

Epic of Eden Discussion Questions

There are more questions in this guide than we will have space for on our discussion night. Use them as a guide for your deepening thoughts as you navigate the book.

Pre-ambles Questions

1. Overall impressions of the book (rate 1-10)?
2. What were some of the things you most appreciated? Feel free to share a quote.
3. What was something you struggled or disagreed with? Feel free to share a quote.

Introduction

4. How has ethnocentrism affected your understanding and interpretation of the Bible, especially the Old Testament?

Chapter 1

5. In *The Epic of Eden*, Richter writes, "God did not canonize Israel's culture . . . he simply used that culture as a vehicle through which to communicate the eternal truth of his character and his will for humanity" (Richter, *Epic*, 23). What are some ways that the church or some members of the body of Christ have canonized Israel's culture in the past? What dangers can arise from this?
6. How do the stories of Lot, Ruth, and Gomer play into your understanding of the story of redemption as expressed in the Bible? Are these new insights for you?
7. What new insights have you developed into the meaning of redemption and Christ's sacrifice on the cross?

Chapter 2

8. How has the discussion of geography and the five major plotlines of the Old Testament helped you to better understand the story?

Chapter 3

9. Considering the suzerian/vassal relationship, how does Richter's writing help your understanding of the ancient Israelite culture and concept of covenant? How do such understandings affect your understanding of God?

Chapter 4

10. Richter describes the results of "Adam's choice" as "not just the removal

of blessings, but a reversal of blessings. What had been a blessing now becomes a curse, a benefit becomes a burden, paradise is exchanged for prison" (Richter, Epic, 106). What do you think of this description?

Chapter 5

11. After reading this chapter, do you agree with the statement "God's original intent is his final intent" (Richter, Epic, 129)? Why or why not?

Chapter 6

12. Richter describes the flood as a "de-creational" event (Richter, Epic, 144, 147). How does this explanation of the flood alter your interpretation of it?
13. Discuss the significance of the smoke and fire walking between the pieces of the sacrifice in Genesis 15. How does understanding this inform your understanding of the depth of God's promise to Abraham and Jesus' sacrifice? (PG 161-162)

Chapter 7

14. Richter states: "If we are to understand the God of our salvation, the faith of Israel, and therefore our own faith, we must understand the exodus" (Richter, Epic, 174). Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

Chapter 8

15. Richter states on page 175, "The law creates and structures the nation by defining what Yahweh requires of them. The calendar organizes Israel's time (the sabbath ordinance, feasts and offerings). The tabernacle enthrones the suzerain in their midst. With this covenant and this blue print for the nation, the kingdom of God is instituted on earth." If these elements were so integral, how do we participate with them in the new covenant?

Chapter 9

16. Does the way the New Testament announces the Messiah (through genealogies and the proclamation of John the Baptist) speak any differently to you now given your new understanding of the story of redemption in the Old Testament and the nature of the promised Messiah?
17. Describe the people, place, and presence of God in the New Covenant. How do these elements shift when we reach the New Jerusalem?
18. Regarding the "not yet," think about the idea that the citizens of your kingdom belong to every nation on earth (Rev. 7:9-10). How does that affect the way you (and your nation) interact with other nations?

