

## Paradigms and Strategies for religious education in the Book of Exodus

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### Introduction

The second book of the Bible is part of the Pentateuch, known in Hebrew literature as Torah (cf. Ezra 7:6). This last word conveys the meaning of instruction, with a possible “connection with ירהׁ in the sense of stretching out the finger, or the hand, to point out a route”.<sup>1</sup> The Law would be taught to the people and, as Ezra records, he had disposed his heart to inquire into the Law, obey it and teach it (7:10). Thus, its didactic purpose is evident from the nomenclature used to designate these first five books of the Bible. In this pedagogical context, in what way is Exodus important?

### Importance of Exodus

Some scholars have pointed to the Book of Exodus as “the most important book in the Bible”.<sup>2</sup> This is due to its theological purpose: “In the Book of Exodus God gives Israel his special name, his special deliverance, his special guidance, his special covenant, his special worship, his special mercy and his special description of himself”.<sup>3</sup> According to Walter C. Kaiser, “Exodus contains some of the richest foundational theology in the Old Testament. [...] Detailed discourses of the nature of God are found in Exodus 3, 6, 33, and 34. These texts focus on the fact and significance of his presence. But his attributes of justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness and holiness are also highlighted”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> HALOT, 1710.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Davidson, Class material OTST885-001 Topics In: Pentateuch, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, June, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> John I Durham, *Exodus*, vol. 3, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), xix.

<sup>4</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Exodus,” in *Genesis-Leviticus*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 1, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 341, 42.

But its importance not only relies on its theological meaning but also in the relational implications between God and his people. “The narratives of Exodus which describe God’s deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, formed the basis for the Israelite’s relationship with God”.<sup>5</sup> “God chooses to enter into an eternally valid covenant relationship with his people Israel”, in which He “is deemed to be absolutely moral, and He correspondingly demands moral standards and behavior from human beings”.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Exodus provides the instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle through which God would lavish his presence among them.

### **The didactic purposes of the book of Exodus**

The book of Exodus has didactic purposes in two senses. The first was to teach them (Exod 24:12): the theological, ethical and relational teaching offered to the people of God. “God was revealed for the first time as a redeemer who delivers them not just from an oppressor, but from their own sin as well. The emerging people of God learned that even their rejection of the Lord would not drive God away. The people learned that God’s presence would positively affect every aspect of their lives”.<sup>7</sup> Jehovah reveals his name (3:6, 14), his merciful character (15:13; 20:6; 34:6, 7), and his power (9:16; 15:6, 7, 13, 14; 32:11). He gives them precise ethical instructions on how to relate to God and their neighbors (20:1-17; 21; 22; 23:1-13; on how to approach him through the tabernacle (26; 27;28; 29:38-46; 30); and he also promises his presence (3:12; 25:8; 29:45). However, it seems that the primary purpose of God with his people is that they learn to believe in Him and produce faith in his new people: “So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped” (Exod 4:31). “Thus, Israel saw the great [a]work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses. (Exod 14:31). They were called to foster a faith that not only trusted but also obeyed (cf. Exod. 24:7).

The second didactic purpose is to teach the foundational element of God’s relationship with his people to the future generations of the Israel.

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<sup>5</sup> Bruce Wells, “Exodus,” in *Exodus Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, ed. John H. Walton, Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 161.

<sup>6</sup> Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus, The Jps Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), xiii.

<sup>7</sup> James K. Bruckner, *Exodus, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 5.

This becomes clear with the institution of the Passover: it is a “memorial” that would be celebrated “for your Generations” (Exod 12:14). The word memorial (זָכָרֹן) is rendered as μνημόσυνον in the LXX, pointing to “an instrument or means designed to cause to remember... something to cause people to remember”.<sup>8</sup> It is clear that the purpose is for future generations of Israelites to remember how God freed them not only from death, but also from slavery to make them his people (cf. 12:17, 24). We also find the following instruction: “And when your children say to you, ‘What does this rite mean to you?’ then you shall say, ‘It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD because He passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians, but spared our homes’” (Exod 12:26–27, NASB 2020). Here the didactical purpose is clear: parents must teach their children the commemorative meaning of the Passover rite. Richard Davidson points out the personification principle for Passover:

“When God instructed Israel about the Passover service as they were just about to leave Egypt, He stated that each succeeding generation was to say to their children, ‘This is done because of what the Lord did for ME when I came up from Egypt’ (Exod 13:8). Each generation was to personalize the Exodus, to consider that they themselves had personally experienced God’s delivering presence as they came out of Egypt.”<sup>9</sup>

They should not only learn the history of liberation and salvation wrought by God, but also appropriate it as their own experience. However, the educational purposes for future generations are not limited to Passover, the same applies to the rest of the book (cf. Exod 27:21; 31:13). This is later confirmed in the instructions to parents regarding the teaching of the word to their children, one that they must repeat during their lifetime:

“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. And you shall repeat them diligently to your sons and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. You shall also tie them as a sign to your hand, and they shall be as frontlets on your forehead. You shall also write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut 6:6–9, NASB 2020).

If the book of Exodus has educational purposes, to all generations of God’s people, then its content should have been selected accordingly. A selected content for educational purposes is technically called a

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<sup>8</sup> Eugene A. Nida, Johannes P. Louw, and Rondal B. Smith, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 348.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Davidson, Class material, June, 2021.

*curriculum*. What, then, could have been the curriculum of the Book of Exodus?

### Exodus' Curriculum

A technical definition would include the overall rationale for any educational program including the planned, un planned, formal, hidden curriculum, but also the way to deliver its content and assess its goals.<sup>10</sup> One simple but useful explanation about curriculum is that it consists of two aspects: “the content (subject matter) and the learning experiences (the mental operations that students employ in learning subject matter). Although in the actual learning act the two are in constant interaction: one cannot deal with content without having a learning experience.”<sup>11</sup> So, what are the contents, learning experiences and goals in Exodus?

### Theology

Exodus contains the foundational truth about God, not only for Israel but also for all mankind. Durham states that “the primary burden of the Book of Exodus, however, is theological. The book is theological in concept, in arrangement, in content, and in implication”.<sup>12</sup> Davidson points out that “the book is central in revealing the identity and character of Israel’s God”.<sup>13</sup> “Exodus is central to the Hebrew Bible. It probes the identity of Yahweh, the God of Israel, through two related themes: the character of divine power, and the nature of divine presence in this world. These two themes of Yahweh’s power and presence go to the heart of ancient Israelite religion”.<sup>14</sup> Kaiser also affirms that Exodus “contains some of the richest foundational theology in the OT. Preeminently, it lays the foundations for a theology of God’s revelation of his person, his redemption, his law, and his worship”.<sup>15</sup> The book reveals God’s attributes, his mercy, holiness, and faithfulness (3:13-15; 6:3).

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<sup>10</sup> A. Kelly, *The Curriculum Theory and Practice* Sixth ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2009), 7.

<sup>11</sup> F. C. Lunenburg, “Theorizing About Curriculum: Conceptions and Definitions,” *International journal of scholarly academic intellectual diversity* 13, no. 1 (2011): 2.

<sup>12</sup> Durham, xx.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Davidson, Class material, June, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Dozeman, Thomas B. *Exodus*. Wm. B. (Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 76.

<sup>15</sup> Kaiser Jr., in *Genesis-Leviticus*, 342.

### Soteriology

Exodus presents God as Savior. “But Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation (יְשׁוּעָה) of the LORD, which He will perform for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again, ever’” (Exod 14:13, NASB 2020). This theme is also very prominent in 15:2, “The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him”. In both cases salvation is offered by God in front of the Egyptians at the crossroads of the Red Sea. Kaiser writes:

“The theology of deliverance and salvation is likewise a strong emphasis of the book. The verb to “redeem” (*gā'al*, one who acts the part of a kinsman–redeemer) is used in 6:6 and 15:13. But the heart of redemption theology is best seen in the Passover narrative in ch. 12 along with the sealing of the covenant in ch. 24. The apostle Paul saw the death of the Passover lamb fulfilled in Christ (1Co 5:7). Indeed, John the Baptist called Jesus the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29), just as the Last Supper was a celebration of the Passover meal”.<sup>16</sup>

In Exodus, God wants to reveal himself as the savior of Israel and of all humanity; freeing the former from literal slavery and all humanity alongside them from the slavery and the consequences of sin.

### God’s presence

Exodus finds unity “[in] the theology of Yahweh present with and in the midst of his people Israel. [...] this theme is constantly in evidence, serving as theological anchor and also as a kind of compass indicating the directions in which the book is to go”.<sup>17</sup> This presence is part of the revelation about himself and his transcendence Kaiser will indicate that “above every other consideration is the fact that the omnipotent, unchanging, and transcendent God of the whole universe has, by means of the tabernacle, graciously come to ‘dwell’ or ‘tabernacle’ with his people”.<sup>18</sup> This presence is evident along the whole book, as Durham has pointed out:

“The revelation to Moses in chaps. 3 and 4 establishes Yahweh’s Presence with Moses (3:6, 12; 4:5, 11–12, 15), points backward to his Presence with Israel in Egypt (3:7–10) and forward to the proof of his Presence to Israel and to the Egyptians and to Pharaoh (3:17, 19–22; 4:21–23), as does the parallel summary of this narrative in Exod 6:2–8. The revelation to Israel in chaps. 19–20 establishes Yahweh’s Presence in

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Durham, xxi.

<sup>18</sup> Kaiser Jr., in *Genesis-Leviticus*, 342.

Israel's midst (19:9–11, 16–18; 20:1–21), points backward to the proof of his Presence in Egypt and at the sea (19:4; 20:2) and forward to the proof of his Presence manifested in Israel's response to his nearness (19:5–6, 8; 20:3–17). The revelation to Moses interceding for Israel in chaps. 32, 33, and 34 establishes Yahweh's Presence as the essential and indispensable basis of Israel's very existence as Yahweh's people (32:7–10; 33:1–6, 12–17). That revelation also points backward to the fact of his Presence and its benefits (32:11–13) and forward to what Yahweh is yet to accomplish in Israel's midst, making Israel unique among all peoples (33:15; 34:9) both by Yahweh's deeds and by Yahweh's requirements (34:10–26).<sup>19</sup>

As we can see, the presence of God is transversal in the book of Exodus and fulfills the promise “I will be with you” made to Moses (3:12), as was later repeated to Joshua (Josh 1:5).<sup>20</sup> Exodus portrays the presence of God with his people of all ages as a fundamental part of its curriculum.

### **Ethics**

After having led his people out of Egypt, God enters into a covenant relationship with them. He gives them his law and ethical instructions (cf. Exod 24:12), in order to make them “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (19:6). The didactic purposes of the ethical section of the book is not only informative, but also transformative. As stated by Sarna:

“The Decalogue and the legislative sections of Exodus thereby constitute divine law. They are not, as is the case with the Near Eastern law collections, the fruit of human wisdom or royal sagacity... God is deemed to be absolutely moral, and He correspondingly demands moral standards of behavior from human beings”.<sup>21</sup>

### **Four teaching events-axes**

Following the natural narrative of the text, we can group the teaching that God imparted to Israel into four significant events or axes: (1) The exit and Passover, (2) Sinai and the law, (3) The crossing of the Red Sea, and (4) the tabernacle. Around these didactic moments, the theological, soteriological content of the curriculum and the learning experiences are arranged. As we will see, the order in which these events

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<sup>19</sup> Durham, xxii.

<sup>20</sup> And to the disciples when Jesus said to them, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matt 28:20).

<sup>21</sup> Sarna, xiii.

occur, coupled with their content, have theological implications that should not be overlooked.

### **The exit and Passover**

This event begins with the multiplication of Israel and the subsequent oppression they suffer. God presents himself as compassionate, one who hears the affliction of his people (Exod 3:7-9; 6:3-5), as well as deliverer (3:19; 6:7,8). He also makes himself known by name (3:14) and promises his presence to Moses: “I will be with you” (3:12; 6:6). In 4:30-31, the book’s primary purpose becomes evident: “He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, they bowed low and worshiped” (Exod 4:30–31, NASB 2020).

The institution of the Passover before the departure is significant. In it, God is presented as savior and protector, where the blood of the paschal lamb typologically<sup>22</sup> points to Jesus Christ who would shed his blood to free us from death (cf. Matt 26:27-29). Davidson points out that Matthew and the other Synoptic Gospels also depict the death and resurrection of Jesus as a New Exodus.<sup>23</sup>

### **Salvation at the Red Sea**

The next axis is the crossing of the Red Sea, where God is presented as the God of salvation (cf. Exod 14:13, 30; 15:2). Central to this axis is Yahweh as savior. As stated by Durham, God “commands them to set aside the fear demoralizing them, to stand firm where they are, and to witness Yahweh’s imminent salvation. The victory will be gained wholly by Yahweh”.<sup>24</sup> Even a certain missionary motif arises: “And the Egyptians will know that I am Jehovah” (cf. 14:4, 18).

Following the typology that points to Jesus, this axis teaches that salvation is God’s work. The Israelites could not save themselves; just as human beings cannot do anything to produce salvation (Eph 2: 9). The crossing of the Red Sea symbolizes liberation from Egypt and the beginning of Israel as God’s people; typologically, it symbolizes the experience of baptism as liberation sin and the birth to a new life dedicated to God.

“For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea; and

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Davidson, Class material, June, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Durham, 192.

they all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and they all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:1–4, NASB 2020).

In this context, it is evident that one main theme of Exodus is that the Israelites may believe the Lord: “So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus, Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and *believed the Lord* and His servant Moses” (Exod 14:30, cursive added).

### **Sinai and the Law**

Around Sinai and after salvation at the crossing of the Red Sea, God gathers his people “Before the mount” (19:2), where God called them “for their instruction” (24:12) by his commandments. The content of the teaching goes beyond strictly ethical concerns, detailing the form of behavior and the relationships between the children of Israel, as well as their relationship with God, and so, it is also relational.

It is essential to underline the fact that the basis of the teaching of the law is grace. Davidson explains this in the context of the blood shed on the altar is central to covenant (cf. 24:6). So it is the blood on the altar, a symbol of Jesus’ sacrifice (John 1:1), the basis of the covenant and not obedience to the words.<sup>25</sup> The same author comments that the covenant has the format of a marriage proposal, which implies dwelling together, loyalty and love.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Tabernacle**

The tabernacle is probably the most powerful didactic resource used in the book of Exodus, but also in the entire Bible to make known the saving work of God to his people. Davidson indicates the centrality of the blood of the lamb and its typological importance. “Through the Passover where God spares his people because of the blood of the lamb and through the tabernacle which illustrates the process of salvation”.<sup>27</sup> In the tabernacle, it is possible to find multiple didactic, visual and active strategies; the use of the senses, symbols, etc. The Israelites approached God in the tabernacle and could see, feel, learn, and experience God’s forgiveness and work of salvation.

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Davidson, Class material, June, 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

The didactic capacity of the Tabernacle comes directly from God because the design and all its details come from the model showed by him to Moses (Exod 25:8). “See that you make them by the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain” (25:40, NASB 2020). The original would be the heavenly sanctuary, according to Hebrews (Heb 7:27; 9:40).

The didactic resources used in the tabernacle are varied, and their symbolism and theological meaning is vast. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to cover them all, therefore we will limit ourselves only to enunciating some of them as an example of how the tabernacle was used as a didactic resource to teach the saving acts of God.

On the outside was the altar, which had to represent the presence of God (cf. Ps 43:4). Altars had been used in the past by God’s people and their ancestors to offer sacrifices and communicate with God.<sup>28</sup> They would continue to do so in the future. We also find the bronze fountain that symbolizes the spiritual cleansing of sin (cf. Acts 22:16; Eph 5:26). Inside the holy place was the table with 12 loaves that reminded Israel that God was the one who sustained them. It also represented Jesus, the bread of life (cf. John 6:48-51). The seven-branched golden lampstand symbolizes the omnipresence of God and the Holy Spirit (cf. Zech 4:11). In the New Testament Jesus would say “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The altar of incense right in front of the veil that separates the holy place from the holiest place symbolizes the prayers that ascend to God (cf. Ps 141:2). According to the New Testament, the merits of Christ are the fragrance that makes our prayers acceptable before the Lord (Eph 5:2; Rev 5: 8).<sup>29</sup> The ark of the covenant was a wooden box covered with pure gold inside and out. It was located in the holiest place (Exod 25:10-22). It contained the tables of the Law. On it was a covering of gold, and on the cover were two cherubim between which the glory of God was revealed granting pardon to the repentant sinners. The ark symbolized the presence of God, there He communicated with Moses, and his presence was manifested.

The sacrifices constituted an active and symbolic visual didactic resource that pointed to the sacrifice of Christ, who would give his blood for us (Isa 53: 4-6; John 1:29). When a sinner brought an offering, he placed his hands on the head of the victim (Lev 1:4) and asked forgiveness for his sin (Lev 4:1-21). Then the priest performed the ritual of blood, sprinkling a part of it inside the tabernacle and putting a little of

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<sup>28</sup> Ángel M. Rodríguez, “Sanctuary”, in *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Pub. Association, 2000), 429.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

it on the horns of the altar of incense. This whole process varied according to the offerer, the type of offering or the type of sin. However, all of it symbolized Christ who shed his blood for the world.

The priesthood itself was a symbol of Christ. The priests were the representatives of the people before God (Deut 33:10; Lev 10:11), they presented the offerings, performed the rituals of the tabernacle through which sinners asked and obtained forgiveness of their sins, offered incense symbolizing the prayers of the people, the priesthood represents Jesus who intercedes for us in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 4:14-16).

In the tabernacle, all the senses were used as teaching resources. the worshipers could see what was and what was happening in it, with all its symbolic load. They could participate by touching the offered sacrifice. They could smell the aroma of the sacrifices and the incense. They could hear the prayers, instruments, and praises, and even on some occasions, they could taste part of the offerings.

### **The soteriological implications of the order of themes and events**

The order in which the Exodus events occur is not accidental, this has been observed by several researchers. For example, Sarna points out the spatial arrangement of the events.

Using the criterion of geographic location, one may divide Exodus into three sections. Chapters 1:1 to 15:21, describe the oppression of God's people, struggle for liberation and its final attainment in the land of Egypt. The account of chapters 15:22 to 18:27 take place at the Red Sea, and chapters 19 to 40 take place at Sinai.<sup>30</sup> This tripartite structure also highlights the overarching theme of the presence of God among His people: (1) redeeming them, (2) entering into a covenant relationship with them based upon His prior redemption and expressed by loyal obedience to His law, (3) and dwelling among them in His sanctuary.

Although Sarna indicates that there are other ways of dividing the book, he relates the structure to the centrality of God and his liberating work in favor of his people. "The entire narrative is God centered. Its focal points are God's mighty deeds on behalf of His people in times of oppression, in the act of liberation, and in the course of the wilderness wanderings. God is the sole actor, the only initiator of events".<sup>31</sup>

Kaiser also sees a structure of events more focused on their theological meaning and divine redemptive action on behalf of his people. Starting with liberation, he then delivers the ethical instructions

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<sup>30</sup> See Sarna, xiii

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

in which he teaches where to live. These laws show the gracious character of God. Finally, God gives instructions to enter into an intimate and face-to-face relationship with his people around the sanctuary.<sup>32</sup>

It is possible to see in the progression of Israel’s experience a parallel with the facets of conversion and Christian discipleship, in the following order:

- (1) The call; In the case of Israel, this occurs from Egypt that symbolizes life away of God and in bondage to sin from where God calls us to be his children. The call to be Disciples (Matt 28:19), and the old life in the language of Paul.
- (2) The moment of baptism, which for Israel is the crossing of the Red Sea (1 Cor 10:1-4). It is the turning point as declared in the great commission (Matt 28:19, 20).
- (3) In the Pauline model (Rom 6:4) the goal is to learn and to adopt a lifestyle by means of a lifelong process. The final transformation occurs when Christ returns to seek his children (Rom 6:22; Phil 1:6).

<b>Israel’s experience</b>	<b>Jesus’ great commission Mat 28:19, 20</b>	<b>Paul’s model Rom 5-8</b>
<i>Egypt</i> – The Israelites are offered deliverance and they accept it (Exod 4:30; 13:3, 14).	Become disciples	Old life
<i>Red Sea</i> - Baptism of Israel (1 Cor 10:1-4).	Baptism	New life
<i>Sinai</i> - “Teach them” (Exod 24:12)	“Teaching them”	Sanctification

### **Paradigms on teaching strategies**

God’s paradigms in teaching Israel are perfectly aligned with certain purposes. In curricular terms, we would say that the teaching units have been designed with the learning outcomes established initially: that his people learn to trust him (Exod 4:4-5; 19:9). The learning experiences are aligned with this great purpose. In recent years, this curricular technique is known as backward design, in which the learning experiences are oriented to the goal proposed at the beginning.<sup>33</sup> What is

<sup>32</sup> Kaiser Jr., in *Genesis-Leviticus*. 341.

<sup>33</sup> Grant P. Wiggins y Jay McTighe. *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units*. (ASCD, 2011), 14.

amazing is that the technique used by God achieves his goal, because “they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses” (14:31).

In addition, God used multiple teaching strategies that address multiple learning styles and uses as many senses as possible to acquire them. This is what in curriculum language is known as attending to the variety of learning skills of the different students, which is what is recommended for inclusive education.<sup>34</sup>

Below we will review some of these strategies by way of example, since it would be very extensive to make an exhaustive analysis.

### Learning styles

Experts in learning psychology have found that each person learns in a different way. There is an innate tendency to integrate, assimilate and acquire knowledge. Learning styles have to do with our approach on how we learn best. Honey and Alonzo propose Active, Reflective, Theoretical, and Pragmatic learning styles. Below we will briefly describe each of them and see how God uses learning experiences that facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and attitudes for each of them.<sup>35</sup>

**Active:** These students like challenges and short activities. They prefer to be involved in their learning and enjoy new experiences and teamwork. Keywords: DO, MANIPULATE.

We find many instances where the Israelites could learn from this learning style. At Passover, they tasted, manipulated the elements, painted the lintels of houses with the blood of the lambs that they had slaughtered (12:7-13). In the tabernacle, they had the opportunity to bring the sacrifice, put their hand on the animal (Lev 1:4). They also had the chance to collect the manna (Exo 16:17, 22), among many other opportunities.

**Reflective:** This involves collecting all possible data; after careful analysis, decisions are made. Students observe, analyze all facets of a problem. Keywords: THINK, REFLECT.

In the book of Exodus, we find that God orders certain events and rites such as the Passover (12:14; 13: 3, 9, 16), the observance of the Sabbath (31:13) as a memorial, to remember and rethink the acts of God. Exodus records the use of hymns such as the song of Miriam (15:1-21) so that they could remember and meditate on the salvation operated by God.

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<sup>34</sup> Carlos Parra Dussan, “Educación inclusiva: un modelo de diversidad humana.” *Educación y desarrollo social* 5.1 (2011): 139-150.

<sup>35</sup> M. Alonso, D. Gallego, and P. Honey, *Los Estilos De Aprendizaje. Procedimientos De Diagnóstico Y Mejora*, Sixth ed. (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1995). 67-136.

Israel could reflectively think about what happened, remember it, meditate on its meaning and implications. All this would help them to achieve the learning objectives set by God.

**Theoretical:** Learners approach problems vertically and in logical phases. They are not satisfied until they have reached “perfection”. They do not like to work in groups. They are very rational; they want theoretical models. Keywords: ANALYZE, UNDERSTAND.

A characteristic of theorists is that they do not react to statements that are not supported by a reason or logical support. In the book of Exodus, God satisfies this need repeatedly by offering the reasons why something should be done, explaining the consequences and implications of specific actions so that conceptually it makes sense to those who have this learning style. He tells Moses to remove the shoes from his feet *because* it is holy ground (Exod 3:5). In the song of Miriam, we find the reason for the praise and the trust that all of Israel should have in God. For pragmatists, the experience was enough, but in the canticle of Miriam, the theorists had the opportunity to think about the reasons (15:1, 19, 21, 23, 25). We find the same aspect in how the Ten Commandments were written. They are repeatedly given the reasons and consequences related to their obedience (20:5, 7, 11; 31:13, 14, 17). Other examples are the indication not to afflict foreigners (23:9), or how they must allow citizens of neighboring nations to dwell in their land (23:31, 33). In this way, those who need reasons and explanations received what they needed to learn.

**Pragmatic:** These learners are restless; they like to act and take a hands-on approach with projects or activities that attract them; they do not like speeches or theory but prefer demonstrations and practical applications. Keywords: ACHIEVE, MAKE IT WORK.

For pragmatics, explanations or promises were not enough; they need to see the achievements, have successful experiences, and experience something that works. The Exodus experience is full of them. To name a few: The plagues and God's protection for Israel (7:18-10:29); the salvation of the firstborn (12:22-36); the crossing of the Red Sea after which the record indicates that “They believed the Lord”; the feeding with manna (16:1-36); the provision of water (17:1-7); the protection by the cloud and the pillar of fire (13:17-22), etc. All these learning experiences had great didactic impact, especially for those with a pragmatic learning style.

### Use of the senses

Informed educators know that the more senses are involved in teaching, the greater and more lasting the learning will be.<sup>36</sup> This fact has been widely studied and documented by researchers of the teaching-learning process. In the book of Exodus, we can observe that God intentionally uses all the senses to fixate his teachings in the minds of his people.

**Sight:** The Israelites could see the works of God, they saw the plagues, they saw the opening of the Red Sea, they saw the pillar of fire and the cloud, they saw the manna, etc. But not only that, God occupied the aesthetic taste in the design and construction of the tabernacle and the priests' clothing, there is talk of beauty תִּפְאַרֶת (Exod 28:2, 40). God also occupied the colors to give symbolism and meaning. Davidson explains for example the meaning of the blue color, associated with lapis lazuli occupied both in the tables of the law associated with the material of the throne of God, implying the divine origin of the Decalogue.<sup>37</sup>

**Hearing:** The Lord also used the sense of hearing. Exodus records that when the Israelites approached Mount Sinai, on the third day “when it was morning, that there were 1thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud over the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled” (Exod 19:16). The people listened and knew that it was God who was speaking with Moses and they were so afraid that they asked Moses “do not have God speak to us, or we will die!” (20:19). Later, Joshua would blow the *shofar* before the battle of Jericho and before the Ark of the Covenant representing the presence of God in the midst of the people (Josh 6:8-9).

**Touch:** The Israelites had the opportunity to touch, as mentioned above, they cooked the lamb and painted their lintels with the lamb's blood (Exod 12:7-13). They could put their hand on the sacrifice for sin (Lev 1:4). When participating in the rituals many senses were involved and one of them was touch.

**Taste:** At Passover, they tasted the unleavened bread and roast meat of a lamb without blemish, together with bitter herbs (Exod 12:5-13). This meal was full of meaning; the use of the sense of taste was associated with the memory of God's liberation from Egypt, signifying a powerful memorial as a perpetual mandate for their generations (Exod 12:14, 17). This rite would also serve as a didactic tool to explain to the

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<sup>36</sup> Leonor Angélica Galindo Cárdenas et al., “¿Cómo El Aprendizaje Basado En Problemas (Abp) Transforma Los Sentidos Educativos Del Programa De Medicina De La Universidad De Antioquia?,” *Iatreia* 24, no. 3 (Sept-Nov 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Richard Davidson, Class material, June, 2021.

children when their curiosity was aroused, and they could wonder how God had brought them out of Egypt with miracles and power. The Israelites also had the privilege of tasting manna, bread from heaven that taught them that God cares for his children and is willing to meet his needs (Exod 16:31).

**Smell:** In the context of the temple service, Jehovah ordered Moses to make an altar to burn the incense. The instructions were precise: it had to be aromatic incense, it had to be burned at a specific moment of the ritual, and it would be a perpetual practice for Israel (Exod 30:1-8). The altar was located right in front of the curtain that divided the Holy place and the Holiest. The incense ritual was carried out in the context of the priest's intercession for the people and foreshadowed the prayers of the people of God that reached as far as God's presence was manifested in the ark of the covenant in the Holiest place. The incense offered, according to the biblical interpretation itself, means the prayers of the saints who reach the throne of God (Rev 5:8; 8:3). In this way, the smell was also used by God as a means of teaching.

### **Punishment**

Although punishment is not referred to positively in current pedagogical practice,<sup>38</sup> behaviorism has long taught positive and negative reinforcements to desired and unwanted behaviors.<sup>39</sup> It is striking that God does use punishment (עָנַשׁ) as a form of teaching. However, it is important to differentiate it from the legal punishment that is applied to people who break laws (Exod 21:20, 21). Punishment occurs only once when administered by men (21:20); in all other occurrences in Exodus, punitive action is carried out by God.<sup>40</sup> One example is when God decides to punish Israel after the incident of the golden calf. As a teaching method, God states, "But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless on the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin" (Exod 32:34, NASB 2020). The punishment for sin is applied by God and by his decision, not by human will. We must also mention Exodus 34:7, text that declares how God visits or punishes the wicked, but introduces another powerful divine

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<sup>38</sup> F. F. D. C. Monte, and L. R. Sampaio, "Práticas Pedagógicas E Moralidade Em Unidade De Internamento De Adolescentes Autores De Atos Infracionais," *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica* 25 (2012).

<sup>39</sup> C. George Boeree, "Albert Bandura: 1925 - Present," 2006, accessed October, 2021, <https://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/bandura.html>.

<sup>40</sup> See the use of עָנַשׁ in Exodus.

action that has the purpose of teaching his children what God is like and how he wants to relate to his people: forgiveness and mercy.

### **Conclusion**

The book of Exodus is central in the Bible and fundamental to all its teaching. In it, God reveals his character full of mercy, his law of love, works his salvation by grace to his people and promises his presence in their midst. It is fundamental for the formation of the people of Israel as well as for Christianity. It has a didactic purpose, "To teach them" (24:12), and the teaching is related to its theological and soteriological content. To teach his people, God uses various didactic means that constitute a paradigm of religious teaching, given both the curriculum and the goals of the text. It is possible to observe four events-didactic axes in the teaching of God to Israel: (1) The departure and Easter, (2) The crossing of the Red Sea, (3) Mount Sinai and the Law, and (4) the Tabernacle. The teaching strategies used by God are varied, and many of them have been re-discovered by education professionals in recent years. God uses a wide range of didactic techniques in these four axes; we can see that his teaching adapts and uses the various learning styles and employs the use of all the senses; it is based on experiential and significant learning that produces the incorporation of concepts; And behaviors in an enduring way. The book of Exodus shows us God as an excellent and successful religious educator, as he achieved the goals of his teaching because he "believed the Lord and His servant Moses" (14:3).