Contents

List of Abbreviations IX

Introduction

- The Name of the Volume 1
- 2 The Purpose of the Volume 1
- 3 A Brief Survey of the Classical Jewish Exegetical Works 3
- 4 Structure and Overview 11

PART 1

The Hebrew Bible and Its Jewish Interpretive Presuppositions and Polemics

- 1 The Place of the Bible in Jewish Religion and Culture: Written and Oral Torah 17
 - The Centrality and Neglect of the Hebrew Bible in Judaism:
 An Enigmatic Constellation 17
 - 2 The Rabbinic Presuppositions and Principles of Scripture 26
 - 3 Written Torah and Oral Torah 27
 - 4 Some Principles of the Classical Jewish Biblical Interpretation 37
 - 5 Defense of the Religious and Cultural Heritage 38
 - 6 Conclusion 44
- 2 Rabbinic Exegesis in Contradiction to the Simple Meaning of Biblical Texts 46
 - 1 Introduction 46
 - The Biblical *Lex Talionis* and Its Disputed Later Reinterpretations 47
 - 3 Civil and Religious (Mis)Interpretation of Biblical Laws and Narratives 54
 - 4 Theological and Ethical (Mis)Interpretation of Biblical Narratives and Laws 59
 - 5 Excursus: The Rabbinic Attitude to Converts 65
 - 6 Conclusion 68

VI CONTENTS

Theological and Methodological Features of Midrash Psalms 74

 $_{\rm 3}$ $\,$ Theologies and Methodologies in Classical Jewish Interpretation:

A Study of Midrash Psalms and Its View of God 72

The View of God in Midrash Psalms

Appendix: And What Now? 142

8

Introduction 72

3

| | | 3.1 The Characterization and Centrality of God 79 |
|---|------|--|
| | | 3.2 "Negative Theology" 81 |
| | | 3.3 The Oneness of God 81 |
| | | 3.4 Forgiveness 85 |
| | | 3.5 God Suffers with Israel 86 |
| | 4 | Conclusion 87 |
| 4 | Enc | ounters and Polemics between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in |
| | Med | lieval Jewish Exegesis 90 |
| | 1 | Introduction 90 |
| | 2 | The Struggle against Opposition within Judaism 91 |
| | | 2.1 Karaite Bible Exegetes and Their Critics 91 |
| | | 2.2 Criticism by Mainstream Scholars 94 |
| | 3 | The Dispute with External Opponents: Christianity and Islam 97 |
| | 4 | Controversies between Jews and Christians 99 |
| | 5 | Controversies between Jews and Muslims 110 |
| | | 5.1 Background and Overview 110 |
| | | 5.2 Karaite Jews and Muslims 114 |
| | | 5.3 Rabbanite Jews and Muslims 116 |
| | 6 | Conclusion 122 |
| 5 | A B | ridge or a Barrier? Jews, Christians and the Hebrew Bible/Old |
| _ | Test | tament: The Roots of Jewish-Christian Controversy 125 |
| | 1 | Introduction 125 |
| | 2 | Are Jews and Christians Bound by their Common Scriptures? 126 |
| | 3 | Is the "Hebrew Bible" Truly Equivalent to the "Old Testament"? 127 |
| | 4 | Do Jews and Christians Share the Interpretation and Theology of |
| | | Their Common Texts? 132 |
| | 5 | Jewish-Christian Disputes regarding Common Biblical Themes 135 |
| | 6 | The Common Biblical Texts and Themes: A Bridge or a Barrier? 136 |
| | 7 | Conclusion 141 |

CONTENTS VII

PART 2

Interpretation, Sectarianism, and Disputes: Case Studies from Late Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism

- 6 The Binding of Isaac: Biblical Narrative in Late Second Temple and Rabbinic Exegesis and Thought 149
 - 1 Introduction 149
 - 2 The Rabbis and the Theological-Ethical Merits of the Aqedah 151
 - 2.1 God Tests Abraham 152
 - 2.2 Abraham the "Knight of Faith" 162
 - 2.3 The Aqedah and Afterwards 170
 - 3 Did God Test Isaac? 170
 - 4 What Really Happened upon the Mount? 173
 - 4.1 Isaac Was Not Hurt 173
 - 4.2 Isaac was Injured and Bled 175
 - 4.3 Isaac Died and Was Resurrected 178
 - 5 Where was Sarah? 181
 - 6 Conclusion 182
- 7 The Day of Atonement in the Late Second Temple Period: Disputes between Sadducees, Pharisees, and Qumranites 184
 - 1 Introduction 184
 - 2 The Centrality and Uniqueness of Yom Kippur 184
 - 3 The High Priesthood in the Late Second Temple Period 187
 - 4 Leviticus 16 and the Presuppositions of the Sadducees and Pharisees 189
 - The Dispute between the Sadducees and the Pharisees regarding How to Enter the Holy of Holies 192
 - 6 Reading of Scripture to the High Priest on Yom Kippur 197
 - 7 The Attack on the Qumranites' Leader by the Jerusalem High Priest on Yom Kippur 202
 - 8 Conclusion 206
- 8 The Hiding of the Temple Vessels in Jewish and Samaritan Literature 208
 - 1 The Jewish Literature 208
 - 2 The Samaritan Literature 211
 - 3 Conclusion 215

VIII CONTENTS

| 9 | The Relations between Jews and Arabs-Syrians in Pre-Islamic Jewi | | |
|---|--|-----|--|
| | Sources | 217 | |

- The Relations between Jews and Arabs and the Identification of Ishmaelites with Arabs 218
- The Identification of the Biblical Ammonites and Moabites with Arabs in Late Second Temple and Rabbinic Sources 222
- 3 Jewish-Syrian Relations and the Attitude towards Syrians in Targum Jonathan 227
- 4 Conclusion 229

10 Saadia Gaon and Abraham Ibn Ezra and Their Defense of the Written and Oral Torah 231

- 1 Rab Saadia Gaon 232
 - 1.1 Exegete, Biblical Theologian and Philosopher 232
 - 1.2 Hebrew Philologist 233
 - 1.3 Bible Translator and Exegete 234
 - 1.4 Confrontations with the Karaites 236
 - 1.5 Estimation of Saadia Gaon and His Work 237
- 2 Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra 238
 - 2.1 A Life of Wandering and Misery 238
 - 2.2 Works and Methods 241
 - 2.3 Evaluation of the Man and His Work 246
- 3 Conclusion: Between Saadia Gaon and Abraham Ibn Ezra 247

Conclusion 250

Bibliography 261

Index of Sources 287

- 1 Hebrew Bible 287
- 2 Ancient Biblical Versions 295
- 3 Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphica 297
- 4 Dead Sea Scrolls 298
- 5 Rabbinic Sources 299
- 6 Jewish Medieval Sources 304
- 7 Samaritan Sources 310
- 8 New Testament and Christian Sources 310
- 9 Islamic Sources 312
- 10 Ancient Near Eastern and Archaeological Sources 312
- 11 Greek, Jewish-Hellenistic, and Roman Sources 312

Index of Authors 314

Index of Subjects 321

Index of Key Hebrew Terms and Expressions 342