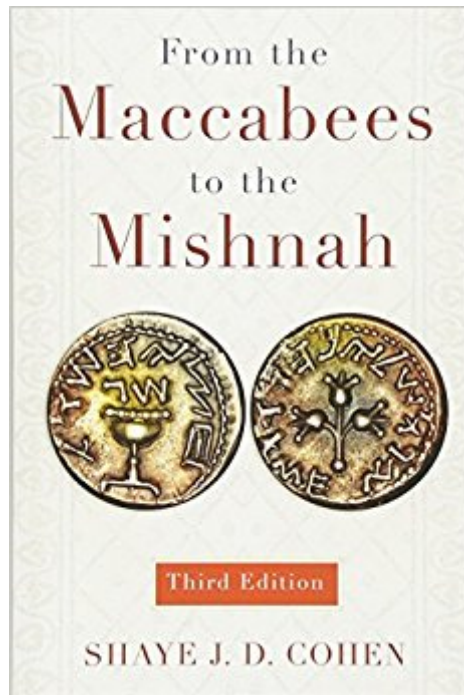




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From The Maccabees To The Mishnah, Third Edition



Synopsis

This is the third edition of Shaye J. D. Cohen's important and seminal work on the history and development of Judaism between 164 BCE to 300 CE. Cohen's synthesis of religion, literature, and history offers deep insight into the nature of Judaism at this key period, including the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, the function of Jewish religion in the larger community, and the development of normative Judaism and other Jewish sects. Cohen offers students more than just history, but an understanding of the social and cultural context of Judaism as it developed into the formative period of rabbinic Judaism. This new edition includes a brand-new chapter on the parting of ways between Jews and Christians in the second century CE. From the Maccabees to the Mishnah remains the clearest introduction to the era that shaped Judaism and provided the context for early Christianity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The term 'classic' is too often abused and overused, but in the case of Shaye J. D. Cohen's *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* the term is perfectly appropriate. How many books published in the 1980s are still useful today, let alone continue to remain required reading? It is a cause for celebration that this book is now available to a new generation of readers." —Richard Kalmin, Theodore R. Racoosin Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Culture, Jewish Theological Seminary "Cohen's 1987 volume was widely acknowledged to be a superb overview of Jewish life in the pivotal era from 200 BCE to 200 CE. This extensively updated and expanded third edition is

supplemented by a masterful presentation of a crucial issue that has been debated during the past few decades, namely, Judaism and Christianity's parting of ways in antiquity. The present volume guarantees that Cohen's work will remain indispensable for many years to come." —Lee Levine, Professor Emeritus of Jewish History and Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem "From the Maccabees to the Mishnah continues to be the essential introduction to ancient Judaism. Its crystalline clarity, absolute command of the facts, and respect for the facts, and sustained intelligence make it an accessible and important read for everyone from interested lay-people, to undergraduates, to professional scholars. The new chapter, on the separation of Christianity from Judaism, is the most sensible treatment of this controversial topic available." —Seth Schwartz, Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Classical Jewish Civilization in the Departments of History and Classics, Columbia University

Shaye J. D. Cohen is the Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. One of the foremost experts on Jewish history and culture, he is the author of several books, including *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* and *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised? Gender and Covenant in Judaism*.

A very helpful history of the period that set the stage for Christianity as well as rabbinic Judaism. Essential reading for any student of the New Testament. Yes, I know it's about Jewish history during that time. That's the point. The Christians were Jews. And the Jews back then had a lot of Greek and Persian in them, too. Gives a refreshing new perspective to us Bible-toting Christians.

This is a great overview of the milieu of the Jews from about 200 BC through 200 AD. Cohen is clear and sticks to the facts as far as they are known/knowable. It's written for a wide audience and I think that anyone interested in the Bible, Palestinian history, Jewish history, etc, would enjoy this broad introduction. It's like a freshman college course and you will enjoy it!

I got this for an Early Judaism class this semester. Really interesting, comprehensive and easy to understand. It is told historically, rather than theologically. Great book.

Very well written and fascinating to read. It contained much new material that I was not aware of. Highly recommend this book if you are interested in Biblical history.

Very in-depth account of Second Temple Judaism. Would have liked to hear more about the Qumran scrolls, though.

The book describes itself as an introduction to the 350 or so years of Jewish history between the Maccabees to the Mishnah. For most people what is found in this book should be more than sufficient to inform and revise many commonly held assumptions about Jews, Judaism: their history, culture, society, religion, and politics during that time. Chapter Eight is new in this Third Edition. This chapter discusses the "separation" that took place between Judaism and Christianity. What the chapter reveals is that this was a lengthy process and not nearly as clear-cut as it has been so frequently presented. In fact in some cases it is difficult to see that a "separation" actually took place since because there was no common communion between the two groups. In other cases a separation occurred, not because there was an explicit forcing out of Christianity from Judaism, but because it simply became difficult to maintain social connections when social practices became so different. These and other possibilities are discussed. The end of the book includes extensive bibliography and suggestions for further study for those who desire to go beyond this "introduction." Writing as a life-long Christian and as a pastor, this book opened my eyes to ways of thinking about the period of the gospels and the apostles in new ways. The relationships between Jesus, the apostles, the various Jewish sects, the controversies, the intent of the New Testament writings, etc. are far more complicated than is typically heard in Christian settings. The way Christians interpret and discuss Jews and Judaism of the period needs to become more nuanced and charitable. For example, the picture of Pharisees in the gospels are more stereotypes and caricatures than what history reveals as reality of the period. What seems to have happened is that later Christian attitudes crept into the preserved writings and their interpretations, which have been handed down as "true traditions" ever since. This book provides a needed corrective to the "jaundiced" tradition that Christians have received over the centuries and millennia. I recommend this book to all pastors. As pastors we need to stop perpetuating inaccurate histories and traditions when accurate ones are available. Yes, doing so will challenge us in how to incorporate and present new understandings, and it will challenge our congregations. (Based on ARC via NetGalley.)

Shaye J.D. Cohen has once again updated his popular introduction to early Judaism (1st = 1987; 2nd = 2005). This 3rd edition contains some cosmetic changes ("I have rewritten sentences and paragraphs here and there..."), and some additional information ("I have added some references in

footnotes."), but the most important change is an additional chapter. Cohen's eighth chapter addresses the so-called "parting of the ways" between Christianity and Judaism ("Preface to the Third Edition", xi) Originally the book was to be written as a sort of background to early Christianity, but Cohen has written an introduction to early Judaism that is aware of incipient Christianity, but not consumed by it. There are eight chapters: Chapter 1, "Ancient Judaism: Chronology and Definitions

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