

Lydia Johnson
Final Project Proposal
NT 504
April 4, 2023

1. Apocalyptic Literature as a Response to Hellenism during the Second Temple Period

A Lesson Plan + Powerpoint presentation

2. Abstract/Introduction:

History and artforms go hand in hand. Throughout time, current events have been the backdrop for art, music, and literature. The same can be said for Jerusalem and the state of Judaism during the time of strong Hellenistic influence. Greek culture flooded the [streets] of Syria-Palestine, and the group most heavily influenced by this were the Jewish people. Facing persecution for the countercultural ways of living, the Jewish people were to make the difficult choice of assimilating to the surrounding Greek culture, or obeying the One true God. The byproduct of these troubles came by way of Apocalyptic Literature.

i. This presentation will explore the genre of Apocalyptic literature in the Second Temple Period, how it was a reflection of the cultural values of the Jewish communities at the time, and how it fertilized morale and the season of revolt amongst pious Jews.

ii. The mode of delivery will be presented via live video chat on Zoom, with a Powerpoint presentation and interactive handouts for learning.

iii. The method of investigation employed will be primarily through research of history and document analysis. Articles and textbook readings regarding the rise of Hellenism, Apocalyptic Literature, and events leading up to the Maccabean revolt will be explored and cited amidst the project. Elements of Apocalyptic Literature will be cited to justify all points, along with summaries of stories implemented to get the big picture of the goals of Apocalyptic works and their writers. The main focuses will be on the historical events and the texts written during the time. References covered from the Epistle of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, and 1 Maccabees. Additional Apocalyptic writings may also be cited.

3. Target Audience:

i. The ministry context for this presentation will be given to an audience of students (in and out of a church context) who desire to learn about the world in which Jesus began his

ministry. The historical events that occurred leading up to the resurgence of Apocalyptic Literature led to the groups Jesus encountered during his time of ministry (the Pharisees, Saducees, and Essenes). Apocalyptic Literature also often had a messianic figure and shaped how the Jewish people would view the incoming Messiah. This presentation could be given in a classroom or Bible study context as a background study for those who want more understanding of the 2nd Temple period world.

ii. Students of all ages will benefit from this project. From children who love a great story about heroes and triumph, to older scholars who seek more understanding about how the history reflected the literature. This presentation will be for believing and unbelieving audiences—for non-believers who seek historical context to a very endearing time period, to believers who will use this context to seek theological significance and value.

4. Outcomes and Rationale:

i. I hope to attain a holistic understanding of the social and theological implications of the time period.

ii. This presentation will work to solve any cultural misunderstandings readers have of the New Testament without consideration of the events leading to Jesus's ministry.

iii. My objectives are to enhance understanding of the time period and the significance Apocalyptic Literature had on the population. It would also give modern day Christians more understanding of Jewish history, which is Jesus's history, and their Jewish view of the Messiah, salvation, and piety.

iv. I will begin the project by laying out the historical background that served as the backdrop to Apocalyptic literature and explore themes in certain texts within the literature. These themes will serve as a way of understanding Jewish values of the time and giving insight into their hopes and expectations for the future.

v. A powerpoint presentation with interactive handouts will be the most effective way to present this information because the ultimate goal is for students to learn the information and think critically about the information through interaction.

5. Sources/Dialog Partners:

Bibliography

George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. Vanderkam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation: Based on the Hermeneia Commentary: The Epistle of Enoch*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004, 10.

Grabbe, Lester L. *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel, and Jesus*. New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

Helyer, Larry R. *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period: A Guide for New Testament Students*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.

Josephus, Flavius. *1 Maccabees*. Ca 104-63 BCE.

Nickelsburg, George W.E. *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament: The Assumption of Moses*. Oxford: University Press, 1913, 2: 407-424.

