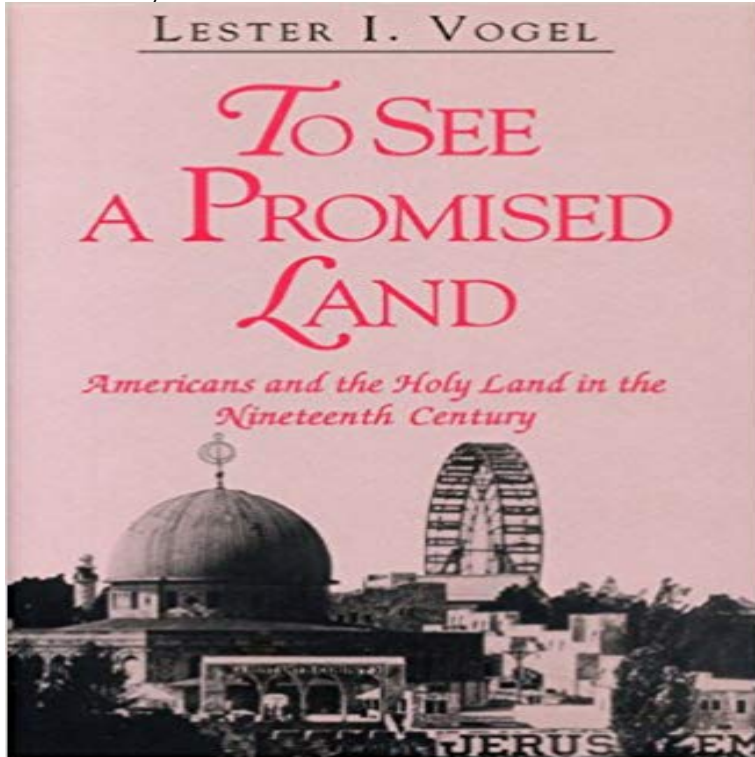


To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century



To See A Promised Land explores the fascination that Americans historically have had with the land of the Bible. By focusing on the period before World War I, Lester Vogel uncovers the various ways in which Americans (primarily Protestants) typically thought about and knew the Holy Land prior to the lands politicization and embroilment in the conflict between Arab and Jewish national interests. During this period, there were literally hundreds of popular books, pamphlets, and articles about the Holy Land available to American readers. Although most Americans never visited the Middle East, they nevertheless had distinct images of what the land was like through these writings, their churches, and their own reading of the Bible. On the very day of his assassination in 1865, even President Lincoln contemplated a tour of the Holy Land at the end of his term in office. Americans who did travel to the Middle East took with them preconceptions and brought back with them descriptions that, in turn, helped to reshape continually the popular image of the Holy Land. One of the most celebrated journeys to the East was the 1867 Quaker City Tour, immortalized by Mark Twain in his *Innocents Abroad*. Vogel suggests that this unique relationship between Americans and a foreign land might be seen as an expression of *geopieté*, a term coined by the geographer John Kirtland Wright to describe a certain mixture of place, past, and faith. *To See A Promised Land* draws upon a wide variety of written accounts—those of American travellers (from Twain to Theodore Roosevelt), missionaries, settlers and colonists, explorers, archaeologists, biblical scholars, and diplomats and officials—in order to shed light on this fascinating aspect of American thought and character.

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