

Week Seven

YEAR ONE

Read

Exodus 1-24

Collins, Chapter 5, "The Exodus from Egypt" pages 55-63.

Focus

Describe the meaning of the term "salvation history." Define any names, terms, or references that were unfamiliar to you in Exodus.

Name the images/metaphors for God that the writer of Exodus uses to tell the story of God's action of liberation for the children of Israel. Select two or three of the images for God and explore what qualities of God the image reveals.

Terms that address the historicity of the Exodus event: Manetho; Hyksos; Hecataeus; Rameses II; Habiru; *Yam Sup*; Passover

Terms that deal with the meaning of the past: charter myth; history; legend; folklore; founding myth

Words and phrases related to God: YHWH; Adonai (Lord); *HaShem*; *'ehyeh 'aser* (I AM WHO I AM); *'ehyeh*; *eimi ho on* (I am the one who is); absolute Being; YHWH is on the side of the weak

Themes to keep in mind: revelation of God; liberation of people

Review the first twelve chapters of Exodus looking for moments of God's self-disclosure and moments of liberation.

YEAR TWO

Read

The Gospel according to Mark

Powell, Chapter 6, "Mark," pages 125-145

Focus

Identify terms or references in Mark's Gospel that you had to look up.

In Powell's text, note: John Mark; intercalation; major themes in Mark; messianic secret; *inclusio*

Every discussion, written or spoken, draws on material to form the presentation. The content (images, story, ideas) comes from different sources, which may be other writings, personal experiences, or beliefs held. Make note of the different sources that Powell used throughout his chapter on Mark.

YEAR THREE

Read

MacCulloch, Chapter 5, "The Prince: Ally or Enemy," pages 155-188

Focus

Terms and names to note and become familiar with pronunciation: *parousia*; *Apostolic Tradition*; Celus; *in catacumbas*; Origen; Plotinus; Mani; Manichee/Manichaeism; Diocletian; Syriac Church; Osrhoene; Dura Europos; Armenia; Ephren; *Odes of Solomon*; Trdat (Tiridates)

Christianity not only survived but grew under the wave of persecutions from 100 to 300 CE. People willing to suffer and die for what they believe wield powerful inspirations. When religious conviction is stronger than the fear of pain and death, people notice. It's as if the persecutors' sword sharpens one's beliefs into passionate convictions. Clarity comes whenever a person discovers relationships that matter more than death. The witness born from martyrdom has transformative power for both believers and non-believers.

YEAR FOUR

Read

Allen, Chapter 5, "What is Meant by 'God,'" pages 44-53

Focus

Ideas and images to know: universe as everything but God; hiddenness of God; cosmological argument for existence of God; faith as above reason

Having read the chapter, answer the question "What is meant by God?"

Respond

From time to time, a person needs to stop and take stock of what has been done and what is being learned. Conversations about important matters can bring fresh awareness and allow seeing newness within the ordinary. Insight brings a renewed energy and vitality to the creation of meaning. Understanding anew the dynamics present in daily life opens the door for a person to see how her or his life is being lived. Then, a decision can be made to continue living in that manner or to make different and possibly better decisions.

Review the thoughts and feelings that you have had over the previous several weeks. As you sift these recent experiences, consider what you have learned from listening to yourself and to others within the seminar. A corollary question: What difference does what you have learned make to how you live your life?

Practice

In whatever place works well for you to focus and be still, set a timer for fifteen minutes and allow yourself to be present to your self, your environment, and to the presence of God. Just be still. Allow images and thoughts and sounds and sensations to just be, not trying to ignore them. Just be.

After fifteen minutes, write briefly about all that you were aware of during that time of listening and presence.