



Darkwood Brew.org

Wherever You Are, We'll Meet You There

New to the role of facilitator? Here are a few tips to help you get started.

- First of all, a facilitator's job is to coordinate the flow of each session. View the video segment ahead of time and make your own notes and observations.
- Prepare the meeting place so that it is comfortable. Arrive early; help organize any refreshments and test your video player/computer.
- Getting to know one another helps the discussions flow. Welcome all, catch up and reflect a bit on last week's session in the first few minutes.
- You don't have to be the expert. You are not expected to provide answers to questions provided. So let the questions ignite the conversation and see where it takes the group.
- It's everyone's responsibility to make sure everyone else gets an equal amount of time to talk.
- Listen first; evaluate later. Make sure you understand a comment, then ask questions or pose other options.
- Encourage participants to bring a Bible or other resources.
- If you feel so moved, start, and/or end your session in prayer.

Leaders Guide

"A Way Out of No Way"

An African American folk saying claims that our God can make a way out of no way. In this six-week series, we'll explore some familiar Hebrew stories of despair and deliverance. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses each persevered with God's help amid almost unimaginable darkness. This series is for the times in your life when there seems to be no way out, and for the times when God's covenant shines a light in the darkness providing that way, after all. Through the narratives of these biblical archetypes, we come to experience our own stories as more hopeful than we might have ever imagined.

Welcome to the Darkwood Brew journey!

We are glad you can join us. Our primary resources for small group study are condensed versions of Darkwood Brew's weekly one-hour episodes. These are called GUIDED EPISODES. Each Guided Episode is 25-30 minutes in length. There are pause points with questions provided for each Episode, intended for group discussion or individual reflection.

On the following page, you will find information on the Series Topic, Skype Guests, Scripture passage, and Questions posed during the episode.



EPISODE TITLE: “Noah and the Flood (Saving)”

A Way Out of No Way, Episode 1

Featured Guest: Dr. Eric Elnes

Dr. Eric Elnes is a biblical scholar with a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also a leading articulator of Convergence Christianity and Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church (UCC) in Omaha, NE. Eric has written several books on faith, theology and culture including, *The Phoenix Affirmations: A New Vision for the Future of Christianity* (Jossey-Bass, 2006) and a book on experiential worship called *Igniting Worship: The Seven Deadly Sins* (Abingdon, 2004). In 2006, Eric also helped lead a 2,500 mile walk from Phoenix to Washington, DC, to promote awareness of progressive/emerging Christian faith and practice and meet with Christians at a grassroots to hear their hopes and dreams for the future of faith in America. His journey, which is the subject of a feature-length film, *The Asphalt Gospel*, is recounted in his book, *Asphalt Jesus: Finding a New Christian Faith on the Highways of America* (Jossey-Bass, 2007).

Questions:

1. Why does God allow evil?
What is the source of evil?
2. What does it mean for us that God is more focused on being in relationship with us than on us being perfect?
3. How can you trust a God that allows evil in the world?

Thorny Theological Question:

Is God trustworthy?

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Genesis 6:16-22; 9:8-15

¹⁶Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.' ²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

⁹ ⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' ¹²God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

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EPISODE TITLE: “Can God Trust Us? Abraham and Call (Blessing)”

A Way Out of No Way, Episode 2

Featured Guest: **Jacqueline E. Lapsley**

Jacqueline E. Lapsley is associate professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. She is most recently co-editor of *The Old Testament and Ethics: A Book-by-Book Survey* (Baker Academic, 2013), *A Women’s Bible Commentary, Third Edition* (Westminster John Knox, 2012), and associate editor for *The Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Baker Academic, 2011). She is currently working on environmental issues in the Old Testament.

Questions:

1. How might the whole world benefit from the blessing bestowed on this one family?
2. What do you think it means for our faith and ourselves that Abraham displays common human flaws and frailties?
3. Can God trust us?

Thorny Theological Question:

Can God trust us?

Pneuma Divina Scripture: **Genesis 12:1-9**

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. ⁹And Abram journeyed on by stages towards the Negeb.



EPISODE TITLE: “With him? Joseph and Prison (Protecting)”

A Way Out of No Way, Episode 3

Featured Guest: Bishop John Selders

The Rt. Rev. Dr. John L. Selders, Jr. is an ordained minister serving in the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Organizing Pastor of Amistad UCC, Hartford, CT, and Executive Director of Zezzo House (an 18 unit housing project). He is also the Bishop Presider of The Inter-Denominational Conference of Liberation Congregations and Ministries and is the Co-Convening Bishop of The Sacred College of Progressive Episcopates. Bishop Selders has traveled across the country speaking, lecturing and conducting workshops in the areas of race, anti-racism and internalized oppression. He is a teacher, lecturer, workshop leader, an HIV/AIDS educator and activist. He works with several organizations both locally and nationally whose work is ultimately concerned with the healing of humanity.

Questions:

1. Joseph experiences extremes of struggle and success. How does that compare to your experiences and to the lives of people you know?

Thorny Theological Question:

What is the real Prosperity Gospel if it isn't about wealth and success?

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Genesis 39:1-23

³⁹ Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ⁴⁰ The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ⁴¹ His master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. ⁴² So Joseph found favour in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁴³ From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁴⁴ So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and, with him there, he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. ⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, 'Lie with me.' ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, with me here, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand. ⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' ¹⁰ And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not consent to lie beside her or to be with her. ¹¹ One day, however, when he went into the house to do his work, and while no one else was in the house, ¹² she caught hold of his garment, saying, 'Lie with me!' But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. ¹³ When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴ she called out to the members of her household and said to them, 'See, my husband has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us! He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; ¹⁵ and when he heard me raise my voice and cry out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outside.' ¹⁶ Then she kept his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, 'The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; ¹⁸ but as soon as I raised my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outside.'

¹⁹ When his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, 'This is the way your servant treated me', he became enraged. ²⁰ And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; he remained there in prison. ²¹ But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love; he gave him favour in the sight of the chief jailer. ²² The chief jailer committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison, and whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³ The chief jailer paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

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Questions:

1. How does fear inhibit our ability to live into fullness in our lives? What can we do to change that?
2. What does it mean to be a truly humble servant?
3. What is our role in God's making a way out of no way?

Thorny Theological Question:

What is our role in God's making a way out of no way?

EPISODE TITLE: "Delivering"

A Way Out of No Way, Episode 4

Featured Guest: Christian Piatt

Christian Piatt is an author, editor, speaker, musician and spoken word artist. He co-founded Milagro Christian Church in Pueblo, Colorado with his wife, Rev. Amy Piatt, in 2004. Currently he serves as the Director of Acquisitions and Author Development for CrowdScribed, and as the Director of Growth and Development for First Christian Church (DOC) in Portland, OR.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Exodus 14:10-14, 21-29

¹⁰As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. ¹¹They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' ¹³But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. ¹⁴The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

²⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.



Questions:

1. What risks does God assume in covenantal relationship with us? How do we respond?
2. What part does grace and gratitude play in God's making a way out of no way?
3. In what ways might the world be transformed if we followed the commandments even a little more faithfully?

Thorny Theological Question:

What part does grace and gratitude play in God's making a way out of no way?

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EPISODE TITLE: "Abraham and Call (Blessing)"

A Way Out of No Way, Episode 5

Featured Guest: Bishop Yvette Flunder

Bishop Yvette Flunder is a native San Franciscan and third generation preacher with roots in the Church of God in Christ. Bishop Flunder is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and holds both masters and doctorate degrees in Ministry from the Pacific School of Religion and the San Francisco Theological Seminary, respectively. In 2003, she was appointed Presiding Bishop of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, a multi-denominational coalition of over 56 churches and faith-based organizations from all over the world.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Exodus 19:3-7; 20:1-17

³Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, ⁶but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.'

⁷So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him.

20 Then God spoke all these words:

²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹For six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.



Questions:

1. What characteristics make the God you follow unique? Why do you choose to follow?
2. What is your reaction to stories of violence in the Bible? What does Jesus have to add?
3. Do you need a new God? Is it time to choose?

Thorny Theological Question:

Do you need a new God?

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EPISODE TITLE: “Do You Need a New God?”

A Way Out of No Way, Episode 6

Featured Guest: Dr. Eric Elnes

Dr. Eric Elnes is a biblical scholar with a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also a leading articulator of Convergence Christianity and Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church (UCC) in Omaha, NE. Eric has written several books on faith, theology and culture including, *The Phoenix Affirmations: A New Vision for the Future of Christianity* (Jossey-Bass, 2006) and a book on experiential worship called *Igniting Worship: The Seven Deadly Sins* (Abingdon, 2004). In 2006, Eric also helped lead a 2,500 mile walk from Phoenix to Washington, DC, to promote awareness of progressive/emerging Christian faith and practice and meet with Christians at a grassroots to hear their hopes and dreams for the future of faith in America. His journey, which is the subject of a feature-length film, is recounted in his book, *Asphalt Jesus: Finding a New Christian Faith on the Highways of America* (Jossey-Bass, 2007).

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Joshua 24:1-15

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ²And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. ³Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac; ⁴and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. ⁵Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in its midst; and afterwards I brought you out. ⁶When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your ancestors with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. ⁷When they cried out to the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt. Afterwards you lived in the wilderness for a long time. ⁸Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I handed them over to you, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. ⁹Then King Balak, son of Zippor of Moab, set out to fight against Israel. He sent and invited Balaam son of Beor to curse you, ¹⁰but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you; so I rescued you out of his hand. ¹¹When you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I handed them over to you. ¹²I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove out before you the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. ¹³I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.

¹⁴Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.’