



The New Testament Code: Gospels, Apostles and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Robert Eisenamn

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The discovery of a trove of ancient scrolls in a series of caves on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea galvanized the field of biblical studies. What has come to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls constituted a library of religious texts in the possession of a radical Jewish sect that flourished around the time of Christ. They offer a unique window into the ideology and religious sentiments of a period that witnessed both the birth of Rabbinic Judaism and the new religious movement that was to become Christianity. Early on the Jordan Department of Antiquities established a committee to oversee the publication of the scrolls. For the next thirty-five years this committee exercised strict control over the find, making, in effect, the scrolls their exclusive property. Robert Eisenman spearheaded the efforts to break the stranglehold of the committee and make the scrolls widely available. His efforts and those of like-minded scholars finally resulted in 1988 in the publication of the entire corpus of the scrolls. In *The New Testament Code* Professor Eisenman marshals his encyclopedic knowledge of scriptures, the scrolls and the entire body of early Christian, Jewish and Islamic writings to present a profound and provocative reading of the New Testament. He argues that the scrolls offer the key to understanding its true meaning. At issue are the relationship between James, the brother of Jesus and the apostle Paul, their strenuous debates over the observance of Mosaic Law, the messianic and apocalyptic movements that presaged the destruction of the Second Temple, the hidden meaning of the Cup of the Lord and the Blood of Christ, and the beginnings of the Christian Church. With intrepid scholarship Eisenman reveals the sinews beneath the surface meaning of texts to present a comprehensive and convincing argument that turns much conventional thinking on its head. Here is an analysis that Jews, Christians, and anyone interested in the founding documents of Western culture will find immeasurably rewarding.

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