



Jacob's Tears: The Priestly Work of Reconciliation

Mary Douglas

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Who is Israel? Who were the priestly authors of the Pentateuch? This anthropological reading of the Bible, by a world-renowned scholar, starts by asking why the Book of Numbers lists the twelve tribes of Israel seven times. Mary Douglas argues that the editors, far from being a separate elite unconcerned with their congregation's troubles, cherished a political agenda, a religious protest against the government of Judah's exclusionary policies. The priestly theology depends on God's Covenant with all the descendants of Jacob, including the sons of Joseph. It would have been unpatriotic, even subversive, to speak against the wars with Samaria. This book suggest an explanation of the editors' disappearance from the history of Israel.

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