Darshan Yeshiva

Intro To Bible

Key Points

- **Early Jewish history was polytheistic.** Monotheism grew out of that tradition. Elements can still be seen in Biblical language (use of multiple names of God, songs like Song of the Sea, etc.)

- **A universal God and universal text** inspired by God is a result of exilic periods.

    - The Jewish people are called the People of the Book, but really, we are the "people of the interpretation of the Book" (Richard Elliott Friedman)

- **The Bible more than anything is what held Jewish history and continuity together** from the second expulsion in 70 CE to the founding of the State of Israel.

- **There is a difference between Truth and Facts**

    - Truth: moral truth, the texts working throughout history to inspire people toward the bettering of society. It's true because it works.

    - Fact: the historicity of events as determined by multiple verifiable sources

        - It's hard to distinguish the facts of the Bible because we don't have a lot of "scientific" evidence from other cultures. On the other hand, cultures tend to not keep records of other cultures than their own, and even then, the records are biased towards the success of their own culture over others (example: war records)

- **Modern people think of history and storytelling in a linear fashion** (beginning, middle, end, and "just the facts".) **Hebrew minds think in terms of genre.** The Bible is therefore a mix of history, law, popular stories of the region, morality, generational lineages and a mix of differing and sometimes contradictory philosophies on life (example: God's fairness in treating the Hebrews versus the Job narrative; God as the God of the Hebrews in Exodus versus the God of Second Isaiah)

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