

**Week 1: How the Torah (the Old Testament) of the Bible was such a radical new way of looking at the world in ancient times, and still is today.**

- 1) Bible structure overview
  - a) 66 books protestant, 73 books Catholic (Apocrypha)
    - i) 39 Old Testament: Pentateuch (the first five books) historical, poetry, wisdom, and prophets
    - ii) 27 New testament; four gospels, 23 epistles (letters to people and churches)
  - b) 35 – 40 different authors
  - c) Over about 1,500 years
  - d) Yet one continuous story!
- 2) It was, and still is the most radical book of all time.
  - a) **RADICAL IDEA #1** Monotheism, One Loving God, who cares about Humans
    - i) It's a Love Story! One God's continual love for His creation, humankind, and humankind's fickle love for God.
    - ii) God and Humans love each other, humans sin and reject God, God disciplines Humans, Humans repent, God forgives – shows mercy – shows grace.
    - iii) REPEAT! REPEAT! REPEAT! REPEAT! . . . .
  - b) **RADICAL IDEA #2** God is a God of ethics and Morals while Human hearts are evil.
    - i) The Torah says that "Mans' heart is evil from birth" Gen 8;21 God is concerned for Humans ethical and moral development, and their justice towards others.
    - ii) The Ten Commandments and all other laws were for our ethical and moral development and for our safety. They are heathy boundaries, Not killjoy rules.
    - iii) Be kind to widows, orphans and the foreigner.
    - iv) God is honest, He always keeps his promises!
  - c) **RADICAL IDEA #3** God's Torah puts an end to many "gods" and cultural norms
    - i) God created All Things, Worship the creator not created beings
    - ii) Snakes, God curses the serpent in the garden
    - iii) The ten plagues on Egypt overpowers twenty five different Egyptian gods
    - iv) Women have status
      - (1) Adam and Eve are co-rulers Gen1:28
      - (2) Sarah's age is recorded at her death Gen23:1
      - (3) Rebecca is asked (not told to) if she will marry Isaac Gen 24:57-58
      - (4) Tamar is "more righteous than Judah" Gen 39:26
      - (5) Moses' mom and sister, Egyptian midwives, Pharaoh's daughter
      - (6) Wisdom is depicted as female,
      - (7) In the New Testament the church is the "Bride of Christ"
      - (8) Pay attention how many times women are respected or showed to be honorable
    - v) "Eye for and eye" ends excessive retaliatory killing

- vi) God of the Torah forbids human/infants sacrifices
- vii) God of the Torah forbids shrine prostitution
- viii) God of the Torah institutes monogamy “one man and one woman”
- d) **RADICAL IDEA #4** The Bible records the faults of God’s chosen people and elevates foreigners
  - i) Adam and Eve sin, Abraham lies, Simeon and Levi murder all the male Hivites, Joseph’s brothers sell him into slavery, Moses kills, Jews worship a golden calf, etc. etc.
  - ii) Egyptian midwives, Moses’ wife and father-in-law, Rehab, Bathsheba, Abigail, Ruth . . .
- e) **RADICAL IDEA #5** God is prophetic, He can predict the future
  - i) Serpent and Eve, “he will bruise His heel and He will crush his head”
  - ii) To Noah “I will make it rain.”
  - iv) Told Abraham “I will make you a great nation” and “they will be slaves for 400 years”
  - v) Told Moses He would free His people
  - vi) Isaiah predicted Jesus’ death, Isaiah 53
- f) **RADICAL IDEA #6** God is Unchanging, He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
  - i) God does not act capriciously, all other gods acted on whims, lusts, how they felt
  - ii) God created order, the entire universe has order and follows basic natural laws
  - iii) God gave us His creativity so we can understand these laws. This ability birthed science.
  - iv) As we continue to discover more about the intricacies of God’s creation we understand more about the “mind of God”
- g) **RADICAL IDEA #7** The Bible is a manual for life!
  - i) The Ten Commandments, Follow them!
  - ii) Learn from others mistakes!
  - iii) Remember the stories, learn them, and tell them to your children
  - iv) Do what the Bible says, live your life to reflect it.
  - v) Yes, times have changed but the human condition has NOT. The Bible is STILL relevant!

**RADICAL POWER** The Bible has the power to radically change your life, If you let it.

**It is a Choice!** You need to willingly except Gods invitation to let Him be “your God”. This would have been so much easier if God had not given us free will, but He did and we need to use it wisely. Luckily He gave us His word in this Bible to help us make the right choice.

**Before you read the Bible, pray that God would open your mind and heart to the truth and wisdom of His word.**