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Hebrew College, Spring 2012
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Torah Core: Bereshit 2

The Patriarchal Narratives in History and Context

Serving as ½ of BIBLE 101

Mondays, 11:15 am – 1:15 pm

On Wednesdays, you will study Bereshit with Dr. Judith Kates through the lens of midrash and rabbinic sources, medieval and modern commentary, literary analysis, and canonical context. With me, you will study Genesis in two different ways: first, in its place as one of many ancient Near Eastern texts; and second, through the methods of modern historical criticism. You will also learn the standard reference grammars and lexica in order to prepare you to successfully read biblical texts on your own.

Required Books

Berlin, Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*. New York: Oxford, 2004.

(JSB)

Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1973. (CMHE)

Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997. (BHS)

Kautzsch, E., ed. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Trans. A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford:

Clarendon, 1910. (GKC)

Recommended Books

These resources are on reserve in the *Beit Midrash*, but they are all essential tools for biblical studies that will serve you well in the future. I recommend acquiring them as you are able.

Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1906. (BDB)

Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner, with Johann Jakob Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Trans. M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994-2000. NOTE: They also publish a 2-volume student edition. (HALOT)

Jouïon, Paul and T. Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 2nd ed. Subsidia Biblica 27.

Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006. 2nd ed. with corrections, 2009. (JM)

NOTE: Accordance Bible software sells digital copies of BDB, *HALOT*, JM, and GKC. While these versions are easier to search, I feel thumbing through pages is surprisingly important.

Grading

This class is graded pass/fail, and you will receive only one grade for both Bereshit sections.

Each student is expected to participate in class discussion in a regular and meaningful way. Please tell me before class if you are unprepared (you can receive one “pass” per semester if you tell me before class). Please see me privately if you find it difficult to participate actively in class—we can work together on ways for you to become more effective or feel less nervous.

Attendance is required at all class sessions. Please e-mail jgaines@hebrewcollege.edu beforehand if you will not be able to attend.

Class Prep

Each class, you will be assigned a Hebrew text (approx. 20 verses). Please prepare this text in advance. Effective preparation requires you be able to:

- Give an original translation of the entire text
- Parse all verbs
- Explain any grammatical anomalies, with reference to GKC or JM
- Discuss textual notes in *BHS*
- Discuss any other assigned primary and secondary readings, also to be read before class.
- Discuss at least one modern scholarly Genesis commentary, choosing from:
 - a. Alter, Robert. *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2004.
 - b. Cassuto, Moshe David (= Umberto). *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. 2 vols. Trans. Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964. First Hebrew ed., 1949.
 - c. Gunkel, Hermann. *Genesis*. 3rd ed. Trans. Mark E. Biddle. Macon, GA: Mercer, 1997. First German ed., 1901.
 - d. Rad, Gerhard von. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Rev. ed. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972.

- e. Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.
- f. Skinner, John. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930. First ed., 1910.
- g. Speiser, E. A. *Genesis*. The Anchor (Yale) Bible 1. New York: Doubleday, 1962.
- h. Westermann, Claus. *Genesis: A Commentary*. 3 vols. Trans. John J. Scullion. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984. Original German ed., 1974.

I recommend adding Gunkel and especially Speiser to your bookshelves.

Evaluation

Reading Quizzes

At the start of each class, we will begin with a 5-10 minute reading quiz. The subject is the previous week's assignment. I will choose 1-2 verses from the assigned reading, and I will ask you to:

- Provide a thoughtful translation
- Parse select verbs
- Explain select grammatical anomalies
- Answer 2-3 questions, both factual and reflective

Please Be Aware

Please bring a copy of the Hebrew text without an attached translation to each class. When called on to read Hebrew, please read from this version. (I.e., do not read from Accordance or a Hebrew/English JPS translation.)

The college and I require the highest level of academic honesty. While you will study with a *hevruta*, you must do all class preparation for yourself. (In other words, you and your *hevruta* cannot divide the work then trade notes.) In your research and writing, you will build upon the work of other scholars. However, you must always give proper credit and citation.

Any student with a documented disability that will affect his or her work for this course should see me immediately so that I can make proper and reasonable arrangements and accommodations.

Class Schedule & Assigned Readings

Please prepare all material in advance of the lesson

Session 1: *Wife/Sister Motif I*

Monday, January 30

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 12:10-20
- Gen 26:6-11

Read in English:

- Gen 12:1-20
- Gen 26:1-35

Session 2: *Wife/Sister Motif II*

Monday, February 6

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 20:1-18

Read in English:

- Gen 20:1-18

Secondary Reading:

- Begin reading “The God of the Fathers” in Albrecht Alt, *Old Testament History and Religion* (Garden City: Anchor, 1966). Original German: “Der Gott der Väter,” *Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1929).

Session 3: *Abram the Hebrew*

Monday, February 13

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 14:10-24

Read in English:

- Genesis 14:1-24

Secondary Reading:

- Finish reading Alt, “The God of the Fathers.”

Session 4: *Hagar & Ishmael I*

Monday, February 27

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 16:1-16

Read in English:

- Gen 15:1 – 16:16

Session 5: Hagar & Ishmael II

Monday, March 5

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 21:1-21

Read in English:

- Gen 16:1-16
- Gen 21:1-34

Secondary Reading:

- Begin reading Cross, “The Religion of Canaan and the God of Israel,” ch. 1 in *CMHE*.

Session 6: Second Priestly Covenant: Circumcision

Monday, March 12

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 17:1-22

Read in English:

- Gen 17:1-27

Secondary Reading:

- Finish reading Cross, “The Religion of Canaan and the God of Israel,” ch. 1 in *CMHE*.

Session 7: Abraham’s Three Visitors

Monday, March 19

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 18:1-15

Read in English:

- Gen 18:1-33

Secondary Reading:

- Begin reading Cross, “The Cultus of the Israelite League,” ch. 2 in *CMHE*.

Session 8: Destruction of Sodom

Monday, March 26

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 19:1-26

Read in English:

- Gen 19:1-29

Secondary Reading:

- Finish reading Cross, “The Cultus of the Israelite League,” ch. 2 in *CMHE*.

Session 9: Lot's Daughters

Monday, April 2

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 19:30-38

Read in English:

- Gen 18 – 19

Secondary Reading:

- Begin reading Cross, “League and Kingdom,” ch. 3 in *CMHE*.

Session 10: The Binding of Isaac

Monday, April 16

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 22:1-19

Read in English:

- Gen 22 – 24

Secondary Reading:

- Begin reading Cross, “League and Kingdom,” ch. 3 in *CMHE*.

Session 11: Esau & Jacob

Monday, April 23

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 25:19-34
- Skim Gen 27:1-13

Read in English:

- Gen 25 – 28
- Gen 33:1-20

Secondary Reading:

- Skim Cross, “Kings and Prophets,” ch. 4 in *CMHE*.

Session 12: Jacob's Wives & Children

Monday, April 30

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 29:31 – 30:24

Read in English:

- Gen 29 – 30

Secondary Reading:

- Begin reading Cross, “Exile and Apocalyptic,” ch. 5 in *CMHE*.

Session 13: *Rape of Dinah*
Monday, May 7

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 34:1-31

Read in English:

- Gen 31 – 35 (skim parts)
- Gen 38:1-30

Secondary Reading:

- Finish reading Cross, “Exile and Apocalyptic,” ch. 5 in *CMHE*.

Session 14: *Joseph & His Brothers*
Monday, May 14

Prepare in Hebrew:

- Gen 37:2b-36

Read in English:

- Gen 37