


The Genesis of Good and Evil: The Fall(Out) and Original Sin in the Bible

Tuesday, January 14
4:00PM – 5:30PM
Royce 306

Genesis 3 is classically understood in Christian tradition as the biblical account of the Fall of humanity from divine grace, resulting in humanity's general sinful condition. As John Milton began his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*: "Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit/ of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast/Brought Death into the World, and all our woe/ With loss of Eden..." But does Genesis 3 really support this cornerstone of Christian doctrine? This presentation will examine what this chapter does (and doesn't) say about the morality of the first human pair's actions in the Garden of Eden. It will also discuss how Genesis 4 and 6 signal a fall-out of sin and evil from the human actions in the Garden. This talk will also show what led to the traditional Christian reading, as suggested specifically by the Dead Sea Scrolls and other texts in the Second Temple period.



Mark S. Smith is Helena Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary and Skirball Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University. He took Masters degrees from the Catholic University of America, Harvard Divinity School, and Yale University, where he also completed his Ph.D.. Professor Smith works on God in the Bible, the history of Israelite religion, various biblical books (especially Genesis and Judges), and the literary texts of Late Bronze Age Ugarit. He is the author of over one hundred and twenty essays, as well as sixteen books of his own and four co-authored books, including *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*; *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*; *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World*; *Poetic Heroes: The Literary Commemoration of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World*; *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*. His most recent book is *The Genesis of Good and Evil: The Fall(out) and Original Sin in the Bible*.