

Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7, Exodus 12-14 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7, Exodus 12-14, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a transcript of a Bible study session led by Dr. John Oswalt, focusing on Exodus chapters 12-14. **The session explores the Passover regulations, their significance in light of the mixed multitude joining the Exodus, and the theological implications of God's actions. Oswalt discusses the historical context of the Exodus story, including the Israelites' journey and the Red Sea crossing, emphasizing the importance of historical accuracy to faith. He connects the events of the Exodus to the Christian faith, drawing parallels to the resurrection of Jesus. Finally, he reflects on the Israelites' wavering faith and challenges listeners to examine their own.**

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →
Pentateuch → Exodus).**



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3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7, Exodus 12-14

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's teaching on Exodus 12-14:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus 12-14

Session Overview: This session focuses on Exodus 12:43 through the end of chapter 14, covering the Passover regulations, the consecration of the firstborn, and the crossing of the Red (or Reed) Sea. Dr. Oswalt connects these events to the themes of covenant, deliverance, remembrance, and the nature of faith.

Main Themes and Ideas:

1. Inclusivity of the Covenant:

- **Passover Regulations for Foreigners:** The regulations given in 12:43-51, which are separated from the initial Passover instructions, highlight that the covenant is not exclusively for ethnic Israelites. Foreigners could participate in the Passover if they accepted covenant obligations, notably circumcision.
- **Quote:** "The covenant was not ethnically based...anybody who wanted to accept the covenant obligations could do that, and that signals for us the truth that God is not merely interested in the physical descendants of Abraham."
- **Universal Reach:** This foreshadows the idea that God's desire is to bring all the world into the covenant, which is further emphasized by references to Isaiah 56 and Paul's teachings about true children of Abraham through faith.
- **Quote:** "He's interested in bringing the world into the covenant...eventually, Paul can say that the true children of Abraham are those who accept the covenant by faith."

1. Remembrance and the Purpose of Rituals:

- **Consecration of the Firstborn:** The ritual of consecrating the firstborn is not merely a practice; it serves as a constant reminder of God's deliverance from Egypt. It is meant to keep the memory of God's actions alive for each generation.
- **Quote:** "Don't forget why you do this...God delivered us from death. Not in the never land of myth, but in our time and space, God broke in."

- **Unleavened Bread:** Similarly, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, observed upon entering Canaan, reinforces the memory of their hasty departure from Egypt.
- **Avoiding Empty Ritual:** Dr. Oswalt emphasizes the importance of understanding the meaning behind rituals and not letting them become empty habits. The rituals are a reminder of the historical facts that underpin the faith.
- **Quote:** "It's very easy for us to get in a habit of doing certain rituals and forget why we do them. Forget what the significance is."
- **Connection to Communion:** He connects this to the Christian practice of communion, stating it is a continual remembrance of the basis of Christian faith and life.

1. **Historicity and the Basis of Faith:**

- **Importance of History:** Dr. Oswalt argues that the historicity of the events in Exodus (and the Bible generally) is crucial to the validity of the faith.
- **Quote:** "There are facts that back up the faith...If these accounts are false, then we are kidding ourselves."
- **Evidence and Belief:** He stresses that faith is not simply a matter of personal feeling; it is rooted in real, historical events and evidence. The historicity is not to be dismissed.
- **Countering Skepticism:** This addresses the issue of those who would believe even if evidence proved the events false, which Oswalt argues is irrational.

1. **God's Purpose and the "Hard Way":**

- **Strategic Route:** God did not take the Israelites the most direct route to Canaan. The route through the Philistine country would have been shorter but not the best way.
- **Sea Crossing Essential:** God specifically led them to the sea crossing for a significant purpose: to provide a crucial confirmation of His incomparability and power.
- **Quote:** "Getting them to Canaan is not the primary purpose... they would never have had that remarkable confirmation of God's absolute incomparability."

- **Building Faith:** The journey through the desert was designed to mature their faith and dependence on God. Avoiding war early prevented the Israelites from reverting back to Egypt, a place they knew.
- **Experiential Faith:** Personal stories shared during the session highlighted how difficult times can ultimately lead to growth, reinforcing the idea that the "hard way" can often be God's best way.

1. The Crossing of the Reed Sea:

- **Not the Red Sea:** Dr. Oswalt clarifies that the Hebrew text uses the term "Reed Sea," likely referring to a series of shallower lakes (Bitter Lakes) in the area of the modern-day Suez Canal and not the deep Red Sea.
- **Quote:** "The Hebrew text says they crossed the Reed Sea."
- **Miraculous Event:** While not a literal "parting of the deep sea" as often depicted, Oswalt maintains the event was still miraculous, with God dividing the waters and allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land, drowning the pursuing Egyptian army.
- **Tidal Waters and Wind:** He notes the lakes were tidal, and the wind played a significant part in the division of the waters, highlighting that the miracle involved natural elements working together to achieve God's purpose.

1. Faith and God's Glory:

- **Pharaoh's Heart:** The hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not a random act but rather a consequence of his own choices; God provided the opportunity for him to act in accordance with his heart.
- **God's Glory Through Defeat:** God's plan to lead the Israelites to the sea was to gain glory through the defeat of Pharaoh and his army.
- **Quote:** "God leads them the wrong way, not only to teach them his goodness and his glory, but also to defeat the enemy."
- **Faith in Difficult Situations:** God can gain glory through our lives, especially when we stand firm in faith during difficult situations.

1. The Nature of Faith:

- **Moses' Faith:** In contrast to the Israelites' despair, Moses showed true faith when he reassured them to stand firm and see God's deliverance; God had not previously given him details of the deliverance but his trust was in God.

- **Circumstantial Faith:** The Israelites demonstrated a circumstantial faith, believing only when they saw immediate evidence of God's favor. This contrasts with true faith, which endures even in the absence of clear signs.
- **Stepping Out in the Dark:** God often calls people to act in faith during uncertain times, not when everything is clear.
- **Quote:** "God usually calls upon us to step out in the dark. He rarely calls us to act in the bright midday when everything is perfectly clear."
- **Dependence on God:** The lack of options for the Israelites at the Reed Sea caused their dependence on God to be more prominent. The lesson is that less options can lead to more faith.

1. **Numbers and Interpretation:**

- **Symbolic Numbers:** Dr. Oswalt points out that Hebrew numbers often had symbolic significance beyond mere quantity. It seems that the number 600,000 should be interpreted in the context of the culture of the time and not as a literal number of people.
- **Interpretation in Context:** He stresses the importance of interpreting the Bible in the terms of the original writers rather than imposing modern understandings onto the text.

1. **Timing:**

- **Early Morning:** The timing of God's action, during the last watch of the night or early morning, is significant as it is a time that highlights the contrast between darkness and light, despair and hope.

Key Takeaways:

- The Exodus story, particularly the Reed Sea crossing, is not just a historical event but a powerful lesson in faith, deliverance, and the nature of God's covenant.
- God's plans often involve challenging circumstances to strengthen faith and bring about His glory.
- True faith is not contingent on immediate results but endures through uncertain times.
- It's crucial to understand the historical context and original meaning when interpreting scripture.

This briefing should provide a thorough overview of Dr. Oswalt's teachings in this session and can be used for further reflection and study.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7, Exodus 12-14

Exodus Study Guide: Chapters 12-14

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why were the additional Passover regulations regarding who could participate given *after* the initial instructions in Exodus 12?
2. According to Oswalt, what does the requirement for circumcision for foreigners wanting to participate in the Passover signify about God's covenant?
3. What is the significance of the inclusion of regulations about the Feast of Unleavened Bread within the instructions about consecrating the firstborn?
4. How does the sacrifice of the firstborn serve as a teaching device, according to Oswalt?
5. What is the relationship between the historicity of the Exodus and the importance of faith, as discussed in the text?
6. Why did God lead the Israelites on the longer route to Canaan, instead of the shorter route through the Philistine territory?
7. What does the text mean by stating that the Israelites went out of Egypt "ready for battle"?
8. What are the two main reasons why God led the Israelites to the Reed Sea, according to the text?
9. How did Moses' reaction to the situation at the Reed Sea differ from that of the rest of the Israelites?
10. How does the timing of God's action at the Reed Sea, occurring in the early morning, contribute to the theological message of the Exodus?

Answer Key

1. The additional regulations were given after the departure from Egypt because a "mixed multitude" of people, including those not of the family of Jacob, had joined the Exodus. These regulations clarified who could participate in the Passover based on covenant acceptance, not just ethnic lineage.

2. The circumcision requirement demonstrates that the covenant was not solely for the physical descendants of Abraham, but open to anyone who accepted the covenant obligations. It illustrates God's desire to bring the entire world into a relationship with Him.
3. The inclusion of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in this section serves as a reminder of why the Israelites were to consecrate the firstborn. It ties the remembrance of God's deliverance from Egypt with the act of consecration.
4. The sacrifice of the firstborn acts as a reminder of God's deliverance and a teaching opportunity for families. It provides a means to continually retell the story of God's grace and mercy in saving them from Egypt.
5. The historicity of the Exodus is crucial for faith, because it provides external evidence of God's actions. If the events of the Exodus did not occur, the foundation of the faith would be undermined, as the belief is rooted in these historical events.
6. God led the Israelites the longer route to the Reed Sea to avoid an immediate war that they were not spiritually prepared for. He wanted to lead them to a place where they would experience His power and establish their faith, and He also did not want them to turn back to Egypt.
7. The statement that the Israelites went out of Egypt "ready for battle" is not meant to suggest military preparedness. Rather, it indicates that they marched out openly and not in secret.
8. The first reason God led the Israelites to the Reed Sea was to provide a remarkable demonstration of his power and incomparability. Secondly, God intended to gain glory through Pharaoh's defeat.
9. Moses demonstrated his faith in God by telling the people to stand still and trust God for deliverance. The other Israelites, however, were full of fear and complained, doubting God's provision and his leadership.
10. The early morning setting symbolizes a new beginning and a time of great force. God's action at this time contrasts with the darkness of the previous night and underscores his power to create and transform.

Essay Questions

1. Explore the concept of God's covenant in Exodus 12-14, focusing on the inclusion of foreigners and its implications for the universal nature of God's plan.
2. Analyze the role of historical remembrance in the rituals and practices described in Exodus 13, explaining how these practices served to maintain the Israelites' identity and relationship with God.
3. Discuss the theological significance of the crossing of the Reed Sea, considering both the miraculous nature of the event and its implications for the relationship between God and His people.
4. Compare and contrast the faith of Moses and the faith of the Israelites in Exodus 14, and explore the factors that contributed to their differing responses to the situation at the Reed Sea.
5. Examine the concept of God gaining glory through both deliverance and conflict, using examples from Exodus 14 to illustrate how God's actions served to demonstrate His power and purpose.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or promise, often between God and His people, outlining responsibilities and blessings. In this context, it refers to the agreement established with Abraham and extended to those who accept the covenant obligations.
- **Mixed Multitude:** A term used to describe the group of non-Israelites who joined the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt. They were not of the family of Jacob but were included in the group.
- **Consecration of the Firstborn:** The practice of dedicating or setting apart the first male offspring to God. In this text, it serves as a continual reminder of the Israelites' liberation from Egypt.
- **Feast of Unleavened Bread:** An annual festival observed by the Israelites that was tied to the Exodus from Egypt. It is a time of remembrance where the Israelites ate unleavened bread.
- **Reed Sea (or Sea of Reeds):** The body of water that the Israelites crossed during the Exodus. The exact location is debated, but the text refers to a marshy area with shallow lakes and reeds.
- **Historicity:** The quality of being a genuine historical event, based on evidence outside of the individual. In this context, refers to the importance of the events of the Exodus actually happening.
- **Unintentional Sin:** Sin that is committed without malice or awareness. In this text, it's something the Israelites were called to weep over in the Feast of Tabernacles.
- **The "Hard Way":** A metaphor for the difficult path chosen by God for the Israelites. It often is not an easy path but leads to the best outcome over time.
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, which has an early translation of Reed Sea as the Red Sea.
- **Bitter Lakes:** Series of interconnected shallow lakes in the area where the Israelites crossed, which were tidal and salty.
- **Troop:** The word used in the passage to indicate the Israelites did not secretly leave Egypt, but rather marched in an orderly fashion.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7, Exodus 12-14, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Exodus 12-14

1. **Why are the Passover regulations about who can participate (specifically regarding foreigners and slaves) given separately from the initial Passover instructions in Exodus 12?** These additional regulations were given after the Exodus from Egypt had begun and a "mixed multitude" of non-Israelites had joined the group. This inclusion of others necessitated clarifying who could partake in the Passover meal. The regulations indicate that the covenant with God was not based solely on ethnicity, but on acceptance of covenant obligations, symbolized by circumcision, therefore opening the door for non-Israelites to participate. This highlights God's desire to bring all people into covenant with Him, not just the physical descendants of Abraham.
2. **What is the significance of the inclusion of regulations about the Feast of Unleavened Bread within the section about consecrating the firstborn?** The intertwining of these two rituals emphasizes the importance of remembering *why* they were instituted. The consecration of the firstborn is not merely a rote ritual, but a reminder of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It's linked with the Feast of Unleavened Bread to stress that both practices point back to God's redemptive act, not just participation in a cultural tradition. This stresses the importance of not letting rituals become empty practices, but to always remember their significance and the events they commemorate, specifically God's breaking into their time and space to deliver them from slavery.
3. **Why is the sacrifice/redemption of the firstborn required, especially since God spared the firstborn in Egypt during the final plague?** The sacrifice or redemption of the firstborn serves as a continual reminder and teaching tool of God's grace and deliverance in the Exodus. It's not merely about the sparing of the firstborn in Egypt, but a broader symbol of God's act of redemption. It also prefigures the ultimate sacrifice of God's own firstborn son, Jesus. The ritual compels the Israelites to remember and teach future generations that their lives and nation are a gift from God, bought at a price, and that this act was in time and space, not in a mythical realm.

4. **What is the connection between the historical events of the Exodus and the truth of the Israelites' faith?** The historical events of the Exodus, particularly the crossing of the Reed Sea, are crucial to the Israelites' faith. The faith isn't just a belief system, but it is rooted in real historical occurrences that provide external evidence to confirm their beliefs. These events demonstrate God's power and faithfulness. If the historical accounts are false, then the entire faith system is undermined. Thus, the historicity of the Bible is paramount for the integrity and validity of the faith itself.
5. **Why did God lead the Israelites away from the direct, easy route to Canaan through the Philistine territory?** God led the Israelites away from the direct route, not because it was the shortest or easiest, but because it was not the best way for their long-term development and faith. Had they faced immediate war, they would have likely returned to Egypt, as they lacked the faith to withstand such trials at that point. The chosen route through the desert and the crossing of the Reed Sea was meant to be a profound and transformative experience that would provide a remarkable confirmation of God's power and lead them to trust Him. God wanted them to know his absolute incomparability through a miraculous demonstration, which would be a foundational experience.
6. **Why did God lead the Israelites to be "trapped" by the Reed Sea, and how did this benefit them and God's plan?** The situation at the Reed Sea was deliberately orchestrated by God to demonstrate His glory and power. By allowing the Israelites to become trapped by the sea, God also prompted Pharaoh's pursuit, setting the stage for the miraculous crossing and the ultimate defeat of the Egyptian army. This served to teach both the Israelites and the Egyptians who the true God was. The difficult circumstance was an opportunity for God to show his power and faithfulness and establish his authority not only for the Israelites but also for the Egyptians, all part of God's plan to bring glory to Himself.
7. **Why did the Israelites display such a lack of faith even after witnessing God's miraculous interventions?** The Israelites displayed a lack of faith because their faith was contingent on their circumstances, and the concrete things they could see. When their lives were comfortable and they had concrete evidence of God's favor, they believed, however, they quickly wavered and doubted when faced with difficulties or uncertainty. The Israelites' faith was often based on immediate gratification and not rooted in a deep, unwavering trust in God's promises. It demonstrates how easily swayed faith can be, highlighting the need for a genuine trust in God that is not dependent upon feelings or circumstances.

8. **What is the significance of God's actions occurring in the early morning?** God's actions taking place in the early morning symbolize a new beginning, a moment of contrast between darkness and light, between hopelessness and salvation. This time of day, just before dawn, is also often a time of intense vulnerability and doubt. By acting at this time, God is demonstrating that He can bring hope and deliverance even when circumstances feel the most hopeless. Additionally, it represents God's calling on his people to step out in faith when the path ahead seems unclear, a time of reliance on God, rather than self.