



The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts

By Mark S. Smith

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- Rank: #910530 in eBooks
- Published on: 2001-08-09
- Released on: 2001-08-09
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Review

"Brilliant, well-documented, well-organized, and very discomfoting. Biblical scholars now recognize that in the pre-exilic era Asherah worship, infant sacrifice, solar veneration, and other religious practices attacked by biblical authors represented normal Israelite worship, while monotheism was a late development in the Babylonian Exile and subsequent years. Smith and others led the charge in this new scholarly perception of Israelite religion. But with this volume Smith has thrown down a gauntlet to challenge our understandings even more. Smith has produced a seminal work with which scholars must come to grips for years."

"This is an important work which will alter the perspectives of many."--The Bible Today

"Not only is the text wide-ranging and insightful at every turn, but it is greatly complemented by the endnotes, which resume arguments, develop tangential aspects, and offer a massive bibliography for further exploration."--Journal of Near Eastern Studies

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About the Author

Mark S. Smith is Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University. His publications include *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* (1997), *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (1994), *The Early History of God* (1990), as well as several other books on the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and West Semitic mythology and literature.

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