End of the Bible • Birth of the Bible

October 16, 2006

- From last time:
  - Significance of the revolts 66–135 CE

- End of the Bible/Birth of the Bible
  - What are we really talking about?
  - Writing of latest books/editing of others
  - Birth of the Bible: A post-classical culture

Significance of Revolts: Summary

- In Palestine
  - Final collapse of Judean “Temple State”, undercutting traditional role of priests as authorities
  - Demographic changes: by fourth century, contraction of Jewish population, concentration in Galilee and South

- In Diaspora
  - where there were revolts, possible decimation of Jewish populations
  - But note: elsewhere (Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy (!)), continued peaceful coexistence
  - Period of restrictive laws on Jews, Judaism
    - Temple donation now a tax to Jupiter Capitolinus
    - Restricted settlement in environs of Jerusalem
    - Later Jewish traditions remember a period of prohibition of religious practices in Palestine after B-A revolt

End of the Bible•Birth of the Bible

What are we really talking about?

- What is the Bible?
  - A collection of books:
    - Historical accounts, laws, poetry
  - Religion of the Bible ≠ Religion of Israel, But Bible is foundational for Judaism

- Who are the Jews? What is Judaism?
  - “Jew”—a tribal term: descendant of Judah
  - “Jew”—a geographical term: From Judaea-Judah
  - “Jew”—a term denoting religion or culture
    - The religion/culture organized increasingly around scripture
Writing of latest books/editing of others

- Last books of the Bible *(examples)*:
  - Daniel 7–12 (160s BCE)
  - Song of Songs
  - Chronicles
- Editing of *(examples)*:
  - Torah
  - Isaiah
  - Psalms
  - Arguably: Much of the Bible

Canonization and its implications

- Terminology
  - Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) and Christian Bibles (based on diaspora Jewish Bible)
  - Uncertain (and competing) boundaries for “Bible”
  - Implications: Judaism in a post-classical age

Terminology

- **Canon** (from term for measurement):
  Books ruled to be in or out of an approved list.
  (For Heb. Bible, not entirely a formal process)
- **Apocrypha** (hidden away):
  Books in the Greek (Christian) Bible, not in Hebrew
- **Pseudepigrapha** (“falsely ascribed,” a modern designation and imprecise):
  A broad category of books on Biblical themes or in the name of Biblical authors produced in antiquity.
Beginnings of Canonization

- Tanakh (Jewish Bible) and Christian Bibles (handout)
- Uncertain (and competing) boundaries of Biblical collection

Outline of Books of the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Torah</th>
<th>Nevi'im</th>
<th>Ketuvim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>Psalms</td>
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<td>Exodus</td>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
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<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>1,2 Samuel</td>
<td>Job</td>
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<td>Numbers</td>
<td>1,2 Kings</td>
<td>&quot;Scrolls&quot;</td>
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<td>Deuteronomy</td>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
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<td>Jeremiah</td>
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<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Twelve &quot;minor&quot; prophets</td>
<td>1,2 Chronicles</td>
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</tbody>
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Uncertain (and competing) boundaries for “Bible”

- Book of Ben Sira, Prologue ("Law, Prophets, other books") possibly earliest reference to 3-part division
- Josephus: 5 Books of Moses, 13 Books of History by the Prophets (to 6th Cent. BCE), 4 Books of Poems
- Qumran (Dead Sea Sect)
  - 4QMMT: Torah, Prophets, David, and other writings
  - Sect seems to include as authoritative texts not in Tanakh
- Christian Bible (Hellenistic Jewish?): Willing to extend beyond the 6th Century BCE (Sira, Maccabees, etc.)
Birth of the Bible: A post-classical culture

- Text of the Bible: Consolidation and Competition
- Bible and Literary Productivity
- Bible and Communal Identity
- Bible and Sectarianism

Text of the Bible: Consolidation and Competition

- A period of textual fluidity. Includes some “inner-biblical interpretation”
- Consolidation to a few “standard” forms by 2nd C. BCE (Dead Sea Scrolls)
- Text and competition (examples)
  - Samaritan interpolations re Mt. Gerizim
  - Later: Christians vs. Jews on Isaiah 7:14

Bible and Literary Productivity

- Retelling
  - Jubilees
  - Testaments
- Imitation
  - Temple Scroll
  - “apocryphal” psalms, other pseudepigrapha
- Commentary
  - Qumran Pesher
  - Philo’s philosophical commentaries
- Source for themes of new works or genres
  - Joseph and Aseneth
  - Ezekiel the Tragedian, Exagoge (Exodus)
Bible and Communal Identity
- Josephus, Philo, others brag about the superiority (and priority) of Torah.
- Bible as source of consolation or inspiration (Daniel 9, and the 70 years of Jeremiah 25:11-12).
- 1 Maccabees: Physical torah as object to destroy as part of persecution.

Bible and Sectarianism
- Examples regarding biblical text (discussed earlier).
- Qumran *Pesher* (= interpretation): Biblical prophecy systematically read to refer to the specific experiences of the group (= "righteous of Israel").
- Legal interpretation as divisive. Example: "day after the sabbath" and date of Pentacost/Shavuot.