

RELS 0020, **DEATH AND AFTERLIFE IN THE BIBLICAL TRADITION**

Mon., 3:00-5:20

Prerequisite: **None.** Open to all students, though enrollment is limited to 20.

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Available by appointment or Tues. 1:30-2:30.

A close analysis of the development of ideas about death and the afterlife in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and in the literatures of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. This is a seminar in which I intend to emphasize (1) the ancient West Asian context out of which Israelite notions emerged; and (2) the interesting and important developments during the latter half of the first millennium BCE which resulted in the ideas about death and the afterlife familiar from early Judaism and Christianity. Topics: the rhetoric of life and death in Israel and ancient West Asia; the abode of the dead and its denizens; from Sheol to Heaven, Hell and the final judgment; religious specialists, rituals and the literature of death: necromancy; burial and mourning rites; cults of the dead ancestor; the lament as a literary form. The emergence and development of the idea of resurrection will be discussed under the rubric From Sheol to Heaven, Hell and the Final Judgment.

Requirements:

(1) midterm paper of 5 pages comparing some aspect of the representation of death in two texts: 30%

(2) regular preparation and participation in seminar: 30%

(3) final research paper of 8-10 pages on a topic of your choice (list of possible topics provided): 40%

Books for Purchase (at Brown Bookstore):

New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha (RSV).

G. Vermes, The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English (Penguin Classics ed.).

M. Coogan, Stories from Ancient Canaan.

J. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East, vols. 1 and 2.

G.W.E. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah (revised 2005 ed.)

Abbreviations used in this study guide:

*--optional reading.

(R)—reserve at Rockefeller Library.

(OCRA)—electronic reserve at Rockefeller Library.

ABD--Anchor Bible Dictionary (6 vols.; reference at Rockefeller). Required items from this work will also be available on OCRA.

ANE 1 and 2--Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East, vol. 1 or 2.

Study Guide:

(1) The Rhetoric of Life and Death in Israel and Ancient West Asia—Feb. 1, Feb. 8

Introduction to cultural context (ancient West Asia) and critical biblical studies.

Baal Cycle from Ugarit (Coogan, 9-25, 86-89, 104-115)

Aqhat Epic from Ugarit (Coogan, 27-47)

Kirta Epic from Ugarit (Coogan, 52-74)

*D. Pardee and P. Bordreuil, "Ugarit. Texts and Literature," ABD 6.706-708.

*P. Craigie, Ugarit and the Old Testament (R). (Recommended for background on ancient Ugarit and the Ugaritic texts.)

R. Oden, "Myth and Mythology," ABD 4.946-56 (OCRA).

R. McCutcheon, "Myth," *Guide to the Study of Religion*, 190-208 (OCRA).

Gilgamesh Epic from Mesopotamia (ANE 1.40-75)

Aqhat (Coogan, 36-37)

*J. Sasson, "Gilgamesh Epic," ABD 2.1024-27.

Gen 2:4b-3:24 (cp. Gen 1:1-2:4a); 6:1-4, 5-8; Ps 90:1-10

Gen 15:15; 35:29; 1 Kgs 11:43; Job 5:17-27; 2 Sam 14:14; Ecc. 12:1-8; Wis Sol 7:1-6;
Ben Sira (Sirach) 44

Deut 28:1-14, 15-68; 30:15-20

Jer 9:20-22 (Heb. 19-21)

Exod 12:23 (cp. 12:13); 2 Sam 24:16-17

The mysteries of life and death were focal concerns of the ancients, as they remain to us today. Mythological and epic lore from ancient Ugarit (Baal Cycle, Aqhat, Kirta) and Mesopotamia (Gilgamesh) treat these themes from various perspectives, as do biblical authors. In some texts, death is simply a state, the absence of life, the natural end to a person's existence; elsewhere, death is portrayed as a threatening force, a deity or angelic figure, from which one hopes to escape, at least temporarily. The gods may escape death, but humans remain subject to its powers.

(2) The Abode of the Dead and its Denizens—Feb. 15, March 8

Descent of Ishtar (ANE 1.80-85)
Nergal and Ereshkigal (ANE 2.5-17)
Gilgamesh XII (OCRA)
review Baal's conflict with Death for its description of the underworld (Coogan, 104-115)
R. Bauckham, "Descent to the Underworld," ABD 2.145-148 (OCRA)

1 Sam 28
Isa 29:1-4; 8:19; 26:13-15; 38, esp. vv 18-19
Ps 6:1-5 (Heb. vv 2-6); Ps 28:1; Ps 30; Ps 88; 115:16-18
Isa 14:3-11, 12-20
Am 9:2; Job 10:18-22
Prov 15:11; 27:20
1 Sam 2:6; Ps 139:7-10

T. Lewis, "Dead, Abode of the," ABD 2.101-105 (OCRA)

Many biblical texts from the First Temple period and early Second Temple period describe in detail the characteristics of Sheol (the underworld) and the dead who reside there, as do texts from surrounding civilizations. What are the characteristics of the underworld as a place? How are the dead portrayed? Is death itself a desirable state? Is it eternal?

(3) **From Sheol to Heaven, Hell and the Final Judgment**—March 15, March 22

Job 14:1-17; Jer 51:54-57
1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:8-37; Ezek 37:1-14; Isa 26:16-19
Ezek 38:1-39:29; Isa 25:6-8
R. Martin-Achard, "Resurrection. Old Testament," ABD 5.680-84 (OCRA)

Isa 66:18-24; Sir 7:17; 46:12; 49:10; Judith 16:17; Dan 12:1-4; 2 Macc 7;
2 Esdras 7 (=4 Ezra)
1 Enoch 85-90, 100-104 (OCRA); Testament of Moses 10 (OCRA);
Jubilees 23 (OCRA)
Nickelsburg, 67-89, 91-94, 97-102, 106-115, 263-65, 270-77.
R. Bauckham, "Descent to the Underworld," ABD 2.148-159.

Qumran Community Rule (Vermes, 97-117)
Qumran War Scroll (Vermes, 163-85)
Qumran hymns (Vermes, 274-80)
Nickelsburg, 119-22, 132-33, 137-47.

Mark 9:43, 45, 47-48
Matt 5:22, 29 (=18:9), 30; 10:28
1 and 2 Thessalonians; Mark 13; Matt 24
Revelation 6; 9:1-11 (cp. Isa 14:12-20); 9:12-21; 12; 20
1 John 2; 2 Tim 3

Josephus, Jewish War 2.8.2-14 (OCRA)
Antiquities 18.1.2-5 (OCRA)
Nickelsburg, 288-93.

G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Resurrection. Early Judaism and Christianity," ABD 5.684-91 (OCRA)

Biblical ideas about the place and fate of the dead developed over time, culminating in notions of heaven, hell, resurrection, and final judgment. How do these ideas differ from older ideas about Sheol and the dead who reside there?

(4) Rituals, Religious Specialists, and the Literature of Death—April 5, April 12, April 19, April 26

(a) burial and mourning rites

Baal Cycle (Coogan, 107-110)
Phoenician and Aramaic Grave Inscriptions: Ahiram of Byblos, Agbar, Tabnit of Sidon, Eshmunazar of Sidon (ANE 2. 226-29).

2 Sam 3 (Abner's funeral); Mark 15-16 (Jesus's execution and burial).
Deut 28:26; 2 Sam 2:4-7 (cp. 1 Sam 31:8-13); 1 Kgs 14:10-13; 2 Kgs 9; Jer 16:1-4; 22:18-19; Jer 34:4-5 (burial vs. unburial).

Num 19; 31; 35:30-34; Lev 21:1-4 (impurity of realia of death).

D. Wright, "Unclean and Clean (OT)," ABD 6.730-31, 733 (sections on death and pollution; OCRA).

E. Bloch-Smith, "Burials: Israelite," ABD 1:785-89 (OCRA).

R. Hachlili, "Burials: Ancient Jewish," ABD 1:789-94 (OCRA).

Baal Cycle (Coogan, 107-110)

Kirta Epic (Coogan, 68-74)

Aqhat (Coogan, 41-43)

Gen 50:10; Deut 34:8; Num 20:29; 1 Sam 31:13; 2 Sam 1:12; 12:18; Deut 21:10-14; Sir 22:12 (length of mourning period).

Gen 37:34-35; 2 Sam 1:1-16; 2 Sam 10:1-5; 2 Sam 12:15-23; 2 Sam 13;

2 Sam 19:1-9; Isa 3:18-26; 22:12-14; Jer 7:29; 41:4-8; Ezek 24:15-24; Amos 8:9-10 (cp. 8:3); Job 1:20-21; Ezra 9:3 (mourning rites).

Jer 9:17-19, 20-22 (Heb., vv 16-18, 19-21); Descent of Ishtar (ANE 1.85); Kirta (Coogan, 68-71), Aqhat (Coogan, 45-46) (specialists: mourners).
Deut 14:1; Lev 19:27-28; 21 (esp. vv 1-6, 10-11); cp. Jer 16:6; Amos 8:10 (laws restricting mourning gestures).
Num 5:1-4; 19:11-13, 14-22; Lev 21:1-6, 10-12; 10:6; Num 6; Ps 137 (incompatibility of mourning and cult).

*S. M. Olyan, Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions.

Testament of Abraham 11:1-11 (OCRA)
Matt 9:23 (=Mk 5:38); Mk 15-16
Nickelsburg, 322-27.

(b) miraculous powers associated with the dead

2 Kgs 13:10-21; Sir 48:13-14.

(c) Necromancers and their Adversaries

1 Sam 28; Isa 8:16-22; 19:3
Deut 18:10-12; Lev 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27

J. Scurlock, "Magic (ANE)," ABD 4.464-68 (OCRA).

(d) the lament as literary form

Akkadian Lament for a City (OCRA).
2 Sam 1:17-27; 1 Macc 9:21
Lam 1-5

(e) cult of the dead ancestor

Aqhat Epic (Coogan, 32-33)
Rephaim texts from Ugarit (OCRA)
Hadad Inscription (OCRA)
Tabnit and Eshmunazor Inscriptions (ANE 2.227-29)

Isa 8:19; 14:9-11; 29:4; Ps 88:10-12 (Heb., vv 11-13); Isa 26:13-14
Deut 26:14; Ps 106:28 (cp. Num 25:2 [Hebrew, v 3]); Sir 30:18; Tobit 4:17 (offerings to the dead).
Amos 6:4-7; Jer 16:5-9 (the marzeah).
Gen 14:5; 15:20; Deut 2:10-11, 20-21; 3:11-13; Josh 12:4-5; 13:12 (living Rephaim).

2 Sam 18:18 (the ancestor stela).

T. Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," ABD 1:240-42 (OCRA).

M. Smith, "Rephaim," ABD 5:674-76 (OCRA).

Supplement to Study Guide:

Optional Readings on the sources of the Pentateuch:

General intro to source criticism: John Barton, "Source Criticism," ABD 6.162-65.

On P and H: Jacob Milgrom, "Priestly ("P") Source," ABD 5.454-61.

Henry Sun, "Holiness Code," ABD 3.254-57.

Israel Knohl, The Sanctuary of Silence (1995).

Jacob Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16 (Anchor Bible Commentary Series), pp. 1-63.

On D: Moshe Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy, Book of," ABD 2.168-83.

Steven McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," ABD 2.160-68.

Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (1972).

Idem., Deuteronomy 1-11 (Anchor Bible Commentary Series).

On E: Alan Jenks, "Elohist," ABD 2.478-82.

On J: A. de Pury, "Yahwist ("J") Source," ABD 6.1012-20.