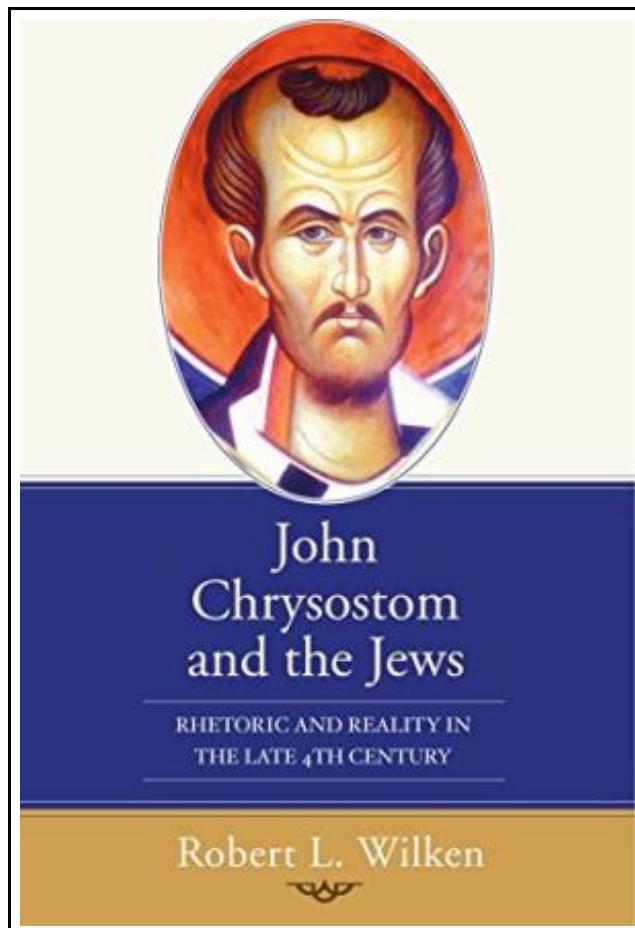


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JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND THE JEWS: RHETORIC AND REALITY IN THE LATE 4TH CENTURY

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Wipf & Stock Publishers October 2004, 2004. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. The images of John Chrysostom the saint, one of most beloved of the ancient Church and especially of the Orthodox Church, and of John Chrysostom the scourge of Jews that emerges from some of his homilies, present a painful and nearly irreconcilable paradox. Robert Wilken's purpose in this recently reprinted study is to explore the context that provoked St. John to turn his brilliant rhetoric to fierce invective against the Jews of Antioch. Through careful investigation of literary, historical and archaeological evidence, and especially through a close reading of St. John's own works, Wilken is led to emphasize several factors that do not resolve but do blunt the sharp edges of the paradox. Though we tend to think of the fourth century as the century of the triumph of the Church, to those living within it the times were anything but certain; Arianism was threatening to engulf the East, a classical paganism remained regnant, actively encouraged for a time by the Emperor Julian, and a vibrant Jewish community (especially in Antioch) was creating converts from among the Christians or influencing many who remained Christians to return to celebrating Jewish festivals and keeping Jewish dietary laws. The Jewish community was a real rival to the Christian community in Antioch during St. John's ministry there, prompting homilies like his 'Discourse Against Judaizers.' Wilken illuminates the whole social milieu of one of the two or three most important cities in the Roman Empire at the end of the fourth century, and gives us a window -- sometimes painful in its clarity -- onto the hostility and suspicion between two powerful rival religious communities.

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