

Biblical Literacy 2021

Discussion Questions for Session 1, Feb 11

As a substitute for the slides which I usually project, I offer these questions as a document. Please focus on answering them as you prepare for our discussion.

1. When was the Greek Golden Age? Socrates? Aristotle?
2. Evangelical megachurch pastor Rick Warren, interviewing them during the 2008 campaign, asked Obama and McCain: "Is evil real?" In such a context, what is meant by the term "evil"?
3. Hayes says that "Genesis wrestles with the existence of evil." Is she using the term in the same sense? If so, what part of Genesis is she referring to?
4. Define "myth" in the sense explored by Ehrman.
5. If we view the creation stories as such myths, what truth is each intended to convey?
6. Can you give a short statement of the four assumptions?
7. Genesis 1:1 in the JSB differs from virtually all other translations. Can we say it's wrong? That the traditional one is wrong? How do we decide?
8. Where is the division between the two stories?
9. How would you characterize the general differences between the stories?
10. Make as long a list as you can of the irreconcilable inconsistencies.
11. Which was composed first? What makes you think so?
12. Do you see the dietary restriction in the first story?
13. Is it fair to say that the first story conceives of "creation" as separation into ordered parts (rather than as bringing something out of nothing)?
14. What did Michelangelo get wrong in "The Creation of Adam"?
15. What motivated the author of the first story to tell it? (What is its truth?)
16. In the second story, was Adam a hunter-gatherer?
17. What assertion of the Lord God turned out not to be accurate?
18. Can you come up with a better interpretation than those relying on a thousand-year-day?
19. List all the ways in which the second story is an etiology.
20. Can you suggest a meaning for what occurs upon eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad? (Can YHWH really wish Adam and Eve not to be

God-like given the fact that he created them in his image?) [What's wrong with the preceding question?]

21. Does Genesis 2:24 prescribe monogamy?
22. How did Eve know about the proscription (when replying to the serpent)?
23. Why should Adam and Eve be prevented from eating of the tree of Life?
24. What motivated the author of the second story to tell it? (What is its truth?)
25. What did Michelangelo get wrong in "The Temptation"?
26. What did Michelangelo get wrong in "The Expulsion"?
27. Is the "mark of Cain" a prize or a denunciation?
28. What was the name of Adam and Eve's third son?