



The Ladder Of Jacob: Ancient Interpretations Of The Biblical Story Of Jacob And His Children.

By Kugel, James L.

Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2009. Softcover. Book Condition: New. 296 pages. Softcover. New book. RELIGION. Rife with incest, adultery, rape, and murder, the biblical story of Jacob and his children must have troubled ancient readers. By any standard, this was a family with problems. Jacob's oldest son Reuben is said to have slept with his father's concubine Bilhah. The next two sons, Simeon and Levi, tricked the men of a nearby city into undergoing circumcision, and then murdered all of them as revenge for the rape of their sister. Judah, the fourth son, had sexual relations with his own daughter-in-law. Meanwhile, jealous of their younger sibling Joseph, the brothers conspired to kill him; they later relented and merely sold him into slavery. These stories presented a particular challenge for ancient biblical interpreters. After all, Jacob's sons were the founders of the nation of Israel and ought to have been models of virtue. In *The Ladder of Jacob*, renowned biblical scholar James Kugel retraces the steps of ancient biblical interpreters as they struggled with such problems. Kugel reveals how they often fixed on a little detail in the Bible's wording to "deduce" something not openly stated in the narrative. They concluded...



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