



# From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism

*Lawrence H. Schiffman*

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From Text to Tradition examines the history of Judaism as it developed from the religion on the biblical Israel to the Judaism of the talmudic rabbis. Each step in this process is discussed from the historical, literary and religious points of view and the context of the political history of the Jews. Among the topics covered in this connection are the biblical heritage which underlies all later Judaism, the importance of the Persian period for laying the groundwork for post biblical Judaism, the confrontation of Judaism with Hellenism, apocrypha, pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, the Jewish-Christian schism, the impact of the Jewish revolts against Rome and the destruction of the Temple, the rise of Rabbinic Judaism, and the development of the Mishnah, Talmud and Jewish Law. One of the book's major theses is that the various approaches to Judaism shared sufficient common ground as to be classified as one, albeit variegated, religious tradition. Diverging trends may be - and are - traced during this period, as is the question of the role of interpretation, the impact of external influences, and the process by which the competing approaches were eventually supplanted by the rabbinic tradition, which became the basis for medieval and modern Judaism. In this way, Judaism is shown to have traveled the long road from the textual heritage of the Hebrew Bible to the oral tradition of the rabbis.

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