



Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.

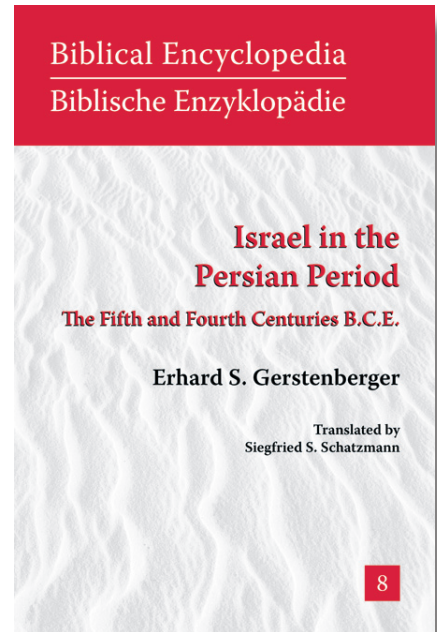
Erhard S. Gerstenberger; translated by Siegfried S. Schatzmann

Although the Persians are seldom mentioned explicitly in the Hebrew Bible, the Persian period (539–331 B.C.E.) gave new shape to ancient Israel, as the biblical text evolved and the foundations of the Judeo-Christian tradition were laid. Therefore, contrary to earlier views, Persian politics, culture, and religion were the setting within which the nascent Jewish community lived and took shape. Against the backdrop of the history and intellectual world of Persia, Gerstenberger describes this exciting 200-year period in the history of Israel, which saw both the creation of biblical literature (historical, prophetic, and poetic writings, especially the Psalms) and important theological developments (e.g., the shape and characteristics of the Jewish community, monotheism, and new means of shaping one's world).

Erhard S. Gerstenberger, Professor of Old Testament at Philipps-Universität Marburg, received his Ph.D. in 1961 from the University of Bonn, where he studied under such luminaries as Martin Noth and Otto Plöger. Since then he has authored numerous articles, essays, and books, including *Der bittende Mensch: Bittritual und Klagelied des Einzelnen im Alten Testament* (WMANT; 1980), *Psalms: Part 1, with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (FOTL; 1988), *Das 3. Buch Mose: Leviticus* (ATD; 1993), *Yahweh the Patriarch* (1996), *Psalms: Part 2, with Lamentations* (FOTL; 2001), and *Theologies in the Old Testament* (2002).

◆ Biblical Encyclopedia 8 ◆ 978-1-58983-265-7 ◆ paperback, \$65.95 ◆ xviii + 575 ◆ October 2011

Hardback edition available from Brill Academic Publishers (www.brill.nl)



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