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There is a Message for You in Reception

With Anthony Swindell

MONDAY 2ND - WEDNESDAY 4TH OCTOBER

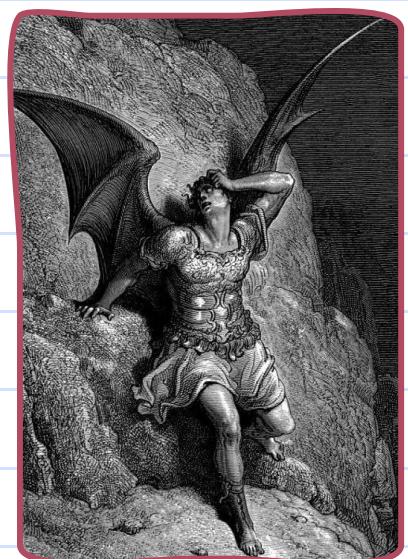
Most people are aware that Milton rewrote the opening chapters of Genesis in *Paradise Lost* and many have read Ben Elton's comic dystopian novel *This Other Eden* but do they know that these works are just the tip of the iceberg? There is a great array of literary reworkings of the Bible just waiting to be explored. This course will set out to provide an introductory map to a field of study which can transform our understanding of what the Bible "means."

Anthony Swindell is the author of three books on the literary reception of the Bible and over 100 academic articles. After a long period in the Anglican ministry, he received a PhD from the University of Leeds in 2007 and was awarded a Lambeth DD in 2012. He was a Research Fellow at Heythrop College, University of London, during 2012-2013. In 2013 he became the Literature Editor for the multi-volume *Encyclopedia of the Bible & its Reception*, published by De Gruyter, which is still in progress.

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Programme

Session One: Introduction

A discussion of passages from two modern rewritings of biblical stories (D.J. Enright's *Paradise Illustrated* and MacLeish's *B.*), followed by a whistle-stop tour of the literary reception of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve and of the story of Job.

Session Two: The Background

An outline of how we arrived at Reception Studies including a look at some early essays in the field, the recent proliferation in written-up Reception Histories and the borderland between biblical studies and literary studies.

Session Three: Other Ways of Tuning in

Considering:

1. The reception of the Bible in the work of particular authors including Chaucer, Dickens, Graham Greene and Toni Morrison
2. The selective approach: Using a restricted range of rewritings to highlight a discrete topic, such as the part played by the Noah story in postmodern literary reflection about the ecological crisis
3. Concentrating on a geo-historical setting: The Bible in the Mystery Plays or in French Romantic Poetry
4. Highlighting extreme rewritings, as when the original narrative is reversed for polemical or theological or other purposes: Goliath defeats David
5. Comic rewritings
6. Postcolonial, feminist and trauma-theory readings of Rewritten Scripture

Session Four: More Grand Tours

Considering:

1. Moses in Literature
2. Susanna in Literature
3. The Good Samaritan Rides Again
4. A contour map of the literary reception of the life of Jesus of Nazareth

Session Five: What's the Reception like in Your Area?

Thinking about the implications: How the literary reception of the Bible can enrich our understanding of our cultural past and our current condition; how it can inform theology and preaching; how it can help bridge the gap between believers and unbelievers by unleashing an open-ended approach to biblical studies.