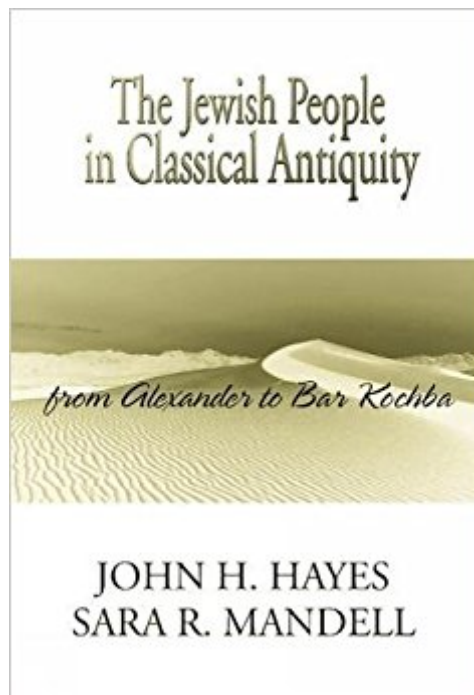


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The Jewish People In Classical Antiquity: From Alexander To Bar Kochba



Synopsis

John Hayes and Sara Mandell provide a clear exposition of Jewish history from 333 BCE to 135 CE. This volume focuses on the Judean-Jerusalem community from a historical rather than ideological or theological perspective. With the inclusion of charts, maps, and ancient texts, the authors have constructed a fascinating account that is indispensable for the study of this crucial period.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John H. Hayes is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia. He is the author of numerous books, including Introduction to the Bible, Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook (with Carl Holladay), The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity (with Sara Mandell), and Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development (with Frederick Prussner), all published by WJK. Sara R. Mandell, Professor Emerita at the University of South Florida, earned her BA (Latin), MA (Latin), and PhD (Classics) at NYU. Mandell studied Organ with Frederick Swann and Virgil Fox at Riverside Church in NY. She served on the Classics faculty of Emory University and subsequently both the Classics and Religious Studies faculty of The University of South Florida. Mandell won honorable mention in the Westinghouse Science Talent Search (now the Intel Search) for research in Physical Chemistry. She is the recipient of NYU's Founders Day Award, two State of Florida teaching awards, and a USF Distinguished Service award. She has published numerous articles and books chapters and is the co-author of two books (one with David Noel Freedman and one with John H. Hayes). Mandell

served as President of the SouthEastern Region of ASOR. She was on the editorial board of USF Studies in the History of Judaism and was Editor of its sub-series, The Hebrew Scriptures and their World.

While this book may contain a lot of useful information, it goes down about as easy as frozen turkey. The writing style is far too lofty and the authors are at great pains to show how vast their vocabularies are while doing everything in their power to bore their audience to tears.

A must read for any serious, or even half-serious student of the Bible or of the Palestinian history of 2000 years ago. Helps you understand some of the actors in the drama and how they affected and in turn were affected by the events of those years. You may know that Herod killed some of his sons, but did you know that he had 10 wives? After you find how he was treated when he was a young upstart, you almost feel sorry for the guy; you can almost understand his reactions. Despite the hundreds of characters in the story, so many of them with the same name, the reading is easy and smooth. In the last chapter, dealing with the first Jewish war, the story reaches a crescendo like a popular thriller. Here you view the Jews inside the Jerusalem walls, divided in three factions, furiously fighting and killing each other and burning their own food supplies; outside the Roman army is encamped, waiting for orders from one or other of their four emperors who were elected that year (some lasted less than a month before they were assassinated in the Senate,) and in the meantime hauling trees from ten miles away to crucify the escapees from the city. The only disappointment in the book is that so little is known and could be written about the revolts in 115 and 135AD.

This book "The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity: From Alexander to Bar Kochba" surprised me because, even though it mentions covering Bar Kochba, it contains very little information about Bar Kochba, only 4 pages out of 216 pages. I found a great deal more information about Bar Kochba ten years before Hayes and Mandell published this book when I was researching "Revelation and the Fall of Judea." I also discovered that many authors seem to think that Judea fell in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. I think this is because the events of A.D. 66-70 were described in great detail by the eyewitness Josephus. However, Judea survived the fall of Jerusalem, and, although the Temple was never rebuilt, the nation gradually recovered. Sixty years later, Judea became strong enough to again revolt against Roman occupation. Bar Kochba, a charismatic leader, unified the Judeans, defeated two Roman armies, and established the First

Jewish Commonwealth, a fully independent nation. The present Israeli government, incidentally, is the Second Jewish Commonwealth. Bar Kochba, though the last leader of a reinvigorated Judea strong enough to drive out the Romans, has passed from history with little historical documentation. Most eyewitness accounts, if they ever existed, no longer exist. Only sketchy myths and legends have survived. Recent archaeological discoveries by Yigael Yadin (*Bar Kochba: the Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Second Jewish Revolt Against Imperial Rome*) and others have shed much new light on Bar Kochba and some people close to Bar Kochba. I'm disappointed that "The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity: From Alexander to Bar Kochba" didn't contain more information about Bar Kochba. However, Hayes and Mandell's coverage of earlier portions of Jewish history is very good.

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