Dangerous Writings
Course Syllabus
STMA 593 Spring 2008
Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner

Overview

Why did Esther make it into the biblical canon, and Maccabees missed the cut? Why keep countless rules about Temple sacrifice and leprosy in Leviticus, and relegate Ben Sira to Apocryphal heresy? Jewish tradition fixes the closing of the biblical canon at the Council of Yamnia in 90 CE. However, the process of transcription and redaction took centuries. What motivated the choices of inclusion and exclusion? If it was merely a question of maintaining authority and offering only party-line propaganda for an eminently insecure, burgeoning post-Temple Judaism, then surely Shir Ha-Shirim (Song of Songs), Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) and Job were poor choices.

Yet these pillars of the oft-unread Ketuvim (Writings) section of the TaNaKH (Hebrew Scriptures) have come to challenge mainstream Judaism, and in many ways helped to define the intersection of evolving Jewish theology and an unpredictable, often harsh world. These texts were as dangerous as they were enlightening, as insightful as they were daunting for the faithful. They can deepen belief for the learned, and breed cynicism for the untutored. Who knows what they will do for you?

Requirements

The goal of this course is it to broaden exposure to and analysis of these texts. There will be an emphasis on Socratic discussion and practical applications through teaching and preaching.

Attendance/Participation 80%
Lesson Plan/Sermon 20%

Texts

Shir Hashirim: A Modern Commentary on Song of Songs, Kravitz and Olitzky
Kohelet: A Modern Commentary on Ecclesiastes, Kravitz and Olitzky
The Book of Job, Scheindlin

Contact

Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner radbam@tdhs-nw.org
Executive Assistant: Cathleen Kallmeyer 206-315-7394

Calendar

April 3	**Special Event**: Join with Rabbi Weiner and clergy from throughout the area for the 28th Annual Temple De Hirsch Sinai Clergy Institute featuring Rabbi Michael Cook, New Testament scholar from the Reform rabbinic seminary. Rabbi Cook's lecture: *Jewish Views of Jesus: Yesterday, Today and into Tomorrow*; 10am at Temple De Hirsch Sinai, 1511 E. Pike St. ***RSVP to Cathleen at 315-7394***
April 10,17	The "Passion" of the Song of Songs: Metaphor or Masters and Johnson?
April 24	University Mission Day…No class
May 1, 8, 15	Cynicism as Virtue?: Solomon's Vanity in Ecclesiastes
May 22, 29, June 5	Why Me?: Job and the Theology of Guilt