Hellenism I – Philo, Josephus, and Greek Society
SS 909 / HT 909
5/25/06

Today

• Israelite / Jewish religion?
  – Distinctiveness? – Temple - Creation
• Hellenism – introduction
• Jewish Responses (Part I)
  – Philo
  – Josephus
  – Apocrypha / Pseudepigrapha

Morality - Reactions to life

• Deuteronomist - Community obeys or not
• Ezekiel - individual chooses, reaps reward
• Psalms (some) - follow YHWH’s way
• Proverbs - practical daily advice (religious)
• Ecclesiastes - cynical - nothing matters
• Job - it does matter, but bad things happen
• Apocalyptic - future rewards, eternal life!
Other texts to consider

• Gen 6-9 - Noah
• Gen 11- Babel
• Gen 22 – Sacrifice of Isaac (vs. Jephthah?)
• 1 Kings 18 – Elijah vs. Baal
• Ezekiel 37 – Dry Bones
Hellenism

- Alexander the Great (d. 323 BCE)
- Ptolemy / Seleucus
- Antiochus IV (175-164 BCE)

- Language / Culture / Thought

Philo

- Dates?
- Social standing
- Pentateuch Commentaries and …
  - Questions & Answers, Expositions
  - Allegorical readings
  - Moses, Essenes
- “Hellenized Jew / Judaized Hellene?”
- Logos!
Josephus

• 37 – 100? CE
• Priestly family? – Various biases?
• General in Jewish army
• Works
  – Jewish War
  – Jewish Antiquities
  – Life
  – Against Apion

Recap

• External Influences / Adaptation?
  – Creation Story / Temple
• Returning to previous events for hope
• Greek Culture
• Some responses - texts

For Tuesday – Hellenism II

• Read VanderKam 102-146
  – Schiffman 151-171, 306-352 (skim)
  – Daniel
  – Pick a book from the Apocrypha to skim
• Were the Maccabees primarily Jewish or rebels?
• Compare Daniel and the Apocryphal selection to other biblical texts
Creation Story Links

- http://www.mythicjourneys.org/bigmyst/2_eng_myths.htm