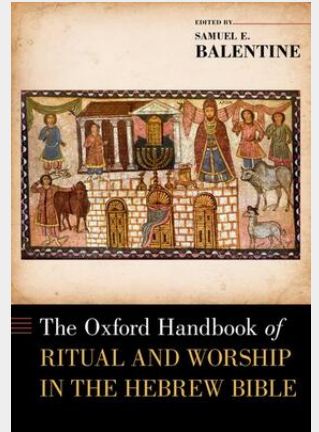


Balentine

The Oxford Handbook of Ritual and Worship in the Hebrew Bible

Ritual has a primal connection to the idea that a transcendent order - numinous and mysterious, supranatural and elusive, divine and wholly other - gives meaning and purpose to life. The construction of rites and rituals enables humans to conceive and apprehend this transcendent order, to symbolize it and interact with it, to postulate its truths in the face of contradicting realities and to repair them when they have been breached or diminished. This Handbook provides a compendium of the information essential for constructing a comprehensive and integrated account of ritual and worship in the ancient world. Its focus on ritual and worship from the perspective of biblical studies, as opposed to religious studies, highlights that the world of ritual and worship was a topic of central concern for the people of the Ancient Near East, including the world of the Bible. Given the scarcity of the material in the Bible itself, the authors in this collection use materials from the ancient Near East to provide a larger context for the practices of the biblical world, giving due attention to historical, anthropological, and social scientific methods that inform the context of biblical worship. The specifics of ritual and worship life-the sacred spaces, times, and actors in worship-are examined in detail, with essays covering both the divine and human aspects of the sacred dimension. The Oxford Handbook of Ritual and Worship in the Hebrew Bible considers several underlying concepts of ritual practice and closes with a theological outlook on worship and ritual from a variety of perspectives, demonstrating a fruitful exchange between biblical studies, ritual theory, and social science research.



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