



Women and the Kingdom of Israel

Women in Antiquity | Meeting #10

1



Upcoming Dates

- Monday, December 8
Position Paper Due
- Tuesday, December 16
Final Exam
- Sunday, November 16
Responses for Week 10 Due

2

Five things today

- The Kingdom of Israel
- Abraham and Isaac
- The Babylonian Captivity
- Ruth and Esther
- Monotheism and Gender

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Quiz #7 | Women and the Kingdom of Israel

1. According to the Book of Esther, Esther saves her people by
 - a. defying the law that she cannot present herself to the king and demanding that he do as she asks
 - ☒ b. hosting a wine banquet for the king and Haman, at which the besotted king offers her anything
 - c. using her authority as the queen to command the guards to prevent the massacre
 - d. pleading to God for a miracle
2. In the story of Ruth, after her husband, her brother-in-law, and her father-in-law all die, the Moabite woman Ruth decides to do
 - a. wander the Earth as a holy woman
 - b. journey to Babylon to become a priestess
 - c. stay in Moab alone
 - ☒ d. remain loyal to her husband's family and return to his homeland, Judah
3. The Judson landholder whom Ruth meets at the threshing of the grain and who later marries her is
 - ☒ a. Ruthazar
 - b. Boaz
 - c. Harephatus
 - d. Jeff
4. In the Book of Esther, the threat to the Persian Jewish community is sparked by
 - ☒ a. Mordecai's refusal to bow to the king's vizier, Haman
 - b. the Jewish God's wrath at his people's infidelity
 - c. the raging, bloodthirsty personality of the king
 - d. a rampage of wild animals
5. Absentee is the name of Esther's
 - ☒ a. king
 - b. cousin
 - c. compact with God
 - d. cat

Extra Credit

EC. In the Book of Esther, how is the behavior of Vashti, the previous queen, contrasted with Esther's?

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Responses

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Ancient History Spring 2026



History of Ancient Rome

The foundation and development of the Roman state, including the rise and decline of the Republic and Empire, with emphasis on its political, economic, social, and cultural achievements.

THURS 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Prof. Wilson 3 credits W/other instructor

HIA 321 / 721



Classical Myth and Society

A comparison of the origins and development of classical mythology and how legend, religious beliefs, their relation to other mythologies, and their adaptation to literature and art have changed and evolved through the present.

FRID 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Prof. Maravelli 3 credits W/other instructor

HIA 314 / 714



Women in Antiquity

Examination of the image, role, and status of women in ancient Greek, Roman, Jewish, and other societies as seen through the important literary works of antiquity.

THURS 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Prof. Wilson 3 credits W/other instructor

HIA 311 / 750



Civilizations of the Ancient World

A survey of the Mediterranean world, tracing the development of civilization from Mesopotamia and Egypt to ancient Greek City States and the dominance of Rome.

THURS 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Prof. Wilson 3 credits

HIS 240

7

Questions about whatever



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The Kingdom of Israel

9

The Fertile Crescent



10



Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar

- Abraham traveled into Canaan with his clan
- Wife was infertile, so she gave him a concubine
 - Result: a son, Ishmael
- Sarah had a miracle baby, Isaac
- Hagar and Ishmael cast out

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Secondary Source Reading

Sebastian Brock
"Reading Between the Lines:
Sarah and the Sacrifice of
Isaac (Genesis, Chap. 22)"

- Viewpoint of Sarah is missing from the story of the sacrifice
 - Left to speculation of later writers trying to plumb the deepest meaning of the sacrifice
 - Depends on age assumed for Isaac
- Multiple paths
 - Sarah was deliberately excluded by god or Abraham
 - Sarah's faith is tested as much as Abraham's, or more
 - Both tested with respect to their roles as father and mother, husband and wife



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The Exodus

- Semitic labor force in Bronze Age Egypt includes many Hebrew tribes
- New Kingdom disrupted at the end of the Bronze Age
- Evidence of Hebrew departure from Egypt comes only from Hebrew legends

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Hebrew tribes in Canaan

- Fertile and strategic areas already occupied
- Risk of attrition as young drawn to Canaanite cities
- Hebrews divided into mutually hostile tribes
 - Each tribe trying to take its own lands
 - Tribal leaders called "Judges"

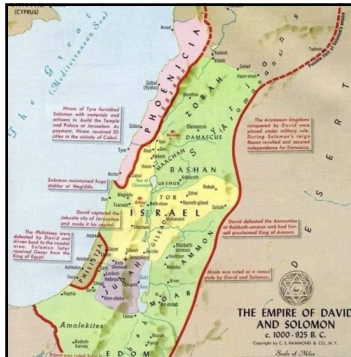
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Primary Source Reading

The Book of Ruth



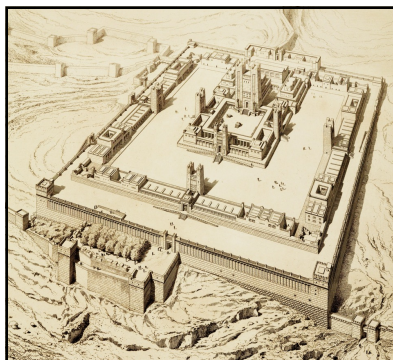
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Expansion of the Kingdom of Israel

- Flourishes under kings Saul, David, and Solomon
- Israel aggressively expands in territory and influence
- Phoenicians retain coastal cities and trade network
 - Extensive trade with Israel
 - Material and expertise made Great Temple possible

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Great Temple

- Built under David and Solomon
- Challenge to other great cities (e.g., Babylon)
 - Economic and political power of Israel
 - Unmatched power of the one god Yahweh

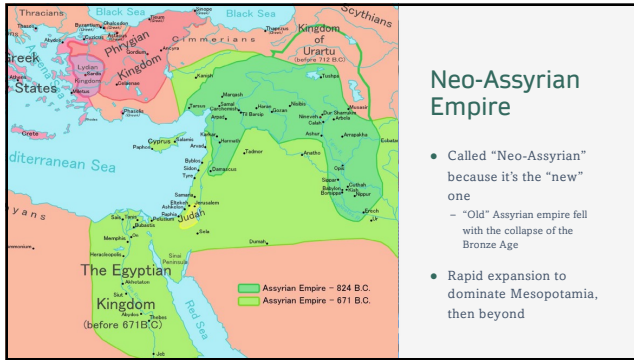
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Divided Kingdom

- After Solomon, cohesion ends
- Two hostile kingdoms result
 - Kingdom of Israel (Northern)
 - Kingdom of Judah (Southern)
- Northern kingdom has more cities and resources

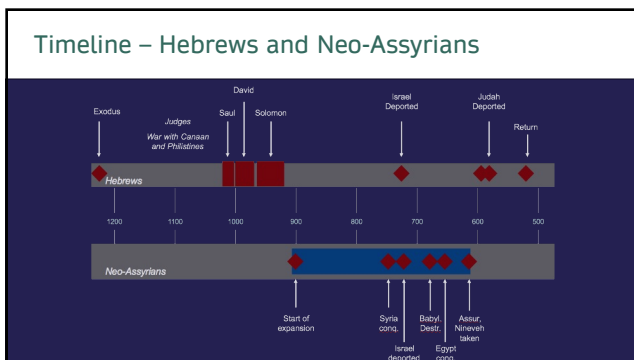
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Deportation of Northern Kingdom (722 BCE)

- Monotheism gives the Hebrews a stronger identity
- Assyrians try to crush Northern Kingdom (Israel) with tributes and oppression
- Finally deport landholders to Assyria
- Northern Kingdom resettled with foreign colonists

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Babylon

- Exerts authority through cultural and technological dominance
- Babylon draws the skilled and wealthy

23



"Tower of Babel"

- Hebrew metaphor for Babylonian arrogance

24



Etemenanki Ziggurat

- Largest ziggurat in the world
- Home of Babylon's patron god, Marduk

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The Babylonian Captivity (587-538 BCE)

- Southern Kingdom (Judah) resistant to Babylon
- Babylon deports landholders
- In Babylon, Judeans (Jews) fight assimilation
 - Preservation of history and language
 - Food and clothing taboos
 - Circumcision
 - Sabbath
- Jewish identity preserved

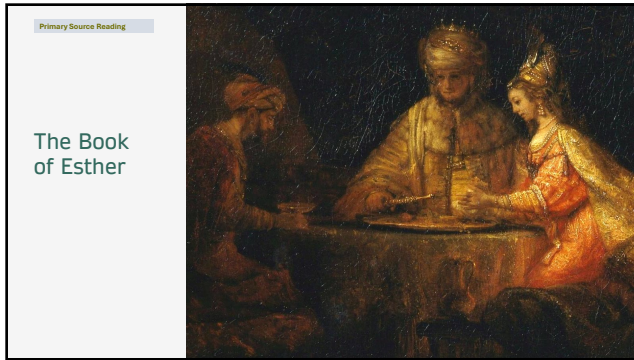
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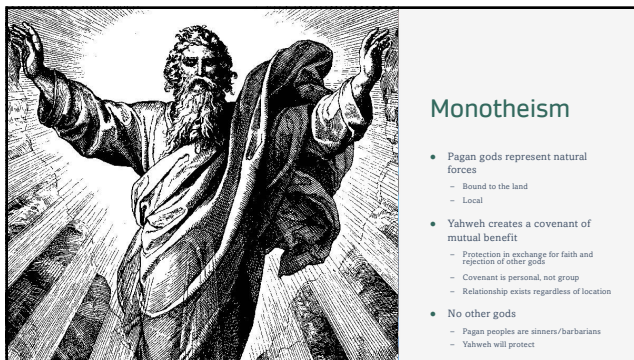
Eve

- Serpent tempts Eve
 - Eat from forbidden tree
 - Get Adam to do it
- Judgments of Yahweh
 - Serpent cursed to crawl on its belly
 - Eve cursed with painful childbearing
 - Adam has to toil and till

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29



30

Secondary Source Reading

Leonie J. Archer

"Notions of Community and the Exclusion of the Female in Jewish History and Historiography"

- Sense of exclusion varies
 - Across time
 - Across class—what we know most about is toward upper end of society
- Tend to find ways to assert gender identity through their own communities
- Collective expression in public or in an insular way



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Ancient Religions

Polytheism

- Mesopotamia
 - Sumer
 - Akkad
 - Babylon
 - Assyria
- Egypt
- Anatolia
 - Hittites
- Aegean
 - Minoans
 - Mycenaeans
 - Classical Greeks

Dualism

- Persia
 - Zoroastrianism
 - Mithraism

Monotheism

- Israel and Judah
 - Judaism
- Christianity

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Hellenistic Canaan

- Mix of traditional Jewish and Hellenistic influence
- Conflicts between Pharisees and Sadducees

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Secondary Source Reading

Leonie J. Archer

"The Role of Jewish Women in the Religion, Ritual, and Cult of Graeco-Roman Palestine"

- Later period when separation reaches the logical extreme
- Only participation publicly is through weeping
- Within the family is profoundly different



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