

Purity: Essays in Bible and Theology



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In ancient religion and societies the concept of purity was of central importance; in many modern societies it is either irrelevant or, when it is used, attached to extremely conservative agendas. This suggests an interesting story to be told within the history of ideas and, at the same time, raises questions about the place, meaning, and use of purity in religious traditions. What does purity mean in different scriptural contexts? Is it synonymous with holiness or different? How has it been used within various strands of theology? What should we make of it today? Have we moderns, by discarding purity as an organizing social form, lost something essential or made a significant moral advance? Or both? This volume begins to address these questions in essays on biblical genres and books, and different theological traditions. Accessibly written and incisive in its scholarship, it will be of interest to both specialists and non-specialists alike.

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