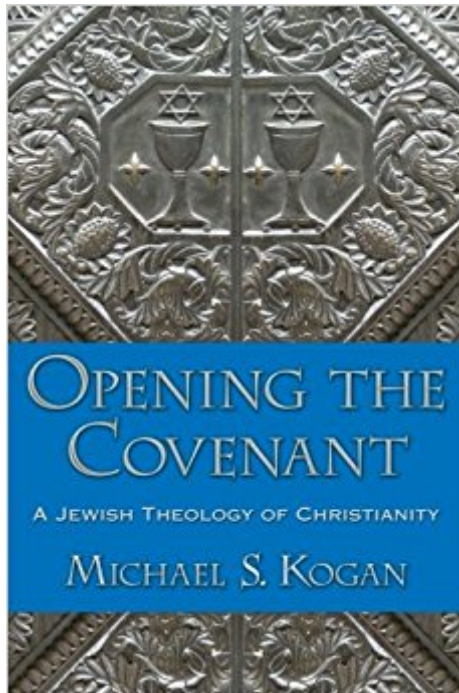




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Opening The Covenant: A Jewish Theology Of Christianity



Synopsis

The Vatican II Council of 1965 signaled a new era in the relationship of the Jewish and Christian faiths. Determined to free the Church of the anti-Jewish polemic which led to such widespread suffering of the innocent, Catholic authorities completely revised their conceptions of Jews and Judaism. Soon, many mainstream Protestant churches also issued a series of official statements that affirm the eternal nature of God's ancient covenant with Israel. An entirely new category of theology emerged as part of the developing Jewish-Christian dialogue, and gradually Jewish theologians began to respond. *Opening the Covenant* represents a significant advance in Jewish thinking about Christianity. Michael Kogan delves deep into the theologies of the two faiths to locate precise points of difference and convergence. He sees Christianity as the breaking open of the original Covenant to include Gentile peoples. God has brought this about, says Kogan, through the work of Jesus and his interpreters. If Christianity is a divinely inspired movement, then Judaism must reevaluate its truth-claims. This will in no way compromise the truth of Judaism itself but will cause Jews to understand their own faith more fully by locating it in the larger context of God's universal redemptive plan. Kogan calls for each tradition to receive the wisdom of the other as a means of self-understanding. Once each faith is freed to find God's purpose in the other, the way will be open to a liberating pluralism in which Jews and Christians come to see each other as Israelite siblings sharing a universal role as God's witnesses, the builders of God's Kingdom on Earth. Neither faith can do this world-redemptive work alone. Kogan argues that an affirmation of one's own religion can still provide space for the truth of the "other," and presents a theory of multiple revelations of truth flowing from the one God of all.

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Customer Reviews

"In *Opening the Covenant*, Michael Kogan faces the people, confronts them with a theological challenge in an honest and upright way, and does it with a purity of language, as the tradition demands." --Rabbi David Lincoln, Park Avenue Synagogue

"Michael Kogan's book, *Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity*, is a major contribution toward a thoughtful understanding of what Christianity might mean for us as Jews. The product of his extensive experience in talking with Christians about faith, his philosophical training, and his deep knowledge of Jewish thought, this book maps out some critically important features of Jewish belief that can help Jews be fully committed to Judaism and, as a result of those convictions (and definitely not in spite of them) come to understand Christians as people of a different but an intelligent and sincere faith. Indeed, only in comparison to such a conception of Christianity can Jews understand the values and concepts that their own tradition affirms." --Rabbi Elliot Dorff, American Jewish University

"Michael Kogan does what Jews must do if they are to engage in a true dialogue with Christianity, namely, take Christianity seriously as an object of God's communication and affection. Dialogue is mutuality. Until now, one could claim that the Jewish-Christian conversation was only a prolegomenon to dialogue. Now it enters into an authentic dialogue." --Leonard Swidler, Professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue, Temple University

"Are Jews anonymous Christians? Are Christians anonymous Jews, co-witnesses of the God of Israel among the Gentiles? With an intimate knowledge of both of these communities, Michael Kogan answers Yes and No to both ideas. He represents these two religions as standing on the edge of grasping the implications of encountering the absolute and incomprehensible Holy Mystery revealed to each. Each community has been addressed by, has responded to, and thus is constituted by the same faithful presence, or Word, or love of God. This book cuts through the phony complexity of theological mystification and opens up the exhilarating simplicity of the choice offered to each community: to recognize the other as kin, to appreciate the intimate partnership of responding to the transcendent God of power and love, and to witness together to the values of God's kingdom in this world. This is essential reading for all Jews and Christians." --Roger Haight, S. J., Union Theological Seminary

"Michael Kogan, an observant Jewish scholar with extensive knowledge of Christianity, responds to the changes with a courageous Jewish theology of Christianity." --Journal of Religion

Michael Kogan is Professor of Religious Studies and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy

and Religion at Montclair State University. He is an active participant in the Jewish-Christian theological dialogue.

Insightful. A major contribution to Judeo-Christian dialogue and mutual understanding, this book is a must read for Jews and Christians alike as it brings clarity to each's religious underpinnings.

Thought-provoking and relevant. This book is a must for anyone interested in interfaith dialogue -- or who needs to be.

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