

Martin Hengel, Anna Maria Schwemer

Jesus and Judaism

Translated by Wayne Coppins

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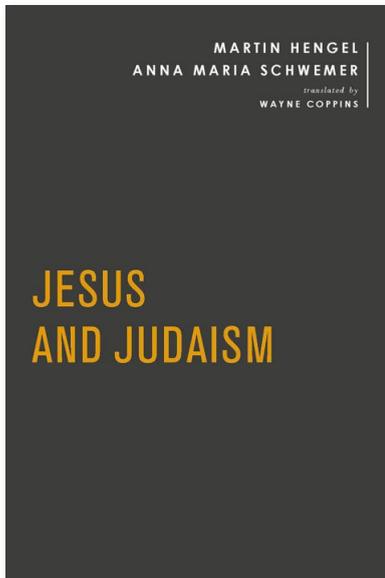
The debate over the extent of Jewish influence upon early Christianity rages on. At the heart of this argument lies the question of Jesus: how does the fate of a first-century Galilean Jew inspire and determine the nature, shape, and practices of a distinct religious movement? Vital to this first question is another equally challenging one: can the four Gospels be used to reconstruct the historical Jesus? In this work, Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer seek to untangle the complex relationships among Jesus, Judaism, and the Gospels in the earliest Christian movement.

Jesus and Judaism, the first in a four-volume series, focuses on the person of Jesus in the context of Judaism. Beginning with his Galilean origin, the volume analyzes Jesus' relationship with John the Baptist and the Jewish context of Jesus' life and work. The authors argue that there never was a nonmessianic Jesus. Rather, his messianic claim finds expression in his relationship to the Baptist, his preaching in authority, his deeds of power, and his crucifixion as king of the Jews, and in the emergence of the earliest Christology. As Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer reveal, Jesus was not only a devout Jew, nor merely a miracle worker, but the essential part of the earliest form of Christianity. The authors insist that Jesus belongs *within* the history of early Christianity, rather than as its presupposition. Christianity did not begin after Jesus' death; Christianity began as soon as a Jew from Galilee started to preach the word of God.

Martin Hengel (1926-2009) was Professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at the Protestant Theology Faculty at the University of Tübingen.

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