a brief, accessible, and perceptive account of the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Israelites, analyzing the complex and varied ways in which they present and preserve themselves in the Hebrew Bible. Drawing on the most recent literary scholarship and archaeological evidence, the author provides a compelling account of how the culture of the Israelites changed over three great historical periods--the distant pre-monarchic age, the monarchies of Israel and Judah, and the Babylonian exile and return. The heart of the book is a rich description of the Israelites' religious life as revealed in the Hebrew Bible. Exploring how they described their experience of God, Niditch draws out consistent themes in the Biblical stories. Most importantly, she allows us to see the world through the Israelites' eyes as she reconstructs both their habits and their larger worldview. Ideal for introduction to the Bible and introduction to religion courses, this insightful, subtly nuanced portrait is also easily understandable to general readers. It brings to life this ancient people whose legacy continues to influence and captivate the world today.

From Kirkus sAn overly brief but very well organized and informative overview of Judaism's formative stage during the 13th to 5th centuries b.c. Bible scholar Niditch (Religion/Amherst Coll.) focuses on the worldview expressed in the Hebrew Bible. She devotes chapters to four aspects of that worldview: the experiential, the mythical, the ritual, and the ethical-legal, largely basing her analysis on close readings of biblical texts. Sometimes, though unfortunately not often enough, she uses insight garnered from archaeological findings or the texts of other ancient Near Eastern religions. Niditch's greatest strength is her succinct, accessible prose; there is solid scholarship, but no academic pretentiousness or jargon here. She is particularly good at capturing and evoking an aspect of ancient Judaism in a sentence or a phrase. For example, after exploring the Yom Kippur ritual of the scapegoat that is prescribed in Leviticus, she observes how it is linked to other biblical rituals involving uncleanness and danger, then concludes that ``sin, like the seductive personification in the story of Cain and Abel, the one who crouches at the door, is real and visceral, a contaminant which makes impossible a healthful continuation of the covenant community." Also enhancing her book is an excellent bibliography. The work's only weakness is an occasional penchant for deriving conclusions from insufficient evidence. An example: Niditch states that the context and content of the ritual of redeeming the first-born son (see Exodus 22) ``seems to be support that child sacrifice was indeed a thread in ancient Israelite religion." Far more evidence is needed for this spectacular claim. On balance, though, this is a first-rate introduction, for undergraduate and graduate students and all serious students of Judaism, to the social, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual underpinnings of the Hebrew Bible. (illustrations, not seen) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "A very useful overview of ancient Israelite religion, made especially helpful by its use of archaeological materials and the inclusion of supplementary reading suggestions at the end of each chapter."--Victor Roland Gold, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary"An innovative new approach to the religion of ancient Israel which integrates archaeology, literature, and anthropological theory. A stimulating window into the world of all of ancient Israel."--William Schniedewind, UCLA"Susan Niditch is well known for her distinguished work on biblical symbolism and folklore in the biblical tradition. In this volume she has drawn upon those resources, and far more, to produce a rich portrait of ancient Israelite religion that considers both the corporate and the individual, the ideas and the ritual, as well as the ethical aspects of the worldview of the people behind the Hebrew Scriptures."--Gene M. Tucker, Professor Emeritus, Emory University"Using archaeological evidence as well as biblical texts, Niditch is able to convey the richness and diversity of Israelite religious beliefs and practices without privileging those that are normative in the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, her sensitive analysis of religious life in the biblical world goes beyond and behind the largely androcentric and urban interests of the biblical writers. She considers issues of gender and social setting, and she connects them to ideas and customs familiar to the contemporary reader."--Carol Meyers, Duke University"An interesting review of Israelite religion as depicted in the Bible. Niditch focuses on religion rather than philosophy or history, bringing into the foreground a topic often insufficiently distinguished from other areas of Bible studies."--Joshua Fox, Hebrew University, IsraelAbout the AuthorSusan Niditch is at Amherst College.