

In the context of this debate, the Pharisees developed new strategies of textual justification for their legal positions. Shemesh ably demonstrates how this tactical shift resulted in both the incorporation of the Sadducean and Qumranic legal traditions into Rabbinic Judaism as well as the creation of new legal propositions within Rabbinic Judaism. What was once a technique for justifying customary and traditional law became a method of reform and adaptation after the destruction of the temple. Besides offering a rich and revelatory narrative of development in Jewish law, Shemesh shows in concrete historical terms how legal techniques, adopted for specific purposes, can become independent sources of reform and change.

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From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition. By John Witte, Jr. 2nd ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012. Pp. 393. \$35.00 (paper). ISBN: 9780664234321.

In this new edition of *From Sacrament to Contract*, John Witte updates and revises his analysis, first published two decades ago, of the relationship between law, theology, and marriage in the Western tradition. Witte focuses primarily on Christian theological norms and Western legal principles of marriage and family life in Western Europe and its extension in America. With his primary goal an analysis of the main theological beliefs that helped shape Western marriage law in the past, Witte seeks to discern how these beliefs might help inform Western marriage law in the future. As he seeks to identify the central religious sources and aspects of marriage law in the West and to isolate Christian theology and marriage law from the body of family experience in the West, Witte relies primarily on official lore and marital statutes.

In this new edition, Witte streamlines his argument, updates and trims the notes, and corrects errors. With revisions distilled from his extensive publications over the last two decades on the history of marriage and family life, Witte not only intersperses new scholarship throughout but provides new chapters addressing classical, biblical, and patristic sources of Western marriage. He extends the last chapter and concluding reflections to more fully address current debates about sex, marriage, and family life that challenge and divide church, state, and society.

Witte argues that the dialogue about marriage must be apt and cheerful, and he aims to contribute to that dialogue. He argues that in order to be apt, we must not be wistful about marriage and the family in a golden age, nor can we be prejudiced against modern ideas of liberty, privacy, and autonomy. He reasons that high rates of single parenthood, divorce, abortion, and problems of children raised in nonmarital homes reflect a disintegration of traditional norms and forms of marriage. Even so, he argues, to be cheerful, we must believe that the modern crisis of marriage and family can be transcended, since the Western tradition of family and marriage have faced crises of this magnitude before. Witte reasons that the Western tradition has historically found new ways to repair and restore itself in order to strike new balances between tradition and modernization in dealing with the evolution of sexual, marital, and familial norms.

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