

## Exodus

## Literary World

### A Story of Ironies

- Hebrews are enslaved because of their numbers; yet their numbers grow greater while enslaved
- Pharaoh plots to kill the sons of the Israelites; in end Pharaoh's own son is killed
- Humble midwives, Shiprah and Puah are ordered to kill Hebrew baby boys; but they outfox mighty Pharaoh
- A boy that was supposed to be put to death, Moses, is raised in Pharaoh's own home
- Pharaoh's daughter adopts Moses, but Moses raised by his own mother
- Mighty armies of Pharaoh are defeated by rag-tag band of nomads

## Birth and Call of Moses

- Role of resourceful women: Shiprah, Puah, mother, sister, Pharaoh's daughter, Zipporah
- Ex. 2:1-10 — primarily from E source; etiology of "Moses" as "draw out" because the Hebrew *Moshe* is a homonym for the Hebrew word "draw out"
- In Egyptian language "mose" is royal term for "son of," preceded by name of a god, e.g., Thutmose, Rameses
  - < As one raised in a royal Egyptian home, did Moses disown a part of his name associated with an Egyptian God?

## Moses a Reflection of Jacob?

- Moses goes into exile
  - < 2:11 ff — ironic prefigurement of Moses' later role
- Parallels between Moses in Midian to Jacob in land of Laban
  - < Meets future wife at a well
  - < Works as shepherd for father-in-law
  - < Encounter(s) with God and promise made by God
    - 4:24 the strange encounter with YHWH on the way back to Egypt — a parallel to Jacob wrestling God?
- Encounter at Sinai
  - < Promise of land flowing with milk and honey (3:8)
  - < Revelation of the name YHWH — I am who am, I will be who I will be (3:13 ff)
  - < Moses' hesitancy — asks for proof (4:1 ff), can't speak well (4:10)

## Theophany as “Unnatural Nature”

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- Burning bush
- Sticks like snakes; snakes like sticks
- Parting of Red Sea
- Pillars of fire and smoke
- Thunder and lightening on the mountain

## Pharaoh’s Hardened Heart

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A Theological Problem?

- 4:21, 9:12, 10:1, etc.
- Is it fair for Pharaoh and Egypt to be punished if God “made him do it”?
- Pharaoh is viewed as a god of the Egyptians, not a regular human being
- Point: YHWH, the God of lowly Israel, is mightier than Pharaoh, god of mighty Egypt

## Historical World: Dating the Exodus

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Dating

## Covenant at Sinai

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Exodus 19-40

- Form of Hittite suzerainty treaties from 13th century BCE
  - < I. Introduction of King
  - < II. Historical recollections of relations between king and vassal (motivation to be faithful?)
  - < III. Conditions/stipulations of treaty, especially stipulation to be faithful and make no foreign alliances
  - < IV. Publication or provision made for writing treaty and public reading
  - < V. Naming of divine witnesses, usually gods and goddesses (heaven and earth)
  - < VI. Blessings and curses related to fulfillment or nonfulfillment

## Sinai Covenant as Suzerainty Treaty

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- 20:1-2 — announcement of name (I) & history (II)
- 20:3-17 — Commandments ([conditions/stipulations]) (III)
  - < Absolute or apodictic laws
  - < Casuistic laws (21-22)
- 24:3-8 — writing down laws (IV), 12 pillars (V?) and reading of covenant (IV), sprinkling of blood (VI)

## What does Hittite Treaty tell us about Israel's Covenant?

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- God is viewed as the great king
- Responsibility placed upon Israel as God's vassal
- Two sides of being chosen (19:5)
- Pillars serve as reminders rather than guardians

## Deuteronomy

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"D" Source

- Deuteronomy = "second law"
- Recapitulates the story of Exodus as speeches of Moses
- 2 Kings 22-23 — the "discovery" of Deuteronomy and the reforms of Josiah in 622
  - < Centralizing worship in Jerusalem
  - < Prescriptions for celebrating Passover
  - < Prohibition of particular pagan practices
- 6:4 — "Shema": affirmation of monotheism or exclusivism?

## Leviticus

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Book of the Levites

- Concern for "Holiness" (17-26)
- Holiness = set apart, associated with "clean" and distinct from profane and unclean
- Why clean (kosher) and unclean foods?
  - < Concern for hygiene?
  - < Creatures that did not fit in with priestly picture of creation — shellfish do not have scales and fins; pigs do not have cloven hooves, etc. (based on Mary Douglas)

## Sacrifices

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(See 171-2 of Bandstra)

- Whole burnt offering
  - < Used whole animal as gift to God
- Grain offering
  - < Flour & oil as gift to God (portion as payment to priest)
- Peace offering or fellowship sacrifice
  - < Used unblemished animal; included festive meal
- Purification offering
  - < Could use various animals, depending on amount of purification needed; done for forgiveness of sin or purification after disease or contact with uncleanness
- Reparation for deliberate injury to another
  - < Used ram; part of punishment beyond paying back injured party

## Samples of Holiness Code

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- 19:9-10 — concern for protection of poor and the land
- 19:18 — love neighbor as oneself
- 19:33 — concern for hospitality to foreigners
- 25 — sabbatical year & Jubilee
  - < Ideal is an egalitarian society where God owns the land (25:23)

## Numbers

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- Name refers to opening census of the people of Israel
- Reflects J, E, & P sources
- Recounts events that occurred from time at Mt. Sinai to arrival along Jordan river