



The Hidden Book In the Bible

Richard Friedman

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Renowned biblical sleuth and scholar Richard Elliott Friedman, author of *Who Wrote the Bible?*, reveals for the first time his most startling and revolutionary discovery: embedded within the Bible is a continuous narrative that had been sliced apart by ancient editors who interlaced it with other stories, laws, and poetry. It is a singular work of genius, the core of the Bible. Across three millennia, this great work of prose comes back to us--pieced together as it was originally meant to be read--in a fresh and powerful translation.

In recent years, Harold Bloom's *The Book of J* and Friedman's own *Who Wrote the Bible?* have made the short work called J known to the public. But in *The Hidden Book in the Bible* Friedman presents his landmark discovery that "J is not a work. It is the *beginning* section of a work: a long, exquisitely connected prose composition full of artistry and power."

Using a creative blend of scholarship and detective work, Friedman has joined together this story from the dawn of written history, and what emerges is astonishing. Far from a primitive first attempt at writing, it is an exciting and complex saga, a passionate work of love, deception, war, and redemption. Readers will experience the story that has not been read as a single continuous narrative for almost three millennia.

Friedman begins by leading the readers through the exciting story of his discovery of this hidden work. He marshals the evidence, showing how a unique use of language and themes--from the two cases of the famous "coat of many colors" to all nine references to Sheol (the place of the dead), and from incidents of sibling rivalry to sexual violation--recur in a connected way in certain parts of the Bible but nowhere else. Friedman dramatically illustrates how these clues establish a singular author's voice guiding more of the Bible than was ever previously suspected.

Friedman presents the work itself in a bold translation that is remarkable faithful to the original. It begins with a well-known tale of the deity's creation of a paradise that goes wrong and then conveys a sweep of history, telling the story of a family through twelve generations: a story of deception and recompense, of powerful loves and sibling rivalries, of wars and spies. The family becomes a nation, the nation finds a ruling family, and they find their way to peace. The author of this saga crafts a compelling and densely woven tale of family struggles, bitter betrayal, and, finally, the birth of a great kingdom under Solomon, the son of David.

This work, says Friedman, is a treasure. It became the core of the Bible and the beginning of prose literature. Readers now have the opportunity to see the first great prose writer's full achievement: an epic work of the struggle between God and human, and between good and bad. *The Hidden Book in the Bible* will forever change the way we regard the Bible. "Exciting, provocative, ambitious yet reverent," says Donald Spoto, "Friedman's latest book is, as usual, grounded in impeccable scholarship."

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Vicky Bowman:

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