

Lutheran Theological Seminary
2022-2023 Spring Semester

JS2001/OT2018/NT2015

Jewish Life, Sabbath and Festivals in Biblical and Classical Times

Dr. Göran Larsson (Dr. Habil., Sweden)

A visiting professor in Jewish Studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) in Hong Kong, the Director of the Goran Larsson Jubilee Foundation for Jewish-Christian Relations and the former Director of Studies and Research, at Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies and Research in Israel (1994-2002). Dr. Larsson commenced the D.Th. degree in 1980 and the Docent (Dr. Habil.) of Jewish Studies in 2007 at Lund University, Sweden. His teaching courses include "History of Classical Judaism;" "The Messianic Ideas in Hebrew Scriptures;" "Let My People Go! Jewish and Christian Interpretations on Exodus;" "Jewish Prayer and Worship;" "Rabbinic Literature: A Primer," etc. His selected publications are *Die Tosefta. Seder II: Moed. Jom ha-kippurim*; *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Traditions*; *Fact or Fraud? The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Course Schedule

Date: March 20-31, 2023 (10 days)

Time: 15:30-18:00 (Mon, Tue, Thu); 16:00-18:00 (Wed); 13:30-17:30 (Fri)

Venue: LTS campus (50 To Fung Shan Road, Shatin)

Language: English

Course Outlines & Objective

The course presents the structure of the Biblical and Jewish year with its various holy days and festivals: The Sabbath, Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost), Rosh Hashanah (The New Year), Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement), Sukkot (The Feast of Tabernacles), Chanukkah (The Feast of Dedication), and Purim. It explores agricultural and historical motifs of the different feasts as well as the historical and theological developments from the sacrificial Temple cult to the Synagogue worship. The course presents the Biblical motifs of each festival as well as rituals and celebrations in Biblical and later times, including selected readings of liturgies and prayers. We will explore in what way and to what extent there is continuity between Classical Judaism and modern Judaism. The links between Classical Judaism and the New Testament, early Christianity and Christian theology will also be considered.

We should bear in mind that the observance and celebration of feasts – worship, hymns, prayers, and liturgical practices – give us insight into "practiced theology", that is, what are living expressions of faith. Hence, this course will present the most profound and tangible aspects of Judaism. It will help us to see how the biblical texts were interpreted and practiced by the people that were the first to receive those texts and who transmitted them as a living word from ancient times to this very day.

Learning Objectives

Judaism and Christianity are both close and separate. Jesus and the New Testament both divide and unite Jews and Christians. Hence, knowledge of Judaism is essential for the understanding of

numerous aspects of biblical studies and Christian theology. The objectives of this course are mainly the following:

- Deepen the knowledge of the Old and the New Testament worlds.
- Exploring the relation between text and tradition, particularly between the Old Testament text and its interpretation and implementation in Jewish practice. In what way is Judaism an “Old Testament religion”?
- Understanding Judaism on its own terms irrespective of its links or lack of links to Christianity.
- Understanding Judaism as a developing and living religion, which as a matter of fact did not lose its vitality when Christianity emerged.
- Reflection on the unique relationship between Judaism and Christianity, positively and negatively.