



The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero

By Joel Baden



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Joel Baden, a leading expert on the Old Testament, offers a controversial look at the history of King David, the founder of the nation of Israel whose bloodline leads to Jesus, challenging prevailing popular beliefs about his legend in *The Historical David*.

Baden makes clear that the biblical account of David is an attempt to shape the events of his life politically and theologically. Going beyond the biblical bias, he explores the events that lie behind the David story, events that are grounded in the context of the ancient Near East and continue to inform modern Israel.

The Historical David exposes an ambitious, ruthless, flesh-and-blood man who achieved power by any means necessary, including murder, theft, bribery, sex, deceit, and treason. As Baden makes clear, the historical David stands in opposition not only to the virtuous and heroic legends, but to our very own self-definition as David's national and religious descendants.

Provocative and enlightening, *The Historical David* provides the lost truth about David and poses a challenge to us: how do we come to terms with the reality of a celebrated hero who was, in fact, similar to the ambitious power-players of his day?



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The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero By Joel Baden Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #540111 in eBooks
- Published on: 2013-10-08
- Released on: 2013-10-08
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

“Reading between and behind the lines of the biblical text and its silences, Baden gives an engaging reconstruction of who the true David may have been. This is a brilliant synthesis, with some unexpected and even daring twists of interpretation. A tour de force!” (**Michael Coogan**, Harvard Divinity School lecturer, Director of Publications for the Harvard Semitic Museum and editor of *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*)

“This revisionist take on King David—as brilliant politician but despicable human being—combines the best of historical study and literary imagination. Baden’s challenge to traditional understandings of Israel’s king is always provocative, often compelling, and completely fascinating.” (**Amy-Jill Levine**, Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University and author of *The Misunderstood Jew*)

“An invigoratingly grown-up reading of the Bible, taking it seriously but not literally.... David emerges no longer as the author of the Psalms or the slayer of Goliath, yet Baden’s scholarly analysis leaves the usurper-King as one of the most crucial shapers of world history.” (**Diarmaid MacCulloch**, Professor of the History of the Church, University of Oxford, author of *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*)

“[Baden] succeeds positively, powerfully, and persuasively in locating Israel’s once and future king as an actual historical figure. The multiple layers of fact and fiction, history and theology are cleanly and clearly distinguished but without either modern apologetics or contemporary polemics.” (**John Dominic Crossan**, author of *The Historical Jesus*)

“Lively.... This is a provocative book that raises questions about the nature of biblical narrative and also about the historical continuity of the Davidic line.” (**John J. Collins**, Holmes Professor of Old Testament, Yale University)

“All praise be—again—to those biblical studies scholars who can make ancient history matter and can shed light on long-held beliefs. In clear prose and with a documented command of what others have said before him, Baden offers a provocative reinterpretation of one of Western culture’s heroes.” (*Publishers Weekly*)

“For readers open to debating this beloved biblical figure, *The Historical David* will make compelling reading.” (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*)

Utterly fascinating and written with sublime lucidity. (*Booklist*, starred review)

From the Back Cover

A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 2013

How the Bible Covered Up the True Story of Israel's Beloved King

For all the glory we attribute to David's legend, the historical reality is both fascinating and disturbing. Through deep textual analysis, Baden brings the historical David vibrantly to life and ultimately reveals that the flesh-and-blood man was far more complex and interesting than the mythical king.

About the Author

Joel S. Baden is Professor of Old Testament at Yale Divinity School and the author of several works on the Hebrew Bible, including *The Composition of the Pentateuch* and *The Promise to the Patriarchs*. Baden's articles have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Daily Beast*, CNN's *Belief Blog*, and *The Huffington Post*. He lives in New Haven, Connecticut.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cornell Smith:

Reading a book tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information that may give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire their very own reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the story that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the knowledge about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their talent in writing, they also doing some study before they write to the book. One of them is this *The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero*.

Anthony Alfaro:

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Becky Duncan:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, magazine, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended for you is *The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero* this publication consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some investigation when he makes this book. Here is why this book acceptable all of you.

Delois Dionisio:

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