

Discussion Questions

1. What in this class has stayed with you the most so far? What do you find yourself thinking about again and again?
2. When you think of the Exodus, what sticks out to you? Why is this story important for Christians?
3. What stuck out to you in Hebrews? How has the class help you better understand what the author is saying?
4. Have you seen *Jurassic Park*? How awesome was that movie?

Exodus

Idolatry & Passover

“Do not come any closer,” the LORD warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD told him, “I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land...

Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.” God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.

This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations. -- Exodus 3:5-15

Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. -- Genesis 1:1-2

*Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the LORD opened up a path through the water with **a strong east wind**. The wind blew all that night, **turning the seabed into dry land**. So the people of Israel walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side!*

Then the Egyptians—all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and charioteers—chased them into the middle of the sea. But just before dawn the LORD looked down on the Egyptian army from the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw their forces into total confusion. He twisted their chariot wheels, making their chariots difficult to drive. "Let's get out of here—away from these Israelites!" the Egyptians shouted. "The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt!" -- Exodus 14:21-25

Nation

Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' This is the message you must give to the people of Israel."

So Moses returned from the mountain and called together the elders of the people and told them everything the LORD had commanded him. And all the people responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has commanded." So Moses brought the people's answer back to the LORD. -- Exodus 19:3-8

Exile

When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved with them. When they lifted their wings to fly, the wheels stayed beside them. When the cherubim stopped, the wheels stopped. When they flew upward, the wheels rose up, for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels...

Then the glory of the LORD moved out from the door of the Temple and hovered above the cherubim. And as I watched, the cherubim flew with their wheels to the east gate of the LORD's Temple. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them... Then the cherubim lifted their wings and rose into the air with their wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them. Then the glory of the LORD went up from the city and stopped above the mountain to the east. Afterward the Spirit of God carried me back again to Babylonia, to the people in exile there. And so ended the vision of my visit to Jerusalem. -- Ezekiel 10:16-19, 11:22-24

In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw a stream flowing east from beneath the door of the Temple and passing to the right of the altar on its south side. The man brought me outside the wall through the north gateway and led me around to the eastern entrance. There I could see the water flowing out through the south side of the east gateway...

He asked me, "Have you been watching, son of man?" Then he led me back along the riverbank. When I returned, I was surprised by the sight of many trees growing on both sides of the river. Then he said to me, "This river flows east through the desert into the valley of the Dead Sea. The waters of this stream will make the salty waters of the Dead Sea fresh and pure. There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. Life will flourish wherever this water flows... Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, for they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing." -- Ezekiel 47:1-12

Creation, Exile and Apocalypse

Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. -- Genesis 3:22-24

Homework

1. Read Exodus 15:1-18. This is the song Israel sang to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt. What creation language can you find in the song? What combat language?
2. Read Lamentations 4. Lamentations is a book of hymns mourning the Exile. What tone do you sense in this chapter? What language sticks out to you? In terms of cultural impact, to what contemporary events might you compare the Exile?
3. Compare Ezekiel 47:1-12 to Revelation 21:1-4, 21:22-22:5. What parallels do you notice? What do you make of them?

The Lord gave me another message. He said, “Go and shout this message to Jerusalem. This is what the Lord says:

*“I remember how eager you were to please me as a young bride long ago, how you loved me and followed me even through the barren wilderness. In those days Israel was holy to the Lord, the first of his children. All who harmed his people were declared guilty, and disaster fell on them. **I, the Lord, have spoken!**”*

Listen to the word of the Lord, people of Jacob—all you families of Israel! This is what the Lord says:

“What did your ancestors find wrong with me that led them to stray so far from me? They worshiped worthless idols, only to become worthless themselves. They did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord who brought us safely out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness— a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and death, where no one lives or even travels?’

“And when I brought you into a fruitful land to enjoy its bounty and goodness, you defiled my land and corrupted the possession I had promised you. The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord?’ Those who taught my word ignored me, the rulers turned against me, and the prophets spoke in the name of Baal, wasting their time on worthless idols.

Therefore, I will bring my case against you,” says the Lord. “I will even bring charges against your children’s children in the years to come.

“Go west and look in the land of Cyprus; go east and search through the land of Kedar. Has anyone ever heard of anything as strange as this? Has any nation ever traded its gods for new ones, even though they are not gods at all? Yet my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols! The heavens are shocked at such a thing and shrink back in horror and dismay,” says the Lord.

“For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!

“Why has Israel become a slave? Why has he been carried away as plunder? Strong lions have roared against him, and the land has been destroyed. The towns are now in ruins, and no one lives in them anymore. Egyptians, marching from their cities of Memphis and Tahpanhes, have destroyed Israel’s glory and power.

And you have brought this upon yourselves by rebelling against the Lord your God, even though he was leading you on the way! What have you gained by your alliances with Egypt and your covenants with Assyria? What good to you are the streams of the Nile or the waters of the Euphrates River?

*Your wickedness will bring its own punishment. Your turning from me will shame you. You will see what an evil, bitter thing it is to abandon the Lord your God and not to fear him. **I, the Lord, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, have spoken!***

“Long ago I broke the yoke that oppressed you and tore away the chains of your slavery, but still you said, ‘I will not serve you.’ On every hill and under every green tree, you have prostituted yourselves by bowing down to idols.

But I was the one who planted you, choosing a vine of the purest stock—the very best. How did you grow into this corrupt wild vine?

*No amount of soap or lye can make you clean. I still see the stain of your guilt. **I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!***

“You say, ‘That’s not true! I haven’t worshiped the images of Baal!’

But how can you say that? Go and look in any valley in the land!

Face the awful sins you have done. You are like a restless female camel desperately searching for a mate.

You are like a wild donkey, sniffing the wind at mating time.

Who can restrain her lust? Those who desire her don’t need to search, for she goes running to them!

When will you stop running? When will you stop panting after other gods?

But you say, ‘Save your breath. I’m in love with these foreign gods, and I can’t stop loving them now!’

“...They, their kings, officials, priests, and prophets— all are alike in this. To an image carved from a piece of wood they say, ‘You are my father.’ To an idol chiseled from a block of stone they say, ‘You are my mother.’

They turn their backs on me, but in times of trouble they cry out to me, ‘Come and save us!’ But why not call on these gods you have made? When trouble comes, let them save you if they can! For you have as many gods as there are towns in Judah.

Why do you accuse me of doing wrong? You are the ones who have rebelled,” says the Lord. “I have punished your children, but they did not respond to my discipline. You yourselves have killed your prophets as a lion kills its prey...

“How you plot and scheme to win your lovers. Even an experienced prostitute could learn from you! Your clothing is stained with the blood of the innocent and the poor, though you didn’t catch them breaking into your houses! And yet you say, ‘I have done nothing wrong. Surely God isn’t angry with me!’ But now I will punish you severely because you claim you have not sinned. First here, then there— you flit from one ally to another asking for help.

But your new friends in Egypt will let you down, just as Assyria did before. In despair, you will be led into exile with your hands on your heads, for the Lord has rejected the nations you trust. They will not help you at all. If a man divorces a woman and she goes and marries someone else, he will not take her back again, for that would surely corrupt the land. But you have prostituted yourself with many lovers, so why are you trying to come back to me?” says the Lord.

“Look at the shrines on every hilltop. Is there any place you have not been defiled by your adultery with other gods? You sit like a prostitute beside the road waiting for a customer. You sit alone like a nomad in the desert. You have polluted the land with your prostitution and your wickedness. That’s why even the spring rains have failed. For you are a brazen prostitute and completely shameless. Yet you say to me, ‘Father, you have been my guide since my youth. Surely you won’t be angry forever! Surely you can forget about it!’

So you talk, but you keep on doing all the evil you can.” -- Jeremiah 2:1-3:5