



God's Last Words: Reading the English Bible from the Reformation to Fundamentalism

David S. Katz

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This wide-ranging book is an intellectual history of how informed readers read their Bibles over the past four hundred years, from the first translations in the sixteenth century to the emergence of fundamentalism in the twentieth century. In an astonishing display of erudition, David Katz recreates the response of readers from different eras by examining the 'horizon of expectations' that provided the lens through which they read. In the Renaissance, says Katz, learned men rushed to apply the tools of textual analysis to the Testaments, fully confident that God's Word would open up and reveal shades of further truth. During the English Civil War, there was a symbiotic relationship between politics and religion, as the practical application of the biblical message was hammered out. Science - Newtonian and Darwinian, as well as the emerging disciplines of anthropology, archaeology and geology - also had great impact on how the Bible was received. The rise of the novel and the development of a concept of authorial copyright were other factors that alerted readers' experience. Katz discusses all of these and more, concluding with the growth of fundamentalism in America, which brought biblical interpretation back to the Lutheran certainty of a demonstrable authority. 'This is a wonderfully learned, very clever, artfully constructed and engagingly written book.' Peter Lake, Princeton University David S. Katz holds the Abraham Horodisch Chair for the History of Books at Tel Aviv University. He is the author of 'The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850' and, with Richard H. Popkin, 'Messianic Revolution: Radical Religious Politics to the End of the Second Millennium'.



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