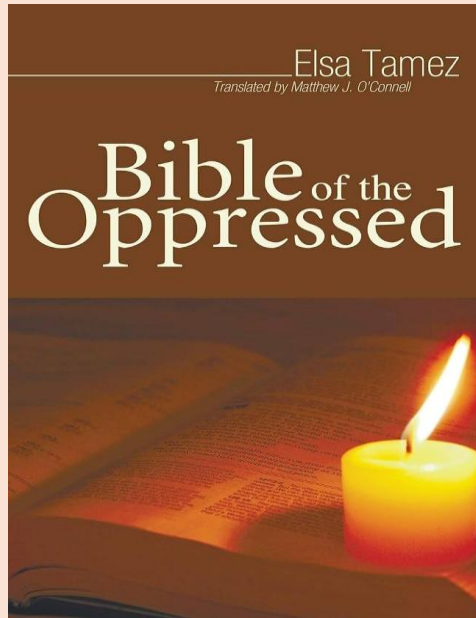




Bible of the Oppressed
by Elsa Támez

LBHS GROUP READING QUESTIONS
WRITTEN BY
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Bible of the Oppressed

“Introduction” & Ch. 1 (pp. 1-19)

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1. Let's begin by becoming familiar with our author. Who is Elsa Támez? Where you familiar with her before joining this reading group? What does a brief online search share about her?
2. What major political event informs Támez's commitments and exegesis (pp.3-4)? What do you know about this event?
3. Let's read between and beyond the lines. Recall Támez's exegetical observation that “Oppression and liberation are the very substance of the entire historical context within which divine revelation unfolds, and only by reference to this central fact can we understand the meaning of faith, grace, love, peace, and salvation” (p. 1). Now recall Támez's socio-theological observation that “There is an almost complete absence of the theme of oppression in European and North American biblical theology” (p. 4). What strikes you about Támez's exegetical observation about oppression, liberation, and revelation? What strikes you about how that exegetical observation pairs with Támez's socio-theological observation?

4. Review the Hebrew words for “oppression” that Támez lists (pp. 8-9). Are you familiar with these words and their connotations? Had a pastor, priest, or other Christian educator introduced you to them?
5. What level of exegetical, social analysis does Támez offer in Chapter 1?
6. Why is it important to know the meanings of *nagash* to understand the exodus narrative?
7. Why is it important to know the meanings of *anah* to understand Jesus and the kingdom of God?
8. Why is it important to know the meanings of *lahats* to understand the exodus narrative and book of Judges?

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- Page 3 of 12

5. Támez writes that “*Daka*’ seems to be the strongest of the Hebrew words for oppression” (p.24). What does *daka*’ mean? How does knowing this meaning help us understand Isaiah 56 & 57 (p25)?
6. How does *tok* relate to lying and deception (p. 26)? How does it relate to Padilla’s discussion of the Antichrist?
7. What does *dak* mean (p. 26)? How does knowing this meaning help us understand Psalm 10 (pp.26-27)?
8. What does *yanah* mean (p. 27)? How does knowing this meaning help us understand Ezekiel and Zephaniah (pp.27-28)?
9. What does *ratsats* mean (p. 26)? How does knowing this meaning help us understand Isaiah 58 and the kind of fasting God, the liberator, chooses/commands (pp.28-29)?

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- Page 5 of 12

4. Támez argues that “Those who strive to accumulate riches cannot follow Yahweh” (p. 35). How does this claim relate to New Testament teachings about wealth?
5. Támez writes; “In the Book of Psalms and elsewhere, the oppressor is spoken of as a son of iniquity, enemy, adversary, haughty, impious, evildoer, proud, greedy. In short, oppressors are the *resha'im*, ‘the wicked,’ whose typical actions are violence, despoliation, deception, injustice” (p. 36). Támez builds on this claim on page 40: “I emphasize this point because we often read of the ‘wicked’ in the Psalms without realizing the full meaning of the word. Such words as ‘iniquitous,’ ‘impious,’ ‘proud,’ have a sociopolitical content that we usually overlook.” How can these observations help us read and understand Psalm 10 and Psalm 14?
6. What characteristics does Támez associate with the oppressed (p. 37)? Which groups does she describe as “doubly oppressed” (pp.37-38)?
7. How, according to Támez, does oppressing people relate to oppressing God (p. 38)?

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1. Támez writes that throughout the OT, oppressors principally oppress people “to increase their wealth” (pp.3, 41). Thus, “the impoverishment and death of the oppressed are a secondary consequence [of the oppressors aims and practices]” (p.41). What insights do we gain from this distinction?
2. According to Exodus 1, what motivates Egypt’s increased oppression of the Hebrew people (p. 41)? How does this motive relate to wealth acquisition?
3. What eight methods of oppression does Támez highlight in her exegesis of Exodus (pp. 41-46)? What strikes you about these practices? Had you noticed them before reading this chapter?
4. Compare Támez’s presentation of Ahab’s murdering Naboth with her discussion of oppressors in chapter 3 (pp.32-33). What does this comparison reveal about the anti-kingdom?

5. What strikes you about Támez's exegesis of OT teachings about "fools" and "nobles" (p.48)? How does exegesis relate to previous points she's made about OT teachings about foolishness and sin (pp.36, 38)?
6. What seven methods of oppression does Támez outline while analyzing national oppression (pp.48-53)?
7. As we conclude Támez's analysis of OT teachings about oppression, what questions do you have about them?

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- Page 9 of 12

- Who experiences the “good news” as good news (pp.67-68)? Who does not (p.69)? How do these responses echo Exodus?
- What five Hebrew words for “poor” does Támez present (pp.70-71)? Were you familiar with these words and their connotations?
- What strikes you about Támez’s arguments and observations in “Blessed Are the Poor” (pp.72-74)?

By Elsa Támez (1982)

- Page 11 of 12

4. What role do Matthew 7, Luke 18, and theologies of the Eucharist play in Tamez's discussion of the unconverted (pp.79-80)? How does she relate these texts and theologies to decontextualized and depoliticized readings of Scripture (p.80)—readings which she believes “leads to death” (p.58)?
5. How does Gustavo Gutiérrez define conversion (p.81)?
6. What lingering questions or thoughts do you have as we finish *Bible of the Oppressed*?