

Syllabus

Near Eastern Studies

The Development of Jewish Theology and Culture

We want to show in this course that theology that relies on Rabbinic Teaching does not reflect the Theology that God revealed of Himself. These concepts of God and His will that begin in the Pharisaic period around 70 AD was also condemned by Jesus,

“For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. ⁹ And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.” Mark 7:8-9

“Scholars of rabbinism have used its literature primarily to write history or theology, and they consequently have construed rabbinic texts to be sources of rabbinic culture and religion, indefectible representations of society and politics, behavior and belief.... scholars have tended to regard the halakic content of rabbinic texts as the most historically reliable, socially representative, and culturally revealing material in the literature” (Green, W. S. (1983). [Introduction: Law as Literature](#). *Semeia*, 27, 2.)

A- The Kingdom of God

- 1- Abraham
- 2- Sinai
- 3- Conquest
- 4- Judges
- 5- Beginning of the Kings

B- First Temple Period (960-586 BC)

- 1- Solomon
- 2- Divided Kingdom

C- Second Temple period (515 BC)

1-The Babylonian Influence- The end of the Monarchy (586BC)

2- Ancient Sopherim (Scribes) from the Second Temple period and the early Rabbinic periods are believed to have preserved culture.

3- The Greek Influence

a- The Septuagint 200BC- Unknown authors and a collection of many manuscripts. The LXX 200BC Ptolemaic period,-“Septuagint” refers to the 70 scholars who took part in the project.

“The third century B.C.E., as the large Jewish population of Alexandria, Egypt, came under the influence of Hellenism. When the Greek language replaced Hebrew and Aramaic as their vernacular, and the Torah in its Hebrew original was no longer commonly understood, a translation into Greek was made for the Jewish community of Alexandria. This translation came to be known as the Septuagint, Latin for “seventy,”

because of the legend that the committee of translators numbered seventy-two, six elders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Translation likely happened during the reign of Ptolemy II in the city of Alexandria. However, it was not a complete work for about 2 centuries - Later versions: 1. Aquila's version AD 140, 2. Symmachus' version about AD 200 3. Theodotion's version the late second century AD

2- MACCABEAN REVOLT- 167-160 BC

3- Qumran Caves 135BC- The archaeological site that preserved nearly 900 scrolls.

4- Philo- the neo-platonist and the Jewish philosopher, was a native of Alexandria in Egypt. 30BC. Philo's goal in integrating Greek philosophy and the Hebrew Scriptures- “Philo saw Greek philosophy as being compatible with his Jewish beliefs, even viewing Moses as a forerunner to Plato”

5- The Roman, Greco/Roman Influence

1- Josephus- The great Jewish historian

2- Diaspora- The end of the Temple Cult

3- Second Jewish revolt 135 AD, Bar Kokhba- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-bar-kokhba-revolt-132-135-ce>

D- The Oral Tradition

1-Rabbinic Judaism

2- The Talmud, the Mishnah and Gemara – began as oral tradition in the Pharisaic period 70 BC and was formalized in writing by 200 AD

E- The Medieval Period

1-**MASORETES** Jewish scholars, active ca. AD 600–1050, responsible for transmission of the Hebrew Bible- they developed elaborate traditions to ensure the accurate copying of the Hebrew Old Testament text. Latin translations of the classic Jewish commentators

2- Influential people Aaron ben Asher, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Kimhi (eleventh–thirteenth centuries)

3-Masoretic Text - The Leningrad Codex is the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible that reflects ben-Asher's Masoretic tradition. Aleppo Codex appeared to have been vocalized and accented by ben-Asher's hand in AD 925 The most famous Masorete was Aaron ben Asher, who worked in the first half of the 10th century. Many scholars believe that Aaron ben Asher and his family were Karaites

4- The Karaite movement's- claim that Judaism should rely on the Bible alone

F- Modern State of Israel

The formation of the Modern State of Israel was not a religious but a political movement. The Modern State of Israel is not a religious state but a secular one.