

Exodus 1:1-2:25

Session 2

Rev. Jan Cook

1. A key to this section is the repetition of the phrase “the children of Israel (Jacob), Israelites” at the beginning and at the end.
2. The use of the “children of Israel” used to describe a whole people is used only twice in Genesis but in Exodus it is used 125 times.
3. The death of a whole generation accentuates a break in the continuity of the generations.
4. Verse 7 – the Israelites pronounced fertility in Egypt recalls the divine promise of descendants and signals the beginning of the Israelite nation.
5. God’s work in redemption fulfills God’s work in creation.
6. Here the story of a chosen people being forged and delivered out of slavery and then narrowing that story down to a family and a person is used to convey the archetypical relationship.
7. Just as in the midst of God’s extraordinary creative activity came the symbol of the snake entering the scene to subvert what God has done.
 - The culprit this time is not a serpent or a brother-killing Cain or the sons of God but “a new king in Egypt.”
8. Oppression is the prevailing theme in this unit. The Hebrews who have just been identified as a people, are in the process of losing their identity.
9. The exodus does not constitute a declaration of independence, but a declaration of dependence upon God.
10. The Text sets the stage for the kind of God it is who will shortly become involved in Israel’s situation
 - God is a God who takes sides.
 - God is God of the oppressed.
 - God enters into their difficult, suffering situations to set things right.
11. The memory of the past is to be used to center the people on
 - 1) What God has done for them?
 - 2) How they are to respond to the unfortunate in every generation.
12. The wider themes of Israelite fertility and Pharaoh’s oppression continue,
But the narrative lens now focuses on a single Israelite family, beginning with the birth of Moses and ending with the birth of his son Gershon.

13. The story of Moses creates a web of conspiracy by women (young and older) who are the life-givers, the nourishers of life and guardians of life

Five women

- Jochebed – Mother of Moses
- Miriam – Sister of Moses
- Bithia – Pharaoh’s Daughter
- Shipprah and Puah – Hebrew Midwives

14. The story of Moses functions as a paradigm (or typology) for Matthew’s story of Jesus. In both the child serves as the not-yet-revealed instrument of God’s intervention. When redemption comes in both cases it is not accompanied by the martyrdom of brave partisans, but by the senseless murder of children.

15. Exodus 2: 11 -22 This section *consists of three stories* from Moses’ life.

It also comes into contact and ties three groups together. Egyptian, Hebrew and Midianite Each incident functions to provide these four elements.

- A transition to what follows.
- Identify the adult Moses as a Hebrew
- Anticipate key events in the following narratives.
- Characterize Moses especially as one who responds to injustice.

16. Moses’ actions embodies anticipates/foreshadows God’s action.

17. Exodus 2: 23-25 back in Egypt the people are crying out (consistently non-religious with emphasis on social justice) **Narrator now brings God into the heart of the story.**

REFLECTIONS

1. The scriptures give us an image to use for that which pulls us or tempts us away from divine will, in the primeval story of Genesis it is the snake, in Exodus it is Pharaoh. As you look at your spiritual life what are the snakes or the “new rulers” in your garden?

2. Oppression is the prevailing theme of this unit. What is meant by “oppression?” What does oppression look like in the world today? If you have experienced oppression, share some of your story. What does Exodus teach us, so far, about God in the face of oppression?

3. The five women who directly intervened and changed the course of history, each had a choice. They were willing to put aside their safety and well-being for the sake of a greater cause. For what does your heart break in our world today and how are you engaging in change? From where do you believe the hope will come to change the situation?

4. When have you found yourself crying out for God?