Clarion Review

General

Reclaiming the Messiah
Fred Reiss
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Two Stars (out of Five)

For the past several years the bestseller lists have hosted a deluge of titles based on historical religious artifacts and secret societies. Most of those books are based on Christianity so it's a wonder that no one has written a book based on another religion—until now. This thriller fills the void with an intriguing Judaism-focused adventure that begins in ancient Jerusalem and ends in present-day Israel.

ZLT a sect of religious Zionists formed by the prophet Jeremiah have located three mystical artifacts which will hasten their core goal—the return of the Jewish Messiah. The artifacts—an Urim (a crystal ball used to divine the future) Thummim (dice with the ability to discern truth from lies) and the breastplate of judgment (which holds the former two) believed to be imbued with God's power—were last seen at the destruction of Solomon's temple.

Orthodox Israeli rabbi and ZLT leader Benjamin Silverman hires an American archeology Ph.D. candidate an American computer expert and an ex-Israeli military officer to excavate the artifacts. Once they are in their possession ZLT plans to overthrow the secular Israeli government replace it with a monarchy and rebuild Solomon's temple where the Dome of the Rock sits. Things go smoothly until a rival Muslim group discovers the plan; the Brotherhood of the Mount exists to collect and destroy significant Jewish artifacts.

Dr. Fred Reiss a retired Hebrew and public school administrator has written three nonfiction books on Jewish culture and public education. This is his first novel.

Although the story is categorized as religious fiction it can be enjoyed by fans of thrillers or ancient history. However flaws in structure and developmental editing handicap an otherwise good book. This is a plot driven story so while the characters are not fully dimensional this could be overlooked because action and suspense drive the story. But action and suspense trickle after the climax when the plot morphs into a character-driven story based on the relationships

between the people involved with recovering the objects.

Finally this story is handicapped by poor grammar and poor sentence structure. Run-on sentences are prevalent throughout the text.

Good fiction is challenging to write but it can be mastered by studying the craft and consulting with experts for guidance. Adequately reworked this story would be twice its current length; which might fix a few of its major flaws. Had the story been better developed it too could have join its peers on bestseller book lists.

Angela Black