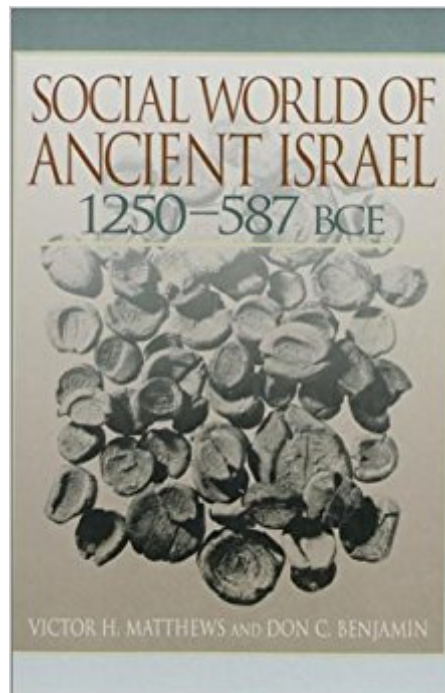


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The Social World Of Ancient Israel: 1250-587 BCE



Synopsis

Getting a fix on the social context of the Hebrew Bible is imperative for anyone reconstructing either the "story" of the text or the "history" behind the text. Resources in this area often prove overspecialized and arcane, and can require highly sophisticated skills in cultural anthropology or Semitic languages just to read the table of contents. *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250–587 BCE*, offers those interested in learning about the biblical world a more user-friendly framework for viewing the broader picture; at the same time it relies upon the latest methodologies of cultural anthropology and biblical analysis in its presentation. Painting a picture in broad but precise strokes, the authors portray the landscape of ancient Israel in new and exciting colors that expert and student alike will appreciate. *Social World of Ancient Israel* takes a unique look at the most prominent social institutions of the world of early Israel and the period of the monarchy, and then shows how properly understanding these social institutions is essential for sound biblical interpretation. Immersing the reader into five major areas of daily life in antiquity—politics, economics, diplomacy, law, and education—Matthews and Benjamin explore the ways in which knowing how "players" function in these institutions, such as "father/mother," "prophet/wise one," "host/stranger," can shape our understanding of earliest Israel. Perhaps most significantly, the book gently exposes the inefficiency of past anthropological models for interpreting the relationships, attitudes and social conventions of earliest Israel. Its corrective insights will enable scholar and student alike to plot new approaches for studying the Hebrew Bible and the ancient people of Israel. *Social World of Ancient Israel* offers the most refreshing and innovative approach to ancient Israelite society that I have ever read. The book uses different roles in village life and state institutions to open up the biblical world. Matthews and Benjamin draw extensively and creatively on biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature as well as the newest work in anthropology. Clear and engaging for beginners, full of insights for biblical scholars, this book fills a major need for a masterful synthesis of life in ancient Israel.

—Mark Smith, St. Joseph's University

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Victor Matthews & Don Benjamin scholarly work, the Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250-587 BCE takes a unique look at the social institutions of the world of early israel and their importance for sound biblical interpretation. Immersing the reader into five major areas of daily life in antiquity (politics, economics, diplomacy, law, and education) Matthews and Benjamin explore how "players" function, such as "father/mother", "prophet/wise one", and "host/stranger". -- Midwest Book Review

Victor H. Matthews is dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs and professor of religious studies at Missouri State University. He received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University and has written numerous popular as well as scholarly articles. He is the author of *Manners and Customs in the Bible* and coauthor of *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* and *The Social World of Ancient Israel*. Don C. Benjamin teaches at Rice University. He is coauthor of *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* and author of *Deuteronomy and City Life*. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

While I could write a review on the book, I really only have a question. Is this paperback edition from 2005 a revision/update of the hardback version of 1993? I did not see anything mentioning this, except for a new cover (which is common when a paperback edition is published). I still have my original copy, but am thinking of updating my library if this is an actual revision. My review? This book (1993 version, of course) was required reading for a basic Old Testament course I had several years ago at seminary. It opened my eyes in many ways with the information and its non-technical presentation. All that I can say is it was a "nice read."

I love this book. great overview of the social life. I had this in one of my classes and have used it to teach myself. It is very accessible but a quality academic resource.

Yes. I don't agree with everything proposed by the book yet it is well-written and informative. Very detailed.

This helpful book explained to me, in easy to understand ways, a lot of obscure OT stuff. Very good just to sit and read, unlike most textbooks.

Benjamin focuses on specific roles in ancient Israel which gives unique insight to many Old and New Testament writings.

Perfect Condition. LBG

helpful, but I wish the writer would make the material more interesting.

It was purchased for one of my college classes.

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