Law (Part II) and Interpretation
6/15/06

Tonight
• Response to “Purity” Movie
• Further Discussion of Law, Impurity
• New Testament views of Law
• Strategies for Interpretation

Tues. 6/20 – Temple Beth Zion
• Temple Beth Zion
  – 805 Delaware Ave. (park in back)
  – 7 pm
  – http://www.tbz.org/
  – Bring your questions!

Bodily Purity – Leviticus 15 *
• Abnormal vs. Normal (vs. "sin")
  – Normal functions are not sinful
  – Improper response is
• Blood & Semen as “dangerous”
• Gender Differences
  – Modesty issues related, but separate matter
• Bathing / other treatments
• Women, blood, and worship
  – Eucharist? / “Churching of Women”

Ritual Baths
Movie – Purity

- Feedback?
- What subjects did the movie connect to the implementation of purity laws?
- Which person did you most identify with?
- What connections can you see to your own tradition?

Texts

- M. Ta’anit 4.8 (719) – choosing spouse
- M. Qiddushin 1:1 (720) – Law of Marriage
- BT Ketubot 8a (721) – Marriage Blessings
- M. Gittin 1,3,9 (725) – Divorce
- M. Niddah 2:4,6, 4:1-2 (726) – Purity
- M. Miqva’ot 2:2-4, 8:1 (728) – Ritual Pools
- M. Yadayim 1:1-4 (730) – Hand washing
- M. Shabbat 18-19 (731) – Birth to circumcision

New Testament Texts

- Matthew 5:17-48
- Mark 7:1-23
- Acts 10, 15:1-29
- Romans 2-3
- Galatians 3-4

- What do they argue? How interpret Law?
- Implications for Christians?

Concluding Questions on Law / Purity

- What is Law? Different views?
- What is its purpose?
  – “Building a Fence around the Torah”?
- What is sin?
- What can we do about sin?
- Is there one law for all people?
Assumptions for Interpretation

• Everything is consistent
  – Nothing contradictory

• Everything is necessary
  – Nothing superfluous or redundant

• Everything is meaningful
  – Nothing trivial or accidental

  • http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rels/002/lectures/lecture10.html

Interpretive Strategies (Hillel et al)

• Minor <-> major  (cf. Matt 7:11?)
  • “Similar laws, similar verdicts”
  • Standard from a passage of scripture
  • Standard from two passages of scripture
  • General <-> Particular
    – (Gal. 5:14?, Rom 13:8-10)
  • Like that in another place
  • Something proved by the context
    • http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=34&letter=T

Texts

• Sifra – R. Ishmael’s 13 rules (531)
• M. Bava Qamma 6:4-5 – Restitution (Fire)
• Mekhilta – Nezeqin 14 – Fire
• Rehov Inscription (624) – Agriculture
• Lamenations Rabbah 21 (638) – allegory
• Exodus Rabbah 1:18-26 (640) – Moses
• Targum Exod 20:1-14 (650) – Decalogue
• Targum to Judges 5 (653)

Tues. 6/20, Thurs. 6/22

• No readings for 6/20, come with questions
• 6/22 – Jews and Christians
  – Read The Bible, The Jews, & Death of Jesus
  – Schiffman – 414-428
  – Statements
    • http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/cjl/Christian_Scholars_Group/Sacred_Obligation.htm
    • http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/cjl/Documents/dabru_emet.htm
    • http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/sites/partners/csg/midstream_signer.htm