



# Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It? (T&t Clark)

*Lester L. Grabbe*

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A number of 'histories of <?xml:namespace prefix = st1 />Israel' have been written over the past few decades yet the basic methodological questions are not always addressed: how do we write such a history and how can we know anything about the history of Israel?

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In *Ancient Israel* Lester L. Grabbe sets out to summarize what we know through a survey of sources and how we know it by a discussion of methodology and by evaluating the evidence. Grabbe's aim is not to offer a history as such but rather to collect together and analyze the materials necessary for writing such a history. His approach therefore allows the reader the freedom, and equips them with the essential methodological tools, to use the valuable and wide-ranging evidence presented in this volume to draw their own conclusions.

The most basic question about the history of ancient Israel, how do we know what we know, leads to the fundamental questions of the study: What are the sources for the history of Israel and how do we evaluate them? How do we make them 'speak' to us through the fog of centuries?

Grabbe focuses on original sources, including inscriptions, papyri, and archaeology. He examines the problems involved in historical methodology and deals with the major issues surrounding the use of the biblical text when writing a history of this period. *Ancient Israel* makes an original contribution to the field but also provides an enlightening overview and critique of current scholarly debate. It can therefore serve as a 'handbook' or reference-point for those wanting a catalog of original sources, scholarship, and secondary studies.

Its user-friendly structure and Grabbe's clarity of style make this book eminently accessible not only to students of biblical studies and ancient history but also to the interested lay reader.

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