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"In the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great, the ancient world of the Bible--the ancient Near East--came under Greek rule, and in the land of Israel, time-old traditions and Greek culture met. But with the accession of King Antiochus IV, the soft power of culture was replaced with armed conflict, and soon the Jews rebelled against their imperial masters, as recorded in the Biblical books of Maccabees. Whereas most scholars have dismissed the Biblical accounts of religious persecution and cultural clash, Sylvie Honigman combines subtle literary analysis with deep historical insight to show how their testimony can be reconciled with modern historical analysis by learning to converse with the biblical authors, so to speak, in their own language to understand the way they described their own experiences. Honigman contends that their stories are not mere fantasies but genuine attempts to cope with the massacre that followed the rebellion by giving it new meaning. This reading also discloses fresh political and economic factors"--