For Monday, 1/10


Writing: Bring written notes on all three questions.

1. The Book of Daniel divides pretty clearly into two halves. The first half, which is your assignment for today, is not especially apocalyptic. As the introduction in our Bible says, it reads more like a collection of folk tales. But it has apocalyptic elements. Here, for your convenience, is the (partial) list of apocalyptic elements listed in the Hesiod handout for Jan. 7 – with a couple more added. Which do you find in the first six chapters of Daniel? **Please point to specific examples in the Daniel reading.**

(a) the idea of truths being revealed – often by a special revealer (such as an angel) to a special recipient (such as a chosen prophet or saint)
(b) a division of history into stages
c) the rise and fall of successive empires and prideful emperors and kings
d) the use of symbols (often to describe the stages)
e) disasters and upheavals
(f) punishment – the disasters and upheavals are brought on by human sin
g) the idea that everything is unfolding according to a divine plan
(h) division and opposition between good and evil, good people and evil people, good divinities and bad divinities
(i) an ultimately happy ending for those on the good side

2. Daniel seems to have been written between 167-164 B.C.E. for Jews facing persecution and martyrdom under a particularly cruel tyrant, Antiochus IV. You can read about him in Harris, 305-310. Antiochus was a a member of the Seleucid dynasty of Syria that took over part of the Greek (Hellenistic) empire after the death of Alexander. Antiochus imposed the Hellenistic assimilation Harris discusses – forcing the ethnically diverse peoples under his dominion to adopt Hellenistic culture and religion. Antiochus identified his rule with that of Zeus, king of the Greek gods, and said to the Jews and others, “Worship me or die.” What does the first half of the Book of Daniel say to people in such a situation? What particular consolations and rewards does it promise? **Please point to specific examples in the Daniel reading.**

3. In what ways do the non-canonical additions to Daniel (“The Prayer of Azariah,” etc.) fit perfectly well with the Book of Daniel. In what ways do they seem to be different. If you were on an ancient council of rabvis, would you have admitted these apocryphal books to the canon?
For Wednesday, 1/12

In the Hebrew Bible: Daniel 7.1 to end. in Harris: 316-320, 323-325

1. Write notes on the apocalyptic elements (see above) in this half of Daniel. Are there any elements you might suggest adding to the list?

2. Write a couple of paragraphs (about 300 words) on this question: What connections can you make between the first and second halves of Daniel?