

Temple Reyim  
Rabbi Philip Kieval  
51<sup>st</sup> Annual Kallah

51<sup>st</sup> Annual Kallah Program  
[All Sessions will be via Zoom]

The Bible Through Literary Eyes

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Professor Gary Rendsburg  
*Scholar-in-Residence*

A Unique Kallah for a Unique Time

January 24, 31 and February 7, 2021  
11, 18 and 25 Sh'vat 5781



For over 50 years, the Temple Reyim Kallah has brought us speakers who have inspired and challenged us. This year, we continue this tradition, while meeting the unusual constraints we face during this pandemic.

**In 2021, our Kallah will extend over three consecutive Sundays.** Each session consists of a lecture followed by a question-and-answer session. All sessions will be conducted via Zoom.

Links for each session will be provided in the [Reyim Shelanu](#) weekly e-newsletter.

Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>  
10:00- 11:30 AM

Lecture 1: Genesis 29 – Jacob and Rachel  
Question and Answer Session

Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>  
10:00 – 11:30 AM

Lecture 2: Joshua 2 – Rahab and the Two Spies  
Question and Answer Session

Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 – 11:30 AM

Lecture 3: "The Bible in Our Hands"  
Question and Answer Session

Concluding Remarks: Rabbi Daniel Berman

The Bible presents history, law, theology, and more, but at its core it constitutes the literature of ancient Israel. In this series of lectures, Professor Rendsburg will offer insights into biblical prose and poetry as well as the grand sweep of these texts within ancient Jewish culture.

**Lecture 1: Genesis 29 – Jacob and Rachel**

This episode is one of the most well-known in the Bible: Jacob meets Rachel at the well, he agrees to live with Laban, Jacob wishes to marry Rachel, but Laban tricks him by placing Leah in her stead. But beyond the simple plot line, the story provides one of the best opportunities to reveal the literary devices inherent in the biblical text.

Initially, we will discuss the type scene of the bachelor meeting his bride at the well in a foreign land, a scene which appears elsewhere in the Bible. Then we will examine other techniques which invite study. For example, did Laban really present Zilpah as a gift to Leah in the middle of the night (as implied in v. 24)? And what's with all the pronouns in v. 23? Join us for a close reading of one of the Bible's most exquisite tales.

**Lecture 2: Rahab and the Two Spies**

This episode is less well known, but serves to reveal a series of literary devices present in biblical prose narrative. Consider, for example, the intentionally confused language in this line: "And the woman took the two men, and she hid him" – a statement which begs elucidation!

More significantly, we will consider the question of Rahab's identity: a low-status foreign woman living on the social margins, who rises from harlot of Jericho to heroine of Israel. We will explore the literary techniques employed in this story by the master Israelite wordsmith responsible for this account.

## The Bible Through Literary Eyes

See how much can be packed into a relatively short biblical story, with Rahab holding center stage throughout.

### Lecture 3: "The Bible in Our Hands"

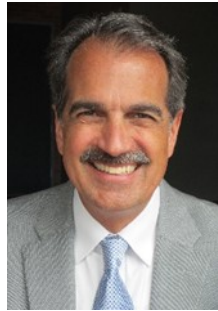
How did the Bible reach us? Except when reading from the Torah scroll or from an Esther scroll in the synagogue, today we access the text from printed books. But how did the biblical text reach us? How can we be sure that this is the text that left the hands of the ancient Israelite authors? Is our text the same one read two thousand years ago?

This talk focuses on the transmission of the Bible from ancient Israel through the age of printing, a journey of over two thousand years.

We will look, for example, at the Dead Sea Scrolls; biblical fragments found atop Masada; the Ein Gedi scroll in 1970; 8<sup>th</sup> century Torah scroll fragments found in the Cairo Geniza; and stunningly beautiful illuminated medieval manuscripts.

Through it all, we will marvel at the ongoing work of dedicated scribes, who transmitted the text through the millennia.

## The Speaker



Gary Rendsburg is Professor of Jewish History at Rutgers University, where he also holds an appointment in the History Department. Prior to teaching at Rutgers, Rendsburg taught for 18 years at Cornell University and for six years at Canisius College.

He takes a special interest in literary approaches to the Bible, the history of the Hebrew language, the history of ancient Israel, and the development of Judaism in the post-biblical period.

He has visited all of the major archaeological sites in Israel, Egypt, and Jordan and has explored Qumran, the site of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, repeatedly for several decades. He has also participated in excavations at Tel Dor and Caesarea.

His main research interests are the literature of the Bible, the history of ancient Israel, the historical development of the Hebrew language, and the relationship between ancient Egypt and ancient Israel.

Professor Rendsburg has written or co-written many books, including *The Redaction of Genesis*, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (co-author), and most recently *How the Bible Is Written*. Professor Rendsburg also has published over 160 articles in scholarly journals and monograph collections.

He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from New York University and has received several fellowships including the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## The Temple Reyim Kallah

In 1968 Saul and Harriet Goldweitz approached Rabbi Philip Kieval with a request for an annual program in memory of Saul's mother, Gussie Goldweitz. Rabbi Kieval suggested the Kallah weekend as a vehicle for this memorial; a program at which Temple members and their guests share in Shabbat services, lectures, and discussions, and the "breaking of bread" with fellow congregants.

In 1988, just prior to Rabbi Kieval taking emeritus status, we proudly named the series in his honor.

## The Kallah Committee

Daniel Berman, Rabbi  
Mara Bloom, President  
Joel Bloom, Chair

Harvey Berman  
Sara Berman  
Rich Klein  
Joan Listernick  
Carol Stollar

Jay Prizant  
Ed Rabin  
Jane Rabin  
Bryon Rakoff  
David Stollar