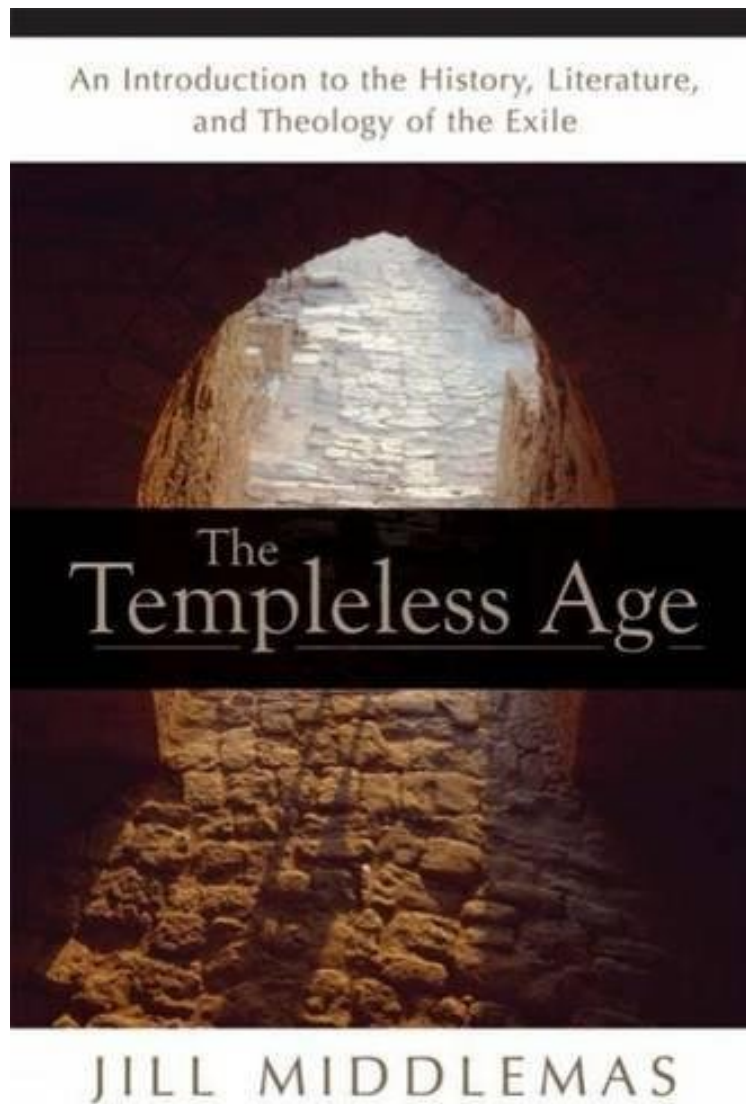


[Ebook free] The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile"

## The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile"

*Jill Middlemas Dechow*

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#1876703 in Books Westminster John Knox Press 2007-09-04 2007-09-04 Original language: English PDF #1 9.02 x .43 x 5.981, .67 #File Name: 0664231306176 pages The Templeless Age An Introduction to the History Literature and Theology of the Exile | File size: 56.Mb

**Jill Middlemas Dechow : The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile"** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile":

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Important overview and introduction to an exciting area of study By

M. Galishoff Since the seminal work of Wellhausen, it has been appreciated that the structure of the Old Testament reached its final form over a period of time and under the influence of various writers and redactors who worked with written and oral traditions to produce what would become the canonical books. Over the past few decades, the importance of the Jewish exile surrounding the disaster of 586 BCE on the structure and theology of a significant portion of the Old Testament has been appreciated. "The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature and Theology of `Exile'" by Jill Middlemas serves as an excellent overview of the subject. Drawing on her own work as well as the work of numerous scholars, the author weaves the material into a format such that the larger picture can be understood. What we find from this study is that Israel in exile underwent a process of individual and corporate mourning, self-reflection, contrition, repentance, and appeal to YWYH and finally finding hope and renewal that began with the restoration. This process, which I feel mirrors that of a modern-day sinner who turns to the Lord, resulted in the creation of a large corpus of Israel's literature. This literature reflects the historical and theological lessons and renewal that ultimately shaped Second Temple Judaism. This process is outlined in the titles to the chapters: "The Historical Record," "The Aftermath of Disaster I: Lamentations," "The Aftermath of Disaster II: Memory," "Between Judgement and Hope," "The Turn to Hope I: Prophetic Visions of Divine Reversal," and "The Turn to Hope II: Commitment to Covenant." Each chapter looks at the corpus of literature developed during this process and the organization/dating and location of the selected Scripture neatly fits the progression from injury to renewal. What Israel experienced and recorded as its corporate experience and theology becomes a lesson for us as Biblical Historians, Theologians, Preachers and Ministers. As such it has academic as well as pastoral depth. The main chapters begin with a form-critical analysis of each section of scripture under study and how scholars have placed the section in this particular time period and location. The author then engages in an exegetical overview of the text and explains how the text and its message not only fits into the hypothesis but served Israel in its preservation of self-identity as God's chosen people even in the wake of the disaster at the hands of the very God they cling to. The study begins with a historical summary of the events surrounding the fall of 586 BCE and the period known as the Golah. It is a great frustration to historians that there are limited extra-biblical data with which to reconstruct the events with historical certainty. For Israel, the literature produced becomes the "story" of this history which is more concerned with global truths than the scientific and systematic dating of events and times. Indeed, this corpus read post-critically, as Israel's testimony and witness to revelation yields a rich field containing countless gems. This witness to revelation is the recording of that process of revelation which, in turn, resulted from the shock/horror of 586 and Israel's process of healing by turning back to the God who loves freely. It is in many ways an experience of creation out of chaos. That Israel survived and emerged again despite the temptations and lure of Babylon's wealth is a miracle that mirrors primordial creation. Chapter two explores the role of lamentation as communal and individual mourning and dirges. These compositions reflect the pain and horror of what happened, lash out in complain and anger to God and cry to him to witness what He has wrought upon his beloved people. Grief turns to memory in chapter three as Israel re-examines its own history in what has become known as the Deuteronomistic History (DtH) comprising Judges to Second Kings. This self-critical history serves Israel as she looks back at her own pre-monarchal and monarchal history and clearly articulates her faults and trespasses against God. This serves a communal confession before God of guilt and acknowledgement that the covenant was broken by Israel and punishment was deserved. The fourth chapter moves to the Major Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel as this process continues. The author explores how each Prophetic tradition served to both articulate and pronounce judgement yet, at the same time, hold out hope for the people that YWYH is in control of all and a heartfelt return was always possible until the final destruction. Reflection upon Jeremiah (Deuteronomist tradition) and Ezekiel (Priestly tradition) brings the people who remained in the land and those in exile into full appreciation of the depth of Israel's trespass but also permits confession, repentance and petition to God in the hope that he will continue as the faithful covenant partner. The fifth and sixth chapters address hope both present and future. This hope explodes upon the suffering and lost in Isaiah 40 "Comfort ye." The book known as Deutero-Isaiah (Ch 40-60) is divided into two sections, the first ten chapters addressing hope among those in captivity and the second ten chapters hope within the land. Interspersed among the songs of hope are songs of service and suffering in which Israel comes to understand its place in the cosmic salvation history and its role as YWYH's suffering servant and light unto the nations. Ezekiel 40-48 concern the hope and vision of God's new Temple wherein the restored relationship comes to fruition, one of worship, sacrifice and people with a new heart. It differs in many important ways from the First Temple in both design and theological outlook. In it the Priestly tradition emerges above and over the kingly tradition as far as the sphere of worship is concerned. Holiness and purity as "physical space" as well as a state of being is also given primacy. This focus of purity in the design and construction of the Temple will have its corresponding systems of purity for the Land, the corporate people and individuals. What emerges is a dialectical tension in which these Prophetic traditions call for purity yet also call for Israel to be a light unto the nations. It will later work itself out in conflict between the reforms of Ezra-Nehemiah (purity/exclusiveness) and the latter Prophets (Jonah, Ruth etc). The role of Prophetic encouragement in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 during the hardships and discouragements of rebuilding and resettlement is explored. Zechariah, in particular, has a primitive form of apocalypse in which the Prophet is given visions into the cosmic world of God, the forces at play and variance

and Israel's role within this tremendous conflict between YAWH and evil. The visions were for the here and now of the end of the period under study and not some vision of future events. Israel's important role on earth in YWYH's plan of salvation for all of creation is now appreciated. Parallel to the latter Prophets the Priestly (P) tradition developed what is known as the Holiness Code (H) recognized as a block of tradition in Leviticus 17-26. P is interwoven as the Priestly view of creation and the events of the Genesis to Numbers, alongside the older J (Jahwist) and E (Elohist) strands in the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. H concerns itself not only with cultic matters but of matters of communal, individual, Temple and geographic holiness. This holiness tradition is diverse and addresses numerous aspects of cultic and everyday life. It includes judicial codes, moral codes as well as ritual codes. We can see at the end of this process Israel restoring the Land and renewing its relationship with God is infused with a dialectical tension of holiness/purity vs. servant hood/suffering and being a light unto the nations. She would complete the period as a Persian Province known as Yahud trying to reconcile this dialectic all the while the fear and memory of 586 looms as an imminent threat and consequence for failure to maintain holiness and purity. We can also see further ahead as the world of Hellenism encroaches itself upon the Land and becomes a constant threat to the purity of the people, Land and Temple. This constant threat was faced every day by those in the Diaspora but God's Presence was in the Land and efforts to maintain this presence by enacting and enforcing increasingly strict and complex traditions of purity eventually eclipsed Israel's other calling. By the time of Jesus and Paul these "works of the law" became identity badges and symbols of nationalism and exclusivist practices which served as a barrier between Jew and Gentile; a barrier that could only be torn down by Christ as he resolves the dialectic irresolvable by human effort. These are my observations. Middlemas' main contribution to our understanding of this period comes in three parts. The first is her coining of the term "The Templeless Age" as opposed to exile. She argues well for this term in her introduction and points out the exile is more nuanced and broad than can be defined within a specific time period. In addition to the obvious continued life of Jews outside the land after the restoration to this day, the experience of exile has spiritual, social and psychological implications that transcend a fixed period of time. She, therefore, defines the Templeless Age as the time between the two Temples (586-515). She has restricted her study to this time. The second major contribution of Middlemas' work is her solid presentation of the above-mentioned blocks of scripture in a context of time, place and process of Israel's recovery after the disaster of 586. Finally, her conclusions explore implications not only for understanding scripture but for preaching and teaching. In my opinion, this area of Old Testament studies is a fertile field and holds the key for understanding much about Ancient Israel in addition to our personal struggles and victories with God. This volume is well written, well argued and accessible in price and style to a wider audience. It serves as both a general introduction for students who wish to learn more and as a gateway for all into The Templeless Period. I urge pastors and teachers to read this volume, take advantage of the generous bibliography and learn more about this age and reflect upon how Israel eventually developed into what existed at the time of Jesus and Paul. Such reflection will enrich New Testament studies and help everyone gain a deeper appreciation of the NT and OT. 0 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Review By Penny Witcher I did not like this book. I found it hard to read and understand. It was on time but not something I will ever buy again.

It was in the sixth century BCE that the state of Judah fell and along with it the temple of Yahweh, the place of divine presence offering divine protection. This introductory textbook throws fresh light on this crucial period in the history and theological development of ancient Israel and Judah. Taking into account new archaeological evidence regarding the exile, *The Templeless Age* offers an up-to-date and compelling overview of the formative events of the sixth century BCE.

About the Author Jill Middlemas Dechow is Associate Professor of Theology at Aarhus University in Denmark. She is the author of *The Troubles of Templeless Judah*.