

Adult Education Series

Jesus and His Jewish Influences

Professor Jodi Magness, Ph.D., The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

September 20, 2020 Through April 25, 2020

9:00 - 9:45 a.m. FLC Campus & Online via Zoom

For anyone interested in understanding the profound effect Jesus had on the world, it's important to realize that his actions and teachings didn't emerge from a vacuum. Rather, they were the product of a fascinating dialogue with—and reaction to—the traditions, cultures, and historical developments of ancient Jewish beliefs. In fact, early Judaism and Jesus are two subjects so inextricably linked that one cannot arrive at a true understanding of Jesus without understanding the time in which he lived and taught.

September 20, 2020 **1 Jesus and Judaism**

Begin your fascinating historical adventure by developing a solid framework for your exploration of Jesus's Jewish influences. What was it like to be a Jew in the ancient world? What do we mean when we talk about Jewish temples? And how similar was ancient Judaism to other ancient religions.

September 27, 2020 **2 Sacred Mountains and Law Giving in Judaism**

In ancient Judaism, there was little distinction between religion and politics. In this lecture, explore the importance of the law (the Torah) in the Jewish religion. Then, draw some intriguing connections between the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai and Jesus's own Sermon on the Mount.

October 4, 2020 **3 The United and Divided Israelite Kingdoms**

In this in-depth look at the kingdoms of David and Solomon, follow the transformation of 12 Israelite tribes into a monarchy that eventually crumbled over tensions regarding how to properly worship the God of Israel. Along the way, probe controversies that lie at the heart of modern scholarship's hottest debates.

October 11, 2020 **4 The Destruction of Solomon's Temple**

How (and why) did the First Temple Period end? First, examine the reign of King Josiah, whose popular religious reforms reasserted the importance of Jerusalem's Temple. Then, investigate the Temple's traumatic destruction - and its relationship to Gospel accounts about the destruction of the Second Temple.

October 18, 2020 **Martin Luther & the Reformation**

Part 1

October 25, 2020 **Martin Luther & the Reformation**

Part 2

November 1, 2020 **Martin Luther & the Reformation**

Part 3

November 8, 2020 **5 The Jewish and Samaritan Schism**

After the end of the Babylonian exile in 539 B.C., returning exiles began to reestablish themselves in Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah. This return would lead to a dramatic schism between Jews and Samaritans - one which, as you'll learn, would influence encounters with Samaritans in Jesus's own time.

November 15, 2020 **6 The Jewish Diaspora and the Golden Rule**

What insights into the ancient Jewish diaspora communities can we glean from close readings of the Book of Tobit and the Book of Esther? What do these books say about holiness and the treatment of other people (the "golden rule" of Jesus's time)? Join the fascinating historical-literary debate.

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November 22, 2020 **7 Alexander the Great's Impact on the Jews**

Alexander the Great's legendary visit to Jerusalem and Judea had a profound influence on the development of ancient Jewish traditions. Could the ancient warrior also have served as a model for the mythical Jesus? Professor Magness illuminates possible narrative parallels between these two iconic figures of Western history.

November 29, 2020 **8 Jews and Greek Rule: The Heliodorus Affair**

Investigate the strange episode known as the Heliodorus Affair. This power struggle between Jerusalem's elite families during the time of the Ptolemies and Seleucids became a key turning point in the history of Jews in Judea. We also see echoes of this conflict in Gospel accounts of taxation.

December 6, 2020 **9 Desolating Sacrilege and the Maccabean Revolt**

Follow the turbulent story of the Maccabean Revolt after the outlawing of Judaism under Antiochus IV. Then, examine how the Book of Daniel (written around the time of the revolt) dealt with the concept of desolating sacrilege," and how this is repeated in Jesus's own prophecies about the destruction of the Temple."

December 13, 2020

*Winter Holiday Break - No Class Today*

December 20, 2020

*Winter Holiday Break - No Class Today*

December 27, 2020

*Winter Holiday Break - No Class Today*

January 3, 2021

*Winter Holiday Break - No Class Today*

January 10, 2021 **10 Apocalyptic Works and the "Son of Man"**

From 1 and 2 Maccabees to the Books of Daniel and Enoch, get a close reading of apocalyptic literary works composed in the aftermath of the Maccabean Revolt. Afterwards, Professor Magness probes possible meanings of the term son of man" in both the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels."

January 17, 2021 **11 Jesus's Jewish Lineage**

Learn how the expansion of the Hasmonean Kingdom provides a sharp context for understanding the birth narratives of Jesus from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The authors of these Gospels went to great lengths to establish Jesus's descent from David. The question is: Why?

January 24, 2021 **12 Was Jesus a Pharisee?**

In this lecture, probe the rise of the Sadducees and Pharisees during the late Second Temple Period. You'll learn how the Pharisaic approach became dominant in Judaism, and you'll spend time investigating what the Gospels say about whether or not Jesus identified as a Pharisee.

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| January 31, 2021  | <b>13 Jewish Ritual Purity: The Sons of Light</b><br>Turn from the Pharisees to the Essenes, the sect associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the first of three lectures on this fascinating sect, focus on how a strict system of ritual purity was a fundamental part of everyday life at Qumran (the site where the Scrolls were found).  |
| February 7, 2021  | <b>14 The Dead Sea Scrolls: Earliest Hebrew Bible</b><br>Unpack the hidden meaning and significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls themselves - some of ancient history's most fascinating texts, which date back to the time of Jesus. Among the findings you'll explore here: early copies of the Hebrew Bible, fragments of a Greek translation of the Septuagint, and early biblical commentaries.                        |
| February 14, 2021 | <b>15 Was Jesus an Essene?</b><br>Most of what scholars know about the Essenes, and their apocalyptic outlook, comes from the ancient historians Josephus and Philo. After a deeper dive into who the Essenes were (and how Essene women lived), Professor Magness makes her case for why Jesus could not have been an Essene.   |
| February 21, 2021 | <b>16 The Hebrew Scriptures and the Septuagint</b><br>First, examine the Letter of Aristeas," which describes translating the Torah into Greek. Then, meet Philo of Alexandria, whose writings (preserved by Christians) are based on an allegorical method of interpreting the Bible. Finally, using a passage from Isaiah, discover why Jews eventually came to reject the authority of the Septuagint translation." |
| February 28, 2021 | <b>17 The Reign of Herod the Great</b><br>What are the historical roots of the often-disputed Massacre of the Innocents reported in the Gospel of Matthew? Find out in this lecture on the reign of Herod the Great, a man notorious for killing members of his own family and best remembered for his biblical campaign of infanticide.   |
| March 7, 2021     | <b>18 Pontius Pilate: A Roman Prefect</b><br>Following the death of Herod the Great, there began a period of direct Roman administration of Judea under prefects, the most famous of whom was Pontius Pilate, who would later oversee the trial of Jesus. Learn the historical backstory of both this figure and another contemporary of Jesus, Herod Antipas.   |
| March 14, 2021    | <b>19 Anarchy in Judea</b><br>In the first half of this lecture, examine the growing anarchy that led to the First Jewish Revolt against Rome - including the rise of others who, like Jesus, claimed to be the messiah. Then, follow the story (as related by Josephus) of the trial and execution of Jesus's brother, James the Just.  |
| March 21, 2021    | <b>20 Jesus's Prophecy: Jerusalem's Destruction</b><br>The First Jewish Revolt against Rome culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. Explore how this cataclysmic event had profound aftershocks for subsequent Jewish history - as well as early traditions surrounding Jesus (for example, the Parable of the Wicked Tenants" in the Gospel of Matthew)."                                   |

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March 28, 2021 **21 Flavius Josephus: Witness to 1st Century A.D .**

One cannot explore Jesus and his Jewish influences without understanding the life and works of Flavius Josephus, the ancient Jewish author who was a witness to the period during and after the life of Jesus. Here, learn how his fascinating historical writings complement what the Gospel authors relate.

April 4, 2021

*Easter Day - No Class Today*

April 11, 2021 **22 Rabbinic Judaism's Traditions about Jesus**

What was Jewish life like after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.? How did the religion survive this trauma? With insights from various historical sources, chart the rise of Rabbinic Judaism - the literature of Jewish sages who portray Jesus as an illegitimate child and magician.

April 18, 2021 **23 Jesus's Apocalyptic Outlook**

Join Professor Magness as she shares some of her own research into Jesus, comparing and contrasting his apocalyptic beliefs with those of the Qumran sect associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls. As you'll discover, one cannot understand Jesus's exorcisms and healings without understanding the notion of apocalyptic purity.

April 25, 2021 **24 Jesus's Teachings and Sayings in Context**

Close out this insightful course with a pointed consideration of how selected passages from the Gospels can be better understood within their Jewish context. The three passages you explore involve the concept of Hell, Jesus's cleansing of the Temple, and John's account of Jesus's healing of a blind man.

About the Lecturer: Dr. Jodi Magness is the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism in the Department of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She earned her B.A. in Archaeology and History from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and her Ph.D. in Classical Archaeology from the University of Pennsylvania.

For her engaging teaching, Professor Magness won the Archaeological Institute of America's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Her other honors include a Fulbright Lecturing Award from the United States–Israel Educational Foundation, and fellowships from institutions including the American Council of Learned Societies and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A trained archaeologist with more than 20 years of field experience, Professor Magness has excavated throughout Israel and in Greece and has codirected excavations of the Roman siege works at Masada and a Roman fort at Yotvata. She is the author of numerous scholarly books on the archaeology of the Holy Land. Among them are "The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls", which won the 2003 Biblical Archaeology Society's Award for Best Popular Book in Archaeology, and "The Archaeology of the Early Islamic Settlement in Palestine", which won the Irene Levi-Sala Book Prize.