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Timeline.....



Amy-Jill Levine, Ph.D.

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Graduate Department of Religion

Professor Amy-Jill Levine earned her B.A. with high honors in English and Religion at Smith College, where she graduated *magna cum laude* and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Her M.A. and Ph.D. in Religion are from Duke University, where she was a Gurney Harris Kearns

Fellow and held the W. D. Davies Instructorship in Biblical Studies. Before moving to Vanderbilt, she was Sara Lawrence Lightfoot Associate Professor and chair of the Department of Religion at Swarthmore College.

Professor Levine's numerous books, articles, and essays address such topics as Second-Temple Judaism, Christian origins, and biblical women's roles and representations; she has written commentaries on Ruth, Esther, and Daniel, as well as on the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. She is currently completing a manuscript for Harvard University Press on Jewish narratives from the Hellenistic period and a major commentary on the Book of Esther for Walter de Gruyter Press (Berlin). Professor Levine has served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, among other publications, and has held office in the Society of Biblical Literature and the Association for Jewish Studies. Among her awards are grants from the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council of Learned Societies.

A widely sought speaker, Levine has given lectures and workshops throughout the United States and Canada for universities, biblical associations, synagogues, temples, churches, and interfaith and civic groups, as well as two series of lectures at Chautauqua in the Hall of Philosophy.

As a graduate student at Duke, Levine was initially prevented from teaching New Testament in the Divinity School by an administrator who did not

think it appropriate that a Jew would teach this material. "You can teach Old Testament," he told her. "I don't do Old Testament," she said; "You do now," was his response. Thus began her ever-growing fascination with the subject of these lectures. Within a semester, the administrator was no longer at Duke and Levine's teaching opportunities broadened, but she chose to continue in the Old Testament classroom while adding courses in the New Testament. Completing coursework in both Old Testament/*Tanakh* and Christian origins, Levine has been studying and teaching both topics ever since.

Levine and her husband, Jay Geller, Ph.D. (who also teaches religion at Vanderbilt), live with their children, Sarah Elizabeth and Alexander David, in Nashville, Tennessee. ■

The Old Testament

Scope:

The Bible has been labeled, correctly, as the foundation document of Western thought. It is read in synagogues, temples, and churches; it is cited on the floor of the Senate and from the bench in the courtroom. Contemporary politics is inextricably intertwined with it, from conflict in the Middle East to the claim by many in the United States that a return to "biblical values" is warranted. The Bible influenced the Pilgrims to leave England in the 17th century; it inspired the founders of the new republic in the eighteenth; it roused both slave and abolitionist to seek a new Moses and sponsor a new Exodus in the nineteenth and the Jews to establish a homeland in the twentieth. Missionaries, with Bible in hand, journeyed to Asia, Africa, and South America, and among the indigenous populations they met, the Bible galvanized attempts to throw off the yoke of colonialism. Its influence permeates Western literature, from medieval plays to modern novels, art, music, theatre, film and dance; its prophetic calls for social justice challenge all readers to reevaluate their own behavior even as its Wisdom literature challenges our views of God. Replete with genres ranging from myth and saga to law and proverb, containing dry political history and erotic love poetry, informed by a world view much different than our own, these texts are a compendium of a people's sacred story. And that story is the foundation document of Judaism and the first part of the canon of the church.

These twenty-four lectures offer an introduction to the history, literature, and religion of ancient Israel and early Judaism as it is presented in the collection of texts called the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, and the *Tanakh*. Not all books will, or even could, be covered; the content of certain books, such as Genesis, could easily fill twenty-four lectures alone, as could the stories of certain figures, such as the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Moses, and David. Attention is given not only to the content of the biblical books but also to the debates over their meaning and the critical methods through which they have been interpreted. Often, a book will be examined by means of an analysis of a representative text or figure in it.

see "Scope cont'd"

1

Scope cont'd

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The lectures presuppose only a very general familiarity with the Bible's major figures and themes (e.g., Adam and Eve, Moses, the Ten Commandments, David and Bathsheba); biblical literacy, as sociologists have noted, is on the wane in the West. Although students do not need to follow the lectures with an open Bible, reading the texts listed at the top of each of the outlines will enhance appreciation for the material.

Oriented toward historical context and literary import, the lectures do not avoid raising issues of religious concern. The goal of an academic course in biblical studies should not be to undermine religious faith. Rather, it should provide members of faith communities with richer insights into the literature that forms their bedrock. Even were one to argue that the text is divinely inspired or dictated by God, one might still want to know as much as possible about the particulars: Why these words? Why this order? Why this social context? Why this translation? ■

N.B. Many scriptural quotations in the lectures are translated by Dr. Levine directly from the Hebrew and thus may vary slightly with the text of standard printed editions in English. In other cases she draws from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the King James Version (KJV) and the New English Bible (NEB).

Scope

2

OT

Timeline

- 1800 B.C.? Abraham.
- 1400 B.C.? Moses.
- 753 B.C. Traditional date for founding of Rome.
- 750-500 B.C.? Prophets of Hebrew Bible.
- 750 B.C.? Homer
- 587 B.C. Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem.
- 510 B.C. Expulsion of kings/beginning of Roman Republic.
- 400 B.C. Plato.
- 333-323 B.C. Conquests of Alexander the Great.
- 145 B.C. Book of Daniel (final book of Hebrew Bible).
- 140 B.C. Rise of Jewish Sects.
- 63 B.C. Conquest of Palestine by Romans.
- 44 B.C. Assassination of Julius Caesar.
- 40-4 B.C. Herod, King of the Jews.
- 27 B.C.-A.D. 14 Octavian Caesar Augustus as Emperor.
- 4 B.C.-A.D. 65 Seneca.
- 4 B.C.? Jesus' birth.
- A.D. 14-37 Emperor Tiberius.
- A.D. 26-36 Pilate as Governor of Judea.
- A.D. 30? Jesus' death.
- A.D. 33? Conversion of Paul.
- A.D. 37-4 Emperor Caligula.
- A.D. 41-54 Emperor Claudius.

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- A.D. 54-68 Emperor Nero.
- A.D. 50-60? Pauline epistles.
- A.D. 50-60? Q Source.
- A.D. 56-117? Tacitus.
- A.D. 50-70? M and L Sources.
- A.D. 61-113 Pliny the Younger.
- A.D. 65? Gospel of Mark.
- A.D. 69-79 Emperor Vespasian.
- A.D. 66-70 Jewish Revolt and destruction of Temple.
- A.D. 79-81 Emperor Titus.
- A.D. 80-85? Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Book of Acts.
- A.D. 80-100? Deutero-Pauline Epistles, 1 Peter, Hebrews, James.
- A.D. 81-96 Emperor Domitian.
- A.D. 85-105? Pastoral Epistles.
- A.D. 90-95? Gospel of John.
- A.D. 95? Book of Revelation.
- A.D. 62-113 Pliny the Younger.
- A.D. 98-117 Emperor Trajan.
- A.D. 120? 2 Peter.
- A.D. 110-130? Gospels of Peter and Thomas.
- A.D. 129-199 Galen.
- A.D. 160-225 Tertullian.
- A.D. 190 Melito of Sardis (death).
- A.D. 249-251 Emperor Decius.

The Old Testament

24 lectures / 30 minutes per lecture

DISC 1

- 1 In the Beginning
- 2 Adam and Eve
- 3 Murder, Flood, Dispersion
- 4 Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar
- 5 Isaac
- 6 The Jacob Saga

DISC 3

- 13 The Book of Judges, Part I
- 14 The Book of Judges, Part II
- 15 Samuel and Saul
- 16 King David
- 17 From King Solomon to Preclassical Prophecy
- 18 The Prophets and the Fall of the North

DISC 2

- 7 Folklore Analysis and Type Scenes
- 8 Moses and Exodus
- 9 The God of Israel
- 10 Covenant and Law, Part I
- 11 Covenant and Law, Part II
- 12 The "Conquest"

DISC 4

- 19 The Southern Kingdom
- 20 Babylonian Exile
- 21 Restoration and Theocracy
- 22 Wisdom Literature
- 23 Life in the Diaspora
- 24 Apocalyptic Literature



The Old Testament



Professor Amy-Jill Levine is the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at the Vanderbilt University Divinity School. A widely sought-after speaker, she has delivered talks on biblical subjects and issues to academic and nonacademic audiences around the world. Professor Levine's invaluable expertise has won her grants from the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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