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## **Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period (Vols. 1 2)**

*John Bowden*

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**John Bowden : Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period (Vols. 1 2)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period (Vols. 1 2):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Recommended.By bluesky2Comprehensive background study on Hellenism influence on Judaic tradition. Recommended.38 of 38 people found the following review helpful. Highly influential book by a world class scholarBy JeriMartin Hengel, considered one of the top biblical scholars in the world, published this book about 1970. It has since influenced a generation of scholars, being cited in hundreds of publications. The book was published in two volumes, with volume one being the book itself, and volume two being the notes and index.The old History of Religions theory had crashed to an inglorious end when Hengel published this book. Hengel's conclusion was that "It is not possible to say that Judaism maintained a straight course through the Hellenistic period...Still less can it be claimed that it was completely permeated by the Hellenistic spirit" (p310).The 'wisdom school' was influenced by Greek thought, which among the people took on a strong eschatological expectation. Still, Hengel insists that Judaism maintained its singularity. "The almost complete fusion of religion and nationalism... prevented any assimilation" (p 313).Among the Greek influences were the 100 years Palestine was

under the Ptolemies, Attic pottery, the Greek language, irrigation, and minted money. "Interest in Hellenistic civilization, however, remained predominantly limited to the well-to-do aristocracy of Jerusalem" (p 56). So did that main pipeline of Hellenism, Greek schools. Earlier schools among the Jews were "exclusive, status-conscious... scribal schools" (p 80). Among the Jewish people, even as Hellenism was influencing their elite, elementary schools were formed that had enormous impact on the common people. The idea was to educate every Jewish boy. Simeon b Setah ordered all Jewish boys to go to school. So did Jubilees. "The school age was set a 6-7...non-Jews and Samaritans were prohibited as teachers...Instead of Homer, the Hebrew Bible, especially the Pentateuch, held pride of place in instruction" (p 82). Instruction was to continue for 10 years. The Cynic philosopher Oenomaus said, "Go and observe their synagogues and schools..you cannot succeed" in changing the Jews, because of those schools and synagogues. The result of this education system was a burst of literary creativity. "It is astonishing what creative forces were developed in their small and relatively remote Jewish temple state measuring barely more than twenty-four miles across, during the Persian and early Hellenistic period" (p 113). Hengel argues that the Septuagint was influenced very little by Hellenism. And that Ben Sira "By asserting that all wisdom comes from the Lord...formulates a Jewish declaration of war against Hellenism" (p 138).

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