



THE BOOK OF EXODUS

A STUDY PREPARED BY

FRANK M. YAMADA

Assistant Professor of Old Testament

Seabury Theological Seminary

Adult Education Series: The Book of Exodus

Series Outline

1. Introduction and Session 1
 - a. Introduction
 - i. Structure, context, and themes
 - ii. Interpretive assumptions
 - b. Session 1
 - i. The family story continues - Exodus 1:1-22
 - ii. Ancestral traditions
 - iii. From favor to oppression
 - iv. The resistance of faithful women
2. Session 2: The birth of Moses - Exodus 2:1-10
3. Session 3: The call of Moses - Exodus 3:1-4:17
4. Session 4: The ten plagues – “Let My People Go” - Exodus 7:8-12-36
 - a. The Knowledge of YHWH
 - b. The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart
 - c. The Passover
5. Session 5: Deliverance at the sea - Exodus 14-15
 - a. Parting the waters
 - b. Tension between divine and human action
 - c. The response of the people
6. Session 6: “Is YHWH among us or not?” – Exodus 15:22-17:7
 - a. The hardships of the people and God’s provision
 - b. Manna – nourishment and sign
 - c. Water – thirst-quencher and sign
7. Session 7: Revelation at Sinai and the meaning of the covenant - Exodus 19
 - a. Basis for the covenant
 - b. Nature of the covenant
 - c. Covenant as treaty
 - d. Covenant as theme
8. Session 8: The Ten Words - Exodus 20:1-17
 - a. Literary context
 - b. Structure
9. Session 9: The Golden Calf incident, God revealed in judgment – Exodus 32:1-35
 - a. Israel’s transgression
 - b. Moses as mediator-intercessor
 - c. Moses as mediator-judgment
10. Session 10: Building the Tabernacle, the people’s faithful response – Exodus 36-40
 - a. Obedience of the people
 - b. Completion of the Holy Space
 - c. Renewal of the Covenant

Introduction

Every social group has core stories, customs, and histories – factual or otherwise – that contribute to its character and serve as the building blocks of collective identity. Growing up in the United States, stories about the Revolutionary War and the writing and adoption of the Constitution are just two examples of our core stories. There are others, of course, and not all of them are shared in the same way across our overall culture. Our core stories about the Civil War, and slavery, are inevitably understood and interpreted differently by many by virtue of our race, our geography, and the experiences of our families of origin. Similarly, Frank Yamada, the Assistant Professor of Old Testament History whose Exodus study series is the basis for our study, inherited stories about the struggles of his father’s family during World War 2, when more than 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were removed from their homes, businesses, and property, and relocated into internment/concentration camps.

The Book of Exodus tells two such core stories: the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt, and the establishment of God’s covenant with Israel. These stories serve as the core of Israelite identity. The stories of God’s deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt and the establishment of God’s covenant is also foundational within our own Christian faith. These stories have also served as the core traditions upon which Latin American, Black, Feminist, and Gay Liberation theologies were formed and developed. At the heart of the book is God’s self-revealing purpose. God is made known to Israel through the liberation of the people from bondage and oppression and through the establishment of the covenant with Israel at Sinai.

Structure, Context, and Major Themes

When considering the exodus of the Israelites, it’s important to note that God liberates the people from their slavery for a purpose – to be able to worship their God freely. Given that, the entire book divides into two parts:

- Exodus 1:1-15:21 Liberation from Egypt
- Exodus 15:22-40:38 Liberation to serve God

The first section begins with a description of the Hebrews’ life of bondage in Egypt and the story of Moses’ call. The main conflict in this section is between Pharaoh and God, which culminates in Exodus 14-15, where Pharaoh’s armies are destroyed and the Hebrews escape. The second section begins with the Hebrews’ entering the Sinai region. The geographical shift also marks an identity shift for the people as they transition from a life of slavery into the covenantal relationship as the “people of God.” In both the first and second parts, the reality of the abiding presence of God is a key theme.

Throughout the book, these central themes are tempered with human responses of faithfulness and disobedience. Importantly, the covenant – the treaty – God makes with the people calls for the people’s faithfulness.

Interpretive Assumptions

Every study of scripture is done from within the viewpoint of the individual. Participants/interpreters in this study session can, and undoubtedly will, arrive at diverse interpretations. Their race, ethnicity, life's experiences, gender, sexual orientation, and other considerations will have an impact on the way they understand and relate to the texts. As we continue through this study, I welcome hearing all participants' reflections and interpretations.

Reflections

1. How does your own gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, and/or social class affect the way you interpret the Bible? What kind of differences in reading and interpretation might that lead to, compared to the interpretations of others?
2. The exodus tradition was very important for African Americans in the context of slavery. As we continue through this study, consider how other people who have experienced oppression interpret the exodus.

Session 1

The Family Story Continues – Exodus 1:1-1:22

The course of history can change with the smallest of events. A solitary act can often have profound effects that redirect the flow of human life. The opening chapters of Exodus narrate such a shift. Three distinct movements can be traced within this opening:

- The explicit link between the ancestral traditions of Genesis and Israel's life in Egypt;
- A changed reality from favor to oppression
- The resistance of faithful women within the community

At one end of the chapter, God's promises to the ancestors are remembered through the lineage of Jacob's family (1:1-7). In the middle scene, the paranoid Egyptian empire strikes back against the growing Israelite multitude (1:8-14). The resulting slavery and oppression provide the setting for the last episode in the chapter, in which the Hebrew midwives respond with faithful courage in the face of hostile authority (1:15-22). On either side of the oppression, hope and loyalty remain strong. Though the new realities of tyranny threaten to undo the Hebrew community, the promises to the ancestors secure the people's hopes to God's faithful actions in the past. Similarly, the courageous actions of devout people in the present, in this case the daring noncompliance of the Hebrew midwives, serve to give strength and salvation in the present. Divine and human faithfulness work together in the beginning of the book to counter oppression.

Ancestral Traditions

Chapter 1 opens with a brief accounting of Jacob's family lineage, pulling attention back to the stories of Israel's ancestors as found in Genesis (Gen. 46:8-27). It also hearkens back to the language of creation:

“But the Israelites were *fruitful* and prolific; they *multiplied* and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was *filled* with them.” (Ex. 1:7). These are the same verbs found in Genesis 1:28 when God blesses the human beings.

This intentional connection between Exodus and the world of the ancestors serves two purposes:

- It has implications for the way one thinks about God. It connects Israel's sojourn in Egypt with God's past promises. The children of Israel have yet to enter into the good land, but they are well on their way to becoming a great nation that lives under God's blessing.
- It says something about Israel's continuity with itself. The Israelite numbers have become so large that the people's presence threatens the pharaoh's sense of national security. The genealogical reference to Jacob's family marks the transition from family to nation. It also reaffirms the fact that the nation's roots emerge from the humble beginnings of Israel's ancestors. Remembering one's roots is an important key to identity. An empire always seeks to have dominion over the minds and hearts of its subjects, nullifying the particularity of different people's cultures and histories. Memory acts as an agent of

resistance to such imperialistic tendencies by keeping alive a particular group's connection to its past.

Reflections

1. The biblical witness often portrays human life as being caught between God's promises and the harsh realities of life. How does a person live in this tension between God's past faithfulness and the present struggles?
2. There are many events in our personal and collective life throughout history that create an abrupt change in the way that we view reality. What are some examples of this that you can think of? When the world as we know it turns upside down, how do we feel? How do we respond?

From Favor to Oppression

Exodus 1:6 recounts Joseph's death, marking a generational transition – the first generation of Israelites in Egypt has passed away. The next verse notes a similar generational passing for the Egyptians, noting a new king “who did not know Joseph.” In the previous administration, Joseph and his family received honored status. The new king, however, decides to enforce a policy of oppression upon his Israelite subjects removing them from places of honor and subjecting them to slavery and oppression. Pharaoh's policies are based on his lack of knowledge of Joseph and the Israelites (v. 8) and his fear of the people's increasing numbers (vv. 9-10), eventually escalating to a national scale. (v. 12). By the end of the chapter, all of Egypt has become afraid of the Israelite population growth. With increased fear comes a more ruthless form of slavery. However, as the persecution intensifies, the Israelites continue to multiply and spread.

When the ruthless work of slavery fails to inhibit the growth of the Israelite people, Pharaoh resorts to more drastic measures, instructing (v. 15) the Hebrew midwives to kill all of the male children who are born to the Israelites. The language here is ambiguous – “Hebrew midwives” or “midwives of the Hebrews” could mean that the women were either Israelite or Egyptian – but in either case, the midwives act as heroic agents on noncompliance in the face of the empire's decree. In spite of the royal order, these women choose to fear God (v. 17, 21), siding not with Pharaoh but with God and the oppressed.

Reflections

1. How can memory be used to resist the imperialistic tendency that seeks to erase the particular expressions and histories of diverse cultures? Can you think of any examples?
2. In the U.S., many have used the metaphor of the “melting pot” to talk about the inherent unity/homogeneity within the nation. This image, however, often does a disservice to the many distinct cultures that have come to the States. What are some potentially harmful effects of grouping all people into a more unified but homogeneous whole?

The Resistance of Faithful Women

The faithfulness, ingenuity, and courage of the Hebrew midwives remind us that human actions matter in the face of an oppressive culture.

God is not overtly present in these early chapters to deliver Israel from its oppression. The only time that God is an active subject throughout Ex. 1:1-22 is in v. 20, when God deals favorably with the midwives. Beyond this one reference, God appears only in relation to the women's conscientious resistance.

In times of oppression and suffering, God may seem passive or only minimally present to act. Even when God's promises are recalled, the present realities of a ruthless empire can overwhelm people at any point in history. The opening chapter of Exodus reminds its audience that God remains present with those who act faithfully on behalf of the oppressed. Shiphrah, Puah, and the rest of the Hebrew midwives remind the contemporary audience that moments of liberation can take shape in the faithful living of those who fear God.

Reflections

1. Give some contemporary examples of people who sought to right the wrongs of oppression. How did/do such people make a difference in society? How can a person live a faithful life of working for liberation/justice today?

Session 2

The Birth of Moses – Exodus 2:1-10

The birth of Moses is told in the style of a heroic folklore legend. In fact, the beginning of Moses' life parallels the miraculous birth of an earlier Mesopotamian king, Sargon the Great, who reigned in the third millennium BCE. Such legends, which involve the miraculous deliverance of the infant hero from death, are common across cultures throughout history. In the New Testament, the Gospel according to Matthew uses a similar type of story in recounting Jesus' escape from Herod's decree of death. The use of this genre tells the reader that the birth of Moses represents the birth of a future hero and leader in the Israelite community. In a setting of slavery, a child is born to this oppressed people, one who carries with him the hopes of their future liberation.

The Caring Nurture of a Mother

The setting of this story follows the Hebrew midwives' courageous acts of civil disobedience. After their resistance, Pharaoh then extends the decree to all of Egypt to kill every boy infant born to the Hebrews. This empire – as with every empire – feeds off of the fear of its subjects. Pharaoh knows this, so he appeals to his people to carry out this law of genocide.

In a time of national paranoia, legislation often coincides with a larger cultural fear within that society. For example, during World War 2, Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the internment of Japanese and Japanese American people within the United States. This occurred within a post-Pearl Harbor culture of fear in the U.S. In such times of national anxiety, legislative acts and cultural ethos can often work together for inhumane ends.

The early stories of Moses contain literary connections to both Genesis and later parts of the Book of Exodus. When Moses is born, his mother, who is unnamed within this story, sees the child and declares him good (2:2) – in the original language, the mother uses an idiom that is identical to God's proclamations in Genesis 1 – “she saw that he was good.” When she makes a pitch-covered basket to float Moses in to save him, the Hebrew word used is *teba* – the exact same word used in Genesis to describe Noah's life-saving ark. Moses' mother, therefore, is acting in a similar manner as the divine Parent in Genesis. She gives birth to a new creation, a future leader for Israel, and declares him “good.” When his life is threatened, she creates an ark for him and saves him upon the waters. Conversely, God's Genesis image is aligned with the caring nurture of a mother who responds to her creation within a culture of adversity.

Reflections

1. The character of Moses' mother is framed within the image of God as Creator. What images of God sustain your faith? What does the powerful image of a nurturing mother communicate about God?
2. There are many parental images of God in the Bible and in our tradition. What are the strengths and limitations of these images?

Past Legacy and Future Hopes

In addition to the connection with Genesis, Moses' birth also foreshadows future events to unfold within Exodus. Moses' mother places him on the reeds near the riverbank. The Hebrew word for "reed" is *suf* – the same term used within the name of the sea – Hebrew *yam-suf*, "Sea of Reeds" (Exodus 13:18, 15:4). Just as Moses was delivered through the waters and reeds, so too are the Israelites as they pass through the Sea of Reeds. Also, the infant Moses is nurtured and fed after his deliverance by his own mother, who is hired to provide care for her own child (Exodus 2:9), foreshadowing God's own provision of manna in the wilderness and water from a rock after they cross through the sea.

These backward-looking and forward-looking allusions within Moses' story creates a convergence, in Moses, of Israel's past legacy and future hopes. It is no wonder that when God finally reveals the divine intention and identity to Moses in chapter 3 – the first time God speaks in Exodus – God's language refers both to the past promises made to the ancestors and to the impending plan to deliver the people from their oppression and lead them into the Promised Land.

In the character of Moses, past and present collide. Promises are made real, and dreams of liberation come to pass.

Three Nameless Women

In chapter 2, three nameless women play a vital role in the miraculous survival of Moses.

1. Moses' mother, who gives birth to Moses and bravely resists Pharaoh's command by protecting him.
2. Moses' sister contributes to the salvation of her brother by keeping watch over him in the basket and by suggesting to Pharaoh's daughter that she allow one of the Hebrew midwives, Moses' mother, to nurse him.
3. Pharaoh's daughter acts compassionately toward Moses, even when her father has decreed death for all Hebrew male children.

All of these heroic women act subversively in an Egyptian culture that fears the Hebrew-other. Their actions point to faithful moments of civil disobedience. Like the Hebrew midwives mentioned last week, these women find a way to nurture life, live compassionately, and sustain

those who are in oppression or danger, even though everything they did was against the law decreed by Pharaoh.

The phrase “make a way out of no way” is commonly used by womanist theologians to describe the ways in which African American women forge out their own survival and the survival of their communities in situations of adversity. In a world where powerful men like Pharaoh have the power to legislate and decree death, these three women responded by “making a way out of no way.”

Session 3 - The Call of Moses

Exodus 3:1-4:17

For most of the first two chapters of the book of Exodus, God remains silent and minimally active. After Moses flees from Pharaoh to Midian the narrator announces a change in the plot (2:23). After many years, Pharaoh had died, but the Israelites remained in slavery. However, at this point we are told that the cries of the Israelites rise up to God, who hears their groaning and remembers the covenant made to their ancestors. God's act of remembrance marks the movement of Israel's deliverance into a new stage, which begins with the calling of Moses.

The Call and Commission of Moses

Moses' call begins on Mount Horeb, another biblical name for Mount Sinai that occurs more frequently in the book of Deuteronomy. In the well-known burning bush story, the future leader of Israel encounters for the first time the God of his ancestors. Moses turns aside to see a bush that is on fire but not consumed. His fascination soon turns to awe as YHWH speaks to him, calling him by name "Moses, Moses" (3:4). After Moses responds with the "Here I am" common to other biblical calls (see sidebar), YHWH announces that the ground he is on is holy. Mountains were often places of revelation in the ancient world – liminal spaces where the gods would dwell and where the heavens met the earth. On this hallowed spot, YHWH reveals to Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (3:6). Moreover, YHWH continues in vv. 7-8

to announce the divine intention to deliver the people from their distress. God has heard the cry of the Israelites, and God's desire is to liberate them from oppression and lead them to the land of promise. YHWH commissions Moses for this task in verse 10. Moses responds with an uncertain "Who am I?" (3:11) God provides assurance to the reluctant liberator through the promise that God will be with him (3:12) – a promise sealed with the sign that the people will worship God on this very mountain.

Sidebar: Mount Horeb versus Mount Sinai

The Bible uses two different names, Sinai and Horeb, for the same "mountain of God." Why? The Torah, or Pentateuch – the first five books of the Bible; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy – is believed to have been written by at least three, and possibly four, different religious groups and schools of thought – abbreviated J(E)PD. This is the so-called "Documentary Hypothesis" of biblical study. The J and P traditions show up in Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers. The E and D traditions show up in Deuteronomy and parts of Exodus. More recent scholarship questions whether there was a separate E tradition, but in either case, it is believed that post-exilic editors of Exodus inserted the references to Horeb at key junctures in Exodus alongside references to Sinai in order to merge the two traditional names for the same mountain and to help establish a harmony between Deuteronomy and the other books.

Source: New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible

The call of Moses is similar to the call stories of other prophets and heroes in the Hebrew Bible. Compare Moses' call to that of:

Gideon (Judges 6:11-14)
Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-14)
Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-13)
Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10)
Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:1-3:11)

Are you familiar with these call stories from previous Bible studies or previous sermons and worship services? Looking at these various call stories, what are the similarities? What are the differences?

Sidebar: "Here I Am" is different from "I Am Here"

When God calls, Moses replies "Here I am" (Hebrew *hineni*). This word is a response to the call of God (Gen 22:1, 46:2, Ex 3:4). It is a response to the call of an angel (Gen 22:11, 31:11) presumed to be God's proxy. *Hineni* is a parent's response to the call of their child (Gen 22:7, 27:18) and a child's response to the call of their parent (Gen 27:1, 37:13). *Hineni* accomplishes two things: the caller has the full attention of the protagonist whose story will change in some dramatic way. The reader must wait to find out what the protagonist will be asked to do.

The Bible also contains a very similar word – the same vowels, just slightly different vowels, and with similar, but significantly different meaning - *hi'nih'ni*. Wherever *hi'nih'ni* is used in the Bible it is followed by a verb. In English it would be, "I am here in order to do X." *Hineni*, on the other hand, is different. It says, "I am here, giving my full attention to the caller and listening intently to whatever the caller has to say or command."

Source: *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*

Moses' call has four components common to all of these call stories:

- The identification of the deity and the reason for their appearance (3:6-9)
- The commissioning of the individual (3:10)
- The prophet's objection to the call – five times, actually, in Moses' case (3:11, 3:13, 4:1, 4:10, and 4:13)
- God's assurance to the prophet, including both verbal support and physical signs that authorize the prophet's call (3:12, 3:14-15, 4:2-9, 4:11-12, and 4:14-17)

Clearly, Moses is a reluctant prophet. This serves two purposes in the story – first, it highlights the humility of the one being called. Second, his reluctance indicates that what follows is the will of God, not Moses simply acting on his own accord and authority. Moses being portrayed as the most reluctant of prophets indicates that his calling is the most important and central in Israelite history.

Beyond the burning bush, this calling is marked by the important point of God's self-disclosure – the revealing of the divine name. God's first reply seems elusive, offering the first person singular form of the verb to be – "I am who I am;" or "I will be who I will be;" equating God's name with the deity's very state of being.

The second response shortens it to just one answer: "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you," here using the first-person singular verb once.

Finally, God offers the name as the third-person singular masculine form – YHWH – "He is;" "He will be;" "He who causes to be."

In ancient (and current) Jewish tradition, one didn't pronounce the divine name and instead used Hebrew words such as "the Name" (*shema*), "Lord" (*adonai*), or "heaven" as substitutes. Most English translations use the word "LORD," all caps, wherever the divine name YHWH appears.

Reflections

1. The prophets were often called in times of difficulty and national distress. How does God respond to the distress of God's people today? Even though we aren't adding to the scriptural record of prophets, do you think God similarly calls prophets in our time? As an example, could one make an argument that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a prophet of equal stature as a prophet recorded in the scriptures? Yes or no? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever resisted God's call on your life? If you're comfortable, feel free to share your story. How did that work out for you?
3. In the ancient world, to name something was to have power or control over it. What is at stake in naming God? Are there other ways that we seek to control God's identity (images, language, etc.)?

Session 4 – The Ten Plagues – “Let My People Go”

Exodus 7:8-12:36

The conflict between YHWH and Pharaoh begins with Moses and Aaron approaching the king of Egypt. This series of stories is framed as a “contest story.” There is a similar story found in the Joseph narrative (Genesis 41). In contest stories, the protagonist’s gift – interpreting dreams or performing miraculous signs – is challenged by other officials who have a similar skill. In the conclusion of these tales, the hero is vindicated, and his or her god is recognized as the true god, or the supreme god among lesser gods. Even though the competition here begins with a contest between Moses and Aaron with the sages and magicians of Egypt, in reality the competition is more cosmic – between Pharaoh, the mighty king of Egypt, and YHWH, the God of the Israelites.

The plague stories all follow a formula or pattern. They begin with YHWH instructing Moses to provide Pharaoh with the threat of a disastrous event. After each disaster, Pharaoh disregards the sign – he “hardens his heart” (active), or “his heart was hardened” (passive).

The Knowledge of YHWH

A prominent theme of the entire story of the Ten Plagues is knowledge of YHWH – “that _____ shall know that I am YHWH” (7:5, 8:22, 9:14, 9:29, 10:2, 14:4, 14:18). These stories are framed such that the point is that YHWH’s signs and wonders aren’t ends in themselves. Rather, they serve a specific purpose in relation to Israel and those who would oppose God’s will for the people. In the Hebrew Bible, signs and wonders point to God’s activity and extraordinary intervention in the world. They aren’t intended to merely prove YHWH’s existence, but are signifiers of divine presence and activity in creation.

The Hardening of Pharaoh’s Heart

The “hardening of Pharaoh’s heart” is a complex issue, reflecting a larger tension between human initiative and divine will that is present throughout the Book of Exodus – and that, frankly, that continues within our theological and faith discussions to this day. To what extent does God determine the actions of humanity? Put another way, how much free will do human beings have within God’s creation? The Book of Exodus offers a different range of possible answers to these questions, but ultimately doesn’t resolve the tension. Some texts say that Pharaoh hardens his own heart (8:15, 8:32, 9:34), suggesting that he is willfully choosing to be stubborn. Other texts simply describe his heart as having been hardened (7:13, 7:22, 8:19, 9:7, 9:35); reflecting the content of other texts stating that YHWH was responsible for hardening Pharaoh’s heart, placing the king’s condition squarely within the divine will (7:3, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10).

Reflections/Questions

1. It's a real dilemma: on the one hand, if Pharaoh can act autonomously from the divine will, openly defying God's intention for Israel, how can YHWH be sovereign over all of the earth? On the other hand, if God determines the actions of Pharaoh how can one hold the king of Egypt accountable for what he does? And what if we aren't talking about Pharaoh in ancient times, but any one of us today?
2. What "signs" give us evidence of God's presence in our midst?
3. How can/do we interpret miraculous deeds in the Bible? Do we rationalize them away? Seek scientific verification of them?

The Passover

The final plague – the killing of the Egyptian firstborns – combines with the regulations set forth for the celebration of the Passover festival. The Passover tradition includes explicit direction for the preparation and celebration of the feast (12:1-28). Instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (12:14-20, 13:3-10) and the consecration of Israel's firstborn (13:1-2, 11-16) are also included. Therefore, this passage combines what were originally two springtime festivals, one agricultural (unleavened bread) and one pastoral (the offering of a lamb). The festivals of Passover and of Unleavened Bread mark two key events within this section of Exodus. The former relates to the passing over of YHWH during the killing of Egypt's firstborn, and the latter to Israel's hasty flight from the land of Egypt. Together, the celebration of the entire Passover event marks a transition point. It corresponds with the tenth and final plague – ironically, doing to the Egyptians what Pharaoh had originally decreed for the Israelites; the killing off of the male progeny. It also marks the initial flight of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. Hence, the Exodus has begun, and the oppressive yoke of the Egyptians has been broken.

It's important to note that this point in the narrative is marked with the explicit direction for a festival to YHWH. Within the world of Exodus, the proper human response to God's mighty deeds is worship. Therefore, YHWH's initial rationale for allowing the people to go – that they might celebrate a festival to YHWH (5:1) – has been enacted in the narrative memory of Israel through the institution of the Passover. YHWH has freed Israel from bondage, and Israel responds with worship and song. They are not delivered, however, for the purpose of unrestrained freedom – liberation for liberation's sake – but are freed so that they might worship YHWH unreservedly, serving the God who has delivered them from oppression.