

The Heart of the Torah

Session 3



“Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.”

(Exodus 23.12)

Chapter One

1. What did you hear in Crossan’s description of Genesis 1 that you hadn’t heard of thought of before? How might this new information change your thinking?

2. How is the creation story about our identity – who we *are*? Why is this identity Crossan points out so critical to our lives?

Chapter Two

1. What’s so great about Sabbath?

2. Crossan says that the ideas of Sabbath creation, Sabbath day, Sabbath year, and the Sabbath jubilee is some of “the most radical stuff in the entire Bible.” Discuss.

Chapter Three

1. The rise and fall of the Mesopotamian Temple/Priestly class follows a distinct arc of influence. Where do you see similar arcs of influence in today’s church and society?

2. How does an awareness of the tension between the royal, priestly, and military influences inform your reading of the Biblical text? Of today’s culture?

Chapter Four

1. By what means did ancient empires keep their vassal states and subordinate colonies in line?

2. The Assyrian style of covenant influenced the Biblical Deuteronomic tradition and prophets like Isaiah and Amos. How might an awareness of this matrix affect your future reading of these texts?