

October 24, 2019

Catholic and Jewish Sacred Scriptures: What Do We Share?

Is what the Christians call the “Old Testament” the same as the Hebrew Bible of the Jews? Yes, for the most part, the writings contained in both are the same with a few distinctions.

First of all, the Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Christian Old Testament canons include several additional books that are not in the Jewish canon. Such books as Judith, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon, and the books of the Maccabees are considered by the Jews as apocryphal literature and not included in the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew Bible is more commonly known to Jews as the Tanakh—an acronym that stands for the three parts of the Hebrew Bible which are the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim (in English, the Torah has the first five books, Prophets and Writings). The Tanakh was written in Hebrew and is still read in the original Hebrew today along with translations in the vernacular languages. The Christian Old Testament was translated into Greek (Septuagint) and the New Testament was originally written in Greek. The differences in languages cause variations in word choices and punctuation which affect some of the interpretations of the scriptures.

The Tanakh and Christian Old Testament also differ slightly in canonical order which further creates distinct interpretations. In the Christian Old Testament, the book of Ruth is tucked between Judges and I Samuel which is more chronological in order. The Tanakh places Ruth in the in the Ketuvim (Writings) where her scroll accompanies the other 4 scrolls (Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) that are read in full on certain Jewish holidays.

The Christian Old Testament ends with Prophets, in which the last book is Malachi who predicts Elijah's return before the “day of the Lord” or what became known as the Messianic age. In the Tanakh, the Prophets (Nevi'im) appear in the middle section followed by the Writings (Ketuvim). The Writings end with II Chronicles in which the last words are those of King Cyrus of Persia who tells the Jews who are in exile in Babylonia that they can go home. The different order of the books allows the Christian and Jewish scriptures to be read with different emphases. The Jewish Tanakh focuses on returning to the homeland. The Christian Old Testament focuses on salvation and the end-time which point to the New Testament and the story and words of Jesus.

Much sacred literature is shared by Jews and Christians—the stories of Creation, the patriarchs, the Ten Commandments, the words of the Prophets, the Proverbs and the liturgical Psalms. Knowledge of what is shared and also the differences allows us to respect the integrity of each tradition and to understand why we interpret the texts differently.

Exciting Programs You Will Not Want to Miss Please Join Us in October and November!

Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Catholic-Jewish Conference's Faith and Action: A Rabbi and a Nun at the US-Mexico Border
Congregation Beth Israel Ner Tamid, 6880 N. Green Bay Ave.

Featuring Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz and Sister Norma Pimentel, two powerful, faith-driven advocates for migrants at the Mexican border in Arizona and Texas. Moderated discussion followed by Q&A. Free event.

Sunday, November 3, 2019 and Sunday, April 26, 2020

Lux Center's Catholic-Jewish Book Dialogue Program 2 sessions

Session 1 Sunday, November 3, 2:30 p.m.

Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

Discussion leaders—Fr. Stephen Lampe and Rabbi Steve Adams

Book to be discussed *On Heaven and Earth*, co-authored by Pope Francis and Rabbi Abraham Sklora

Session 2 Sunday, April 26, 2:30 p.m.

Congregation Sinai

8323 N. Port Washington Road

Fox Point, Wisconsin

Discussion leaders—Bishop Richard Sklba, Rabbi David Cohen, Dr. Patrick Russell

Book to be discussed *The Misunderstood Jew* by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine

Program Co-Chairs: Patricia Jursik and Sheryl Primakow

To register go to www.shsst.edu/events-and-news-headlines

The programs will be co-sponsored with the Catholic-Jewish Conference of the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Dehon Lecture at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

7335 S. Hwy. 100, Franklin, Wisconsin

Featured Speaker—Austen Ivereigh, journalist and author, “Wounded Shepherd: The Sacred Heart and the Reform of Pope Francis”

For more information or to register, go to www.shsst.edu/fall2019dehonlecture

Free and open to the public.

Sunday, November 17, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.

Lux Center Holocaust Seminar—Legacies of the Holocaust: Franklin Roosevelt, Immigration and the Jews.

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, 7335 S. Hwy. 100, Franklin

Dr. Tim Crain, former director of the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education and an assistant professor of history at Seton Hill University, will present this lecture about United States immigration policies before, during and after WWII and how this affected European Jews who were desperately trying to flee Nazi persecution.

To register go to www.shsst.edu/events-and-news-headlines

This program is co-sponsored by the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center.