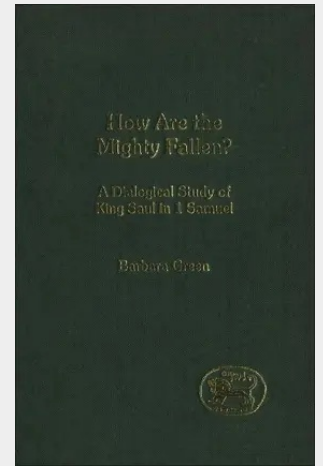


How Are the Mighty Fallen?

This book marries the several elements: a given text (1 Samuel), a focal character (King Saul), a spacious and creative theorist (Mikhail Bakhtin), a historical context (the collapse of monarchic Israel and the moment for return. The dilemma for the exile community is to return with royal leadership or without it); a reading challenge is: can a character be a cipher for a corporate experience (Saul represent the whole monarchic experience)? The author argues that the narrative of 1 Samuel may be read as a riddle propounding the complex story of Israel/Judah's experience with kings as an instruction for those pondering leadership choices in the sixth century. The work is an extended reflection on what went wrong with kings and why new leadership must be attempted. The extended riddle of Saul works to show how the life of the king is fundamentally destructive, not because any is malicious but because of many factors of weakness and inadequacy that will be familiar to readers.

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