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Reading the Book

Burton L. Visotzky

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Burton L. Visotzky : Reading the Book before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Reading the Book:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One of the difficulties with looking at others religion and ...By Normal guy One of the difficulties with looking at others religion and practices is understanding their view point, or how they see things. This is an engagingly written book about how the ancient (and modern) Jewish sages see their text. It will help the Christian reader understand the Rabbinic way of telling stories and interpreting the Bible. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An intelligent guide for thinking readers By A Customer This is one of the best books on The Bible that I've ever read. It is thought-provoking, insightful, and wonderfully human and humorous. I read it after seeing the author on Bill Moyer's Genesis series. This book is not just for Jewish readers; I think anyone who enjoys reading and thinking will find it delightful. It will spur even skeptics like me to a reading and appreciation of the ancient writings in The Bible. 1 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A great help! By A Customer This book is a great help for one interested in learning about biblical exegesis. No teacher should be without it.

For many people the Bible is a dusty old book with little relevance to their lives. But for Vistozky the Bible is a living entity that can offer endless insights for its readers if they enter into dialogue with it in the manner of the ancient rabbis, whose midrash, or commentary, has accompanied it almost from its beginning. Focusing on themes in key

biblical texts - good and evil, sexuality, parent-child relations, sibling rivalry, faith, and creation - Reading the Book demonstrates the ingenuity and richness of this traditional Jewish approach. It then shows how readers of any religion can create their own midrashim and develop living relationships with the text.

From Publishers Weekly In this highly accessible and entertaining book, Visotzky, professor of midrash and interreligious studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, takes readers into the world of the midrash, the rabbinic commentary on the Torah which ultimately became so complex that it was said it would make Moses dizzy. After showing that one of the major sources of the Bible's vitality has been the ongoing and ever-changing debate as to how it is to be interpreted, he examines the hermeneutic of the rabbis and the literature it produced, showing that they were critical readers incapable of fundamentalism in interpretation. He then focuses on the biblical text and the midrash themselves, looking at stories concerning Abraham, Jacob, Moses and others. Particularly effective are the chapters dealing with the binding of Isaac by Abraham and sibling rivalry in the stories of Moses and his brother (Aaron), sister (Miriam) and nephews (Nadav and Avihu). The book is lively with examples drawn from popular culture, such as how we interpret headlines in supermarket tabloids, and references to the work of movie directors like Akira Kurosawa and Pedro Almodovar. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This book is designed to provide an "introduction to the meaningful reading of Scripture," and is aimed at all readers, "regardless of religious background." To achieve this purpose, Visotzky, a rabbi and associate dean of the graduate school of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, provides numerous examples of rabbinic methods of interpreting biblical texts. He suggests that those methods can be used profitably by readers who wish to get more from their Bible reading. He also describes two conditions essential to the worthwhile reading of scriptures: reading with a "community" (one or more additional persons) and reading with an open mind. Approaching this book with an open mind is important, for some readers may feel that Visotzky takes liberties in interpreting the text at hand. Nonetheless, liberal-thinking readers will find this interesting and witty. For larger biblical studies collections. - Joanna M. Thompson, Bluefield State Coll., W.Va. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Inside Flap An invitation to all--regardless of religious background--to engage the Bible, grapple with its language, unlock its mysteries, and understand its relevance in our own time. Reading the Book is the model for Bill Moyers's forthcoming 10-part PBS series, Genesis: A Living Conversation, to be aired in the fall of 1996.