

Death & the Afterlife in Early Judaism & Early Christianity

McMaster University, Term 2: Winter 2005

Lecture: Monday & Thursday 13:30-14:20 BSB 108; Tutorial: Friday 10:30-11:20, BSB 108

Course Website: <http://www.annettereed.com/rs-3r03/>

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will survey the development of early Jewish and early Christian concepts of death and the afterlife. The focus will fall on our ancient sources, and we will read selections from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament as well as other literature from early Judaism ("Apocrypha," "Pseudepigrapha," and Dead Sea Scrolls as well as other Second Temple Jewish literature and classical Rabbinic literature) and early Christianity (early Church Fathers, as well as some so-called "New Testament Apocrypha" and "gnostic" texts from the Nag Hammadi Library). Topics to be considered include heaven and hell, eschatology and apocalypticism, persecution and martyrdom, the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. The course will also consider the cultural contexts of early Jewish and early Christian ideas about the afterlife as well as exploring how concepts of the afterlife evolved in dynamic interaction with socio-historical circumstances that prompted reflection on human suffering and the justice of God. In the process, this course will introduce students to a broad range of literature from this formative period in the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Western culture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & participation (10%) – It is imperative that students attend the Lectures and weekly Tutorials. Not only will attendance and participation count for 10% of the final grade, but Lectures will cover material not treated in the textbook, for which students will be responsible in the Midterm Test and on the Final Exam. Tutorial sessions will focus on close readings of key selections from the assigned primary sources; detailed knowledge of these selections will be assumed in the Lectures and on the Exam. Make sure to have read the assigned passages prior to attending Lectures and Tutorials and to bring copies of the primary sources to both!

Mid-term Test (20%) – The Midterm will consist of a series of identification questions plus one essay. It will be geared towards testing knowledge of the primary sources as well as key concepts from the textbook readings (on which see below).

Term Paper (40%) – Due March 28th in the lecture, the paper (6-8 pp.) will be a treatment of the themes of death, afterlife, heaven, and/or hell in one specific primary source covered in the class. Students can choose from any of the primary sources (marked below with *) assigned for the course. A list of commentaries and other secondary sources for each will be circulated in the first few weeks of class, together with more detailed paper guidelines. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 grade per day late. Due to the university's test and examination ban, no papers will be accepted after March 31st.

Final Exam (30%) – The final exam will consist of identification questions spanning all the material covered in the course, together with 3-5 essay questions on broader themes and trajectories.

REQUIRED READINGS

Textbook & Primary Sources – There is one required book for this course, which is available for purchase at Titles and has also been placed on Reserve at Mills:

- ❖ Alan F. Segal, *Life after death: A history of the afterlife in the religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

Selections from the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, so-called “OT Apocrypha,” “OT Pseudepigrapha,” and “NT Apocrypha,” and early Patristic and Rabbinic literature are accessible from the course website [<http://www.annettereed.com/rs-3r03>], from which the assigned passages can be read and printed out. Students should bring copies of the primary sources to lectures and tutorials. Lectures will presume knowledge of the sources, so it is imperative that students read the primary sources assigned for each class!

Students are not required to purchase a bible for this course, since assigned passages can be printed from the course website (see URL above). That said, students who are interested in further studies in biblical traditions, Judaism, and Christianity may wish to purchase a Study Bible; these handy volumes contain non-denominational English translations (i.e., RSV or NRSV) of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, “apocryphal”/deutero-canonical books, and New Testament, together with scholarly commentary and introductory essays. Copies of the *HarperCollins Study Bible* are available for optional purchase at Titles. The *Oxford Study Bible with Apocrypha* is also recommended. Multiple copies of both books can be found in the library, as well.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: (1) Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. (2) Improper collaboration in group work. (3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Please be aware that Plagiarism includes quoting and paraphrasing other people's writings or ideas – whether from a book, commentary, website, etc. – without proper citation of the author, book, URL, or so on. I cannot stress this enough: whenever in doubt, always add a reference (whether in a footnote or in parentheses in the body of your paper) making clear the source of your information!

If you have **any** doubts about what constitutes Plagiarism and/or how, why, and when to cite references (esp. for the paper) – or if you just wish to learn how to use secondary sources more effectively in your own writing and argumentation (esp. if you will have to write a thesis and/or are thinking about pursuing graduate studies) – I strongly encourage you to peruse the following very clear and helpful resource:

- ❖ Gordon Harvey, *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students* (© 1995; The President and Fellows of Harvard University), available on-line at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources/>

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Primary sources are marked with *. Abbreviations, when applicable, are used to denote the corpus in which a text is now found = HB (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament), OTA ("Apocrypha"), NT (New Testament), OTP ("Old Testament Pseudepigrapha"), NTA ("New Testament Apocrypha"), NHL (Nag Hammadi Library).

Monday, January 3: Introductory Comments

1. THE HEBREW BIBLE AND ANCIENT ISRAELITE RELIGION

Thursday, January 6: Historical and Cultural Background: Egypt and Ancient Near East
Segal, pp. 15-21, 39-48, 68-91

Monday, January 10: Death and the Afterlife in Canaanite and Israelite Religion

*Genesis 23; 27:1-11; 28:10-22; 37:12-36; 49 (HB)

*Deuteronomy 32:39 (HB)

*1 Samuel 2:6-8 (HB)

*1 Kings 2:1-12 (HB)

*2 Kings 4:1-37; 13:14-21 (HB)

Segal, pp. 101-24

Thursday, January 13: Necromancy

*Deuteronomy 18:9-14 (HB)

*1 Samuel 28 (HB)

*2 Kings 23:1-28 (HB)

Segal, pp. 124-34

Monday, January 17: Sheol and Gehenna

*Numbers 16 (HB)

*Proverbs 1 (HB)

*Isaiah 5-6; 14; 24-27; 38 (HB)

*Amos 9:1-10 (HB)

*Psalms 88; 115; 139 (HB)

Segal, pp. 134-53

Thursday, January 20: Israelite Reflections on Human Mortality

*Genesis 1-5 (HB)

*1 Kings 17:8-24 (HB)

*Psalms 91; 104 (HB)

*Job 1-10; 14; 18; 21; 38 (HB)

Segal, pp. 91-95, 154-70

2. FROM THE BABYLONIAN EXILE TO THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

Monday, January 24: Historical and Cultural Context: Persia and the Hellenistic World
Segal, pp. 173-80, 190-92, 204-11, 214-19

Monday, January 27: Prophetic Perspectives on Heaven, Judgment, and Exile

*Isaiah 40:12-31; 45:1-8; 65-66 (HB)

*Ezekiel 1; 8-10; 28; 37:1-14; 40-43 (HB)

Segal, pp. 198-203, 255-61

Thursday, January 31: Mortality and the Justice of God in Post-Exilic Wisdom Literature

*Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) 1-12 (HB)

*Tobit 1-5; 8; 11-14 (OTA)

*Wisdom of ben Sira 1; 14:11-19; 15:11-20; 17; 41 (OTA)

Segal, pp. 221-23, 248-55

Thursday, February 3: Early Ascent Apocalypses: Heaven and the Places of Judgment

*Astronomical Book: 1 Enoch 80-82 (OTP)

*Book of the Watchers: 1 Enoch 1-36 (OTP)

Segal, pp. 272-81

3. FROM THE MACCABEAN REVOLT TO THE FALL OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

Monday, February 7: The Maccabean Revolt, Martyrdom, and Resurrection of the Body

*Daniel 7-12 (HB)

*2 Maccabees 1-7 (OTA)

Segal, pp. 262-72, 285-93

Thursday, February 10: Early Historical Apocalypses: Eschatology and Crisis

*Book of Dreams: 1 Enoch 83-90 (OTP)

*Epistle of Enoch: 1 Enoch 91-97, 99-100 (OTP)

*Jubilees 23 (OTP)

Segal, pp. 351-56, 360-63

Monday, February 14: Eschatology in the Qumran community

*Selections from the Dead Sea Scrolls [to be distributed in class]

Segal, pp. 294-308

Thursday, February 17: Body, Soul, and Immortality in Hellenistic Judaism

*Wisdom of Solomon 1-6; 9; 12; 15 (OTA)

*2 Enoch 1-22 (OTP)

*Philo of Alexandria, *Legum Allegoriarum* 1.105-108; *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit* 237-240; 275-283; *De Cherubim* 113-14

Segal, pp. 224-37, 363-75, 498-99

Monday, February 21 + Thursday, February 24: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES!

Monday, February 28: MIDTERM TEST!

Thursday, March 3: Jesus, the Jesus Movement, and First-Century Judaism

*Gospel of Mark 12-13 (NT)

*Gospel of Matthew 7; 19:1-12; 22:23-33; 24-25 (NT)

*Gospel of Luke 7:1-17; 8:41-56; 12:22-31; 16:19-31; 20:27-40 (NT)

*Gospel of John 3; 11 (NT)

*Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.403-20; 7.389-406; *Jewish Antiquities* 18.11-23

Segal, pp. 375-96

Monday, March 7: The Messiah, the Heavens, and the Eschaton

- *Romans 5–8 (NT)
 - *1 Corinthians 15 (NT)
 - *2 Corinthians 12:1-6 (NT)
 - **Similitudes of Enoch*, esp. 45-47 (1 Enoch 37-71; OTP)
- Segal, pp. 356-59, 399-410, 416-38

4. AFTER THE FALL OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

Thursday, March 10: Eschatology, Resurrection, and the Kingdom of God in the NT

- *Gospel of Mark 14-16 (NT)
 - *Gospel of Matthew 26-28 (NT)
 - *Gospel of Luke 22-24 (NT)
 - *Gospel of John 13-21 (NT)
 - *Book of Acts 1; 7 (NT)
- Segal, pp. 442-77, 480-81

Monday, March 14: Post-70 Apocalypses: 4 Ezra

- *4 Ezra (all; OTP)
- Segal, pp. 491-98

Thursday, March 17: Post-70 Apocalypses: Revelation

- *Revelation (all; NT)
- Segal, pp. 481-90

Monday, March 21: Martyrdom and Martyrologies in Early Judaism and Christianity

- *4 Maccabees (all; OTP)
 - *Story of the 10 Martyrs [to be distributed in class]
 - *Ignatius, *Epistle to the Romans*
 - **Martyrdom of Polycarp*
 - **Passion of Perpetua*
- Segal, pp. 532-34, 541-46, 558-60

Thursday, March 24: Resurrection and Judgment in Early Patristic Literature

- *Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V 5, 6, 12, 35
 - *Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 1-15; 40-58
- Segal, pp. 564-95

Monday, March 28: Resurrection and Judgment in Early Rabbinic Literature

- *Mishnah: m. Sanhedrin 10; m. Hagigah 2
- Segal, pp. 598-619
- PAPER DUE ←

Thursday, March 31: Cosmology, Eschatology, and the Diversity of Late Antique Christianity

- *Ascension of Isaiah 6-11 (OTP)
 - *Apocalypse of Paul (NTA)
 - *Coptic Apocalypse of Paul (NHL)
- Segal, pp. 499-503, 534-41, 546-58, 560-64

Monday, April 4: Cosmology, Eschatology, and the Diversity of Late Antique Judaism

- *Babylonian Talmud: b. Hagigah 11b-12b
- *Selections from 3 Enoch (Sefer Hekhalot) [to be handed out in class]

*Deuteronomy Rabbah, 11:10 to end
Segal, pp. 503-5, 511-17, 619-38

→ FINAL EXAM, date and time T.B.A.