

Introduction to Exodus

Session 1

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1. The big idea of the OT is that the God of ancient Israel (who is the creator of heaven and earth) is a God in *relationship*.
2. The Old Testament is an invitation to reimagine our life and our faith *as an ongoing dialogic exchange in which all parties are variously summoned to risk and change*. (Walter Brueggemann: An Unsettling God)
3. Israel's story of the beginning of the world in Genesis 1-11 is followed immediately by her story of her own beginning.
4. As in the creation story, God is the central reality and actor. The One who created heaven and earth now creates Israel.
5. Embedded within the narrative of the Pentateuch are the 613 laws revealed by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The most famous of these are the Ten Commandments
6. The combination of *sacred narrative* and *sacred law* made the Pentateuch the foundation of ancient Israel's life.
7. Exodus draws us into a story with a plot and characters, which is to say, with design and personal relationships.
8. The Exodus story continues to be a major means that God uses to draw men and women in trouble, out of the mess of history and into the kingdom of salvation.
9. In this story we encounter Israel's "**primal narrative.**" The exodus story is primal in three meanings of the word.
 - **Primal means** "of greatest importance."
 - **Primal means** "originary" or "originating"
 - **Primal means** "archetypal"
10. Though the Exodus story contains some history remembered, it is not what we think of as historical reporting; rather, it is history metaphorized.
11. Whether or not the stories and figures are literal or metaphorical, the exodus is rooted in the historical experience of ancient Israel.
12. Another path may lead you to read the story from a position of *intent*.
In this process you also explore the story *in the way Israel told it*, but you also take into consideration more deeply the question "**Why did they tell it this way?**"

13. **About half the book** (chapters 1-19 and 32-34) is a gripping narrative of an obscure and severely brutalized people who are saved from slavery into a life of freedom
- The other half** (chapters 20-31 and 35-40) is a meticulous, some think tedious, basic instruction and training in living the saved, free life.
14. The Old Testament is the revelation of God's foundational relationship with humankind for the Christian Church.
15. Our understanding of the Christian gospel has been decisively shaped by this salvation experience of the Hebrew people.
16. The Archetype Story of God's Salvation: From Exodus to Jesus
- Jesus, like Israel, called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15)
 - He is tempted in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11)
 - He celebrates Passover (Mark 14: 12-25, Matthew 26:28)
 - He is identified as the Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; 11:25)
 - He is also identified as the supernatural rock that followed Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4)
 - He assumes the role of the new Moses – or the instructing God of Exodus 20 as he teaches his disciples from the mountain (Matt. 5-7)
 - And in the most remarkable move of all, Israel's God "tabernacles" in the very person of Jesus (John 1:14)

Reflections

1. Share your feelings about studying the Old Testament. Why would engaging in the Old Testament be essential to understanding your life as a Christian?
2. The Exodus was/is one of the most important experiences in the history of the Jewish people. Is there an event or experience in your faith journey that is more important or influential in your faith?
3. The Book of Exodus involves many memories and events blended together into a coherent story that reveals deep truth. Are there similar stories from your family that contain layers of truth that are revealed in the differing perspectives held by individual members of your family?