Week 2, Lecture 4.[1] More Comment's on Genesis 1 [2]

Academic Study & Faith. Academic study need not destroy faith; it can deepen faith.
In fact, it sometimes does destroy faith (e.g. Bart Ehrman and William G. Dever).
      Ehrman moved from fundamentalist Christian believer to liberal Protestant, to agnostic through academic study.
      Dever moved from fundamentalist Christian to secular-humanist Jew through academic study.
My words to seminarians "If the study of theology does not shake your faith you are not doing it right!"
A-J. is an Orthodox Jew. She writes from the perspective of a Jewish believer. She is not a purely "secular" scholar.

Levine: Often archaeological discoveries yield material that is controversial.
E.g., Jericho was already a ruined city **before** Joshua got there.
Jerusalem was a "little hovel" at the time of David, not a major city.

Jericho
      Archaeology has shown that Jericho had been abandoned for some time before the emergence of the Israelite tribes, probably because its water source had become severely polluted, making its waters no longer potable. In the thirteenth century BC [1300-1201; Exodus ca. 1250, PJM] Jericho was a small unwalled village and remained so until the Persian Period (6th century BC [600-501 BC, PJM]). [3]

Jerusalem, a "hovel"?
There has been some "push back" from professional archaeologists on this since these lectures were recorded (2001).
More on this when we get to the time of David.

Difficult Words & Advances in Philology
hapax legomena (singular *hapax legomenon*) are words that occurs only once (literally "only-once said")
Because meaning ultimately comes from context, this makes it hard to determine the meaning of such words.
If the context is prose, we can make an intelligent guess.
If the context is poetry (psalms, proverbs, most prophetic oracles, Job) often we don't have a clue!

Cognate Languages
We have discovered inscriptions in related languages -- writing carved into stone on buildings & monuments.
In the 20th century, whole libraries have been discovered in Ugaritic and Akkadian, related languages
Consider the following pairs of German and English words
      Fuss, foot   *Hand,* hand   *Vater*, father   *Mutter*, mother *Schaff*, Sheep
Once someone figures out that the two languages are **related**,
      if the meaning of the word in one language is known, and intelligent guess can be made in the other language.

A Caution!
We have to be careful of what the French call *faux amis* (false friends). They look familiar, but are not really.
E.g., the French word *actuel* does not mean "actual, real" but "current, up-to-date"

Levine Mentions "Type Scenes." Even children can tell a "Situation Comedy" from a "Western"

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[1] For "filing purposes" I am numbering the lectures consecutively. So, although this is the first this week, it is the **4th** lecture overall.

[2] Lecture 1, starting at Roman numeral III of the disc index, available from The Teaching Company as part of "The Great Courses" series. Used & audio-only versions are available in Amazon. Search for "Levine Old Testament Great Courses."

[3] Leslie J. Hoppe, "Joshua," *Catholic Study Bible,* Third Edition, RG 181.

Modern Media Conventions: "Miami Vice"
In Germany I met a young Italian man whose parents would not allow him to study English in America: "too violent"
I told this to my brother Ed, stationed in Germany, who watched Armed Forces TV.
He commented on the TV show Miami vice: Those two cops kill more people each season than the entire Miami PD.

Conflict Myth
The use of traditional literary / mythic patterns renders the historical reliability of a story suspect
> Think of the "pattern" of a "police show" and the historical reliability of *Miami Vice*
There is an ancient Near Eastern myth popularly known as the "conflict myth. "
It describes a young warrior god's rise to kingship by defeating an old god / force that is a threat to world stability
> [This pattern] is transformed by the biblical writers into a literary pattern that shapes the stories of the Exodus, Joshua's conquest of Canaan, and Saul's election as king. [4]

Barren Mother of Important Person
> The traditional motif of the barren mother of an important person, for example, is used in the stories of Sarai and Isaac, Rachel and Joseph, and Hannah and Samuel.[5]

Accidentally skipped during lecture. The video was recorded during post-lecture Q & A.
Distinction: Actual Events / Interpretative Framework
> The particular style of the biblical writers does **not** necessarily mean that **no actual events lie beneath the narrative**, but at the very least it indicates that the presentation of such events has been shaped to conform to a traditional interpretive framework. In other words, the **meaning** of such events as indicated by their presentation . . . is more significant to the biblical writers than the **historical reality** of the events.[6]

John the Baptist as Elijah
Levine mentions the Israelite tradition that Elijah did not die, but was taken up to heaven alive (*Swing Low Sweet Chariot*)
This has inspired legends that Elijah will come again -- before the end time, before the Messiah.
Today the final cup of wine at the Passover is the "cup of Elijah." [Lecture recorded the day before Passover, 2016]
She mentions that the NT uses this tradition to describe John the Baptist.
> In Mark it is only the clothing, manner of dress that gives the hint.
> Matthew makes the hint explicit after the Transfiguration story. ("Then they understood he meant Elijah").
> Luke does not have this line, but makes the parallel explicit in the annunciation story of JB.
> By contrast, the Gospel of John explicitly denies that John the Baptist is Elijah!

Orthodox & Roman Catholic OT end with additional historical works, Maccabees [slight mistake].
Levine must have been looking at an RSV or NRSV "with apocrypha."
In such editions, Maccabees **does** come at the end of the OT.
However in the "Catholic Edition" of these translations, these books come at the end of the "Historical" books
> 1 &2 Samuel, 1 & 2Kings, 1 & 2Chronicles, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 & 2 Maccabees
Thus, our Catholic OT, like that of Protestants, ends with the prophet Malachi.

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[4] Simkins, "History & Archaeology," 33-34.

[5] Ibid., 34.

[6] Simkins, "History & Archaeology," 34.

Week 2, Lecture 5. Final Comment's on Genesis 1

Hebrew Scriptures. Some people regard "Old" Testament as derogatory, as if "Old" means "out of date."
Therefore "Hebrew Scriptures" is the politically correct way to describe these books.
The problem is that "**Hebrew** Scriptures" is not accurate. Several chapters in Daniel, and some of Ezra is in **Aramaic**.

From the **Catholic & Orthodox** Perspective it is even more inaccurate**.**
The RC OT contains 7 books written in **Greek**; the Orthodox OT contains several more.
      Plus chapters 13 & 14 of Daniel, written in Greek, plus about 50 verses in Daniel 3 not in Hebrew.
      Hebrew Esther does not mention the name of God or have any prayers. Greek Esther does.
      In the NABRE the Hebrew chapters of Esther have numbers: 1, 2, 3, etc.
          and the Greek Chapters have letters: A, B, C, etc.
          The numbers and letters are "blended" together**. Page through Esther in your NABRE!**
For these reasons, I continue to use the expression "OT."

Tehom (Hebrew, "the abyss") **& Tiamat** (Babylonian Goddess) are closer than they look!
"H" is often elided." -at is the feminine ending in many Semitic Languages
Ba'al = "Lord." *Ba'alat* = "Lady."   The *–at* is simply a feminine suffix, not an integral part of the "root" of the word.

Order out of Chaos. The biblical portrait of creation in Genesis is not *creatio ex nihilo*, "creation out of nothing."
Rather it is **making order out of chaos**. That is why the NABRE correctly translates Gen 1:1-3 as follows
      In the beginning, **when** God created the heavens and the earth -- [2] and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters -- [3] Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light

Creation actually begins in verse 3
Verse 2 is a parentheses **describing what was already there**!
      The ancient story-tellers had not yet asked the question where the chaos came from!
The biblical idea of creation in Genesis is like the ANE idea: it is making order out of chaos.
This is so standard in the biblical commentaries that I am not even going to bother with a footnote.

NABRE vs. Douay/KJV

Traditional translation	"**Spirit of God** hovered over . . ." As if God is getting ready to act . . .
NABRE:	"A **mighty wind** swept over . . ." This is the ultimate chaos!

The translation problem is twofold.
1) *ruach* can mean "spirit" or "wind" (or even "breath," but that is not a possibility here)
2) Hebrew is short on adjectives.
      So a "cedar **of God**" is a way to say a "really big cedar." "Mountain **of God**" = "really big mountain!"
      Similarly a "wind **of God**" is a really big wind! (i.e., a "mighty" wind)

Creation and Redemption
Creation as "making order out of chaos" is why creation & redemption are closely related themes in the Hebrew mentality.
To take a "mixed rabble" of slaves and make them into his Chosen People was another example of "order out of chaos!"
We miss this parallel completely if we think in later theological terms of "creation *ex nihilo*."

Week 2, Lecture 6. Comment's on Genesis 2 [7]

Sun & Moon
The words "sun" and "moon" are not used in the creation story of Genesis 1.
Rather, we hear of a "great light" and a "lesser light."
Shemesh = Sun & sun god's **name**!   *Yāreach* = moon & moon god's **name**!
The purpose of these "lights" is **only** to mark times & seasons.
The biblical writer has not thought about tides or ice ages. He is engaging in theological polemic!

2 reasons for Sabbath Rest. 2 "Sources"
P (Priestly)   Creation   D (Deuteronomist)   Liberation from slavery
Lecture on "Sources" to follow.

Verses & Chapters: Jewish Bibles.[8] In Jewish Bibles, the verse divisions are more ancient than the chapter divisions.
We have evidence from 200 A.D. that Jews divided scriptures into what we would call "verses" (*pesûqîm*).
The earliest actual divisions we have are mediaeval, ca. 900 - 1000.
Jews also began to divide the bible into **paragraphs**.
Current Jewish bibles follow paragraph divisions established by Maimonedes (1135-1204), based on the Aleppo Codex

Christian Bibles: Chapters & Verses
Christian divisions into chapters are first attested in the 13th century, traditionally by Stephen Langton.[9]
        They do not correspond to the Jewish "paragraphs"
The division into verses came later. Often these follow the Jewish verses -- sometimes they do not.
Robert Stephanus (Robert Estienne), a printer, added the verses to the NT in 1551; to the OT in 1571[10]

Gen 2:4b
Most modern scholars do not think that the literary divisions are: Genesis 1 and Genesis 2
Rather the first creation story goes from Gen 1:1 - 2:4a (the first part of verse 4)
The second creation story begins at Gen 2:4b.

***Elohim* & *Yahweh*. What is the difference?**
Elohim is a **title**. Yahweh is a **name**.
President Obama, Pope Francis, Mrs. Jones, Doctor Smith, Governor Edwards, Father Pat, Bishop Duca

Pronunciation
Before the Exile the name *Yahweh* was regularly pronounced.
After the Exile it became considered too sacred to pronounce.
Wherever *Yahweh* was written the lector said *'Adonai* (Lord) out loud.
This is why most modern bibles write LORD (all capitals) wherever YHWH occurs.
        The write it in all capitals as a reminder that LORD **is not actually written** in the Hebrew.
        "LORD" is what we **hear**, but what is **written** is too sacred to say out loud, "Yahweh."

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[7] These comments are prompted by Amy Jill Levine's "Adam and Eve" Lecture 2 of *The Old Testament*, The Great Courses series available from The Teaching Company. Used & audio-only versions are also available in Amazon.

[8] Mark Zvi Brettler, *How to Read the Bible*, (JPS, 2005) 29-30.

[9] Archbishop of Canterbury, 1207-1228. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Langton#Chapters_of_the_Bible .

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapters_and_verses_of_the_Bible#Verses .

Short Forms

The name *Yahweh* is shortened to *Yah* in many names, spelled –iah in English

Isa**iah**, Jerem**iah**, Hezek**iah**, Jos**iah**, Obad**iah**

At the beginning of names it is *Yo*, spelled Jo- in English

Joel, **Jo**seph, **Jo**shua [Hebrew form of "Jesus"] **Jo**saphat , **Jo**nathan

Sometimes it comes out as *Yeho*, spelled Jeho- in English, e.g., **Jeho**saphat

The title *Elohim* often is shortened to *El*, and it can appear at the beginning or end of names.

Eliab, **El**ijah, **El**isha, **El**iakim

Micha**el**, Rapha**el**, Gabri**el**, Dani**el**, Uri**el**

Tetragrammaton = **four letters**

YHWH י ה ו ה . The names of the letters (in modern Hebrew) are *yud heh vav heh*

To some Greeks יהוה looked like: **ΠΙΠΙ** which spells *pipi. (pi iota pi iota)*.

Created out of nothing? Levine uses the phrase *creatio ex nihilo* for Genesis 1

It is creation by a word, but it is not specifically stated that it is *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).

I am sure she is aware of the commentaries. Perhaps this was simply a "slip of the tongue."

Elohim (Genesis 1) vs. Yahweh (Genesis 2). Actually more complex

Genesis 1	*Elohim*	God
Genesis 2	*Yahweh Elohim*	The LORD God

English, Most Bibles	English JB, NJB	Hebrew written	Hebrew pronounced	Number of Times
God	God	*'Elohim*	*'Elohim*	2,602
LORD	Yahweh	*YHWH*	*'Adonai*	5,658
LORD God	Yahweh God	*YHWH 'Elohim*	*'Adonai 'Elohim*	36
LORD God-of	Yahweh God of	*YHWH 'Elohê*	*'Adonai 'Elohê*	48
Lord	Lord	*'Adonai*	*'Adonai*	
Lord GOD	Lord Yahweh	*'Adonai YHWH*	*'Adonai 'Elohim*	293

Remarks

When we hear "LORD God" it **sounds** familiar.

When read aloud, both "LORD God" and "Lord GOD" sound exactly alike in English.

However, what is written on the Hebrew page is very different!

Our phrase from Genesis 2 *Yahweh Elohim* (Yahweh God, LORD God) is fairly rare!

Usually when we hear "Lord GOD" (Lord Yahweh) we are hearing the translation of *'Adonai YHWH*

Of the 36 times that *Yahweh Elohim* occurs in the OT, 19 of them occur in Genesis 1-2!

That leaves 17 times for the **entire** rest of the OT.[11]

Note that the word in all capitals: LORD or GOD always stands for the **unpronounced name** *Yahweh*.

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[11] Of these, **7** are in 1 & 2 Chronicles (post-Exilic); **6** are in Psalms; plus: Exod 9:30; 2 Sam 7:25; 2 Kgs 19:19; Jon 4:6.