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Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimensions

By Robin M. Jensen



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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

"What a gift Robin Jensen has given us in this book, a gift she is uniquely qualified to give. A scholar of Christian liturgy, doctrine, and art, Jensen presents the history of early Christian initiation the way it was experienced--as a unified whole. Integrating image with practice and interpretation, Jensen offers a deep and insightful look into early Christian baptism. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity* is so clear and direct it can easily serve as a solid introductory text; at the same time it is so thoroughly researched it will serve scholars of early Christian history, liturgy, and art for years to come. This much welcome and much-needed volume is not to be missed."

--**Todd Johnson**, Fuller Theological Seminary

"To examine how early Christians enacted, experienced, and reflected upon baptism, Jensen utilizes an array of sources for her work: ritual texts, theological treatises, various genres of ancient literature, and most importantly for this study the visual arts and the design and decoration of the ritual space. By drawing together the different types of textual and nontextual evidence, Jensen offers the reader a fuller picture of the sacrament's complexity, particularly as considered through the theological motifs of cleansing, initiation, enlightenment, death and resurrection, and the eschatological restoration of creation."

--**Karen B. Westerfield Tucker**, Boston University

"Through her engaging exploration of the images, language, and symbols of early Christian baptismal rites, Jensen invites readers to consider anew the theological meaning and power of baptism for contemporary worshipers. Jensen's clarity of expression and the striking photos bring to life ancient ritual practices as well as illuminate some of the intriguing peculiarities of early Christian art and worship. Her presentation of baptism through five core motifs offers historical and theological insights about baptism that are valuable for historians and theologians as well as ministry students and pastoral leaders."

--**Jill Crainshaw**, Wake Forest Divinity School

"Jensen brings her scholarly acumen and aesthetic sensibility to the interpretation of the principal motifs of the early Christian baptismal ritual. Adding to her impressive writings on the subject of baptism, this book is addressed to a more popular audience but with solid scholarly support. These thematic studies elucidate the effects and meaning of the baptismal liturgy as a sensory, symbolic, and spiritual experience for its recipients."

--**Everett Ferguson**, Abilene Christian University

About the Author

Robin M. Jensen (PhD, Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary) is Patrick O'Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. She previously taught at Vanderbilt University. She has authored several books, including *Face to Face: Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* and *Understanding Early Christian Art*.

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