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Timothy Michael Law

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Timothy Michael Law : When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I really enjoyed this book By GAA1I really enjoyed this book. As an orthodox Christian who could read Greek and went to a catholic university I could never understand why "their" bible

was different. I always put it down to translation. This book explained the history to me in a way that made sense. The varying early "editions" of the Old Testament make perfect sense in an ancient world with limited travel and interactions between far flung communities. The explosion of knowledge about the Old Testament following the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has really helped us understand the evolution of the OT. Probably the best chapter is the one discussing the discourses between St Jerome and St Augustine, two giants of the early church. Unfortunately Augustine proved to be prophetic when he accused Jerome (who was working on a translation of the OT from the Hebrew which wasn't really finalized until long after the Septuagint was written) that his translation would split the church, which is what eventually happened. I do feel that this edition was written for Western Christians as there is almost no mention of Eastern Orthodoxy, the religion of millions of people. While this book can be dry at times it really is an important read for those who really want to understand the OT that Jesus and the Apostles used.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Bit Basic but Useful for a Beginner By Stefano Nikolaou Let me first say that I absolutely hate the title of this book. I don't know what Timothy Law was thinking. The subtitle 'The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible' is a better, if boring, title. Law doesn't introduce any new information on the Septuagint, or discuss any new sources or develop any new theories. He basically summarises existing scholarship. For this reason I would label Law a 'populariser' rather than a scholar. Of course, there is absolutely nothing wrong with popularising information. The Septuagint got a bad rap at the time of the Reformation. The Roman Church had slowly adopted the Vulgate of Jerome, which used the proto-Masoretic Text as its base. The Reformers looked at the Hebrew text for their vernacular translations of the Old Testament (and for determining their canon too). The Septuagint was dismissed as an inaccurate and corrupt translation. When Protestant missionaries went to Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the 19th century (the Ottoman Empire) they even bought fresh translations of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, Arabic, Romanian, Bulgarian and Armenian so the Christians there would get 'real Bibles' rather than translations based on the Septuagint. All this sort of activity basically ignored the pivotal role that the Septuagint played in early Christianity. Finds like the Dead Sea Scrolls, early Septuagint manuscripts and a closer look at the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament have all helped rehabilitate the Septuagint- hence books like this!

The account of the translation of the Septuagint (chapter 4) is fairly bland, as is chapter 6 which summarises the 'Apocrypha'. Chapter 8 'The Septuagint behind the New Testament' was a bit too brief but interesting. As is the following chapter 'The Septuagint in the New Testament'. There are tables with the NT quote, the Septuagint and the Hebrew so the reader can easily compare them. There is, of course, a chapter on Origen of Alexandria (chapter 12) with a bit on Constantine thrown in. I found this chapter very unsatisfactory. The Hexapla is barely mentioned and there is no real discussion on how Origen's work impacted (or contaminated) the text of Septuagint. After all, all manuscripts and nearly all papyrus finds of the Septuagint post-date Origen. There is a bit on Jerome and Augustine (chapter 13) which is about Jerome's translation work and Augustine's defence of the Septuagint text (in the form of the Old Latin translation that he knew). There is a weak postscript. The impact of the Septuagint after the 5th century is basically ignored. The role of the Orthodox Church, which still uses the Septuagint, is not mentioned except in a few passing statements. Law offers up a question in his postscript which I would like to repeat 'What would modern Christian theology look like if its theologians returned the Septuagint to the place it occupied at the foundation of the church, or at least began to read it alongside the Hebrew Bible, as a witness to the story of the Bible and in acknowledgment of its role in shaping Christianity?' A good question! As this book has the meritorious aim of alerting the public to the Septuagint I am happy with it. This is a great book for someone with little or no prior knowledge on the subject. There are more of technical or detailed books available but they are more expensive than this one. For those wanting more there is a nice up-to-date bibliography with good groupings under key topics - ie 'The Septuagint in Early Christianity' or 'Key Figures' or 'Bible and Liturgy' etc

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. the Importance of the Septuagint By Craig L. Adams This is a very interesting and readable introduction to the history of the Greek translation of the Old Testament: called the Septuagint. Timothy Law demonstrates the antiquity and importance of the Septuagint, which has for far too long been relegated to a secondary importance in Christian theology. In fact, the Septuagint witnesses to an earlier form (or forms) of the Old Testament than the commonly used Hebrew Masoretic text. The Septuagint was the Bible of the early Church, and is quoted as Scripture by the New Testament writers. The early Church Fathers also looked upon the Greek Old Testament as Scripture. Law shows the pivotal role Jerome played in shifting the church from the Septuagint to the Hebrew Old Testament. I was aware of some of the facts about the Septuagint that Law mentions, and have long believed that the Septuagint is far more important than usually recognized however, much of what Law discusses was new to me, and makes the case for the Septuagint far stronger than I had realized. Highly recommended.

How did the New Testament writers and the earliest Christians come to adopt the Jewish scriptures as their first Old Testament? And why are our modern Bibles related more to the rabbinic Hebrew Bible than to the Greek Bible of the early Church? The Septuagint, the name given to the translation of the Hebrew scriptures between the third century BC and the second century AD, played a central role in the Bible's history. Many of the Hebrew scriptures were still evolving when they were translated into Greek, and these Greek translations, along with several new Greek writings,

became Holy Scripture in the early Church. Yet, gradually the Septuagint lost its place at the heart of Western Christianity. At the end of the fourth century, one of antiquity's brightest minds rejected the Septuagint in favor of the Bible of the rabbis. After Jerome, the Septuagint never regained the position it once had. Timothy Michael Law recounts the story of the Septuagint's origins, its relationship to the Hebrew Bible, and the adoption and abandonment of the first Christian Old Testament.

"Law writes lucidly and compellingly, presenting evidence and arguments that readers in communities of faith will find intelligible and enlightening. His book is the rare gift of an accessible update on scholarship's relevance for those seeking to practice faith." --Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology "Law has succeeded in a rare and difficult task: providing a clear narrative retelling of the development of an ancient text. Of course, like anyone else, he is an interpreter of history rather than an objective observer, but Law presents a story where scholarly backbone and narrative flesh cohere... Law convincingly demonstrates the central role the Septuagint played in the New Testament and the early church. The church's understanding of Scripture is undernourished when the Septuagint is ignored or relegated to peripheral status." --David Gundersen, Boyce College Southern Baptist Theological Seminary "[A] fresh perspective...[Law] brilliantly turns accepted wisdom about the nature of biblical text on its head...[He is] aware that good history is a solvent for lazy and often harmful promulgations...[He writes] with an implicit moral purpose." --London of Books "It is a gripping tale, beautifully told, and should be of profound interest to any reader of the Jewish or Christian Bible Timothy Michael Law has written the first introduction to the LXX that can be read by people outside the guild. It is a remarkable book, full of fascinating detail that I cannot evoke in a short review, a book that tells a rich story that no reader of the Bible can afford to ignore." --Los Angeles of Books An ambitious, accessible, and intelligent survey of the context, composition, and contributions of the Septuagint to Christian Scripture and theology. This is a fine introduction to an underappreciated subject...Recommended. --CHOICE "A splendid work...I haven't found any book so interesting and enjoyable in years." --Sir Fergus Millar, Camden Professor of Ancient History (Emeritus), Oxford, and Fellow of the British Academy "When churchgoers and church watchers wonder about the origins of Christian theology, questions about the Septuagint's importance for the New Testament and patristic era do not dominate their concerns. Law laments this lack of attention and enthusiastically explains the Septuagint's history, its significance for early Christian writers, and the reasons it all but disappeared from theological discourse in the Christian West." --The Christian Century "Strong and engaging... Law's argument for the Septuagint's return as an authoritative text is persuasive and dissenters will be hard-pressed to deny it a place" --Freedom in Orthodoxy "An original thinker, Timothy Michael Law portrays the birth, development, and theological impact of the Septuagint on Christianity and western civilization, and analyzes in a fascinating way the Septuagint as a creation in its own right and not only as a translation. This innovative study, incorporating the very latest research, is meant for the scholar and learned reader alike." --Emanuel Tov, J.L. Magnes Professor of Bible, the Hebrew University "Law overturns the assumptions of most Christians about their sacred scripture. He points out that the Greek text of the Septuagint was the early Church's Bible, that it predates the Hebrew Scripture now commonly accepted, and that it presents plural traditions of ancient Hebrew biblical texts, many now lost to us. Fundamentalists will find these unpalatable truths; others will find that Law points to new delights in their reading of scripture." --Diarmaid N.J. MacCulloch, Professor of the History of the Church, Oxford University "Law provides a thorough, readable introduction to the Septuagint's formation, distinctiveness, impact upon the New Testament writers, and ongoing life in the Christian Church. Law boldly challenges us to reckon with the theological implications of multiple 'Old Testaments' informing early Judaism and Christianity and to consider the Septuagint afresh as Christian Scripture. We cannot afford to ignore the testimony this book offers." --David A. deSilva, Trustees' Distinguished Professor, Ashland Theological Seminary "[Law writes] to acquaint interested non-specialists with the importance of the Septuagint. They are wooed effectively with warm-hearted argument.... [The] narrative argument brings the biblical and patristic periods together in a way which may help many who are learning the subject primarily from a biblical angle. It shows once again, for those who may not realize it, how fundamental the Septuagint has been for Christianity. The author's lively apologetic and polemic are not always the same as guidance for non-specialists, but his particular target audience is a vital one for biblical and ancient Jewish studies. May the book stir many who come to these fields." --Journal of Jewish Studies "When God Spoke Greek succeeds in remaining accessible to the educated reader whilst satisfying the scholarly expectations of the professional biblical scholar. Law is to be commended on an impressive achievement." --SOTS Book List 2014 "Reading Law's book is a bit like reading the biography of someone you once knew, but not well. It is full of information you never suspected was true... Law's vivid re-creation of the Greco-Roman world into which the Septuagint was born and of the culture it helped shape is more than readable. It is fascinating." --Theological Studies "...[A] good and lively read... intended to convey Law's sense of the importance of the Septuagint, to enthuse and to inspire readers to explore the subject further, and its accessibility and entertaining style achieve this aim very well." --Journal of Theological Studies "...[O]ne of those rare volumes which successfully communicates a fascinating general overview fully grounded in serious academic research... Law's manifesto calls for the Academy to return to the study of the Septuagint as the great document of the rise of Christianity, and the Church to re-engage with

the Septuagint as part of its Biblical inheritance... NETS and Law would together be a perfect introduction to the Bible which shaped Western culture and the Christian Church." --The Oxonian "...I love this book. Law's insights into the Septuagint and differing translations, mistranslations, and thematic development was engaging. He also makes strong points about the value of the Septuagint for the Church today. It's hard to understand some of the exegetical nuances in the New Testament without a knowledge of the Septuagint. It was the Bible (a term Law might not use) of the NT and early Church. Pastors and exegetes would do well in prizing the Septuagint and valuing its contribution to our theology." --Grace For Sinners Blog "Overall When God Spoke Greek is engaging and easy to read--yet still stimulating. Law is a master of his material, and that his knowledge and insight goes deeper even than what is contained on these pages is evident." --Words on the Word Blog "...Law has written a clear historical account of how the Septuagint became the authoritative OT Scripture of the early church." --Themelios About the Author Timothy Michael Law is founder, publisher, and Editor-in-Chief of The Marginalia of Books (themarginaliareview.com). He is currently an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow in the Seminar für Altes Testament in the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (with Prof. Dr. Reinhard Kratz). He spent 2009-2012 as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the Oriental Institute at the University of Oxford, and until 2014 remains Junior Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.