

Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture

Frances M. Young



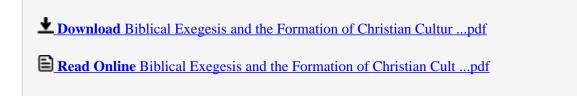
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This book challenges standard accounts of early Christian exegesis of the Bible. Professor Young sets the interpretation of the Bible in the context of the Graeco-Roman world - the dissemination of books and learning, the way texts were received and read, the function of literature in shaping not only a culture but a moral universe. For the earliest Christians, the adoption of the Jewish scriptures constituted a supersessionary claim in relation to Hellenism as well as Judaism. Yet the debt owed to the practice of exegesis in the grammatical and rhetorical schools is of overriding significance. Methods were philological and deductive, and the usual analysis according to 'literal', 'typological' and 'allegorical' is inadequate to describe questions of reference and issues of religious language. The biblical texts shaped a 'totalizing discourse' which by the fifth century was giving identity, morality and meaning to a new Christian culture.



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