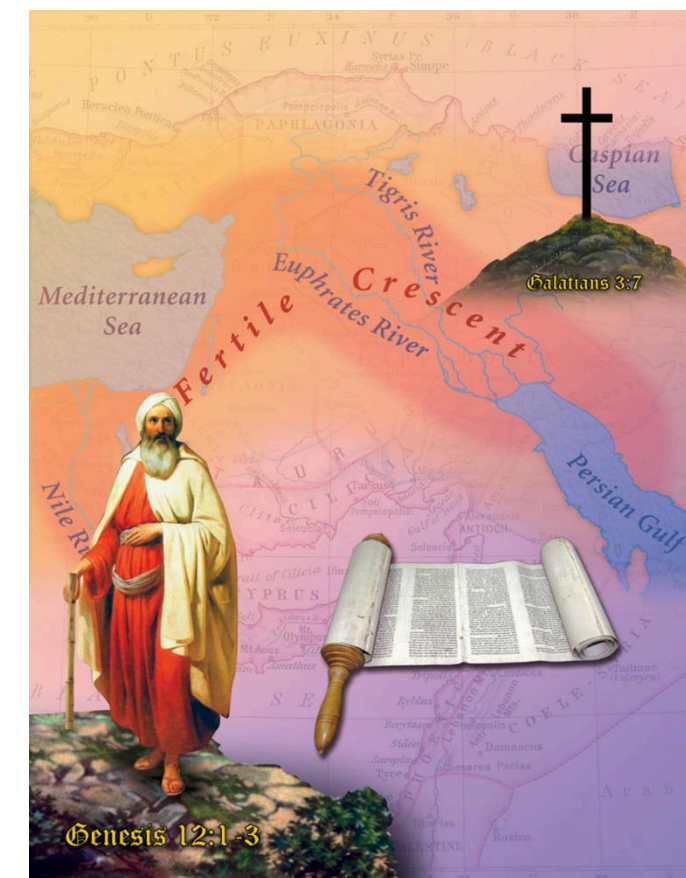


BIBLE SURVEY COURSE

FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

The Old Testament - 101



School of Global Missions

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The Old Testament - 101

School of Global Missions
Dr. Frederick Osborn, M.Div., D.Min.

Bible Survey Course Syllabus
The Old Testament - 101

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frederick Osborn traveled the world teaching and preaching the Word of God from 2005 - 2017. His first trip to South Asia was in 2001, and since 2005 he has been fully involved in ministry. His books and study guides have been used in classrooms by hundreds of students around the world.

In 2013 he earned his M.Div. from Andhra Christian Theological College in Hyderabad, India and in that same year was officially ordained into the ministry in a holy convocation administered by Indian pastors representing AG, CSA, and other independent ministries. In 2017 he completed his D.Min. from Covenant Bible College & Seminary, Florida, USA.

He and his wife, Deena now live near Atlanta, GA where he continues to write, teach, and publish his books and study guides.

Portions of this BIBLICAL STUDIES course are taken from the following books by this author:

Exploring the New Testament

Exploring the Old Testament: Vol. One – The Pentateuch

From Genesis to Revelation: Interpreting the Book of Revelation Through the Old Testament Scriptures

Judges: A 21st Century Prophetic Commentary

The Apocalyptic Vision: Understanding the Apocalyptic Writings of the Bible

The Revelation of Jesus Christ: John the Apostle's Heavenly Vision of Jesus Christ

The Way, the Truth, and the Life: The Teachings and Ministry of Jesus the Messiah

School of Global Missions

SGM BIBLICAL STUDIES: OT 101-103

COURSE SYLLABUS - PROFESSOR

Dr. Frederick Osborn, Academic Dean		Chancellor/President, SGM
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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course in BIBLICAL STUDIES is designed to teach and train three groups: (1) those who are preparing to go to unreached people groups in foreign mission fields (2) for indigenous workers who need more teaching and training for the work they are doing, and (3) to provide materials for indigenous church planters to teach and train others for evangelism and church planting.

CREDIT VALUE:

SGM uses what is known as a *Trimester Calendar* for holding classes. In a trimester system, students have three terms of 12 weeks in each school year. The students will cover a full year's worth of teaching in a normal two semester year. This course in BIBLICAL STUDIES has a 30 credit hour value (Three Terms in Old Testament Studies and Three Terms in New Testament Studies).

COURSE TEXT:

The only required text for all Biblical Studies Courses is THE HOLY BIBLE. We recommend that each student has a good Study Bible, if possible.

NOTE TO STUDENTS: SGM recommends the website, www.blueletterbible.org for Bible translations and reference materials for Bible study. The site is also available on Mobile apps for your phone or tablet.

NOTE TO PROFESSORS: Additional material is included in the teaching materials that you may or may not wish to take advantage of. Anything that is identified as HANDOUT material is NOT seen by the Students unless you copy and give to them as supplemental material. It will be up to the individual teacher to review the teaching materials and decide what to emphasize in their class time. Whatever is not covered in the class, the students will be able study as homework assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDENTS:

1. Read the required texts.

NOTE TO PROFESSORS: Because the Bible is the only required text for all BIBLICAL STUDIES classes, the students should read the relevant chapters from the Scriptures. The chapters and verses covered in each class will be listed at the beginning of each lesson.

2. Attend all classes in person or Online, or review recording of an excused class (maximum two per term).
3. At the end of each term (12 weeks) write a term paper of at least three typewritten pages (12 point, Times New Roman font, single space.)

SUPPLEMENTAL READING BY REV. DR. FREDERICK OSBORN:

(NOTE: These books are not required reading. They are listed for your benefit as additional sources for your Term Paper, as well as for your personal edification and growth. Portions of these books are included in the teacher's curriculum)

DANIEL: KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

EXPLORING THE OLD TESTAMENT:

VOL. ONE – THE PENTATEUCH

JUDGES: A 21ST CENTURY COMMENTARY

REVIVING A NATION

BIBLICAL STUDIES COURSE:**OT 101 LESSONS****The Pentateuch: “The Five Books of Moses”**

1. Introduction To the Old Testament and Bible Study Methods
2. Genesis Part One: The Creation Narrative
3. Genesis Part Two: The Fall and Its Consequences
4. Genesis Part Three: The Fall and Its Consequences – The Flood
5. Genesis Part Four: The Patriarchs - Abraham
6. Genesis Part Five: The Patriarchs – Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
7. Exodus Part One: Moses the Deliverer
8. Exodus Part Two: Mount Sinai
9. Leviticus: The Sacrificial System and the Great Day of Atonement
10. Numbers: The Children of Israel in the Wilderness
11. Deuteronomy Part One: Principles for Godly Living
12. Deuteronomy Part Two: God’s Call to Obedience

OT 102 LESSONS**The History of Israel: “Prophets, Priests, and Kings”**

1. Joshua and the Conquest of the Promised Land
2. The Judges From Othniel to Samuel
3. United Kingdom pt. one: Saul
4. United Kingdom pt. two: David
5. United Kingdom pt. three: Solomon
6. Divided Kingdom pt. one: the Kings of Israel
7. Divided Kingdom pt. two: the Prophets of Israel
8. Divided Kingdom pt. three: the Kings of Judah
9. Divided Kingdom pt. four: the Prophets of Judah
10. Intro to the Major Prophets pt. one
11. Intro to the Major Prophets pt. two
12. The Exile and Return

OT 103 LESSONS**The Wisdom Literature and Between the Testaments**

1. Introduction to Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament
2. The Book of Job
3. Psalms pt. one
4. Psalms pt. two
5. Psalms pt. three
6. Proverbs
7. Ecclesiastes
8. Song of Solomon
9. Between the Testaments pt. one: The Apocryphal Books
10. Between the Testaments pt. two: The Scribes, Pharisees, and Teachers of the Law
11. Between the Testaments pt. three: Apocalyptic Literature
12. Between the Testaments pt. four: Hellenism and the Rise of Rome

SGM BIBLICAL STUDIES**OT 101: THE PENTATEUCH: THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES****TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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NOTE: ALL HANDOUTS FOR THIS COURSE ARE IN A SEPARATE FILE. HANDOUTS ARE NOT INCLUDED WITH THE STUDENT NOTES. THE HANDOUTS MAY BE COPIED FOR THE STUDENTS AT THE TEACHER’S DISCRETION.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

The materials for the School of Global Mission’s BIBLICAL STUDIES, OT 101: THE PENTATEUCH: THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES are taken from *Exploring the Old Testament, Volume One: The Pentateuch* by Dr. Frederick Osborn © 2014. This course material has been edited from the original book of more than 300 pages. A copy of the original will be made available to the teacher upon request for \$25.00 + SH, but it may not be copied and distributed to others without the written permission of the author or the School of Missions administration.

These special Teaching Notes are intended for the teachers only; they are in Times New Roman #14 for ease of reading while teaching. A separate set of notes for the students has been produced, and are intended for the student to read and follow as you use the Teaching Notes.

Because this course uses the Inductive Method of Bible Study (see HANDOUT), you will notice a number of places where words, phrases, or sentences are in **bold print and underlined** these are intended for the students as fill-in-the-blank answers in their Student Notes as they follow your lesson.

There are more notes in the teaching materials than can be taught in the one-hour class time. So, it is best to review each lesson before you start teaching and refer to the student notes for reading and homework assignments. The additional materials in the *Teacher’s Notes* allow the teacher some flexibility in how they teach this course.

All of the Appendices of *Exploring the Old Testament Volume One: the Pentateuch* have been removed from these Teaching Notes and from the Student Notes. I will include all Appendices in the separate file of HANDOUTS that the teacher may look through and select which of the additional materials they want to copy and distribute to their students.

BIBLICAL STUDIES OT 101-1 INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT AND BIBLE STUDY METHODS

How Do We Interpret The Bible?

HERMENEUTICS is the science or methodology of interpreting texts. Hermeneutics is the branch of theology that is concerned with explaining or **interpreting religious concepts, theories and principles.**

Not all Bible interpreters agree on the meaning of every Bible passage. However, most acknowledge that certain guidelines will help us determine the meaning of each passage with a high degree of accuracy. EXEGESIS (a Greek term meaning “**to lead or guide out**”) is how we accurately understand and interpret the Scriptures.

The GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL METHOD of Bible interpretation is used to find the basic “plain sense” meaning of a Bible passage. This method helps the Bible student determine what the text says grammatically and what it meant historically. The purpose of this method is to understand the passage in its **original context** to determine the author’s **original intended meaning.**

To understand the CONTEXT the student must consider the passage being studied in its three most important contexts.

1. Immediate – in the paragraph, chapter, and the book
2. Remote – to other books of the Bible
3. Historical – in its historical setting

DETERMINE THE TYPE OF LITERATURE. What is the genre? History, prophecy, narrative, and poetry all require special consideration. Always take the truth of the Bible literally, but not always the words. In prophecy and poetry words are often used as symbols for the truth. (Note in particular, Psalm 91:4; Isaiah 55:12; John 3:3 but there are many, many more examples.)

THINK HEBREW! A key to understanding the Scriptures is to understand the world of the Bible – the places, setting, and the people who lived in those times – and especially the Hebrew people who wrote most of the Bible. The Hebrews learned and transmitted knowledge in a different way than people who live today.

The most ancient form of Hebrew script, the script that Moses used to write the first set of scrolls, is known as Paleo-Hebrew, a picture language. Moses' writings were meticulously copied and recopied by Hebrew scribes. As the Hebrew language evolved, the script was updated to reflect the new innovations that made

Ancient Paleo-Hebrew	א	ב	א	ז
Modern Hebrew	א	ב	א	ז

the language more precise and easier to read. But the Bible frequently contains "word pictures" that reflect the ancient method of transmitting thoughts in writing.

Note how Hebrew thought differs from our Greek or Modern thought processes.

HEBREW THOUGHT	GREEK OR MODERN THOUGHT
ASKS WHY? (Motivations)	ASKS HOW? (Methods)
PICTURES & METAPHORS	WORDS, DEFINITIONS, EXPLANATIONS, & LISTS
NAMES OF PLACES, PEOPLE & STRUCTURES MAY HAVE MEANING	PLACES, PEOPLE, & STRUCTURES ARE NAMED FOR HISTORICAL PURPOSES
EMPHASIS ON CONCEPTS: GOD CREATED; GOD IS SAVIOR	EMPHASIS ON TELLING THE STORY
EYE SPEECH: GOD IS... "A SHEPHERD" "A ROCK" "LIVING WATER"	EAR SPEECH: GOD IS "LOVING" "POWERFUL" "OMNIPRESENT"
CORPORATE THINKING (what effects one person can impact an entire community)	INDIVIDUALISTIC (what I do or do not is between me and God alone)
COMFORTABLE WITH THE MYSTERIOUS "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law." Deut. 29:29	TRIES TO EXPLAIN THE MYSTERIOUS

LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE. Find other biblical texts that relate to and clarify a difficult passage of Scripture. Interpret a difficult passage in the light of a clearer one.

DISCOVER THE APPLICATION TO MODERN LIFE. The Old Testament is as much a Christian document as it the New Testament. The Bible spoke to Israel in Old Testament times, to the early church, and it speaks to us today.

FOR DISCUSSION: Read John 5:31-47. How does Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in this passage affect your motivations and goals for completing this study of the Bible? How will interpreting the Bible in its proper context help you to know and worship Jesus Christ in spirit and truth?

TESTS FOR CANONICITY

How did Jews and Christians first decide which books belonged in the Bible? When we ask this question, we raise the issue of CANON.

The word "canon" comes from the word for **"reed" or "measuring stick"**. It signifies a measuring standard to which the biblical writings themselves must conform.

TESTS FOR CANONICITY: author, audience, and teaching

TEST #1: Written by a prophet or prophetically gifted person.
The Spirit of God had to have his hand on the author.

TEST #2: Written to all generations.
If a book is God's word, it must be relevant to all people of all times.

TEST #3: Written in accord with previous revelation.
God's word remained the same and would never contradict any other part of God's revelation.

FORMATION OF THE CANON

The details of how the Old Testament writings became recognized as authoritative and distinguished from other Jewish works are obscure, but Jewish tradition credits the scribe, Ezra with collecting, arranging and preserving the books of the Old Testament during the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

“The word canon derives ultimately from a Semitic word meaning reed, which yielded the figurative sense of a measuring rod or ruler. From this derived the general sense of a norm or standard and then finally a list or a table. When used of the Bible, canon refers to the list of writings recognized by the Christian church to be the unique rule of faith and life.” From the Holman Bible Handbook © 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, USA

The Old Testament is a collection of writings possessing the same infallible authority for the faith and life of the church as does the New Testament. But unlike the process by which the New Testament books were selected, the process by which the Old Testament canon was selected is unknown for the most part. The early leaders of the church met in a series of ecumenical councils where each prospective writing for the New Testament was examined and cross-examined by good and godly men of faith who prayerfully sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit to include only those writings that met the highest standards of authorship, divine authority, purity of doctrine, and universal appeal. The process of canonization was out in the open and took centuries to complete. The New Testament canon was not declared officially closed until the later part of the 4th century.

<u>LAW</u>	<u>PROPHETS</u>	<u>WRITINGS</u>	
Genesis	Former Prophets	Psalms	
Exodus		Joshua	
Leviticus	1-2 Samuel	Job	
Numbers	1-2 Kings	Proverbs	
Deuteronomy	Latter Prophets	Ruth	
		Isaiah	Song of Songs
		Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
		Ezekiel	
	The Twelve	Pre-Exilic Writings	
			Lamentations
			Esther
			Daniel
			Ezra-Nehemiah
		Post-Exilic Writings	
			1-2 Chronicles

The exact details of the process by which the Jewish scholars determined which of the Old Testament writings were recognized as authoritative and separated from other Jewish works are mostly hidden from view. There are no records of any councils and no indications from any of the Jewish scholars that there were any controversies surrounding any of the books that were considered part of their sacred canon. Of course, whenever there exists a gap in our historical

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understanding of something as important as the formation of the Old Testament canon, scholars representing various schools of thought will jump into that void and will try their best to fill in that gap with their own theories and speculations. But what scholars do know for certain about the history of the formation of the Hebrew Scriptures helps to confirm what is now accepted by the church as Old Testament canon.

THE APOCRYPHA

A group of materials or books composed between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100. They were translated into the Greek at the same time as the Hebrew Old Testament and were included in the Greek translation known as the SEPTUAGINT. As a result, many Christians read these works and in the course of time came to regard them as part of the Old Testament.

The disagreements over the canonicity of these writings began long before the Protestant reformers decided to accept only the books composed in Hebrew as Old Testament canon. Although most Roman Catholic and Orthodox scholars embrace the apocryphal (or deuterocanonical) books as genuine parts of Scripture, they place them on a lower level of authority than the first-order canonical books that were written in Hebrew.

Protestant scholars acknowledge these writings contain much that is useful and spiritually satisfying, but they are not to be regarded as Scripture.

INSPIRATION: HOW THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN

We know that God’s Spirit worked through the human authors to inspire the sacred writings of the Bible. The Bible affirms this in many places.

- Note: 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
- Jeremiah, Isaiah and all the prophets said – “The LORD spoke to me...” or “The LORD said...”
- Also 2 Peter 1:20, 21 “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

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How exactly did God’s Spirit work with the human authors to inspire the Scriptures? What role did the human authors play in the writing of Scripture? Many theories have been proposed to answer these questions.

Of the four most common theories of Bible inspiration, the Plenary Verbal Inspiration Theory is the only theory that recognizes both the **human element** in scripture and affirms **the Holy Spirit** as the Bible’s ultimate author.

Plenary Verbal Inspiration Theory: this theory asserts that God’s inspiration extends to all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. (*plenary* = “full” or “complete”, verbal refers to the words of Scripture). Verbal inspiration means God’s inspiration extends to the very words the writers chose. God allowed the writers express their own personalities through the words they chose, but the Holy Spirit so guided the process that the words they chose accurately conveyed the meaning God intended. God guided the writers no less when they recorded historical details than when they discussed doctrinal matters.

- It means the Bible is trustworthy. We can trust it to provide reliable information about the history of God’s people and it also describes God’s plan for the world and for our lives
- It means the Bible is authoritative. Because it is God’s word, it speaks with God’s authority. The Bible remains God’s truth whether we choose to accept it or not. (Deut. 6: 6-12)

“...he said to them, ‘Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.’” Deut. 32:46-47

HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS THE AUTHORITATIVE, ERROR-FREE WORD OF TRUTH FROM GOD TO US?

1. The Bible says it is God’s authoritative Word of truth to us.
2. The historical church says it is: Irenaeus, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley – to name a few.
3. Jesus says it is (Example Luke 24 – the Emmaus road)
4. The contemporary evangelical church says it is. Here is a statement signed by several hundred evangelical leaders at the October 1978 meeting of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy in Chicago:

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“Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God’s acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God’s saving grace in individual lives.”

As we prepare to study the volumes of this Bible Survey Course, we can be confident that the Scripture is the faithful record of what God has said through His chosen human agents, and it is without error.

BACKGROUND OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Why Study the Old Testament?

“A person will never properly understand the New Testament Scriptures if the Old Testament Scriptures remain a mystery to him.” Paul N. Benware, Th.D., Grace Theological Seminary

Although most of the Old Testament is in the form of history, it is essential to understand that it is not merely human history, but it is **human history written from God’s point of view** – or more specifically, human history from God’s point of view as it relates to Abraham and his descendants.

The human stories included in the Old Testament are not there simply because they happened, but they are there because they reveal something about the relationship between God the Creator of all things, and His creation.

The Old Testament Scriptures are intended to reveal God’s plan to Israel first and through them to the rest of mankind. The Old Testament reveals:

- the often unseen hand of God working throughout history
- the great effort of God to redeem His fallen creation
- and how God prepares His people for the new heaven and new earth to be revealed at the end of the age.

The history told in the Bible is **linear and not cyclical**. That means the omnipresent God of the Bible is from the beginning, lives in the present, and is in the end waiting for the consummation of earth’s history.

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It is for this reason that the Old Testament's **Prophetic books** often have past, present, and future elements in them and should not be restricted to speak only to a single time and place.

It is for that same reason that the Bible's **Wisdom Literature** transcends the cultural setting of the twelve tribes of Israel and contains universal truths that speak to all generations and all cultures.

The Old Testament is not a book in the traditional sense of the word. It is in fact a **“library of books”** written by different authors over the course of centuries, but all have a common thread of undeniable spiritual unity that binds them together and identifies them as being from the same Divine Source.

The student must approach each book asking first what genre of writing it is:

- history
- drama
- poetry
- wisdom literature
- prophecy

Second, the student must ask who is speaking – God or the human agent?

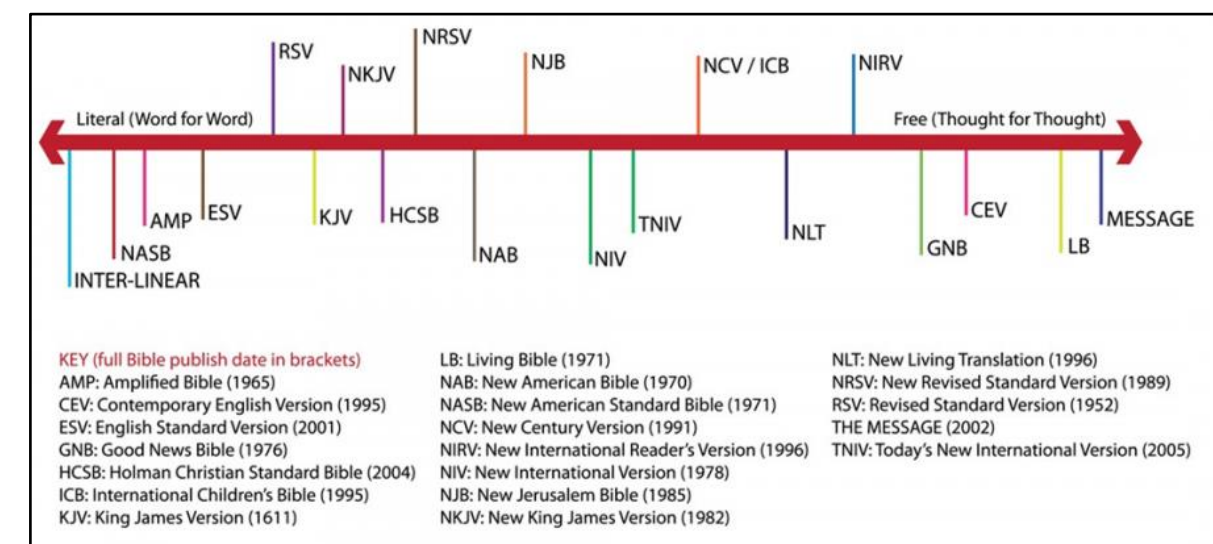
Because the Old Testament was written in centuries long ago, and was written for a people from a very different culture than our own, there are important steps that must be taken in order to understand the Hebrew Scriptures, and properly apply them to our lives in a modern context.

WHEN A STUDENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FAILS TO FOLLOW SOUND PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS AND EXEGESIS, THEY WILL OFTEN FALL INTO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING COMMON ABUSES OF SCRIPTURE:

- **Picking one small passage out of context and using it like an incantation or magic spell believing that when recited it will produce a specific effect.** The Scriptures were never intended to be used in that way. The Old Testament tells a single coherent story and all parts of Scripture should be understood in context of the whole.
- **Building a major doctrine on a single verse that has been taken out of its original context and then reinterpreted to fit into a preconceived idea.**

This is frequently done by Christian cults that convince their followers to adopt unorthodox or heterodox (deviant) theologies, but this method is never used by sound theologians.

- **Thinking that the Old Testament is too remote, irrelevant, and too obscure for the average Christian to understand.** It is not.
- **Thinking someone must know and be fluent in biblical Hebrew to know what the Old Testament Scriptures really mean.** Enough reference material exists to help the student of the Bible make an assessment of the accuracy of the translation. (See chart below). Some professors argue that the student must be fluent in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek or they can never know what the Scriptures truly say. That is sheer nonsense!



Yes, it is helpful to have some basic understanding of biblical languages to help with any in depth word study, but there are many reference materials available to the modern day student in libraries, Christian bookstores, and on the Internet that will allow them to look up the original word in the original language. Once the word is found, there are many scholarly dictionaries and word study helps that will guide the student to the original intended meaning.

The Old Testament may require a little extra effort to interpret properly, but anyone who takes the time for a systematic study of the Hebrew Scriptures can understand them and recognize their relevancy to their life.

- **Thinking that the Old Testament Scriptures are from men and not from God, and therefore reading them as if they were the same as any other ancient literature.** The Old Testament is not just history and geography written by the Hebrew people; the Holy Spirit is the divine author and therefore the Old Testament contains a spiritual message that is relevant to all people everywhere.
- **Thinking that the Old Testament is just a collection of myths and fairy tales filled with mistakes and contradictions that make it irrelevant in a modern scientific age.** The Bible was written by real people who lived through real situations and were inspired by God to write down what they experienced using prose, poetry, allegory, or symbolic language. Unlocking the language and original intent of the author will reveal the authentic message and allow the student in any age to properly understand and apply the Scripture.

The Old Testament is a part of the **whole, unified, and progressive revelation** that tells us about the character of God and His redemptive work in all creation. The story the Bible tells begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation; therefore, it is essential for the serious student of the Bible to understand the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments.

In the end, having a proper understanding of the Old Testament and its relevancy to the New Testament will allow the student to gain confidence in their faith based on the knowledge of God's Word and not depend upon personal revelations, sign-seekers, or miracle-workers. Any serious study of the Old Testament will encourage students to take seriously the complexity and holiness of the Hebrew Scriptures while training them to study God's word for the purpose of making application in their hearts – living it out on a daily basis and not just reading and reciting it.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Finally, any serious study of the Old Testament should be intended to equip students, pastors, evangelists, Bible teachers, and lay leaders to have a more complete understanding the Old Testament free from any specific denomination's bias.

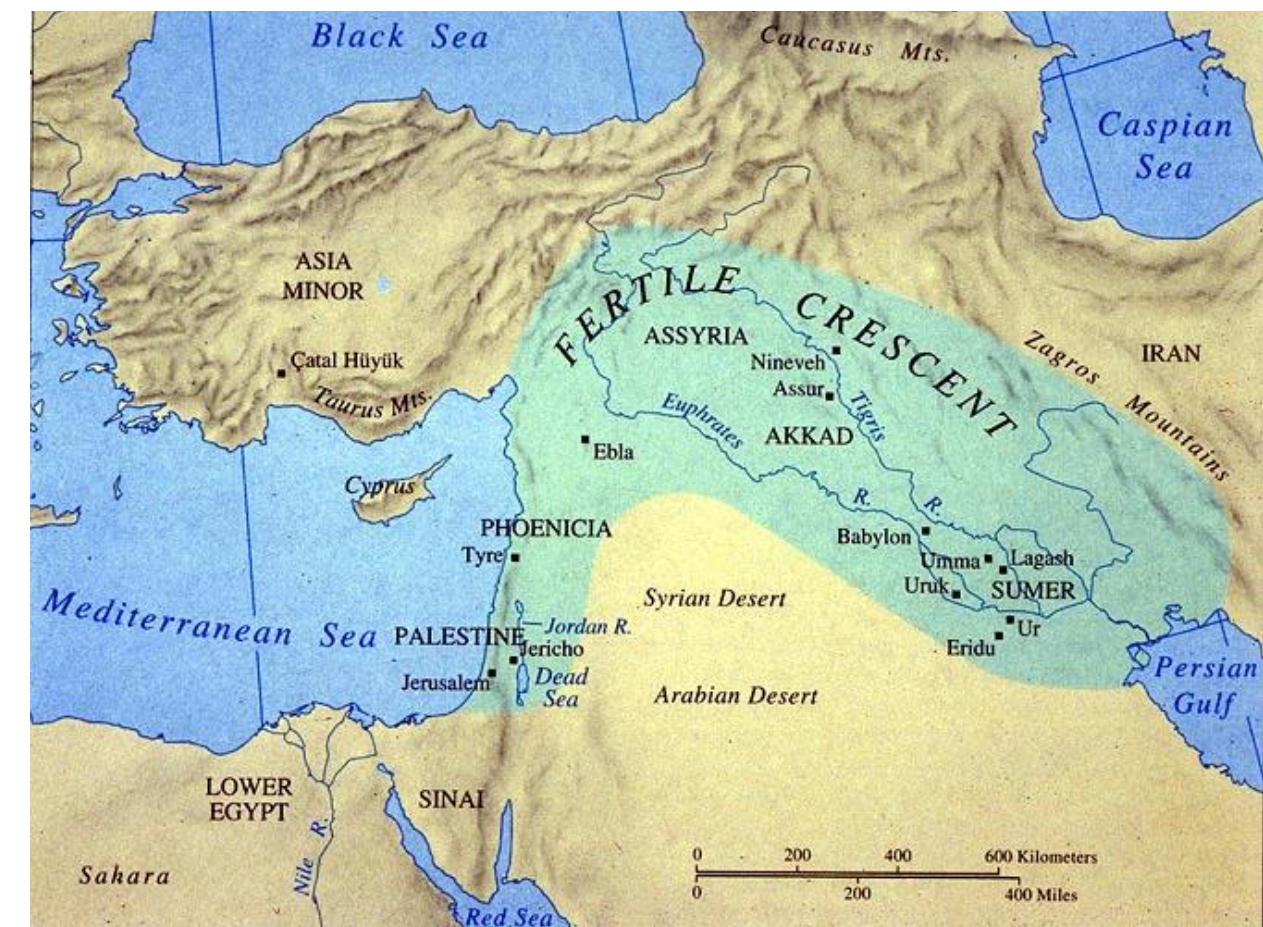
In the end anyone who completes this study of the Old and New Testaments should be able to **teach it to others**.

THE ENTIRE BIBLE WAS GIVEN TO US BY INSPIRATION FROM GOD AND IS USEFUL TO TEACH ALL PEOPLE WHAT IS TRUE AND RIGHT.

A systematic study of the Bible can be used by Christians to make them:

- well prepared to follow Christ at every point of life (hearing and obeying)
- to be fully equipped to live a righteous life (living a holy, sanctified life)
- and do good to everyone they meet (living by God's moral standards)

WHERE DID THE OLD TESTAMENT STORIES TAKE PLACE?



The Fertile Crescent. Mesopotamia (the land between two rivers), was a beautiful place, lush and green, with forests and fertile fields fed by the two rivers that ran within its Eastern boundaries.

When the Bible student first thinks of the ancient lands of the Old Testament, they often envision a hot, dry, desert land – a hostile place where extremes of climate and geography make it a difficult place to survive. Those who have visited modern day Western Asia are often surprised to discover that this region, once known as Mesopotamia (**the land between two rivers**), was a beautiful place, lush and green, with forests and fertile fields fed by the two rivers that ran within its Eastern boundaries. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flow through the heart of the Fertile Crescent. They pour down from the Taurus Mountains of Turkey and run through the northern plateau of Iraq as they make their way into the Persian Gulf. The Nile River and Delta marks the opposite end of the region. The Fertile Crescent is completed by the land of Canaan, which is the Promised Land of Israel.

The Fertile Crescent is also called "**The Cradle of Civilization**" due to the birth of various kingdoms within its borders. The Syrian Desert to the south – also known as the Levant – completes the Fertile Crescent. The outer boundaries are mountainous regions to the east and north, and to the west is the vast Sahara Desert.

The three great rivers of the Crescent – the **Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates** – made it possible for the world's first great civilizations to come into being.

Without water

- people and livestock cannot survive
- the development of agriculture is impossible – irrigation
- Waterways also provide an efficient means to transport goods over long distances.

The Fertile Crescent was abundant in plant and animal life

- Wheat and barley – became the region's most important surplus crops.
- Beans, onions, lettuce, cucumbers, and herbs used for cooking.
- Orchards of date palm, apple, and pomegranate trees produced abundant harvests
- The sheep, goats, and cattle that grazed the land supplied milk, wool, labor, and meat.
- grasslands that allowed the domestication of animals to expand; Cattle, sheep, and pigs

The early civilization of Mesopotamia was made up of a group of city states that sprung up along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The city states were

- ruled by kings
- were often at war with one another over control of land, water, or trade routes.

One of the greatest of the early city states to emerge was the southern Mesopotamian city state known as SUMER.

- At the center of the city was the **ziggurat**, a massive pyramid-like structure built in ancient Mesopotamia
- The Sumerians were polytheists that worshiped many gods
- Each city had their own special god that they believed prospered them and protected them from harm
- They developed improved irrigation
- They invented wheeled vehicles that were used to transport goods and people. Wheeled chariots also gave their armies superiority during times of war.
- They are believed to have invented sail boats, the pottery wheel, and a variety of innovations in math and science

THE MOST IMPORTANT INVENTION OF ALL WAS THE WRITTEN WORD. **Cuneiform** (also Akkadian) is a complex series of approximately 500 symbols that are a type of **picture writing**. Some symbols to show sound. The first writing was very complicated and detailed, but over time the symbols were simplified to make them more efficient.



CUNEIFORM

Cuneiform, one of the earliest writing systems in the world allowed the Sumerian people to keep records for business and government, codify a written law, communicate over long distances, and create a cultural tableau. The oldest cuneiform tablets ever found date from around the year 3500 B.C.

- Scribes who served as teachers, record keepers, and official writers in government and business were valued and honored members of the community.
- Storytellers were hugely popular in Sumerian culture. The best known of the surviving stories is the tale of *Gilgamesh*, a

hero who began a journey to seek out immortality. Included in this ancient tale is the story of a catastrophic flood that contains elements similar to Noah's story in Genesis.

Egypt emerged later.

- It became a unified state – a federated, imperial state, with a number of communities working together toward common goals.
- The Egyptians developed their own, partly pictorial writing system called *hieroglyphs*
- They developed a highly evolved and complex religion officiated by the pharaohs, priests, and other higher dignitaries.
- By far, the most remarkable accomplishments of the earliest Egyptians were the great Pyramids of Giza constructed around 2500 BC under the pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty.
- Egypt's first major role in the Bible is **a haven from famine for Israel's patriarchs.**

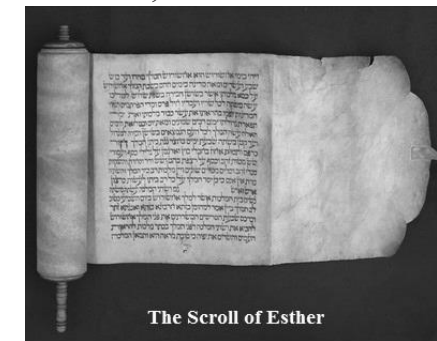
As Egypt expanded into the Levant, the Promised Land became a target for invasion and a battleground between Egypt and the empires emerging from Mesopotamia

WHAT IS THE MAJOR THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

One of the first challenges that confront the student of the Old Testament is the fact that the contents are not organized in chronological order. The Hebrew Scriptures were written a long time before the invention of books and printing presses; at first they were written on parchments made of animal skins and later of papyrus or paper. These parchments were formed into scrolls and often stored in clay jars or other containers to preserve them for as long as possible. The Hebrew scholars would have to select the scroll from the collection that they wanted to read, study, or copy. The scrolls of the Hebrew Scriptures were arranged into three major categories that later influenced the order they were placed in what we now call the Old Testament. The three major categories are: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Our Old Testament is arranged as follows: The Historical books of Genesis through Esther, which are arranged somewhat chronologically; The Poetical books of Job through Song of Solomon; and the Prophetic books of Isaiah through Malachi that are not arranged in any chronological order but are grouped into Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel) and the Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi).

“The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”
Psalm 98:2-3 (NKJV)

Although they were composed over a period of more than 1,400 years by a variety of authors, all of the books of the Old Testament are bound together by single major theme: **God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has revealed Himself to mankind through His chosen people, Israel.** All of the other major themes of the Old Testament concerning God and His relationship to mankind – sin, righteousness, grace, covenant, law, atonement, holiness, the Messiah, etc. – are woven together within the context of what God was revealing about His character, nature, and perfect will to Abraham and his descendants – and through them to the rest of the world.



It should never be forgotten by the student of the Old Testament that God's revelation was always intended for all nations and not just for the descendants of Abraham:

“Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.’” (Genesis 17:3-6).

“Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.” (1 Kings 8:41-43 NKJV)

God intended to use Israel's interactions with the people groups around them as a means to reveal His righteousness, salvation, and kingdom to the nations:

“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles...”
(Isaiah 42:6 NKJV)

“The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” (Psalm 98:2-3)

“All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.” Psalm 145:10-13 (NKJV)

The Lord chose Israel to be **an example to the nations.** Through them, He would make His existence known to all the nations that had gone astray and were worshiping the false gods of their own imaginations. If Israel obeyed the commandments of the Lord, remained holy, and refused to bow down to the gods of the other nations, then the Lord would bless them, prosper them, and defeat their enemies. But if Israel backslid and began to worship other gods, then the Lord would make a negative example of them and take away the covenant blessings, and they would be defeated by their enemies. In many ways, the Old Testament is the story of a people struggling to remain pure surrounded by a sea of idol worshippers. The apparent cultic syncretism found in the history of Abraham’s children is not representative of the “norms” in Hebrew religion, but reflects the epic conflict between the faithful judges, prophets, priests, and kings and the idolatrous leaders who brought down the judgment of God on the unfaithful nation.

Finally, the Old Testament serves as an example to Christians (1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Hebrews 4:1-11; Hebrews 11; James 5:10-11). What was revealed in types and shadows in the ancient days was made known to the church (Romans 5:14; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:1-6; Hebrews 10:1-10). So as the student of the Old Testament unravels the mystery of the ancient Scriptures, it will shed a greater light upon their New Testament faith.

THE PENTATEUCH

“Pentateuch” is the Greek name given for the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Jews call these books **the Torah** (instruction), which is translated “Law.” They are often called the Books of Moses since he is the human author. The Pentateuch forms the essential foundation to the entire word of God. It introduces the reader to the

unfolding revelation of God that begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth and leads on in hope, looking to that distant time in the future when the final consummation of all things will reach its climax. Although each book can stand alone, together they form a chronological and theological progression from creation to Paradise lost to the founding of a new prophetic theocracy that will someday usher in the establishment of a kingdom where God's rule over a new heaven and new earth will begin.

The narratives of the Pentateuch give us the history of the world from creation, the Fall, the great flood, and the scattering of the nations at Babel; from Babel, the story shifts to the choosing of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and their descendants until the death of Moses. These first five books of the Old Testament reveal God’s character through His relationships with Adam, and his descendants, which include all nations. The story of Israel’s deliverance from slavery, their covenant with the Lord at Sinai, and the institution of the civil and religious legislation of the Israelites tell us that because God is holy, those who worship Him must be holy. Genesis may be considered the introduction to every other book of the Bible until the end of Revelation. Without the Pentateuch the early history of the children of Abraham leading to their Exodus from Egypt, the Mosaic legislation, and the history of the people under the leadership of Moses would be missing. The experience of Israel in Egypt and the desert give context to the events surrounding conquest of Canaan and their later struggles to become a faithful covenant people led by prophets, priests, and kings. The Pentateuch is the essential foundation from which the remaining Old Testament books find their context.

BIBLICAL STUDIES OT 101-2 GENESIS PART ONE: “THE CREATION NARRATIVE” (GENESIS 1 – 2)

INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH

“Pentateuch” is the **Greek name** given for the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The Jews call these books **the Torah** (instruction), which is translated **“Law.”** They are often called the **Books of Moses** since he is the author.

The Pentateuch forms the essential foundation to the entire word of God.

It introduces the reader to the **unfolding revelation** of God that begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Although each book can stand alone, together they form an important part of the Old Testament’s **theological progression** from creation to Paradise lost and from the founding of a new theocracy to the prophetic promise of a Messianic kingdom that will someday usher in the establishment of a new order where God's rule over a new heaven and new earth will begin.

OVERVIEW OF THE PENTATEUCH

Genesis: **The book of beginnings**, Genesis can be divided into two parts. The first part – chapters 1-11 – describes four major events leading up to the patriarchs: Creation, The Fall, Noah’s Flood, and the Tower of Babel. The second part – chapters 12-50 – tells the stories of the four great patriarchs of the Hebrew people: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Exodus: **Exodus means the “way out.”** The book begins with Israel in slavery in Egypt, and tells the miraculous story of God’s deliverance of the people starting with Moses’ birth and selection as God’s instrument of deliverance. Central to the story is the presence of Yahweh (Jehovah) in the midst of the nation. Yahweh delivers them from slavery, saves them from their enemies, and leads them through the Wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. Yahweh’s continuing presence with His chosen people, Israel, calls for obedience to the covenant commitments

given to them at Sinai. Primary to Israel’s survival is their absolute loyalty to the Lord in worship.

Leviticus: Throughout Moses’ struggle with the Egyptian Pharaoh, the Lord repeatedly called for His people to be free from slavery so they might worship Him (Exodus 4:23; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1; 10:3; 12:31). Once free from the bonds of Egypt, the Lord led them to Sinai where the covenant was established, commandments were given, and the pattern for worship defined. However there is a major problem: a sinful people cannot enter into the presence of a Holy God. Leviticus details the God of Israel’s **ways and means for atonement** to be made for the sins of the people so the Lord could remain with them. The key to the book of Leviticus is the phrase: **“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 17:11**

Numbers: The Hebrew name for this book is translated **“in the desert”** and best describes its contents since the entire setting of this book is the **Wilderness area between Egypt and the Promised Land of Canaan**. The title “Numbers” comes from the opening verses of the book that describe the census of the tribes of Israel that came out of Egypt. The narratives and laws in Numbers:

- Describe the **organization of the tribes** into an orderly religious and civil community in preparation for their conquest and occupation of Canaan
- Describes the **growing unity of a people** on their way to possess the Promised Land
- Gives the conditions for Israel’s **possession of and prosperity in the Promised Land** – including respect for and obedience to God-ordained leaders, and their need to maintain the holiness of the covenant community in the land of the promise
- Contain **frequent warnings to the people** of the terrible penalty of God’s judgment that rebellion will bring upon the corporate community
- Describe how the **laws, tabernacle, priesthood, and other instruments of worship** become important unifying factors in the life of the covenant community on their way to the Promised Land.

The last verse of the book of Numbers gives the best summary of the whole by saying, “These *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.” Numbers 36:13 (NKJV)

Deuteronomy: The book of Deuteronomy (Greek “second law”) is Moses’ **amplification of the law given at Sinai**. Forty years had passed since the Exodus from Egypt and the first, rebellious generation of Israelites had died out and now a new generation was about to enter and take possession of the Promised Land.

Moses was inspired by the Lord to present the covenant statement to the nation as **his farewell address**. Moses retold the history of God’s covenant faithfulness and exhorted the new generation not to follow in the rebellious footsteps of their parents, but to be obedient to the terms of the covenant.

The authorship of the Pentateuch

Conservative Bible scholars agree that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch.

1. **The books give indications of Moses as the writer:** he was ordered to write historical facts (Ex 17:14; Numbers 33:1-2), laws (Exodus 24:4, 7; 34:27ff) and one poem (Deuteronomy 31:9, 22). For the Documentary Hypothesis (DH) to be true, these passages would have to be classified as false or misleading (see HANDOUT “The Documentary Hypothesis”).
2. **Moses is affirmed as the author in the rest of the Old Testament:** (Joshua 1:7-8; 8:32, 34; 22:5; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Daniel 9:11-13; Malachi 4:4). All of these passages would have to bear false witness since they attest to Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
3. **The New Testament writings referred to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch** (Matthew 19:18; Mark 12:26; Luke 2:22; 16:29; 24:27; John 5:46-47; 7:19; Acts 13:39; Roman 10:5). Since Jesus Christ Himself referred to Mosaic authorship of these books, Jesus would have to be ignorant and mistaken if they were not.
4. **Moses is unanimously testified to be the author of the whole Pentateuch in the Jewish Talmud and by the Church Fathers.** So all Jewish and Christian scholarship prior to the modern era would have to be proven false if the DH were true. However, the proponents of the DH cannot prove their theories are the **only** possible explanation for the existence of the Pentateuch. They may offer them as an alternative to the conservative/orthodox view, but no more.

The narratives of the Pentateuch give us the history of the world from creation, the Fall, the great flood, and the scattering of the nations at Babel; from Babel, the story shifts to the choosing of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and their descendants until the death of Moses.

These first five books of the Old Testament reveal **God’s character** through His relationships with **Adam, and his descendants**, which include all nations.

The story of Israel’s deliverance from slavery, their covenant with the Lord at Sinai, and the institution of the civil and religious legislation of the Israelites tell us that **because God is holy, those who worship Him must be holy**. Genesis may be considered the introduction to every other book of the Bible until the end of Revelation.

Without the Pentateuch the early history of the children of Abraham, their Exodus from Egypt under Moses’ leadership, the Mosaic legislation, including the history of the people under the leadership of Moses would be missing. The experience of **Israel in Egypt and the desert** give context to the events surrounding conquest of Canaan and their later struggles to become a faithful covenant people led by prophets, priests, and kings.

The Pentateuch is the **essential foundation** from which the remaining Old Testament books find their context.

CREATION AND ITS CONCEPTS

Once the creation narrative is placed within the broader context of the Pentateuch and in context of the entire Bible, the importance of Creation and its concepts to the whole becomes apparent: the story of Creation **lays the foundations for everything that follows**.

The Old Testament story of creation also separates the Bible from all other beliefs because the basic concepts found in the Genesis account are not found in other religions:

- God created all things **good**
- God relinquished the earth to humankind **as a gift**
- God **binds himself** to his creation
- God claims **ownership** over all he has made
- Humanity, too, is **owned by God**
- Fashioned and owned by God, humankind has freedom **only within certain limits** set by their Creator.
- Male and female are **fashioned in God’s image**
- Humankind is the **crown of God’s creation** and have been given FOUR

RESPONSIBILITIES:

To replenish the earth

To subdue the earth

To dress, till, and keep the earth
To have dominion over the earth

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The most important statement in the entire Bible is found in Genesis chapter one verse one. In fact, what one believes about that most profound statement will effect what they believe about everything that follows in all of Scripture.

- If God did not create the heavens and the earth, then who or what did?
- If God did not create the heavens and the earth, then man was not created in the image of God. If man was not created in the image of God, then in whose image is man?
- If God did not create the heavens and the earth then against whom do we sin? Do we really need a Savior?
- If God did not create the heavens and the earth, then we must seek a natural explanation for everything that exists.

Numerous New Testament verses depend upon the Genesis story of Creation for **their context and meaning**. The following examples make sense because they presuppose the reader’s familiarity with God, the Creator of all things:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” **John 1:1-3**

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” **Hebrews 11:1-3**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **Hebrews 11:6**

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but

became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” **Romans 1:20-25**

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” **Colossians 1:16-17**

No pronouncement by any religion or philosophy has endured a greater assault by its opponents than “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It is important to note that the assaults upon the Bible did not begin or end with Charles Darwin’s “Origins of the Species.” Genesis 1:1 is attacked from all sides because it refutes atheism, pantheism, polytheism, materialism, dualism, humanism, Darwinism, fatalism, syncretism, and deism (See HANDOUT “Genesis 1:1 Is Attacked From All Sides”).

The Story of Creation is Theological in Thrust and Not Scientific

Students of the Bible make a major error when they attempt to study the first chapters of Genesis as a scientific treatise.

Genesis should not be studied as a scientific book, or as a philosophical argument, but should be studied **theologically as a religious book**.

This does not mean that science, history, or philosophy cannot be found in the Old Testament; they can be found, but they are incidental and not the primary concern of the authors.

The Hebrews **assumed the existence of God**. For this reason, no scientific or philosophical foundations for the existence of God needed to be laid in Genesis 1:1.

Remember Moses started writing the Pentateuch after the miraculous deliverance of the people from bondage in Egypt; they had seen with their own eyes the power and majesty of the Lord (Exodus 15 and Psalm 136).

The Bible deals with the meaning and quality of life from a theological perspective. The phrase **“God saw that it was good”** is used repeatedly in Genesis chapter one.

God is good and His creation must reflect the goodness of His character. The goodness of creation also suggests that everything was created beautiful, and everything necessary for human life was in perfect ecological balance.

Five great truths, which have their bearing on every part of revelation, come to us from the earliest chapters of Genesis:

- The first of these truths is **the creation of all things by the word of God’s power;**
- The second, **the descent of all mankind from our common parents, Adam and Eve;**
- The third, **our connection with Adam as the head of the human race,** through which all mankind were involved in his sin and fall;
- The fourth, **that One descended from Adam, yet without his sin,** should by suffering free us from the consequence of The Fall, and as the second Adam become **the Author of eternal salvation to all who trust in Him.**
- The fifth is the institution of **one day in seven to be a day of holy rest unto God.**

Male and Female Are Fashioned in God’s Image

Genesis 1:27 states, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

The phrase “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26) not only separates the creation of the human race from other created things in the Genesis story, but it also separates biblical creation from other ancient creation myths (see HANDOUT “Ancient Creation Narratives”).

The story in Genesis communicates **the unique status of humanity;** like a coin stamped with the image of the king, so humanity bears the image of their creator.

NO OTHER RELIGION OR SYSTEM OF BELIEFS ELEVATED THE HUMAN RACE TO THE UNIQUE POSITION IN CREATION OF BEARING THE VERY IMAGE OF GOD.

The structure of Genesis 1 is **chronological,** revealing the sequential events of the creation week; whereas in Genesis 2, Moses used a **topical** structure in order to present the Creator’s special concern for man and his environment. (see HANDOUT “The Two Creation Accounts”).

In Genesis 1, Moses established the Creator’s intention that everything He created should live in a domain **where all would be in harmony.**

The sequential ordering of the events of Creation means that God is a God of order and reason – that creation was not random or chaotic, but that God has a *specific* plan and definite order to His creation:

The six days of creation grouped into two categories of three days each

Day 1 – light	Day 4 – sun, moon, and stars
Day 2 – waters beneath waters above (sky)	Day 5 – fish, birds
Day 3 – dry land, seas,	Day 6 – animals, people and plants

Day 7 – God rested	

Day One – God Created Light

In a spiritual sense the creation of light indicates that God is a **revealer** who acts to **overcome darkness, confusion and ignorance.**

Revelation foretells a time when the cosmic luminaries will no longer be needed: “[The New Jerusalem] does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” (Rev. 21:23 NKJV). The creation of light, which is pure energy, sets the stage for all that follows in the creation story.

Day Two – God Separated the “Waters”

On the second day of creation, God begins to form the universe and the planet earth He brought into being. God separated the waters of Gen. 1:2 into two regions

with the atmosphere, called the “firmament” or “expanse” in between. The word “firmament” in Hebrew is רָקִיעַ (rāqīa) which means “expanse” or “spread-out-thinness.”

The firmament referred to in this particular passage is **the visible atmosphere**. Separated by this firmament, or atmosphere, the two bodies of water were then ready for their essential functions in sustaining the life soon to be created on earth.

Day Three – The Surface Waters Gathered Into Seas

This is the third act of separation of creation. The surface waters were gathered into seas so that **the dry land could appear**. God then created all manner of plant life: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees.

“It is significant that these plants were made, not as seeds, but as full-grown plants whose seed was in themselves. They thus had an ‘an appearance of age.’ The concept of creation of apparent age does not, of course, suggest a divine deception, but is a necessary accompaniment of genuine creation. The processes operating in Creation Week were not the processes of the present era, but were processes of ‘creating and making,’ and are thus not commensurate with present processes at all. Adam was created as a full-grown man, the trees were created full-grown trees, and the whole universe was made as a functioning entity, complete and fully developed, right from the beginning. The ‘apparent age’ that might be calculated in terms of present processes would undoubtedly be vastly different from the ‘true age’ as revealed by the Creator.” The Genesis Record, Pg. 63, © 1976 by Dr. Henry M. Morris, President of the Institute for Creation Research, Pub. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. and Master Books El Cajon, Calif.

Day Four – God Created the Sun, Moon and Stars

These heavenly luminaries were made to **provide light** for the inhabitants of the earth and to be for them **signs, and for seasons**, and for **days and years**. Mankind would find them useful to distinguish times, day and night, summer and winter. They are for signs of the change of weather, that the farmer may order his plantings and harvestings, and the workman may begin his work.

The Genesis account of the creation of the sun, moon and stars makes it clear that they are a part of God’s awe inspiring heavens; but they are intended to be man’s servants and not the other way around. It is, therefore, a great affront to God and a dishonor to us to make deities of them, to worship them, or to consult them in place of God.

“And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.” (Deut. 4:19 NKJV) Note also Deut. 17: 2-5; and Jeremiah 8: 1-3.

Days Five and Six – God Created All Animals

On day five God created the **birds and fish** to inhabit the water and the air. God blessed them and commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply.”

Day Six was **the climax** of the story of Creation. First God created all land animals:

- The beasts of the earth – wild animals
- Cattle – animals for domestication
- Everything that creeps upon the ground

As with the birds and fish of Day Five all land animals were to multiply **“according to their kinds.”**

The Genesis story of creation brings the reader to this climatic point where the world was now fully prepared for its human inhabitants who would have a **meaningful relationship with their creator**.

Regardless of which side of the creation versus evolution, Intelligent Design versus no design, or Young Earth versus Old Earth debates one is on, the Genesis story of the six days of Creation confirms several important concepts about the Earth:

1. *There are **orderly and logical** relationships between the different components of the earth’s ecosystems.* Genesis reveals that these relationships are fully comprehended when they are in relation to their Creator, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” Romans 1:20.
2. *Plants and animals, including human beings, function best where there is a **regular time for them to rest**.* Genesis establishes that there is a divine pattern for man’s six-day workweek. A regular day of rest and special communion with God is essential for man’s good; and God’s example is the best pattern and incentive for man to keep such a day.
3. *Mankind has the **highest place on the earth** in intelligence.* Man’s technological advances, his ability to plan and think abstractly, and his

mastery over the earth's environment – all demonstrate his unique and dominant position on the top branch of the earth's "Tree of Life." The human focus of Genesis 2 emphasizes **Adam's place of authority** in God's grand scheme of creation. Man has been given dominion over the earth as God's representative. But more than that, Genesis provides **divine purpose to guide mankind's behavior**. As the "crown of creation" mankind has the responsibility to protect and preserve the environment. As the Creator's good steward, human beings are supposed to use the earth's resources wisely and not squander them because of carelessness or greed. Having been created in God's image, Adam's life was to be lived in purity and integrity before his Creator. When humans are behaving according to God's image, their behavior will consist of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. (Note Ephesians 4:24 & Colossians 3:10).

4. *Mankind is not the true **owner** of the earth.* Mankind, the crown of God's creation, is given freedom and dominion over the earth, but not freedom without limits or dominion without responsibilities! Even those who do not accept the Genesis creation story intuitively know that mankind is not free to abuse, misuse, or wantonly destroy the earth because they are not the ultimate power in the universe. The Genesis story makes it clear that **God Is The Owner Of All He Has Created:**

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours*; Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all." – 1 Chronicles 29:11.

The **Authority** of God is rooted in **His Ownership** of all He has fashioned, including mankind.

Genesis establishes and defines **the limited freedom of mankind** in terms of "covenant" relationships between God and man – covenants that **bind the human race to their Creator**.

Unlike a contract or agreement between two equal parties, in the divine covenants of Genesis, God always takes the initiative. God established and set the terms of the covenants He made with mankind.

Man Was Created as the Crown of God's Creation

For all who follow the story of Genesis 1:28-30 and 2:15-17, THE EDENIC COVENANT displays the Creator's intentions for mankind: "Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden..."

- Man is to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth (Gen. 1:28)
- Man is to Subdue the Earth (Gen. 1:28)
- Man is to have dominion – the management and preservation of the Earth (Gen. 1:28)
- Man is to dress, till, and keep the Earth (Gen. 2:15)
- God invites the man and woman He created to enter into a covenant relationship with their Creator. This covenant is a relationship of love and loyalty between the Lord and those He created as the crown of His creation. The test of Adam's and Eve's covenant love and loyalty to their Maker was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 1:29-30 and 2:15-17).

Man Was Created to **Live in Community** – First With His Wife and Family, and Then With Others

The story of mankind's creation continues: "The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed." Genesis 2:8 (NKJV) *Garden* literally means "a protected area" and *Eden* means, "delight." Therefore, as the name implies, the Garden of Eden was a protected area specially prepared for people to inhabit and enjoy. It was a place where people had communion (intimate fellowship) with God and where they were given every physical thing necessary for life.

The prominent position in the garden of the tree of life made it **a constant reminder to Adam and Eve** that God is the author and giver of life. Access to the tree of life depended upon **their relationship to God**.

The Genesis story implies that tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed in the Garden as a **Test of Obedience**. True obedience is only possible when love for God and trust in God's plan for His creation exist. True obedience is not possible if the choice *not to obey* is not an option.

Genesis describes the Garden of Eden as a **perfect environment** where mankind had access to everything created by God and intended by God to be the perfect food and medicine to sustain human life indefinitely.

Once He had made Adam, only one significant creative act remained for God: God knew that “It is not good that the man should be alone.” That the man He had created would be incomplete without the woman. All the animals had been made both male and female and had been instructed to bring forth after their kinds and to multiply on the earth (Genesis 1:22, 24). Man alone, of all God’s creatures, had no such companion.

Thus ends the story of creation found in the book of Genesis. Everything was good. The purposes for which mankind was created were firmly established:

- **Man Was The Crown Of Creation.** The earth was a lush garden teeming with life. Mankind was specially created in the image and likeness of his creator and given the responsibilities to be fruitful and multiply, to replenish the earth, to dress and till the earth, and to preserve the earth. God still claimed ownership over all He had made and intended for mankind to respect the environment that had been provided for mankind’s use and enjoyment.
- **Man Was Created To Live In Community.** All who lived on the earth were “created in the image of God” and were one family. God provided an environment for mankind that would enable them live together in perfect harmony. Husband and wife were of “one flesh” and all human life that issued from Eve would be one family, living in community, and fulfilling the purposes for which they were made.
- **Communion With God.** God intended that the inhabitants of the world He created live in constant communion and fellowship with Him – that we all know Him “face to face.” Mankind was created to walk the earth naked and unashamed. Content in whom God created them to be, and secure in their place in the universe.

The first two chapters of Genesis leave no doubt that the continuation of the Edenic state of harmony was contingent on **obedience to God.** Man must be holy to maintain communion with his Creator because God is holy. Once sin entered into the picture, separation from God would occur and apart from God mankind would soon learn the terrible price of disobedience.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-3 THE FALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (GENESIS 3 - 11)

Genesis chapter three has been described as “the darkest chapter in human history.” The intent of God that the inhabitants of the world He created should dwell in a domain where they would have harmony with all things is now broken.

Genesis chapters 3-11 explain the “human dilemma” as the aftereffects of **disobedience to God:**

- Human beings live with the feeling that **“something is missing”** and live their lives in a desperate search to fill that emptiness caused by sinful man’s lost communion with a holy God
- Sinful man is unable to restore the **broken community** that was the result of the Fall.
- No longer the crown of creation, mankind has lost **his inner peace** and lives in conflict within himself and nature. War, strife, and all kinds of conflict destroy Man’s unity.

Genesis chapters 3 – 11 explain how creation lost its intended **Divine purposes** and is now under Adam’s curse.

Estrangement... *To estrange* means “to alienate the affections of or confidence of another.” And *estrangement* is that condition of alienation that mankind experiences in all his relationships:

- *Estrangement* issues from sinful man’s **broken communion** with a holy God
- *Estrangement* issues from sinful man’s loss of **his true identity** as being created in the image of God. The Crown of God’s creation is damaged and lying on the ground. Mankind now experiences inner conflicts and conflicts with nature as a result of Adam’s curse.
- *Estrangement* issues from **disharmony with others.** The beautiful community of peace and harmony intended for the human race is drenched in blood as brother wars against brother.

In mankind’s search for theological truth, the questions are often asked:

- How do we explain the existence of evil in a world created by a holy God?
- If God is omnipotent and holy why does He permit such things as war, famine, and disease?

- Did God create evil?

As a result of this quest for truth, every philosophy and religion deals on one level or another with the existence of evil in the world and in the human race.

- Atheism is centered on the pessimistic rationale that the existence of such evil in the world proves that if God exists He is not good (condoning evil as He does) or is not omnipotent (unable to stop evil). Therefore, the atheist argues, the existence of evil in the world disproves the existence of God.
- The Dualist argues that good and evil have always coexisted in creation; one cannot exist without the other. Therefore, god is both good and evil.
- The Humanist, the determinist, and the “enlightened rationalist” have in common the belief that human conduct is the source of all evils. Therefore human beings can eradicate evil only by changing their behavior.

The Genesis chapters 3 – 11 give us a clear description of **the origin and spread of evil in the world**. Genesis chapter 3 is the darkest chapter in all of the Old Testament because it describes the entrance of evil into creation.

“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” Genesis 3:1 (NKJV)

Adam and Eve were created with God’s perfect nature within them. Therefore, before man could bring sin into the world, an agent external to himself must cause him to sin.

“The material serpent was an instrument or tool of a higher agent, Satan or the devil, to whom the sacred writers apply from this incident the reproachful name of ‘the dragon, that old serpent’ (Rev. 20:2).” *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary: Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (1871)* by Rev. Robert Jamieson, D.D., Rev. A.R. Fausset, A.M & Rev. David Brown, D.D., Database © 2005 WORDsearch Corp.

And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” – Genesis 3:1b. Satan took advantage **of the woman’s innocence**.

He came to her as a **“divine messenger”** offering to lead her to the **“true interpretation”** or the supposed intent of God’s words. How often have false

teachers misled the flock with words like, “Never mind what the Bible says, I’ll tell you what it really means.”?

The devil came to Eve when she was alone. There is a much greater opportunity to be tempted when we are isolated (Note Hebrews 10:24-25). Adam’s and Eve’s downfall came in part because they failed in their responsibility to one another to **stay together** and with one heart and mind exhort one another to **remain true to God’s word**.

“And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Genesis 3:2-3 (NKJV). It is clear from verses 2 & 3 that the woman knew what God had commanded.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was intended by God to keep that knowledge from people; God had declared that the ability and right to judge what was good and what was not good for people, and was something that He had reserved for Himself.

Failing to convince the woman that God had said something other than what she had heard, Satan resorts to an outright lie! The serpent said to the woman, “you surely shall not die...” and blasphemes God by implying that God was selfishly keeping the knowledge of good and evil to Himself.

Satan in the guise of the serpent continues to spin his web of deceit: “you will be as God...” he promised Eve, knowing full-well that this was the same temptation that led to his own downfall! (Note Isaiah 14:13, 14).

The woman was faced with the same choice all are now faced with: **to believe God and take Him at His word...or not**. So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food [the lust of the flesh], that it *was* pleasant to the eyes [the lust of the eyes], and a tree desirable to make *one* wise [the pride of life], she took of its fruit and ate...” (Note: 1 John 2:16)

“...She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” Satan tempted Eve that she might in turn tempt Adam. “It is his policy to send temptations by unexpected hands, and by those who have the most interest in us and influence upon us” Matthew Henry.

The Scripture does not tell us what was in Eve’s heart when she turned towards her husband and offered him the same fruit. Proverbs 7:21 (NKJV) warns the young

man to avoid the temptress: “With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him.” Adam may not have been such an easy target for Satan, but his heart was easily turned by the one he loved as “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.”

Eve was deceived, but Adam **ate knowingly**: “*And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression*” 1 Timothy 2:14 (NKJV).

Did Adam And Eve Have A Fair Chance Against Satan?

It is often asked, “Why did God allow Adam and Eve to be tested, knowing they did not have a fair chance against Satan?” The answer to that question can be found by answering another set of questions:

- What kind of nature did Adam and Eve have?
- Were all of their needs satisfied? Were they hungry, thirsty, or tired?
- Did they know God and have fellowship with Him?
- Did they know the truth? Were they given adequate instructions, and were they informed of the consequences of disobedience?
- Did they have dominion over the earth (including the serpent)?
- Were they in obedience to God before the temptation and experiencing the benefits of obedience?

Then why did God allow Adam and Eve to be tempted? God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden to **test their obedience**. Freedom without choice is not freedom at all. Adam and Eve exercised their freewill to choose God or to choose their own way.

The story of Adam and Eve’s fall shows that human beings are vulnerable to temptation, but do not have to give into it. It is true today and was true in the Garden: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

So when is a person vulnerable to temptation?

- When they reject the absolute authority of God and His word.
- When they do not believe God really expects absolute obedience, or will excuse sin in their lives.

- When they think there is something better beyond the limited freedom granted to them by God.
- When they choose to define their own boundaries and want to decide for themselves what is good and evil apart from God’s word.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN



“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.” Genesis 3:7 (NKJV)

“Adam and Eve Cast Out” by Gustave Dore

There are both **immediate and long-term** consequences for sin. The promise that the man and woman would acquire wisdom and become as gods through the knowledge of good and evil was false. Instead, of becoming gods, there came over them the realization of what they had done: they had violated God’s sacred command, rebelled against their maker, and lost their divine nature and their dominion over the earth. As Satan promised, they now had the full knowledge of evil.

Before sin entered their souls, Adam’s and Eve’s focus had been upon God. They were unaware of their nakedness and experienced perfect communion with each other and with their God. Before there was sin, there could be no shame, and both

nakedness and sexuality were undefiled. Now the eyes of both of them were opened and their focus was no longer upon God, but on themselves. They were filled with an awful sense of guilt and shame over what they had done, and they became acutely aware of their nakedness. Their sins had left them exposed, and now they wanted to hide from God and from each other.

“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you should not eat?” Genesis 3:11 (NKJV)

THREE HUMAN RESPONSES TO SIN

"Life would be a feast to the wicked and death a godsend, were it not for the immortality of the soul." – Pythagoras

1.REVEL – Revel: to take great pleasure or delight (in); to make merry; indulge in boisterous festivities; boisterous merrymaking or festivity

2.REFUSE – Denial is a refusal to acknowledge or admit to sin in general or one's own personal sin. It includes the idea that one's own good deeds outweigh the bad, making bad deeds justifiable. Blame shifting means it is always somebody else's fault; "a victim of circumstances," refusal to admit one's own culpability for sin and its consequences.

3.RUN AWAY – The desire to escape from the painful consequences of sin. Mentally: drugs, entertainment and fantasy. Emotionally: withdrawn, uncaring, callous, and uncommitted. Physically: instead of facing up to and admitting to sinful behavior, and then working to compensate those harmed by that behavior, physically move away from bad circumstances to escape the consequences for actions (i.e. the "gypsy" lifestyle; a pattern of divorces, broken relationships, bankruptcies, or career changes, etc. anything to avoid facing the consequences).

GOD'S REMEDY FOR HUMAN SIN

1.REPENT – "Against you and you only I have sinned" I deserve death: face up to and confess sins and seek wherever possible to restore, or compensate those harmed.

2.RECEIVE FORGIVENESS – By the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, atonement was made for the sins of all people (John 3:16). This includes forgiving yourself and forgiving others; being reconciled to God, to others, and to yourself.

3.RESURRECT – To be raised again into the new life now and in eternity. God does not make "bad" people

When confronted by God over their sin they could no longer **DENY** that it existed. They could no longer hide and **AVOID** dealing with the issue with God. They were unable to **ENDURE** the presence of sin in their lives in the presence of a holy God. And they could not **TURN BACK** because once innocence is lost, it is lost forever. The only response God left to them was to **EMBRACE** His words, and accept His judgments (Genesis 3:14-24).

“Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.” Genesis 3:21 (NKJV)

The garments of skin were **God's provision for restoring** Adam and Eve's fellowship with Him and imply the shedding of blood in order to cover their sin.

Their sins were covered because of god's grace and mercy, but the perfect harmony God intended for Adam and his descendants was shattered. God placed a curse (judgment) on man and on his whole environment as a means to force him to recognize the seriousness of his sin.

Because Adam and his descendants would be subject to death and decay, they would no longer be able to exercise perfect dominion over the earth.

The curse on Adam's race and the disharmony it brought was fourfold:

- 1) **Sorrow** – resulting from continual disappointment;
- 2) **Pain and suffering** – signified by the “thorns”;
- 3) **Sweat and tears** – the “strong crying” of intense struggle against a hostile environment; 4) **Physical death** – which would eventually triumph over all of man's efforts, returning everything back to dust “...because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (3:19b).

Jesus came and bore the curse for us that we might be set free from the curse of Adam... *“Surely He has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* Isaiah 53: 4-6 (NKJV)

“So the LORD God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.’” Genesis 3:14 (NKJV)

The serpent was not excused; it was singled out from all other creatures because as an instrument of Satan it would be a constant reminder to human kind of **his fall from perfection**.

The same curse that brought death also brought the **promise of hope and life**. *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”* Genesis 3:15 (NKJV)

Genesis 3:15 has been labeled the “Protevangelium” because it is the first statement containing a reference to the gospel. This is the foundational messianic prophecy in the Bible and it will be built upon throughout Scripture.

“Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ – therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:22-24 (NKJV)

Genesis 3:22-24 describes what can only be called “Paradise Lost.”

The perfect environment God had created for man was no longer suitable for man in his fallen condition. The story of Adam’s and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden served and three-fold purpose:

1. **God’s justice required punishment**
2. **God’s love kept them from the Tree of Life**, lest they should eat of the Tree and live forever in a fallen condition

3. **God’s mercy would be found** when the conditions of mankind’s fallen estate caused them to realize they were lost and in need of salvation.

FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD

The chapters of Genesis immediately following chapter 3 describe what happens after The Fall; they tell the story of the rapid unraveling of **the Creator’s intentions for His creation** as Adam’s descendants sink deeper and deeper into sin and rebellion.

Eventually, judgment comes to mankind in the form of the Flood that cleanses the earth of sinful and violent men, but Adam’s nature is still in the survivors: Noah and his family. Although human life spans will be severely shortened after Noah’s Flood, the sin nature (Adam’s fallen image and likeness) will continue to be passed down through his descendants.

As the history of the Old Testament unfolds, it will chronicle the continuing **downward spiral of humanity** into sin against the backdrop of God’s **plan of redemption** being worked out through His chosen people.

Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16)

“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the LORD.’ Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel...” Genesis 4:1-2a (NKJV)

Enmity, conflict, and strife was about to enter the human race. The story of Cain and Abel introduces another major theme found in the Old Testament: **“Sibling rivalry among brothers”** is another theme in Genesis. Ishmael persecuted Isaac; Jacob left home so Esau couldn’t kill him; and Joseph’s brothers intended to kill him but decided to sell him as a slave. When sin entered the human race, it gave us dysfunctional and fractured families, and only the Lord can put families together again.” Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, Pg. 31, © 2007 Published by David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO.

At the time of The Fall, God pronounced that there would be conflict between the **serpent and the “seed” of the woman**: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and*

you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:15 (NKJV) This conflict will be played out – and is still being played out – in Adam’s race by the constant struggle between **good and evil**.

Adam, Eve, and their offspring had been driven from the presence of God in the Garden of Eden. However, by God’s grace and mercy – and because of His promise of a future Redeemer to come from the Seed of Eve – the Lord would make a way for **sinful men to approach Him** under certain conditions.

This is another theme established in the early chapters of Genesis: the necessity of a **substitutionary sacrifice for sin** as a prerequisite to approaching a holy God.

At a future time and place (described in the books of Exodus and Leviticus) God would institute a more elaborate system of sacrifices that would be necessary for Israel to maintain its religious purity and unique ethnic identity in the midst of the idolatrous nations that surrounded them. However, in this period of time, a simple blood sacrifice as atonement for sin was all that was required.

“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.” Genesis 4:3-12 (NKJV)

“Meeting his brother in the field, angry words led to murderous deed, and earth witnessed the first death, the more terrible that it was violent, and that a brother’s hand.” Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, © 1975, Hendrickson Publisher, Peabody, Massachusetts, Pg. 16. Cain’s twisted heart directed his actions, and caused him to spill the blood of his own brother. It seemed to be an act of defiance: in his wrath, Cain would rather see his own brother’s blood maliciously spilled out upon the earth than repent and humbly make a right sacrifice in reverence to his Maker.

“Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and

called the name of the city after the name of his son – Enoch.”
Genesis 4:16-17 (NKJV)

Cain’s punishment and the brief history of his family that follows, parallel the further destruction of the peace, harmony, fellowship, and unity that man was supposed to experience as they lived in the presence of their Creator.

The Genealogies that compose Genesis chapter 5 fill in the information of the bloodline of the Messiah (Savior) from Adam to Noah’s son Shem (See Luke 3:36-38). The genealogies in both Old and New Testaments serve three very important purposes:

1. **God was preserving and recording** the divinely ordained line of the promised “seed” or Messiah
2. God’s command: **“be fruitful and multiply”** was being carried out
3. God’s curse was in effect because all **eventually died** (Note the emphasis in Genesis chapter 5).

BIBLICAL STUDIES OT 101-4 “THE FLOOD”

THE DAYS OF NOAH

“And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” Genesis 5:32 (NKJV)

“It is urgently important, from the standpoint of both understanding past history and seeking guidance for the future, that we understand the events which took place in the days of Noah.” Henry M. Morris

“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:1-5 (NKJV)

The great flood is one of the most important events in human history. The world that God created was forever lost after the flood (See HANDOUT “Where On Earth is the Garden of Eden?”). The Old Testament prophets, Isaiah (54:9) and Ezekiel (14:14, 20) testified to the existence of Noah as an historical figure. Peter (1 Peter 3:20 & 2 Peter 2:5) and the author of the book of Hebrews (11:7) verified the historicity of Noah and the great Flood. And Jesus himself confirmed the story of Noah and his times (Matt. 24:37-39). In fact, Jesus warned that the characteristics of those days would be repeated just before His return in the closing days of this age, “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be...” Matthew 24:37-39. These passages and the Genesis account itself pose a great problem for liberal theologians who relegate Noah’s Flood to ancient mythology. If their hypothesis is true then they must admit Jesus was ignorant and foolish for believing in Noah’s Flood.

THE MINISTRY OF ENOCH

Enoch was the first recorded evangelist. He preached a prophetic message on the coming judgment to the antediluvian world. “Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’ – Jude 14-15 (NIV).

Enoch was a man of great faith and was the father of Methuselah (Genesis 5:22-23). Genesis 5:24 states that “Enoch walked with God...” To walk with God means to live in harmony, intimacy and constant communion with Him. Without faith it is impossible to walk with God. The author of Hebrews includes Enoch in the list of patriarchs known for their faith because he departed from the earth without dying (Genesis 5:24): “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him.”—Hebrews 11:5.

“Enoch’s translation was not only an evidence to faith of the reality of a future state, and of the possibility of the body’s existing in glory in that state; but it was an encouragement to the hope of all that walk with God that they shall be forever with him...” – Matthew Henry.

The conditions preceding the flood show the root causes of why the Great Flood was necessary.

Genesis 6:1 reveals that a great **population explosion** had taken place. However, with this explosion of Adam’s race, there came with it an **explosion of sin**. There was a total breakdown of morality and an increase of satanic activity (6:2-4).

Adam’s race had become **totally depraved and corrupt** in God’s sight. Cain’s murderous act was repeated again and again until the earth was filled with violence. “*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” God was ready to destroy all flesh that had become corrupted by Adam’s sin.

“*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*” Genesis 6:8 (NKJV)

Although Adam and his descendants had been denied access to the Garden of Eden, they still lived in the perfect world that God had made for them. Genesis introduces another Old Testament theme: for all His loving, long-suffering towards human beings, there finally comes a time when, God’s justice demands that He draw the line in the sand so to speak, and says to the out-of-control wicked city, nation, family, or individual, “enough is enough – the time for judgment has come.” This pattern will be seen with Sodom and Gomorrah, with the Egyptian Pharaoh in Exodus, the children of Israel in the Wilderness, the northern Kingdom

of Israel, the southern Kingdom of Judah, the prophetic passages of the End of the Age, and finally prophesied in the Book of Revelation.

In Genesis 6 the time came for God to act in accordance with His **justice and holiness**. It had reached the point where the human race could no longer afford His grace. Before they destroyed themselves and forever prevented the accomplishment of God's purpose for mankind, God would have to terminate man's wickedness, which had crashed through every restraint.

Adam and Eve could not see past the single act of one bite of forbidden fruit. Satan blinded their eyes to the long-term consequences of their sin. If Adam and Eve could have looked into the future and beyond the borders of Eden and seen the horrible scenes of death and destruction they would unleash, no doubt they would have turned away from the temptation. Now it was too late, and man's outward wickedness flooded the earth because every inclination of the thoughts of the human soul had become only evil all the time.

“And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’” Genesis 6:3 (NKJV)

The first four verses of Genesis chapter six mention certain “sons of God” who married the “daughters of men” and produced an offspring of “giants” who were “the heroes of old, men of renown.” The identity of these “sons of God” has been a source of both mystery and controversy amongst scholars of the Old and New Testament for thousands of years; all that can be known for certain about them is they perished in the Great Flood with the rest of the antediluvian world. (See HANDOUT “Who Were The Sons of God?”)

Another great controversy that arises from the early chapters of Genesis is the controversy over the ages of human beings listed in the early genealogies. Could human beings really live six, or seven, or eight hundred years or more? Evolutionists scoff at such a notion. They point to pre-historic ape-like ancestors of *Homo sapiens* and laugh at the Genesis record as being ridiculous. Some liberal critics are less abusive to their so-called Fundamentalist brothers and sisters. They argue that the authors of Genesis were either mistaken or were writing mythologies influenced by other ancient stories. Some neo-orthodox scholars argue that the 900 years of life mentioned in the Old Testament were not literal years. They claim that back then people counted each month as a year. On that basis they argue that you have to take the age given and divide by 12 months. Of course none of these theories does justice to the Word of God as written.

It is interesting to note that in the decades immediately following the introduction of Darwin's theories on the origin of man, no scientist would dare to argue that the ages of humans given in Genesis were possible. However, once the Genesis connection is removed from the discussion, today's scientists are much more open to the possibility that humans can live at least 1,000 years (See HANDOUT “Can the Human Lifespan Reach 1,000 Years – Some Experts Say ‘Yes.’”) The Genesis story indicates that God deliberately restricted the number of years humans could live to a maximum of 120, and that cutting off access to the world as originally created by God was the physical means to that end.

THE FLOOD

“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.’” Genesis 7:1 (NKJV)

The door to the “ark of safety” was about to close on Noah's generation. The antediluvian witness of the Holy Spirit to man through the preaching of the Word of God by Enoch and Noah had been rejected. Adam's descendants **refused to repent** and had become so **hopelessly corrupt** as to be beyond reclamation.

It was futile for God to “strive” any longer with man (Genesis 6:3-7). His creation knew the will of God, but chose to disobey it. Man had been told to “multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28) but now “the earth was filled with violence” (Genesis 6:11).

Their destiny to live in perfect harmony as sons and daughters of their Father/Creator was lost. Every blessing given by divine decree and that belonged to them as the crown of God's creation was broken, distorted, or destroyed.

Rebellious sons and daughters began by at war with their Father God, but soon they were at enmity with themselves, with others, and finally with the world around them. The intended bliss in the world God had created for them was forever lost. Adam's condition quickly spread to all mankind, and they ended in complete revolt against God. The entire earth was **filled with violence**.

“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark – you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.” Genesis 6:18 (NKJV)

Matthew Henry Commentary – “Christians should take careful note of Genesis 6 – 9. Jesus prophesied that just as world conditions in the days before the Flood presaged a coming catastrophe, so will world conditions in the last days of *this* age foreshadow an even greater catastrophe. Some of these characteristics are summarized as follows:

- Preoccupation with physical appetites (Luke 17:27)
- Rapid advances in technology (Genesis 4:22)
- Grossly materialistic attitudes and interests (Luke 17:28)
- Uniformitarian philosophies (Hebrews 11:7)
- Inordinate devotion to pleasure and comfort (Genesis 4:21)
- No concern for God in either belief or conduct (1 Peter 2:5; Jude 15)
- Disregard for the sacredness of the marriage relation (Matt. 24:38)
- Rejection of the inspired Word of God (1 Peter 3:19)
- Population explosion (Genesis 6:1, 11)
- Widespread violence (Genesis 6:11, 13)
- Corruption throughout society (Genesis 6:12)
- Preoccupation with illicit sex activity (Genesis 4:19; 6:2)
- Widespread words and thoughts of blasphemy (Jude 15)
- Organized Satanic activity (Genesis 6:1-4)
- Promulgation of systems and movements of abnormal depravity (Genesis 6:5, 12)

These were conditions described the days of Noah and they are all rapidly growing and spreading throughout humanity again today. The present condition of the human race is reason to believe that this present time may well be the time that immediately precedes the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*” Revelation 3:11 (NKJV)

“Take away conscience and the fear of God, and men become beasts and devils to one another, like the fishes of the sea, where the greater devour the less. Sin fills the earth with violence, and so turns the world into a wilderness... When wickedness has become general and universal ruin is not far off; while there is a remnant of praying people in a nation, to empty the measure as it fills, judgments may be kept off a great while; but when all hands are at work to pull down the fences of sin, and none stand in the gap to make up the breach, what can be expected but an inundation of wrath?”

But in all of that corrupt and perverse generation there was one exception: “Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord” (6:8). Noah, like Enoch before him, “walked with God (Gen. 6:9). He was a “preacher of righteousness” to his disobedient generation (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5). He remained faithful even though no one believed him except some in his own family. Noah is listed among the heroes of faith recorded in Hebrews 11; his description both begins and ends with the phrase “by faith” (Hebrews 11:7)

indicating the way he lived from beginning to end. Noah was a “righteous” (just) man “blameless” (perfect) in his generation.

As Noah entered the ark, he was also entering into a **new covenant relationship** with God. Genesis 6:18 is the first actual mention of “covenant” (Hebrew *berith*) in the Old Testament. The details of this covenant are revealed after Noah and his family members emerge from the Ark (Genesis 9:9-17).

WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD MEAN WHEN IT SAYS NOAH WAS “PERFECT”?

“Noah was no doubt a sinner, being human; but he had believed God’s promises and sought, by God’s grace, to obey His word and follow His will.” – Henry Morris.

It is by sovereign grace, received through faith, that the believer is justified before God and declared to be complete in Him (Romans 4:3). Genesis says that Noah found “favor” (6:8) in the eyes of the LORD and was justified and declared “righteous” (6:9) before the LORD by that same sovereign grace. Noah was:

- “perfect” or “blameless”
- In the attitude of his heart
- In his faith in God
- And in his obedience...

Noah “did all that God commanded him” (6:22; 7:5; 7:9; 7:16)

“He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8

Noah is another type of Jesus, the Savior of the world who is come. Noah went about preaching repentance and warning men of the coming judgment. Note when Jesus began His public ministry he began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14). Noah provided shelter and sustenance for his family and all creatures gathered into the Ark. It was a great honor for him that God would allow the human race to continue through him, and through him the new world, the promised seed (the Messiah), and the church would come. “Herein also he was a type of Christ, to whom it is owing that the world stands, by whom all things consist, and who preserves mankind from being totally cut off and ruined by sin; in him the holy seed is saved alive, and the creation rescued from the vanity under which it groans. Noah saved those whom he was to rule, so does Christ, Heb. 5:9.” Matthew Henry

THE ARK OF SALVATION

“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.’ And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him.” Genesis 7:1-5 (NKJV)

God promised Noah that his family would be saved. Noah and his family had to respond in faith and voluntarily chose to enter the Ark (7:7).

No doubt, Noah’s preaching, and the building the Ark must have seemed foolish to a generation that had never seen rain (Gen. 2:5, 6) or anything like a flood. They may have deceived themselves that God would never destroy His perfect creation. Lacking any scientific or empirical evidence that all the fountains of the great deep could be broken up, and the windows of heaven could be opened and their waters cover the entire earth, Noah’s generation refused to believe Noah



Model of Noah's Ark

and did nothing to prepare themselves for what was to come.

The LORD’s call to Noah to, “Come into the ark, you and all your household...” appeared to be more of an invitation than a command. As they entered the Ark and the door closed behind them, they could have no idea what awaited them: their obedience had to be totally on faith that God would be in the Ark with them, and although the Flood would soon be unleashed upon the

world, they would all be safe with the LORD in the Ark. In the Ark, they safely endured the battering of the flood. For Christians the ark is a type of Christ, saving them from the second death that is the consequence for sins (Revelation 20:16). Noah demonstrated great faith and unwavering obedience to God by building and then entering the Ark. Because of Noah’s faith and obedience God promised his entire household would be saved. In the New Testament, this same promise was extended to the Philippian jailer: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31). Christ is the divine Architect of our

salvation – the Master Builder who made the way for all who enter into salvation through Him (John 3:16).

Noah’s family is a type of **all who follow Christ by faith**; the old is passing away, but the promise of a new heaven and new earth awaits them on the other side. Each member of Noah’s household had to exercise faith by entering Ark of their own freewill. By entering the Ark they were renouncing the old world, and by faith were accepting that God would deliver them into a new world according to His promise. The balance between man’s free choice and God’s electing grace is a theme that will be seen throughout the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are one and the same; that means from the beginning salvation has always been by grace through faith. Man in his finite understanding can never fathom the eternal depths of God’s justice and mercy. God’s justice demanded a penalty for sin: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV). God’s justice demanded that the world and all those corrupted by sin must be destroyed. But because of grace, God promised Noah that his family would be saved. Noah and his family had to **respond in faith and voluntarily choose to enter** the Ark (7:7).

“You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female...” Genesis 7:2 (NKJV)

Genesis 7:2 introduces the idea of clean and unclean animals. Mosaic Law would eventually define exactly which animals were to be regarded as clean in the Israelite system (Leviticus). No specific reason is given why seven pairs of clean animals were to be taken on the Ark, and it is best not to read too much into it. But the number seven figures predominantly in the divine plan of creation and often symbolizes fullness, completeness, and spiritual perfection.

“For in seven days I will send rain upon the earth...” time was running out, the animals were loading onto the Ark, but this seemed to be one last warning to the ungodly in the world. In the end, no one will be without excuse (Romans 1:20). Still, no one listened (Matthew 24:37-39). Once all were safely inside the Ark, “the Lord shut them in” (7:16). It was a supernatural act of God that shut and sealed the door of the Ark. This act provided a final assurance to the occupants that they were in the will of God and under His protection. “The door of mercy will shortly be shut against those that now make light of it. Now, knock and it shall be opened; but the time will come when it shall not.” Matthew Henry (Note Luke 13:24-30.)

THE BIBLE DESCRIBES A UNIVERSAL, WORLD-DESTROYING FLOOD

“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.” Genesis 7:11, 12 (NKJV)

Moses is very specific about the year, month, and day that disaster struck. His intent was to show that he was not writing allegory, or mythology, but was writing an **eyewitness account of an historical event** handed down from Noah. The entire chronology of The Flood including the abating of the flood waters is described in detail.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLOOD

GENESIS		DAYS
7:12	The rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.	40
7:24	The waters continued to rise for another 110 days. (A total of 150 days the waters “prevailed upon the earth”)	110
8:4, 5	The ark came to a rest upon the mountains. The waters continued to abate until the first day of the tenth month. The tops of the mountains can be seen above the water.	74
8:6, 7	After forty days Noah sent out the raven	40
8:8	After seven days Noah sent out first dove	7
8:10	After seven more days Noah sent out second dove	7
8:12	Seven more days passed before the third dove is sent	7
8:13	First day, first month of the 601 st year The waters were “dried from off the earth” and Noah removed the covering of the ark	29
8:14, 15	The “face of the ground was dry” God tells Noah to evacuate the ark.	57
	TOTAL	371

GOD’S NEW PROMISE FOR A NEW WORLD

By God’s grace Noah stepped out into a new *re – created* world that continues to this day to sustain humans, but not the same as before the great deluge. Despite the poetic language of God’s promise,

“As long as earth endures,
Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
Summer and winter, day and night,
Shall not cease” (8:22)...

the new world was and is a much more hostile environment for the human race.

Noah’s first recorded act after leaving the ark was to **build an altar to the LORD** and offer on it a **burnt offering** from the clean animals and birds that had come from the ark (8:20).

Noah’s sacrifice, like that of Abel’s (Gen. 4:4) was pleasing to God (8:21). The human condition that became the measure of God’s wrath and brought God’s terrible judgment upon the earth – that every imagination in the thoughts of the human soul had become evil (6:4) – became the measure of God’s grace in the new world: “I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.” (8:21).

A NEW COVENANT FOR A NEW WORLD

“Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: ‘And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.’” Genesis 9:8-10 (NKJV)

Genesis 9:9-17 describes the covenant God makes not only with mankind through Noah and his descendants, but with all of the **animals and the earth itself**.

God promises never again to send another flood to destroy the earth and seals His promise with **the rainbow**, “I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.” This covenant, which was made with Noah, is an **unconditional covenant of grace** extended to all generations on the earth.

To this day, whenever a Christian sees a rainbow in the sky, it is for them a reminder of the sign of the covenant God established between Himself and all living beings on the earth. This new covenant, established by God with mankind,

signaled that God would again seek a harmonious relationship with the human race.

His provision after the Flood also included the **blood atonement for sins** – a principle that will be more clearly defined in the Mosaic covenant given at Mt. Sinai.

The covenant God makes with Noah introduces another theme that will be seen throughout the Old Testament: **God is a God of second chances.** The world of Noah's day deserved to be destroyed, and it was.

But with the passing of God's judgment by the Flood, there came a new beginning for the world and all those who lived in it. Anyone who puts their trust in God and seeks His forgiveness and atonement receives a second, and sometimes third or fourth chance in life. The stories of all the patriarchs, kings, and prophets are stories of flawed people who often failed to live up to the people they were called to be. But not one of those who truly repented of their sins and who sought God's grace and mercy were disappointed by Him. "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments" Deuteronomy 7:9 (NKJV). And this same grace and mercy extends to all those who put their trust in Jesus and need a second chance at life: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

The Reemergence of Sin (9:20-29)

"And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." Genesis 9:20-21 (NKJV)

The fallen sin nature of Adam was ***not*** drowned in the Flood with the rest of the old world. "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned..." and "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." (Romans 5:12, 19).

This story has parallels what happened in the Garden of Eden. Noah, like Adam fell in his own garden. Both indulged in a fruit of the earth and ended up naked and ashamed. Adam eyes were opened, and he covered his nakedness; in his drunken state, Noah was unaware of his nakedness, but his sons were not. Noah's sons, like Adam's sons, acted differently towards sin; Ham was like Cain and

compounded his father's sin. Like Adam's faithful sons, Abel and Seth, Shem and Japheth responded righteously.

Once again, Genesis introduces another frequent theme found in the Old Testament: it is often after a great victory or great achievement in the LORD that humans are **most vulnerable to a fall.**

BABEL AND THE TABLE OF NATIONS

Chronologically, the events of 11:1-9 precede most of the events described in chapter 10. Chapter 11 tells us *why* people speak different languages. Chapter 10 tells us *how* people were scattered after their languages were confused. Genesis 10 is often called "The Table of Nations" because it lists the nations (or people groups) that inhabited the earth in the days before Abraham.

This chapter also reminds us that God is concerned about ***all*** the people in the world. Chapter 10 documents the beginning of the fulfillment of God's command to Noah's descendants to be fruitful and fill the earth, but it comes only after God intervenes in human history at Babel.

The Tower itself was not a threat to God. But the tower was an important **symbol to its builders.** It was for them:

- **A common rallying point**
- **A monument of pride** in what they were able to accomplish apart from God if they remained unified
- A symbol that **man could rival God**
- A common religious center for **worshipping their own gods in their own way**

GOD DOES NOT ABANDON SINFUL PEOPLE:

A NEW PROMISE IS GIVEN

Out of the darkness comes light. Out of judgment comes redemption. From human defeat comes God's promise of a future victory. This chapter of human history closes with the genealogy of Noah's son Shem (11:10-27) and serves as a bridge between the judgment of Babel and the promise to Abraham that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed.

BIBLICAL STUDIES**OT 101-5****THE PATRIARCHS PART ONE: ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12 – 22)****Lesson Outline for the Student:**

The purpose of this lesson is to describe for the student how the Abrahamic Covenant and the Promises of God shaped the lives of the Patriarchs. Included in this lesson are the major concepts of:

- Covenant
- God's Election
- The Promise of Land, a Great Nation, and all Nations Blessed Through Abraham
- Separation: Ethnic, Within Families, and Geographic

CHOSEN IN ETERNITY

“Abram was chosen by God from eternity! It was in eternity that God purposed to bring salvation to a lost world through him. His plan was to do it through a nation he had formed for Himself and for this purpose. This nation would be for Him a ‘kingdom of priests and a holy nation’: (Ex. 19:6). It would be through this nation that the Savior would come, and salvation to all people through Him. To build this nation, God purposed to begin with one man – Abram. Abram would be chosen for God's own sake! God would bring him into such an intimate relationship with Himself that all those ever after whom He would call to Himself would walk in this same relationship with God, as Abram did, and this relationship would be for all eternity! In other words, God created us not for *time* but for *eternity*.

Little did Abram know how his life would affect eternity. He had no idea that world peace and world politics would be influenced from his day even to our present day. When God chooses a person for His purpose, all of eternity will be shaped by his decision. What an awesome responsibility God gives to each person he chooses. But remember God's choice is not for one person alone, but His choice will affect people and nations for generations to come.” Henry T. Blackaby, *Created To Be God's Friend*, Thomas Nelson, Inc. Publishers, Nashville, © 1999, PP 5, 6

ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY OF FAITH: GENESIS 12:1 - 25:18

The importance of Abraham's story is much greater than any theological idea or religious concept that may be attributed to him. It was God's intention that through Abraham, His ultimate plan and purpose for the redemption of the human race would be revealed. Abraham's personal struggles to come to terms with his faith in the unfulfilled promises of the “unseen” God can show us that there can also be purpose and meaning to our own personal struggles of faith that lay beyond our immediate circumstances. The immediate drama of Abraham's hope to obtain an heir to The Promises of God (Gen. 12:1-3) is played out against the backdrop of the larger panorama of the promise God gave Eve that the offspring of the woman would someday prevail over Satan – the one who brought all of this sin and suffering upon the human race; God's selection of Abraham focuses on His plan to advance the fulfillment of that ancient prophecy through one man and his wife, Sarah. It would be by Abraham and his descendants that the Messiah would come who would bring salvation to a sinful race and restore His dominion over the earth.

Abraham is considered by many historians and theologians to be one of the greatest figures of the ancient world. All three of the great monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – claim him as their “Father.”

Archeologists have explored the place of his origin, searched for, and in many cases found the ruins of towns mentioned in his story in Genesis. Historians have traced his journeys and have been able to reconstruct an accurate portrait of his life 2,000 years before Christ. For centuries skeptics and liberal theologians believed that if an historical figure like Abraham existed at all, most of what was written in the Old Testament about him and the world in which he lived must have been mythological. However, in the last 100 years archeologists have made some amazing discoveries that confirm detail after detail of his story and reinforce the accuracy of the Old Testament account. Werner Keller in the Introduction to his book on the history of the Bible wrote:

“In Palestine, places and towns which are frequently mentioned in the bible are being brought back once more into the light of day. They look exactly as the Bible describes them and lie exactly where the Bible locates them. On ancient inscriptions and monuments scholars encounter more and more characters from the Old and New Testaments. Contemporary reliefs depict people whom we have hitherto only known by name. Their features, their clothes, their armor take shape before our eyes.” Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*, William Morrow and Company, New York, © 1981, P. 22

FROM GENESIS 12 ONWARD THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ALL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING OF THE PROMISES GOD FIRST ANNOUNCED TO

ABRAHAM SOME 4000 YEARS AGO THAT ALL THE NATIONS WOULD BE BLESSED THROUGH HIM.

Because the story of Abraham is intended to be more than a personal story of one man's journey of faith, Abraham's faith has become the pattern for all who would ever put their faith in the God of Abraham – even after the fullness of time came, in God's Son. The promise to Abraham that his seed would be a blessing to the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness that came by faith. "Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all..." (Romans 4:16). Abraham's faith became the standard for the only kind of faith that is acceptable to God for righteousness: "Even so Abraham 'believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'all the nations will be blessed in you.' So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer" (Galatians 3:8, 9). This is the kind of faith God was looking for in the human race, and He found it and shaped it to fullness in Abraham. Therefore, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3).

God made known to Abraham "...the mystery of His will." A major theme that runs throughout the Bible is the fact that **God is self-revealed**. If God did not reveal Himself, we could not know Him. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Also, "He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him" (Daniel 2:22); and "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

As the story follows Abraham's journey, it reveals how God developed him completely "according to the kind intention of His will." God's desire for Abraham (and for all who walk by faith in this world) is to have a relationship with a heavenly Father based upon intimacy and trust. In the English, *intimacy* refers to the feeling of being in a close personal association with another and belonging together. It is a familiar and very close emotional connection with another as a result of a bond that is formed through knowledge and experience of the other. Genuine intimacy requires dialogue, transparency, vulnerability, and reciprocity. Intimacy with God can be expressed as, "into-me-he-sees" (from both

perspectives); throughout his life, the Father saw into Abraham and Abraham saw into the Father.

It is spiritually significant that God called Abram in Ur because Ur represents a place of worldliness and idolatry from which God calls every human being. Later, when Israel left Egypt they had a similar experience of leaving a place of worldliness and idolatry behind to reach the Promised Land. When Abram left Haran and crossed over the border into Canaan, it was like that step of faith that takes all believers from death to life when they choose to believe God and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. "But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..." (1 Peter 2:9). And just as with Abraham, New Testament believers leave behind their old way of life and begin a journey with God that leads to ever-increasing intimacy with Him.

GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES TO ABRAHAM DETERMINE THE COURSE OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE. THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE ABRAHAM WAS DRIVEN BY THE PROMISES THAT HIS GOD WILL MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION, WILL BLESS HIM, AND MAKE HIS NAME GREAT; AND HE WILL BE A BLESSING; GOD WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS ABRAHAM, AND THE ONE WHO CURSES HIM, GOD WILL CURSE; AND IN ABRAHAM ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.

Still Abraham's faith did not spring up fully formed and mature; it had to be nurtured and strengthened by **many tests along the way**. Abraham's character would be tested along with his faith in what God had spoken to him.

Prominent among these tests was God's delay in producing **the promised heir**. As the promised seed failed to materialize and as Abraham and Sarah advanced in years, they sometimes wavered in their faith in God. In Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20), with Hagar (Gen. 16:1-5), and again in Gerar (Gen. 20:1-15), Abraham and Sarah placed the promises of God in jeopardy.

In every test of Abraham's faith, God shows His power and presence. God is able to keep Abraham from falling away and at the end of every test Abraham returns to God in repentance and faith.

GOD'S PLAN FOR ABRAHAM BEGAN WITH A COVENANT

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Genesis 12:1-3 included blessings in three areas and an obligation:

National: "I will make you a great nation..." This is amplified in the Second Law or Palestinian Covenant

Personal: "I will bless you and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing (blessing & obligation)"

Universal: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This prophetic part of the covenant has three aspects:

1. Blessings for those people and nations which bless Abraham and the nation which comes from him
2. Curses upon those people and nations which curse Abraham and Israel
3. Blessings upon all the families of the earth through the Messiah, who according to the flesh, is Abraham's son and provides salvation for the entire world.

Key to understanding Abraham's journey of faith is the recognition that Abraham was chosen by God to **enter into a covenant with Him**.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the basis for all other theocratic covenants to follow. It is an important link in all that God began at Creation; has done throughout the history of the nation of Israel; and will continue to do until the consummation of human history.

Throughout his life, Abraham walked in that covenant relationship with God so that he might always be **"Blessed to be a blessing"** (Genesis 12:1-3).

This same dynamic is found in the New Testament church. Ephesians 1:4-5 states, "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will..." And like Abraham, the New Testament believers walk in this world "in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29) so that they might in turn be a blessing to others.

The eternal principle of God's election is made clear in His relationship with Abraham: God had chosen him "before the foundation of the world." Jeremiah 1:5 affirms this same idea of being chosen by God from eternity when the Lord said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." God called Abraham and his descendants to faith according to the "good pleasure" of His will.

God is always the one who initiates the calling in anyone's life. And God had simply "purposed in Himself" the time and place of Abraham's call.

Abraham's story demonstrates how God is always seeking those who have the desire to follow Him in a **covenant relationship** with Him.

It should never be lost on the New Testament church that they are a people who walk by faith in a **covenant relationship** with God and therefore, along with all the blessings, have an obligation to be **a holy people set apart to fulfill God's purpose**.

(see HANDOUT "Genesis 15: The Abrahamic Covenant Is Ceremonially Confirmed By God")

Abraham's spiritual journey is clearly understood as a process or progression that leads to a deeper and more meaningful revelation of who God is. Abraham's journey was not a cyclical pattern of behavior that kept leading him over and over to the same place; neither was it an aimless wandering. After God chose Abraham and established His covenant with him (Gen. 12:1-5), He reveals a specific plan for him. Abraham realized that the fulfillment of that plan in his life was his Destiny, and that Destiny would not only guide his life, but would impact his descendants, and all future generations on the earth. Abraham then progresses through a series of tests:

- Abraham believes
- God tests
- Abraham either passes or fails the test
- Abraham believes
- God reestablishes His unconditional covenant with Abraham and reveals more of Himself to him

Abraham's faith in God produces a deeper intimacy and trust in God. Therefore, as Abraham passes each new test, he learns to trust God and grows in intimacy with God. Abraham's spiritual growth is reflected in the progressive revelation of God's character which is found in the names Abraham uses to describe his God at each new stage of his spiritual development:

- In Genesis 14:18-20, Abraham's God is El Elyon or the Most High God.
- In Genesis 17:1-2 He is not only the Most High God, but He is also El Shaddai, the All Powerful God.
- In Genesis 18:25, The Most High and All Powerful God is also Shapat, Judge or Ruler.

- In Genesis 21:33 added to Abraham's understanding is El Olam or The Eternal God.
- And near the end of his life in Genesis 22:14, Abraham's Most High, All Powerful, Eternal Judge of the Earth is also Yahweh-Yireh, The-LORD-Will-Provide. (Gr. Jehovah Jireh).

Every trial and test that Abraham went through in his life all led up to the climactic moment when his faith would be put to the ultimate test in Genesis 22. No study of the life of Abram is complete unless it covers the event recorded in this chapter of Genesis. Many great and powerful sermons have been preached on this chapter. The best and brightest Bible scholars have written excellent commentaries describing every detail of this chapter. Christian Study Bibles often refer to this portion of Scripture as The Offering of Isaac or The Sacrifice of Isaac; some Jewish scholars call it The Binding of Isaac because Isaac was bound but not sacrificed.

Although the faith both father and son stand revealed with special clarity at this moment, the focus of the story is not on the destiny of Isaac, but upon the faith and obedience of Abraham. Verse 5 of this story ("...I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and will return to you") is a key to understanding Abraham's faith at this time. His assurance that Isaac would return with him from the sacrifice was not "wishful thinking" or a flat denial on Abraham's part of what was about to take place on the mountain. It was Abraham's **full conviction and faith in the promise of God**, "through Isaac your descendants shall be named" (Gen. 21:12) that gave him the assurance of Isaac's return.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense" Hebrews 11:17-19.

Though the faith both father and son stand revealed with special clarity at this moment, the focus of the story is not on the destiny of Isaac, but upon **the faith and obedience of Abraham**.

THE BINDING OF ISAAC

A Prophetic Foreshadowing of Jesus Christ

- Isaac = only son of Abraham and Sarah

Jesus = only begotten Son of God

- Isaac carries the bundle of wood for the sacrifice. Jesus carries the wooden cross to Calvary.
- Isaac is presented as a sacrificial lamb. Jesus is called, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29)
- Isaac yields willingly to his father and allows himself to be bound. Jesus yields to the Father and allows himself to be sacrificed for the sins of the world

"And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided'" (Vs. 14). It is believed that on this same mount David built an altar and Solomon built his temple. And it would be where God would surrender His only and beloved Son, Jesus, to be crucified. God would provide Jesus as the only acceptable sacrifice as payment for our sins, so that we might be forgiven and have eternal life. God has provided grace, mercy, and salvation for us. And the name *Yahweh Yireh* (Greek = *Jehovah-jireh*) is a testimony to the supreme love of God who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-6

GENESIS PART FIVE: THE PATRIARCHS – ISAAC, JACOB, AND JOSEPH (GENESIS 23 – 50)

THE COVENANT GIVEN TO ABRAHAM IS CONTINUED THROUGH ISAAC

A Land to Possess and Seed That Would Be Numberless

Of all the promises of God to Abraham, the promise of seed that would be numberless must have seemed to him, the one least likely to be fulfilled. It was this promise that haunted Abraham and Sarah most of their lives. The specific promise of a seed was made to Abraham long after Sarah had passed childbearing years... and still God made them wait. At every turn in Abraham's journey of faith, he questioned God concerning His promise of seed, and at every turn God reaffirmed that promise:

- "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them... So shall your descendants be." (Gen. 15:5b)
- "...I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore..." (Gen. 22:17b)

Against all hope, Abraham continued to believe God's word – until one unexpected day when "the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised" (Gen. 21:1). Why did God wait so long to fulfill His promise? The Bible never reveals why God waited until that exact moment. However, the extraordinary circumstances surrounding Isaac's birth would be a powerful sign to all that Isaac was indeed the miracle child of the promise. The circumstances of Isaac's birth would also fuel the dreams of future generations that even in their darkest moments – when all Israel seemed to be lost – God's promise to Abraham insured not only Israel's survival, but that they would prosper, multiply, and fill the land God had given as a permanent homeland.

Like his father Abraham, Isaac's faith would have to be tested: "There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. Then the LORD appeared to him and said: 'Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I

swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws" (Genesis 26:1-5).

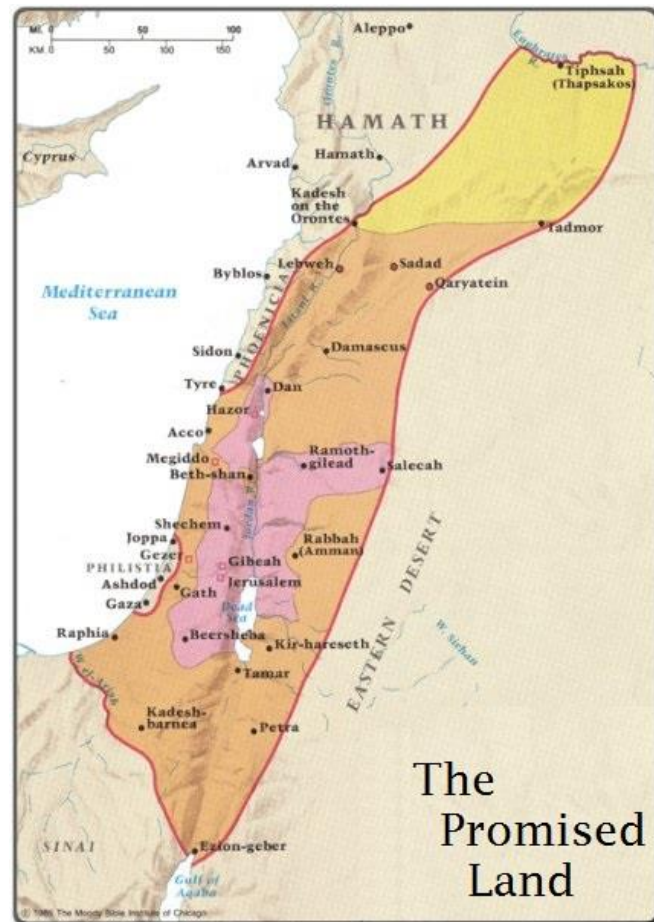
Isaac follows in his father Abraham's footsteps. IN OBEDIENCE by heeding God's specific command to remain in the Promised Land and not to go to Egypt to escape the famine (Gen. 26:1-6), and IN DISOBEDIENCE by doing as his father did and jeopardizing the line of the promised Seed by compromising his wife, Rebekah, with Abimelech.

Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah, but it would be another 20 years before Rebekah would bear children for Isaac...

Isaac's failure to remain faithful and trust God in spite of the circumstances is a reminder to all that no matter how "mature" they may think they are no one is immune to sin. Because Isaac was not diligent in his walk with God he failed this test of his faith. However, the God of Abraham shows the same mercy and grace to Isaac, and reaffirms the covenant with him. Isaac's failure stemmed from a lack of faith in God's provision and protection and was not out of open rebellion or because he despised the covenant blessings. God never failed to keep His covenant with Abraham. And like his father Abraham, Isaac would be reassured after each test that the Lord was faithful to his promises. "Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake.' So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well" (Genesis 26:23-25). The Lord shows once again that the blessings of the covenant are based upon His word not man's works.

God's covenant to bless Abraham and that all the nations would be blessed through him was anchored in three provisions: (1) that Abraham and his descendants were **God's Chosen People**; (2) that Abraham's **Seed Would Be Numberless**; and (3) that there would be a **Land To Be Possessed**.

Central to the history of Abraham's descendants is the Promised Land. From the moment Abraham left Ur 4,000 years ago to the present day, the issue of who owns the strip of land that borders the eastern Mediterranean Sea, known today as Palestine, is hotly contested.



Abraham's fathers were a nomadic people; there was no reason for any of them to contemplate permanent ownership of any parcel of land. It was God that planted into the consciousness of the Hebrew people the vision of a land to settle and call their own. So Abraham instilled into his son, Isaac, his calling to carry on with his Destiny to be the heir of God's promise that a great nation would come forth to be blessed by Him with lands and a kingdom – a nation that was destined to bless the whole earth.

Genesis chapter 24 is one of the longest chapters in the Book of Genesis. It chronicles an important chapter in the history of Israel. It is the story of the passing of the

covenant blessing from Abraham to the child of the promise, Isaac. It is at once a heart-warming love story between Isaac and Rebekah and a foreshadowing of Christ and the Father sending forth the Holy Spirit to prepare a people for His name, a bride for His Son (Acts 15:14-17 & 2 Cor. 11:2). The important point to take from this story is the care that is given to find a suitable woman for Isaac. Abraham said to his servant, "I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell..." (Genesis 24:3). Abraham understood the importance of selecting the proper bride for Isaac, and made his servant swear an oath by the Covenant (symbolized by the placing of the hand under the thigh near the place of circumcision). Care is given to describe these events since Isaac's wife would become:

- The mother of the multitude of nations which God had promised would come through Abraham's seed
- The mother through which the promised Savior would come

- And the mother through which all nations of the earth would be blessed.

The story of Isaac is best understood within context of the eventful lives of his father, Abraham, who came before him and his son, Jacob, who came after him (See HANDOUT: "Isaac's Journey of Faith"). In the few chapters in Genesis that mention Isaac, he is almost always secondary to the story. The focus of the story of Isaac being offered as a sacrifice is Abraham's faith. It is Abraham that selects the bride for Isaac; Isaac is in waiting as the story of Rebekah unfolds; and once Jacob is born, even from his mother's womb, the son becomes the dominant figure of the story. Jacob's struggles with Esau undermine Isaac's authority as head of his own family. Isaac is never really in charge of his family's affairs; he is deceived by Jacob, circumvented by his wife Rebekah, and in the end overruled by God in his desire for Esau to be the heir of the covenant and receive his blessing as the firstborn son. Isaac's story is of a quiet man who wished to live out his days in peace and prosperity, but who was always being shaken by events that were beyond his control – events that were necessary for the covenant blessings to move forward and the nation's destiny to be secured.

JACOB SEIZES THE COVENANT

THE FIRSTBORN AND THE BIRTHRIGHT

As his birthright, the firstborn:

- Received a double portion of the inheritance
- Automatically became head of the family upon the father's death
- Served as the spiritual leader/priest of the family
- Was given great authority and honor (In the case of Israel it included the Abrahamic covenant blessing.)

The "Heal-catcher"

Old Testament is as much a "family book" as it is history. The story of Abraham's descendants naturally revolves around family relationships as they fulfill their destiny to become a great nation, and then lose it, and then see the hope of its restoration in the future. The relationships between brothers play a key role in the process of God's plan of election. In human relations, it is always the firstborn son who is favored and who is intended to inherit the mantle of leadership of the family from his father. However, in the Bible stories, that tradition is often overturned by sin or by God's design as he demonstrates that He is the one orchestrating human events. Being the firstborn son of Adam, Cain was special,

but because of his sin, he lost everything, and Seth took his place (Gen. 4:25). Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn of his flesh, but God bypassed him and chose Isaac, the child of the Promise. Esau was Isaac's firstborn son, but even from the womb he was ejected in favor of Jacob ("As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'" Romans 9:13). And Jacob's firstborn son, Reuben, was replaced by Joseph's two sons (Gen. 49:3–4; 1 Chron. 5:1–2). In fact, God even rearranged the birth order of Joseph's sons (Gen. 48:8–22). Throughout Old Testament history, God's sovereignty is displayed in His choices of those who receive His blessing, for all that we receive is because of God's grace.

Sibling rivalry between brothers is major theme of the stories of the patriarchs. Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Jacob left home and went to distant country so Esau could not kill him for tricking him out of his birthright; and Joseph's brothers captured him intending to kill him, but decided instead to sell him as a slave. When sin entered the human race, it created dysfunctional and fractured families; the sins of greed, selfish ambition, and pride were constantly interfering with God's plan to bring the Promised Seed who would be His chosen instrument to break the power of sin once and for all ("For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God." Romans 6:10.)

Jacob's Journey of Faith

Next to Abraham, Jacob is the most important patriarch in Genesis. The story of Jacob's life straddles twenty-five chapters of the Bible (GENESIS 25—50) – more than any other figure of the Pentateuch except Moses. (See HANDOUT: "Jacob's Journey of Faith"). In order for God's promises to Abraham to be fulfilled, his seed would have to maintain ethnic purity from generation to generation until the Messiah was born. The promises of land and a kingdom were dependent Abraham's heirs **maintaining ethnic separation** from the unbelieving and idolatrous nations surrounding them. Abraham understood the importance of this command and when selecting a bride for Isaac, the child of the promise, he said to his servant, "I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live..." (Genesis 24:3). Before Isaac's wife gave birth to twins, the Lord revealed to her that He would choose Jacob over Esau – meaning that not only would they have to maintain ethnic separation, but there would be separation within families as well.

Separation Must Be Understood In Context Of **The Nation Of Israel Only.**

The New Testament church is not under the requirement of ethnic separation since the prophecy was fulfilled when the promised Seed, Jesus, was born. The church is God's instrument to unite in Jesus Christ one people of different ethnic backgrounds and families "To the ends of the earth." Christians are in the world, but not of it (John 17:14-18). That means while they interact with others for the sake of Christ, they do not allow themselves to become "yoked" to unbelievers ("in covenant relationship") with them through marriage or any other legally binding, permanent partnerships. The concept of separation in the New Testament church has nothing to do with ethnicity or family background, but Christians are commanded to separate themselves from those who practice evil and live unrighteousness lifestyles so that they might not be tempted to engage in sinful activities and fall away from the faith (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

The story of the sibling rivalry between Jacob and Esau is significant because it is part of the overall pattern in Genesis of:

1. The continuation of the Abrahamic covenant through **God's chosen**
2. Three types of separation for the ones chosen by God

ETHNIC SEPARATION

- The heir of the promise comes from Abraham and Sarah only
- The Selection of Rebekah as wife for Isaac
- Jacob is commanded not to take a wife from the Canaanites

SEPARATION WITHIN FAMILIES

- Abraham and Lot separate; Hagar and Ishmael are cast out
- Rebekah leaves her family and is joined to Isaac
- Jacob separates himself from Laban and Esau

GEOGRAPHIC SEPARATION

- Abraham leaves Ur for the Promised Land of Canaan
- God commands Isaac not to go to Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan
- Jacob remains separate from Esau after returning to Canaan

At two key stages in Jacob's life, God graciously confirms that His promises to Abraham and Isaac will be through him.

Jacob had to flee from the presence of his brother and left his home thinking he would never see his mother or father again. It was at this critical moment in his life that Jacob arrives at Bethel and is given his first dramatic sign that the God of his fathers – Abraham and Isaac – was with him, and would be his God as well (Gen. 28:10-22). The same promises that were made to Abraham and confirmed to his

father were now confirmed to Jacob. Jacob was able to continue his journey knowing that God was with him every step of the way.

The second great confirmation of his calling came as Jacob was about to reenter the Promised Land after many years of service to his uncle Laban. God had prospered Jacob and he departed from his father-in-law's company with flocks and herds and twelve strong sons who would be the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. He was about to meet his brother – his greatest enemy – face to face. Esau has sworn to kill Jacob for what he had done and was coming to meet him with a small army of armed men. Would Jacob's faith falter at this key moment of his life? Jacob prepared for the worst and sent his family to safety, but he stood his ground at the Jabbok River valley and waited to meet Esau. As night fell, Jacob wrestled through the night with a strange "Man." Although this mysterious "Man" is never identified, it is important to note that when God appears as a Man in the Old Testament, He is usually called the Angel of the Lord, a title interchangeable with "God" or "the Lord" (See HANDOUT: "The Angel Of The Lord: The Mystery Angel"). It was here that Jacob receives his new name, "Israel" from the Lord.

In his later years, Jacob would face many more difficult trials and heart aches along the way, but one thing remained certain through all of it and that was his unshakable confidence that for **the sake of His promise**, the Lord was with him and would protect him every step on his journey of faith.

JOSEPH: THE FAVORITE SON

Pride, anger, jealousy, and sibling rivalry introduce the story of Joseph's life (Gen. 37; and 39 – 50). Joseph was the first of two sons from Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel, and Jacob made it clear to all that he was his most favored child. As a sign of his favored status, Jacob had a special garment made for Joseph that distinguished him above his brothers. The friction between the brothers turns into open hostility after Joseph shares with his family two of his dreams that make him **the ruler over his father and brothers**.

From the Dinah incident (Gen. 34) Joseph's brothers had already shown their capacity for deceit and violence against their enemies, and it is no wonder that they would strike out against Joseph as soon as the opportunity presented itself. Away from their father's watchful eyes, the brothers conspired at first to kill Joseph, but decided instead to profit from his demise and sold him as a slave to a passing caravan on its way to Egypt. In an incident reminiscent of Jacob's deceit of his own father, Isaac, Jacob's sons tore Joseph's coat, dipped it in animal's blood, and took it to their father as proof that Jacob had been attacked and killed by wild

beasts. This first phase of the story ends with a hypocritical show of fake mourning by the brothers as they attempt to console their father in his grief.

At first it seemed as though Joseph's brothers had triumphed, but as his story unfolds in Egypt, it becomes clear that everything that happened to him was a part of God's plan. God's intention to bring His chosen people under Egyptian domination was already revealed to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-16). So the chain of events that would lead Israel into Egypt was set in motion through the consequences of the sibling rivalry and the brothers' actions. However, with each new crisis and every new test of faith, Joseph would rise to the occasion and God would bless him and move him one step closer to fulfilling his destiny to bring his family under his authority in Egypt. "...so far as the sudden elevation of Joseph is concerned, Eastern history contains many such instances, and indeed, a Greek historian tells us of an Egyptian king who made the son of a mason his own son-in-law, because he judged him the cleverest man in the land. What is remarkable is the marvelous Divine appointment in all this, and the equally marvelous Divine choice of means to bring it about." (Alfred Edersheim, Bible History: Old Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, © 1995, p. 112).

Two very important observations should be noted about Joseph's life in Egypt. First, Joseph carried with him into his captivity **the memory of the covenant promises** that had been passed down to him from his father by Abraham and Isaac. Added to the assurance of the covenant blessings were the powerful dreams of greatness that Joseph received from God.

Joseph, like his fathers before him, believed God and believed that the same gracious hand of Divine providence that guided those who came before him would preserve him during his humiliation. It was Joseph's faith that kept him from sin, disbelief, and despair all those years in bondage. Once Joseph was lifted up from prison and placed in the corridors of worldly power, it was that same faith in the Divine providence of God that kept him from pride, and from engaging in the heathen religious practices of the Egyptians, to which his close connection through marriage with the daughter of chief priest of the Egyptian cult religion might easily have led him.

The second important observation to be made is that in spite of his wealth, power and position in Egypt, Joseph always considered himself nothing more than **"a stranger and a pilgrim"** in Egypt. His heart was set upon his father's home in the Promised Land. Joseph never forgot his father's God – who was his God. Joseph never forgot that Egypt was not the Promised Land. Joseph heart was set upon the Promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, his father Jacob and now to him. This was made abundantly clear to all who had ears to hear when his Egyptian wife bore him two sons. He gave to both of them Hebrew, not Egyptian names. His firstborn he named, Manasseh or "making forgetful," by which he acknowledged

the blessings of God, who had made him forget his past sorrow and toil. By the second, Ephraim, or “double fruitfulness,” Joseph distinctly recognized that, although he had become fruitful and prosperous in Egypt, it was the Lord who would cause him and all of Israel to experience an even greater abundance in the place He had chosen for them.

It was the vision of their calling to be a special people chosen by God for a specific destiny on the earth, and the two great promises that went with that calling (of **a Land to call home** and of becoming **a great and fruitful nation** through whom the world would be blessed) that would sustain Israel during their long period of slavery in Egypt.

Egypt became the unwitting womb for the infant nation. Instead of being swallowed up and assimilated into the Egyptian Empire, the small band of seventy five people prospered and quickly grew to 2.5 million people as separate nation-within-a-nation. Egypt protected Israel in three ways.

- First, **it protected Israel militarily**. At this time, the Egyptian army was a formidable force in the region and kept their borders secure and their people safe. Canaan on the other hand was a wild place where numerous petty kings and robber bands could strike the small but prosperous Israelites at any time and wipe them out.
- Second, **Egypt shielded Israel morally**. Although Egypt was not anywhere near righteousness by the God of Abraham’s standards, it was superior to the wicked Canaanites. By removing His chosen people from the degrading influences of the wicked Canaanite people, God was able to preserve them from moral failure, which surely would have come if they had been left under the constant pressure to join in with the Canaanites’ worship.
- Third, Egypt secured **Israel’s ethnic purity**. The children of Israel would certainly have intermarried with the Canaanites (as Genesis 34 indicates), but they would not intermarry with the Egyptians. The Egyptians looked down on the Israelites because of their occupation of shepherding (46:34), and this was a key factor in keeping these two peoples apart.

Although the time was coming when the Egyptians would turn on Israel and make them a nation of slaves, at first they were happy, secure, and prosperous.

CONCLUSION

The stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are the stories of a **People Set Apart by God** for a special purpose on the earth: "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth..." (Deuteronomy 7:6).

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-7

Exodus part one: “Moses the Deliverer” (Exodus 1 – 18)

Lesson Outline for the Student

The purpose of this lesson is to describe the unifying factors that laid the foundations for Israel to become a great nation. Included in this lesson are the unifying factors of:

- Separation: Ethnic, Within Families, and Geographic
- The Land of Canaan
- The Rite of Circumcision
- Oppression Under Pharaoh and the Events Surrounding Israel’s Deliverance
- The Moral, Civil, and Religious Laws Received at Mt. Sinai
- Israel's Hopes and Dreams as God’s Chosen People

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE IN EGYPT: 400 YEARS OF SLAVERY

Part One: Building A Nation

What is it that unites a people and makes them into a great nation? What are those characteristics that define a nation? Today the human population on the globe is divided into several thousand national groups. These groups of people are distinguished by one or more of the following:

- People who speak the same language or dialect
- People who share common customs (including diet, dress, holidays, and festivals)
- People who share a common history
- People who share a common racial identity
- People who share a common religious background

What defines a nation even more than these shared characteristics is when the individuals who comprise that nation *feel* that they are one people – in other words a sense of nationalism. In 2000 BC the idea that each nation had its own identity and the right to statehood did not exist. Most people were organized around individual tribes or clans led by a patriarch who exercised authority and discipline over the family. A few of these tribes became large enough and wealthy enough to become small city-states. In the city-state, the patriarch became a

monarch or king who extended his authority over all who came within his sphere of influence. At the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob very few city-states extended their influence far enough to become kingdoms with established borders. At that time, Egypt was one of the few established kingdoms in that region, and with the help of Joseph's able administration, the kingdom grew in wealth, power, and influence in the region (Genesis 47:13 – 26).

God knew that if His people were going to survive 400 years in Egypt and come out in tact as a nation, they would need a number of **unifying factors** to hold them together with a distinct identity as heirs to the promises God made to their ancestors, the Patriarchs. If Israel succeeded, they would emerge from Egypt a people in pursuit of a common destiny united into a nation by specific **ethnic and historical experiences**. If God's chosen people rebelled, lost faith in the promises, and lost their identity as a unique people with a divine calling, they would cease to exist as a distinct people and be lost forever in the sands of history. The need for a National Belonging based upon the **promises God made to Abraham and his descendants** became the brick and mortar that held Abraham's children together in a foreign land for 400 years.



The overarching thematic background of the Old Testament is God working through history to fulfill His purposes on the earth. As the stories of the Patriarchs come to a close, and the story of Israel in bondage in Egypt begins to emerge, the student of the Old Testament must pause and examine what specific **national characteristics** and **historical circumstances** served to keep Israel united during this period.

Even before Joseph drew them into Egypt, God had ingrained into the consciousness of His chosen people His promises of **land**, and their destiny to become **a great nation** that would bless all the nations of the earth. God had impressed upon the heirs of the promise the absolute necessity to **maintain separation** from those who lived outside of the promise. **Ethnic** separation, separation **within families**, and **geographic** separation not only carved out Israel's unique identity as God's chosen, but it also protected the promised "Seed" yet to be revealed.

Living as a unique, separate, community in covenant with the God of Abraham kept the people unified into a close-knit family. Because they were

united they survived 400 years in Egypt, and once they were delivered from bondage, Israel quickly moved forward as a Chosen Nation moving toward the realization of its national destiny to be "to be blessed to be a blessing" on the earth.

United for a Destiny

It was God who sent Jacob's family to Egypt and spared them the devastation that the invasions of Canaan would bring during that 400 hundred year period also known as the **"Silent Years"**.

Moses chose to say very little about the period between Genesis 47:27 and Exodus 1:14.

Between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses, Israel had very little to sustain them except for their **dreams of a great destiny** that awaited fulfillment in a land beyond the borders of Egypt. What little Moses does reveal is related directly to the prophetic word God gave to Abraham, which was being fulfilled:

- **Genesis 15:5** "Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'"

Exodus 1:7 "But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them."

- **Genesis 15:13** "Then He said to Abram: 'Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.'"

Exodus 1:8-14 "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, 'Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and *so* go up out of the land.'

Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel.

So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage – in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.”

The Rite of Circumcision

The rite of circumcision was introduced to Abraham and his male descendants approximately 2000 B.C. as an identifying mark of their separation to God in a covenant relationship (Gen. 17:10-14).

Circumcision represented for Israel a **Sacramental Operation** in that it was introduced to Abraham as his part in the covenant-making process with God (Genesis 17) – at the same time God gave new names to Abram (Abraham "Father of many") and Sarai (Sarah "princess") and confirmed the promised Seed would come through Sarah. It is significant that at this point God makes circumcision a sign of his covenant with Abraham and his descendants.

Why Circumcision was an appropriate sign:

- **The shedding of blood** was necessary to validate a covenant between two parties
- An alliance based upon **blood-relationship** was inviolable; is it a sacred bond
- Reinforced the emphasis of the covenant upon **the promised "seed"** because circumcision, the "cutting around" of the source of transmission of this seed from one generation to another, pictured its complete enclosure within God's protective and productive will
- Finally, circumcision was a sign of keeping God's covenant by **living a separated life**.

Oppression Under Pharaoh

The oppression Israel experienced under the Egyptians was another major factor that **unified the nation**.

God used the evil of oppression in Egypt for **Israel's good** to:

- Cause His people to want **to leave Egypt**
- Cause them to **Dream of their own place** where they would be free to full their Destiny
- **Unite the people** and keep them **separate from** the Egyptians

- Cause them to draw close to God for deliverance

United By The Law

By far, the **Law of Moses** would be the most essential **unifying factor** for the nation of Israel after they left Egypt. Circumcision, separation, and oppression forced the people of Israel to unite for survival – to keep from losing their identity and being absorbed into the greater, more powerful nations around them.

The Ten Commandments were designed to keep the people from **destroying themselves with sin** – by disintegrating from within as the result of losing their identity as a holy nation set apart for God's special purposes.

Moses followed the LORD's instructions "...when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain" (Ex.3:12). Once His people were gathered before Mount Sinai, the LORD established a deeper and stronger covenant relationship between Himself and His people. **The Three Essential Elements** of this covenant were:

1. The Covenant was based upon what **God had already done** (Ex. 19:4). It is important to note that "Salvation" came before the Law. Therefore there should be no confusion in thinking that in the Old Testament God's grace was based upon keeping the Law.
2. Although the Covenant relationship was entered into by grace, it was conditioned upon two requirements. The people must (1) **obey His voice**, and (2) **keep His covenant** (Ex. 19:5). In other words, in order to continue to experience the blessings of the Covenant, they would have to keep the requirements of the covenant.
3. God promised three blessings.
 - First, Israel would be His **"Treasured Possession"** – out of all the nations, out of all the world, Israel alone would be His own treasured possession. The whole earth belongs to God, but Israel would be His people in a unique way.
 - Second, God would make them a **"Kingdom of Priests"** – God promised to make the people of Israel an instrument to bring God and the nations together.
 - Third, God would make them a **"Holy Nation"** – The people of Israel were to be "set apart" for a specific purpose. God called His people to obedience and faith.

The moral, civil, and ecclesiastical laws and regulations that were ratified on Mount Sinai would serve to **unify the Nation** of Israel and would allow them to maintain their distinct identity as **God’s Chosen People**.

A PROMISE FULFILLED

They entered Egypt a small, loose-knit, tribal clan, now they gathered before Mount Sinai as the Nation of Israel with a sense of a great future destiny.

“The book of Exodus has been composed with great artistry. It opens with a slave people building cities for Pharaoh (1:11) and ends with the same people, now liberated, building a tent-dwelling for their God (35 – 40). It tells of the lamb of



Replica of The Ten Commandments

God (12:1-12) but relates how the same people who sheltered under the blood of the lamb turned to make and worship a golden calf (32:1-6). It is a book of the grace of the God who first **saves** (1 – 12), then **accompanies** (13 – 17) and finally **indwells** (29:42-46) his people. And at its centre lie the Bible’s fundamental truths of grace and law (19 – 24).” J. Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Il., © 2005, p. 26

Events of Deliverance

Although Moses is the central figure of Exodus, the story is not about Moses. Because Exodus is not autobiography very little is said of Moses’ upbringing in the royal family or his forty years in Midian.

Exodus is the story of how **the Lord delivered His people from bondage in Egypt** and **only Moses’ part in the story is told**.

Moses’ story is representative of Israel as a whole in that the infant nation was saved from destruction as it settled in the Nile River Valley. At first Israel was protected by Joseph’s royal connections until they grew to maturity in the cradle of Egypt and became a threat. After the baby Moses is saved from the Nile River, nothing is revealed about his life until he is grown. In the same way, very little is revealed about the details of Israel between Joseph and the Exodus.

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, ‘I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.’

So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’ Moreover He said, ‘I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the LORD said: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.’” Exodus 3:1-8

The story of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt begins with Moses’ call in Midian. Moses was **80 years old** (Ex. 7:7) when the fullness of God’s time came for Israel’s deliverance.

God called Moses to be His **chosen instrument** to deliver His people from bondage, and as Moses stood before the burning bush, the Angel of the Lord specifically identified Moses with the earlier patriarchal leaders when He said, “I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

“Then Moses said to God, ‘Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they say to me, “What is His name?” what shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you

shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.” Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.” Exodus 3:13-15

The second grand revelation given to Moses at Mount Horeb was of **God’s name**, Yahweh (I AM WHO I AM).

God had not changed. He was still the same God as that of the patriarchs. What was significant was now the Children of Israel would be given a deeper revelation of who this God is that is about to deliver them. “I AM” was the most significant name given so far.

“Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.”’ And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.’” Exodus 5:1-2 (NKJV)

The next part of the Exodus story (chapters 5 – 14) describes **the mighty acts** God uses to **break the power** of Pharaoh and **deliver His people** as promised.

The battle between Moses and Pharaoh was seen by both Israel and the Egyptians as a battle between **the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt**. Pharaohs were considered one of the most important of all the Egyptian gods.

While a pharaoh was ruling, he took on the incarnation of the god Horus and the son of Re. Once the pharaoh died, he was identified with the god Osiris, the god of the underworld. Moses was chosen to be the mediator between Yahweh and Israel. The ancient Egyptian Pharaohs served as mediators between their people and the gods. That is why the Egyptians believed that the fate of the nation lay strictly with the pharaoh. The confrontations between Moses and the Pharaoh increase in intensity from the very first meeting. At first the Pharaoh is unmoved by God’s command to let His people go.

The series of plagues were God’s **judgment upon the gods of Egypt** and **proof that the true and living God of Israel** was superior to the false gods and goddesses of the imaginations of men.

THE TEN PLAGUES: YAHWEH VS. THE GODS OF EGYPT

SCRIPTURE	PLAGUE	ISRAEL EXEMPT?	EGYPTIAN GODS INVOLVED	LEVEL OF PAIN AND RESPONSE
1 st Ex. 7:14-25	Nile turned to blood	No	Hapi Isis Khnum	Discomfort; Pharaoh refused to listen
2 nd Ex. 8:1-15	Frogs	No	Heqet Nun	Discomfort; Pharaoh refused to listen
3 rd Ex. 8:16-19	Swarms of Lice/Gnats	No	Set	Discomfort; Magicians believe, but Pharaoh refused to listen
4 th Ex. 8:20-32	Swarms of Insects	Yes	Khepri	Land laid waste; Pharaoh tries to bargain
5 th Ex. 9:1-7	Livestock Killed	Yes	Apis Hathor	Destruction of livestock; Pharaoh's heart hardened
6 th Ex. 9:8-12	Boils/Sores	Yes	Sekhmet	Disease; Pharaoh refused to listen
7 th Ex. 9:13-35	Hail, thunder and lightning storms	Yes	Set Nut Osiris	Destruction of crops; Pharaoh repents, then hardens his heart after storms end
8 th Ex. 10:1-20	Locusts	Yes	Isis Set Nut Osiris	Destruction of remaining crops and trees; Pharaoh asks for forgiveness, but does not let Israel go
9 th Ex. 10:21-29	Darkness	Yes	Re Nut Hathor	Dread; Pharaoh says, "Go." But without flocks and herds.
10 th Ex. 11:1 – 12:36	Death of the Firstborn	Yes If blood properly applied	Osiris Horus	Death, destruction and dread. Pharaoh lets Israel go without conditions or restrictions

The Institution of the Passover

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I will bring yet one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold.’

And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

Then Moses said, ‘Thus says the LORD: “About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.’ And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, “Get out, and all the people who follow you!” After that I will go out.’ Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.” Exodus 11:1-8 (NKJV)

The climax to the Exodus event becomes the setting for what will become Israel's central religious celebration: **the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread**. The Passover will be an annual reminder to the people of God's **salvation from Egypt**, and will have prophetic implications of the greater salvation to come when the Savior, the eternal Lamb of God is revealed.

One last confrontation remained between Yahweh and the Pharaoh before the story of Israel in Egypt came to an end. When Pharaoh realized that the Hebrew slaves were actually leaving his domain, his heart hardened once again, and driven by his pride, he gathered his army to go after them and bring them back. The Israelites found themselves trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's oncoming army. Moses recorded the one last great miracle God performed as they left Egypt for good: the Red Sea was parted, allowing Israel to escape, but when Pharaoh's army attempted to follow, the Sea closed in on them and his army was destroyed.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-8

Exodus Part Two: “Mount Sinai” (Exodus 19 – 40)

“The word of God cannot be refused endlessly. There always has to be an end, a meeting with the God whom our refusals have offended to the point of finality.” (J.A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL., © 2005, p.126) Abundant opportunity had been given the king of Egypt to repent of his stubborn self-will and heed the Lord's command to let His people leave in peace. The time for a reckoning had come – a greater king than Pharaoh was about to visit the land and lay His hand of judgment upon the firstborn of Egypt. To the outside observer, this might mean that Yahweh was harsh, cruel, and bloodthirsty, but they would have to ignore the fact that the kings of Egypt had ordered the slaughter of Hebrew children from the womb in order to keep their numbers low. And these same Pharaohs would have had no problem ordering the deaths of tens of thousands of Hebrew slaves at a moment's notice if it suited their needs. For centuries countless numbers of Hebrew slaves were ground down into the dust of the land to build monuments in brick and mortar to the Pharaohs and the gods of Egypt. The Lord had the power and the right to destroy an entire generation of Egyptians if He so chose. So the death of the firstborn of Egypt was the least punishment the Lord could impose that would finally make the Pharaoh admit that he could no longer resist the God of Moses and the Hebrew slaves.

God's promise has been kept; four hundred years of slavery have come to an end and the Exodus from Egypt is complete. Chapter 15 records the glorious celebration as the people reflect upon the wonders God performed to set them free. Israel is now on their way upon an uncertain course through the Wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

Red Sea or Reed Sea?

Any Bible student that does a quick word study of the terms that are translated “Red Sea” will immediately discover that the literal translation of the Hebrew *yam sùp* is in fact “Reed Sea.” Without a careful and more thorough study, the student may conclude that it was in fact an inland lake called the Reed Sea that the Israelites crossed on their way out of Egypt. However, the Hebrew, *Yam sùp* (pronounced *yahm soof*) appears a number of times in the Bible and when the other references are pieced together it becomes clear that *yam sùp* refers to the body of water we know as the Red Sea (including its two northern fingers, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba). Although *yam sùp* literally means “Reed Sea,” it is easy to conclude from the number of Biblical references where *yam sùp* refers to the Red Sea that in ancient times the terms were used interchangeably.

ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI

In obedience to God's command given at the burning bush (Ex. 3:12), Moses leads the reborn nation to **Mount Sinai**.

The journey is slow and difficult – an entire nation is on the move with all their flocks, herds, and possessions. Young and old alike must travel through strange country not knowing how to survive. Fear and grumbling followed by provision and faith, which then returns to fear and grumbling quickly form the pattern that will repeat itself over and over again in the life of the nation. On the way to Sinai, God gives Israel His greatest signs of His presence and provision. From the moment they left their homes in Egypt, God's presence went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and fire at night. Then after crossing the Red Sea and entering the desolate Wilderness, the Lord sends daily manna from heaven to feed His people – this miracle will continue without fail until the nation enters the Promised Land.

The nation is gathered at Mount Sinai to meet their covenant-making God and to receive His Law that would have to be obeyed as condition for the covenant to remain in force. Just as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph before them, Israel as a whole would be given the same opportunity to enter into a covenant relationship with the Lord who saved them. So much was depending upon obedience to the Law that on four different occasions in Exodus chapter 19, Moses went up and down the mountain to communicate God's words to the people and the people's responses to God (verses 3, 8, 20, and 24). Once all the provisions of the covenant were clearly spelled out and the people agreed to them, they consecrated themselves for the official inauguration of the covenant (19:10-25). **Israel was now without excuse if they suffered the consequences of breaking the covenant:**

- Yahweh demonstrated **great power to deliver them from Egypt**
- They saw His awesome power to **provide for them in the Wilderness**
- He displayed His glory for them upon Mount Sinai so that they would understand **His holiness and the seriousness of their commitment to Him**.
“And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.” Leviticus 20:26(NKJV)

Among the most important things that define a nation's character are its moral, civil, and religious laws. The guiding moral principles are what define the character of the people – what they value above all else. The civil laws define what they treasure – what is the physical worth they place on people and things. Finally,

their ecclesiastical laws determine the spiritual health and well-being of the people in relationship to their God.

At Sinai, God gave the nation of Israel His **unchanging moral laws** in the form of Ten Commandments. These Commandments shape the hundreds of laws that would compose Mosaic Law. The first four of the Ten Commandments form the foundation for all of Israel's **religious laws**. The last six form the foundation for all of Israel's **civil laws**. The basis for the moral codes of the Ten Commandments is **the uncompromising holiness of God**. Yahweh sets the standards for His people that His people must obey if they are to remain in covenant relationship with Him.

קָדַשׁ, Qādash

Sanctify or Consecrate

Qādash is the Hebrew verb that means “to sanctify, be holy.” The term signifies an act whereby, or a state wherein, people or things are set aside for use in the worship of God: they are consecrated or “made sacred.”

In Leviticus 10:3 qādash means “to be treated as holy”: the Lord says to Moses and Aaron, “... I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me [approach me in formal worship], and before all the people I will be glorified.” God will have people obey Him and see Him as an awesome, holy God in love and not in fear, which was supposed to be the foundation of Israel's relationship to their God (Deuteronomy 6:3, 5ff.). A related meaning of the word Qādash appears in the Ten Commandments: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). Israel is to remember the Sabbath by keeping the day holy, by celebrating God's person and worshiping Him in the way He specifies.

The Giving of the Civil Laws (Exodus 21 – 24)

Included in these chapters of Exodus are:

- Laws governing **slavery** (21:1-11)
- Laws concerning **personal injury** (21:12-36)
- **Property** Laws (22:1-15)
- Miscellaneous laws concerning **proper moral behavior, finances, and offerings** (22:16-21)
- Laws concerning **civil obligations** (23:1-9)
- **Ceremonial** laws (23:10-19)

When examining these various civil laws, it is important for the modern Bible student to keep in mind the fact that these laws reflect the time and culture of a semi-nomadic people whose economy and lifestyle were based upon protecting

their flocks and herds and preserving their families. These civil laws were never intended to be universal or unchanging in their application. Some of these laws were changed and modified once Israel settled in Canaan, and others changed as Israel's situation changed.

The greatest changes in their ceremonial laws came when the Tabernacle was replaced with a permanent structure in Jerusalem; when Israel was in exile in Babylon; and after 70 AD when the Temple in Jerusalem was completely destroyed. No one would seriously expect that these laws should be applied as written to any modern, technologically advanced, urbanized society. These laws are useful for study in that they demonstrate God's great concern about the details of the lives of His people and that nothing of concern to them was beyond His interest and personal involvement.

THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICE

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.’” Exodus 25:1-8 (NKJV)

The Divine Plan for a Holy People to Worship a Holy God

The final chapters of Exodus (Chapters 25 – 40) describe in detail God's instructions to Moses and the people for the **construction of the Tabernacle** and **the service** that would take place there. The building of the Tabernacle along with its services was the second great event that took place at Sinai (the giving of the Ten Commandments being the first).

It is important to remember that for 400 years Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, and that Egypt had a very complex and sophisticated religion. Numerous temples were constructed for the worship of a pantheon of gods and goddesses that the Egyptians believed controlled life, death, nature, and the destiny of their people. The Pharaoh was considered a god, and everywhere the Israelites looked, they saw nothing but idol worship. Up until this moment, the Jews only had their

traditions to remind them of the God they worshipped. At Mount Sinai, the Lord gave them His Commandments written on stone tablets. Through Moses, the Lord began to lay out the civil and religious laws that would guide the nation and shape them as a unique people on the earth, distinct from all other idolatrous nations.

It would be critical for Israel to have a place for worship that would be a constant reminder to them of **how a holy people should worship a holy God**. The Tabernacle was more than a portable worship center for the Jews; it represented the presence of God in their midst. For the next 450 years the Tabernacle would be the place where Israel would come to sacrifice, worship, and have fellowship with their God. Without the Tabernacle, the Israelites would quickly lose their identity as a holy nation and worship the magnificent and imaginative gods and goddesses of the nations around them. Throughout their history, the Jews often drifted away from the Lord and were tempted to worship idols; the Tabernacle (and later the Temple at Jerusalem) and its services drew the Lord's wayward people back to pure worship of Him.

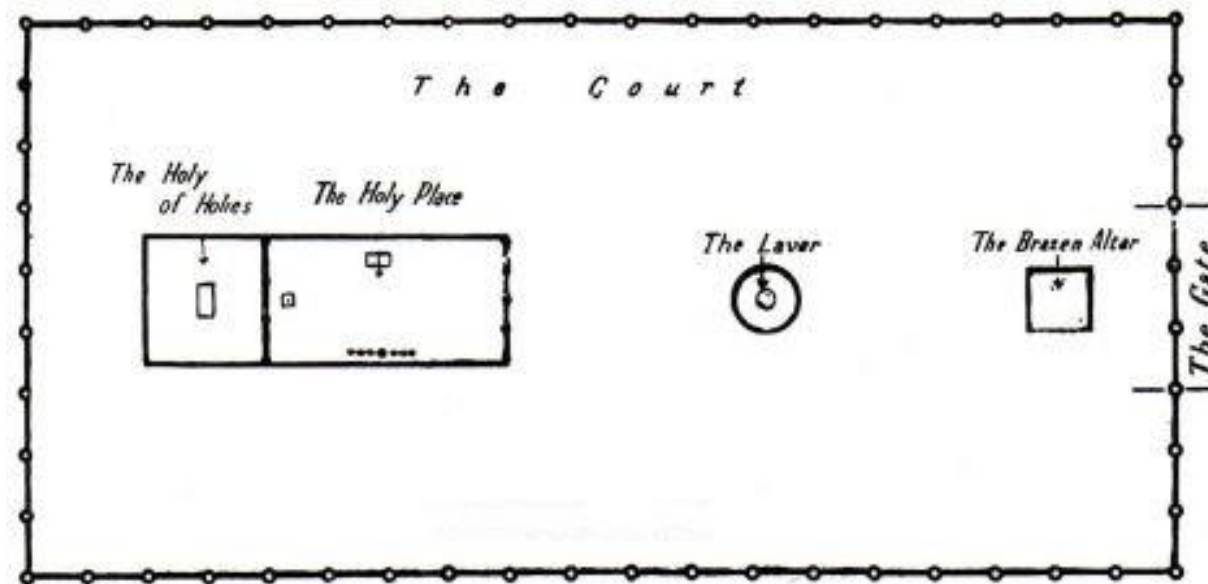
The importance of the Tabernacle was demonstrated by the golden calf incident (Exodus chapter 32). Before the Tabernacle was finished, evil struck the camp of Israel. While Moses was still on the Mountain, the children of Israel succumbed to temptation and fell into deep sin. Although they had promised to keep the commandments, at the first opportunity to be tested, they failed miserably. Even Aaron was not able to stand the test and participated in the making of a golden calf idol and the immoral form of worship that accompanied it. When Moses came down from the mountain and reentered the camp, he restored order and severely disciplined those who participated in the idolatry. Moses interceded before God on behalf of the wayward nation – which is why they were given the chance to repent, but around 3,000 of those who refused to repent were slain.

The closing chapters of Exodus describe the actual construction of the Tabernacle. When the construction was completed, the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. The nation now had **its people, laws, and meeting place with God** where they would find the assurance of God's provision, protection, and forgiveness.

The Tabernacle: the Divine Pattern for Worship

God commanded Moses to oversee the construction of the Tabernacle **“the tent of meeting.”** The name “Tabernacle” and its position in the center of the Israelite encampment were clear signs of God's desire to **dwell among His people**, and to be in fellowship with them. Unlike the gods and goddesses of other nations that were distant and unapproachable, living on high mountains or deep in the underworld, the true, living God of Israel would dwell with His people. But the

God of Israel could only be approached by **a holy people** – the impure, unrepentant sinners, and idol worshippers would be destroyed if they set foot inside the most holy inner courts of the Tabernacle, and only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies.



The Plan of the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle, its furnishings, its courtyard, and all those who served in the Tabernacle were all part of pattern set by God. It was of utmost importance that God's people worshipped Him in the way He prescribed and not be influenced by the false worship of those who bowed down to idols. For 500 years the Tabernacle was a **moveable place of worship** that was intended to be placed in **the center of the Israelite camp**. However, once King Solomon built the permanent structure in Jerusalem, the "City of David" and its Temple Mount became the center of Israelite worship.

The Tabernacle was constructed with the most valuable and rarest materials available such as gold, silver, bronze, precious woods and stones, and rare cloth – all of which were worth millions of dollars by today's standards. The people were instructed by the Lord to bring only freewill offerings to Moses for the Tabernacle. The unique construction, the beauty and value of the materials, and the skills which were used to produce everything to the smallest detail spoke to the people of the God's uniqueness and the value of His redemption for His people. After the Son of God was given for all mankind, the Tabernacle was understood to be the foreshadowing of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ who, after His resurrection,

entered the real Tabernacle in heaven to serve as our Great High Priest forever. (See Exodus 25:1-9, 22; 28:8-9; 35:22-36:7; Hebrews 8:1-5; 9).

TYPES OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

The Court Of The Tabernacle

- The Entrance – Only One Way In**
 Although the Tabernacle made God accessible to the Israelites, He was only approachable in holiness. Matthew 7:13-14 (NKJV) says, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

The worshiper could enter the Gate of the Court only to **offer a sacrifices to God**. The book of Leviticus gives the details of God's substitutionary offerings that are made at the Tabernacle. The blood sacrifices for sins were only temporary until the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ would be offered "once for all." (Hebrews 9:24-26).

The gate was composed of hanging curtains of blue (representing the kingdom of heaven), scarlet (representing sinful man), purple (representing the reconciliation of sinful man with the kingdom of heaven), and white (representing the spotless purity of the Lord). The four pillars of brass, with sockets of bronze, and silver hooks and clasps represented the created works of God (all four corners of the earth). "He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory. 'For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He has set the world upon them.'" (1 Samuel 2:8 NKJV)

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 NKJV).

The entire structure, contents and service of the Tabernacle showed sinful people how they could come before a holy God in **worship and service**. The Tabernacle was a Testimony to God's grace and mercy, but there is no other way to God except through sacrifice for sin, which God alone makes possible. In John 14:6 (NKJV) Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the

life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (See also, Acts 4:12; Hebrews 7:25).

- **The Outer Curtain (Fence)** – Separation from the World
Curtain surrounding the Outer Court of the Tabernacle served as a barrier between those who were ceremonially “unclean” (**unfit for worship**), and the priests who performed their duties inside the Tabernacle. The Outer Curtain (46 meters long, 23 meters wide, and 2.3 meters high) was constructed from the exact specifications given to Moses. The Lord required this fence to use linen curtains, pillars, sockets, hooks, fillets (tops and rods), and pins of bronze (Exodus 27:9-19; 38:9-20; 40:33).

The Outer Curtain served as a constant reminder to the Israelites that they were to be **holy and separate** from nations surrounding them (1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 1:3-4). From the moment Abraham and his descendants were chosen to be the Lord’s special people, they were required to maintain geographic separation, ethnic separation, religious separation, and even separation within families. The Gentiles and unrepentant sinners were not allowed to trample over the holy, consecrated grounds of the Lord’s Tabernacle.

- **The Bronze Altar** – The Place of Substitutionary Offering
Upon entering the Tabernacle, the first thing to meet the eye of the worshiper was the Bronze Altar upon which **the sin offerings were made**. It was at the altar of sacrifice that the sinner met with the mediating high priest who performed the sacrifice on behalf of the sinner. The priest would take the blood of the sin offering and pour or sprinkle it upon the altars in the temple as prescribed by the Lord. (Exodus 27:1-8; 40:6, 10, 29; Leviticus 17:8-9).

The people could only approach God through **blood atonement** and a **mediating priesthood**. And so it is true for all Christians today. The Bronze Altar points to Christ’s Sacrifice At Calvary “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come – In the volume of the book it is written of Me – To do Your will, O God.’” (Hebrews 10:5-10).

- **The Bronze Laver** – Washed, cleansed, water baptism

“...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22 NKJV). Purification (**sanctification**) before and during service in the Tabernacle was **mandatory** for the priests who ministered before God. The priests were not to enter the Holy Place of the Tabernacle before washing away the stain of sin from their hands and the dirt of the ground from their feet. Their sins being atoned for at the Brazen Altar made it possible for them to approach the Tabernacle to worship. But before they entered, they must first wash the defilement of this sinful world from their bodies. The shiny mirrored surface of the Laver helped the priest to wash thoroughly and reminded him that the Lord sees past the outward appearance, directly into the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). “Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.” (2 Corinthians 10:7 NKJV) This act of sanctification **sets apart** the priests who worship God in His Tabernacle.

In the same way that Aaron and his sons were born into the priesthood (Exodus 28:1), every Christian enters the priesthood by means of the new birth through the “**washing of regeneration**” (1 John 1:7-9). “He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity and mercy, by [the] cleansing [bath] of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out [so] richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.” (Titus 3:5-6 AMP).

The Holy Place

- After the sacrifice has been made, the priest enters the specially constructed Holy Place (Exodus 25:4-5; 26:1-36; 36:8-19, 35-38; Hebrews 9:2, 6). The Tabernacle was lighted by The Candle Stick (**representing Christ, the Light of the World**). The Candle Stick was filled with consecrated oil and the priests were instructed to never allow the flames of the ornate, seven-branched candlestick to die out (John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 10:32; Revelation 21:23-24).

A Table of Shew Bread (Showbread) – also called “**The Table of Presence**” was placed across from the Candlestick. The twelve loaves made from fine flour were always to be on the table, which represented **God’s desire for fellowship with His people** (the priests ate the bread). Bread is necessary for physical health. Jesus used the image of our daily need for bread to

represent our spiritual need to daily be in God’s presence (Matthew 6:11; John 6:35).

In front of the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Tabernacle stood the **Altar of Incense**. The incense represented **the prayers of God’s people** rising up to heaven. The role of Jesus Christ as High Priest and Intercessor is clearly seen in Hebrews (4:14-16; 5:5-10; 8:1-2). Paul wrote, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus...” (1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV). And John said, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1 NKJV)

The Holy of Holies

A special veil separated the Holy Place from the **Holy of Holies**. The Veil serves as a type of **the Body of Christ** (Hebrews 10:19-20). The Ark of the Covenant with its **Mercy Seat** rested in the Holy of Holies, and was protected from view **behind The Veil**. Only **the High Priest** had access to the Holy of Holies, and only once each year on **the Great Day of Atonement**. By His sacrifice, Jesus opened The Veil for us: “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 6:19-20 NKJV)

The central focus of the Holy of Holies was **Ark Of The Covenant**, a symbol of **God’s heavenly throne** (Hebrews 9:1-12). The Tabernacle was designed and built to house the Ark of the Covenant. After Jesus’ resurrection, New Testament believers saw its significance and the fulfillment of Jesus’ ministry to the church. Jesus came as the High Priest of a better system than the Old Testament’s sacrifices. Jesus serves as our High Priest in the greater, perfect Tabernacle in heaven than the man made Tabernacle. Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in heaven by His own precious blood, once for all and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat, making sure of our eternal salvation.

Contents of the Ark of the Covenant

Placed Inside the Ark were three symbolic objects: **a Jar of Manna** (Exodus 16:31-35) representing God’s miraculous provision for His people, **Aaron’s Rod that budded** (Numbers 17:8-11) as a reminder of man’s rebellious nature and God’s choice (election), and **the Tables of Law** given to Moses at Mount Sinai that testified against man, revealing his sinfulness; to the Children of Israel, they also testified of God’s righteousness.

Everything about the Tabernacle, the religious services, and the sacrifices were intended to demonstrate that unlike all other religions, it is not up to the people to reach God by their own efforts, but it is God who approaches His creatures, deals with every obstacle to communion with Him, and makes it possible for them to know Him. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29 NKJV).

Israel Communed With God Through the Tabernacle	Christians Commune with God Through Jesus Christ
Bronze Altar for Sacrifices	Christ’s Sacrifice (Heb. 9:24-28)
Bronze Laver for Washing	Cleansing Through Confession and Baptism
Candlestick/Lampstand	Enlightened by the Holy Spirit Who is Sent by Jesus Christ
Table of Showbread	Jesus is the “Living Manna” who sustains us spiritually
Altar of Incense	Prayer, Communion, and Intercession of the Saints
Beyond the Veil and Into the Holy of Holies	Entering God’s Presence Boldly Through Christ
Priests and the Garments	Service to God and Others

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-9

“The Sacrificial System” (The Book of Leviticus)

LEVITICUS: The Way of Holiness

The Lord knew from the beginning that His people could not keep His laws to perfection. Israel lived in a world **where evil was a reality** and God knew **temptations** would come.

The Israelites did not have to look far to see what a nation or people would look like if the principles established by God’s laws were not followed. The idolatrous nations who did not know Yahweh were plagued by the sins of injustice, greed, blasphemy, and immorality; internal and external rivalries between families often led to violence or warfare.

Even before they left Mount Sinai, Israel had proven that they too were prone to sin with **the Golden Calf incident**. When the individual or the nation sinned, the children of Israel would need **a mediator** and a way for **atonement to be made**, otherwise, God’s holy justice demanded that anyone who sinned must die.

The wages of sin are death, but God’s mercy made a way for forgiveness and life. Before they left Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the prescription the Israelites would need to live in the presence of a perfect and holy God.

Christians often ignore the book of Leviticus thinking it is mostly an instruction book on when and how the Jews made their sacrifices. However, a closer examination of Leviticus reveals to the modern student the great blessings of God’s forgiveness and shows them not only how a sinful and fallen people can be restored to a holy God, but also how that people –once restored – can live in **intimate relationship with a holy God**.

New Testament believers who have hope for the future because of Christ’s atonement, can have that hope reinforced because Leviticus confirms it is God’s desire to:

- **Bless His people with a healthy life**
- **Forgive trespasses and sins**
- **Maintain an intimate relationship with his people**

Atonement was the answer God had made from the beginning with Adam’s and Eve’s sin (Genesis 3:21; 4:4; also Hebrews 11:4): “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul” Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV).

THE OFFERINGS DESCRIBED IN LEVITICUS

The Burnt Offering (1:1-17): The purpose of the offering was to **Cover Sin in General**.

- The burning body of the animal = judgment of God; everlasting misery. Type of Christ on the cross; the Son of God took our iniquities
- Animal was spotless, without blemish = sinless purity of Christ
- Freewill offering must be done out of love and thanks to God = Christ willingly offered himself
- Must be offered at the door = a sinner can have no communion with a holy God
- Offeror places his hand upon the head = signifies the desire that the sacrifice will be accepted in exchange for his life. Atonement was by faith in God’s mercy and forgiveness.
- Sacrifice killed before the Lord = sacrifice is to God alone (Note: Romans 12:1 “...present your bodies a living sacrifice...”)
- Priests sprinkle the blood on the Altar = blood is the life by which atonement is made
- The animal cut into pieces – then burned = God’s judgment of sin

“Blessed be God that we have the substance, of which these observances were but shadows. There is that excellency in Christ and in his work as a mediator, which no types and shadows can fully represent. And our dependence thereon must be so entire, that we must never lose sight of it in anything we do...” Matthew Henry

Grain Offering (2:1–16): The greater part of the offering is **eaten not burnt**. It is an expression of appreciation for God’s provision and a willingness to share what God has given.

- **No** leaven (leaven represents pride, malice, sin, etc.) = offering is given in humility and love; the worshiper is committed to remove sin from their life

No honey (honey represents sensual pleasures) = offering is not for the worshiper's own pleasure, but is meant for God

- Add salt (salt is a preservative, makes thirsty, cleanses) = reminder of the covenant with God – offering to God is without corruption
- burnt portion (flour + oil + incense) = God who is the sustainer of life in the body + the Spirit that gives life to man's spirit + the soul lifted up in prayer and worship to God

“The reality and permanence of our Christian lives will be brought out by the fire of the great day, when what is wood, hay and stubble shall be consumed; while that which is real shall prove itself incorruptible, having had the fire applied to it.”
Alfred Edersheim

The Peace Offering (3:1-17): Also called the “**Fellowship Offering**,” it demonstrates the worshiper's desire to be **at peace with God**. In the sin and the guilt offerings the sacrifice is divided between the altar and the priests – the offeror had no share, as he had in the peace offerings. The former expressed repentance and sorrow for sin, therefore it was more proper to fast than to feast.

The peace offerings denoted communion with a reconciled God, and the joy and gratitude of a pardoned sinner. “Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:12. (Note that the Christian is reconciled to God through Christ who... “made peace with the blood of his cross.” COL. 1: 20-22 ROM. 5: 8-11.) The Peace Offering is a positive expression of a worshiper's **love for God**.

- Made as a freewill offering in Joy and Thanksgiving or after the fulfillment of a vow
- Offering shared with the priests and the Lord.
- Portion belonging to the LORD – blood and fatty portions for Atonement (vs. 3:17)
- Portion given to the PRIEST – Received a portion as appreciation for his service on behalf of the community
- Taught the Jews to distinguish between common and sacred things
- The peace offering denotes
 1. once sin is atoned for, communion with God is restored
 2. the joy and gratitude of a pardoned sinner

3. the privilege fellowship within the community of faith

The Sin Offering (4:1- 35): The sin offering reminded the worshiper of the need for **repentance and Atonement for sins**. Sinners must be cleansed even from secret faults – even the errors which they do not understand or are aware of (Psalm 19: 7-14). Sin offerings applied to **every person** in the community including the anointed priest (4:1-12).

The priests were not above the Lord's law; in fact they were more accountable because of their privileged position. The blood of the sin offering is sprinkled in front of the veil of the sanctuary (Mercy Seat) and on the horns of the Altar of Incense, which are the areas where the priests minister.

- The blood is poured out = the sinner acknowledges he deserves to have his blood poured out like water. God is dishonored by sin, but honored by sacrifice.
- Sin offerings were for sins committed through:
 - Ignorance
 - Weakness
 - Rebelliousness
- Bull = costly sacrifice
- The head and body of the animal – skin and all – were to be carried outside the camp, to a certain place appointed for that purpose and burnt to ashes = The DUTY OF REPENTANCE is the putting away of sin as a detestable thing which our soul hates. The body of sin must be destroyed (Note Romans. 6:6; Galatians 2:20 and 5:24). Repentance is required for acceptable sacrifices; Isaiah 1: 11-20; also Micah 6: 6-8). When God pardons sin He casts it out ... it is abolished. (Note: Hebrews 13:11-13)
- Sin Offering is made for the congregation by the elders, the representatives of the people, who laid hands upon the offering (4:13-21) = Not only is it possible for an individual to be guilty of sin, but it is also possible for the whole community to be guilty (See HANDOUT “The Principle of Corporate Responsibility in the Moral and Civil Laws of Moses”.)
- The blood is sprinkled seven times (not poured) = complete cleansing of the soul and perfect satisfaction for sin (Note Hebrews 10:14).
- Offering can be made by a ruler or leader (4:22-26) = It is bad when leaders give bad examples, and it is worse when all men follow them. The leader must be a positive example by repenting and making sacrifice for the people.

- Offering can be made by a private person (4:27-35) = All are responsible for their own sins, but no one is excluded from the way of atonement.

The Guilt Offering (5:1- 6:7): also called “**Trespass Offering**”. These offerings were for **specific sins** that also required **restitution**. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering required:

- Confession and acceptance of responsibility
- Repentance
- Atonement

Reconciliation to God begins with the sinner’s participation with God’s plan of salvation first by confessing and accepting responsibility for their sins. But all three were required because atonement is not accepted without repentance, and repentance alone would not justify without atonement (Note also, 1 John 1: 5-9).

Leviticus 5:7 states that if a person was too poor to afford a lamb or goat, two turtle doves or young pigeons, or flour without oil or incense could be substituted. This meant that no one was to be excluded from reconciliation to God and restoration with the community because of poverty. Before the altar of God, the rich and poor are treated as equals; no offering, no matter how humble, would be rejected.

There were specific sins that required a guilt offering:

- Refusing to give testimony concerning what one knows about a crime
- Anyone touching something considered unclean – such as the dead body of an animal forbidden for food – or insect forbidden for food
- Touching human discharge of any kind
- Making a rash or foolish vow that causes harm
- Stealing from, refusing to repay a debt owed, or not returning something borrowed or in some way oppressing a neighbor

All of above are considered trespasses against the LORD. As Jesus said, quoting from Leviticus 19:18, “Love your neighbor as yourself...”

Leviticus Chapters 6:8 – 7:38 include additional instructions concerning the offerings. Every detail was meant to reinforce to the Children of Abraham that their sacrifices are to be done to the LORD – the sacrifices of Israel should never be confused with the sacrifices the pagans offered to their false gods.

For Israel, the polluting nature of sin, and the removal of guilt from the sinner to the sacrifice were the motivations for all of their sacrifices. Leviticus 6:8-13 commands that the fire for the burnt offerings should never be allowed to go out

and that the burnt offerings be made continuously before the LORD. Christians see in this command a type of Christ who is the perfect sacrifice and continually pardons all from trespasses and sins.

The instructions for the **Wave and Heave Offerings** are described in verses 7:28-35. The priest was to keep the breast and the right shoulder. It was a “contribution” for the service done by the priests. When the sacrifice was killed, the offeror himself must present God’s part of it; that he might signify his cheerfully giving it up to God. He was with his own hands to lift it up, in token of his regard to God as the God of heaven; and then to wave it to and fro, in token of his regard to God as the Lord of the whole earth.

From all of these laws concerning the different offerings for sins the Israelites learned:

1. **To hate sin, and to watch against it.**
2. Sin will pollute the individual and can affect **the whole community.**
3. **Atonement is COSTLY.** Many innocent and useful creatures had to be slain and burned on the altar to pay for individual sins and for the sins of the community.

To all of the above, New Testament Believers may add:

4. **To value Christ,** the great and true sin offering, whose blood cleanses from all sin, which it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away.

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.’ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come – in the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do Your will, O God.’ ” Hebrews 10:1-7 (NKJV)

Chapters 8 – 10: The God Who Calls Equips. The priests of Israel were a privileged people, set apart from the rest of the community and intended to serve as living examples for the people on how they were to be a nation set apart from the

other nations around them. As special servants of the Lord, the priests had to be appointed, consecrated, and instructed in the appropriate means of sacrificial intercession.

God’s intention was for the nation of Israel to be a **“kingdom of priests and a holy nation”** (Ex. 19:6) but they failed in that mission. **The Book of Leviticus demonstrates that the reason for their failure was not for lack of instructions, understanding, or equipping.** In chapters 8 – 10 of Leviticus, God gives instructions for setting apart the priests that would serve the community and intercede before the Lord on their behalf.

Chapters 11 – 15 of Leviticus contain the laws concerning religious purity:

- Food: Chapter 11
- Childbirth: Chapter 12
- Leprosy (which included various skin diseases): Chapters 13 & 14
- Bodily discharges: Chapter 15

There are **four key terms** to understand when studying these chapters: *holiness, unholiness, clean, and unclean*:

1. **Holiness: is inward;** the work of the Holy Spirit. It is God who sanctifies us and makes us holy and set apart unto God. God sanctifies from the inside out.
2. **Unholiness:** amounts to any thought, motive, or deed that **broke God’s Word, and separates** a person from God.
3. **Clean: undefiled.** Not necessarily sanitary or healthy. A “clean” person is one who was ready for daily life and worship. “Clean” reflects the concept of the human body as sacred. Cleanliness dealt with the outward part or physical part of a people “set apart” for service to God in this world.
4. **Unclean: defiled.** An “unclean” person was not necessarily physically dirty or morally filthy. An “unclean” person was not cleared to return to normal life or worship within the community. This could be for any number of reasons that may or may not have anything to do with their moral fitness to worship.

These laws concerning Purity were **protective** in nature because:

- **Quarantine** was the best way to stop the spread of disease in a time when good antibiotics, disinfectants, and preventative medicines were scarce or unavailable
- They created a **rested people** who ate a good, healthy diet

- Maintained community’s **separation** from pagan practices and idolatry
- United Israel as a **holy nation** unto God

Chapter 16 is another key chapter in the book of Leviticus; it contains the instructions for the **Great Day Of Atonement.**

The Day of Atonement was to be celebrated as the most important of the ordinances because on that day **ALL of the sins** of the whole congregation were atoned for (16:21).

Therefore the Day of Atonement brought **total pardon and forgiveness** for all the sins of the people and restored their access to God. On this Day only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies to atone for and make reparation for the people in the most sacred place of the Tabernacle. On this Day the High Priest had to make special preparations to minister at the Tabernacle:

- Full washing / not just hands and feet
- Had to make sacrifices for himself and his household to be ready to act on the people’s behalf
- High Priest laid aside his priestly garments and insignia of his office and wore simple linen tunic

Leviticus 17 contains additional instructions for Aaron and the priests and for all the people of Israel concerning blood sacrifices. No sacrifices are to be made anywhere by anyone except by **the priests** and only **at the Tabernacle.**

Chapters 18 – 27 of Leviticus include details for how a holy people and holy priesthood will live and serve a holy God.

- Chapters 18 – 20 concern laws for **maintaining sexual purity.** Israel must not follow the perverted and disgusting behaviors of the other nations (Note Deuteronomy 9:4-5).
- Chapter 19 lists behaviors that encompass **holy living for a holy people.** Including such things as:
 - Respect for parents
 - Obey Sabbath rest



HIGH PRIEST ON DAY OF ATONEMENT

No idolatry
 Observe laws for fellowship offerings
 Laws for the harvest – a provision for the poor
 Do not lie, cheat or steal
 Do not profane the name of the Lord
 Deaf and blind not to be disrespected
 Do not pervert justice
 Keeping the laws of nature – each after its kind
 Sexual sin with a slave forbidden
 Laws concerning orchards & fruit harvest
 Do not eat meat with the blood
 No divination or sorcery
 Grooming (reinforces separation)
 Cut or tattooed bodies forbidden
 Do not sell daughter into prostitution
 Observe Sabbaths and revere the sanctuary
 No mediums or those who practice magic
 Respect for elders
 Do not mistreat aliens or strangers
 Do not use dishonest measurements

- Chapter 20 is a warning **against idol worship** – in particular against the Canaanite god Molech.
- Chapters 21 & 22 give instructions for Holy living to **maintain a holy priesthood**. These Laws concern personal purity of the priests and laws concerning the offerings.
- Chapter 23 establishes God's **appointed times to meet** with His covenant people. The Feasts include:
 - Passover and Unleavened Bread
 - First Fruits
 - Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
 - Feast of Trumpets
 - Day of Atonement
 - Booths (Tabernacles)
- Chapter 24 concerns the **continuity and purity of worship** – pure oil, burning continually required the priests' constant attention. The fine flour was baked into twelve cakes by the Levites for the showbread. The twelve cakes representing the twelve tribes – the flour, oil, wine, and salt being

furnished by the people. This chapter also describes the severe punishment for Blasphemy. Whenever God's name is taken in vain, and left unpunished, one can expect rebellion born out of a lack of respect for the highest authority to infect the whole community.

- Chapter 25 reminded Israel that the **Promised Land of Canaan** was to be considered a holy land for a holy people. The principle of the **Sabbath rest** was to be applied to the whole land. Israel would have to trust God to provide for the Sabbath year of rest and restoration for the land. These laws were to remind the people that life is more than the pursuit of wealth, work, success and pleasing the fleshly appetites. They reminded the people that the land and the fruit of the land **belonged to God**. (Note Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:24-34.)
 This chapter also includes instructions for **The Year of Jubilee**. Every 50th year (seven Sabbath years plus one) all debts were to be forgiven, indentured servants released, and ancestral lands to their original owners. This way, even the economy was given a rest. The Year of Jubilee taught Israel:
 1. to fear God and refuse to take advantage of one another
 2. to have faith that God will provide
 3. to realize that the Promised Land belongs to the Lord, who divides it by grace, not by merit or social standing
 4. to understand that they, the land, and everything they possessed belonged to God

Chapter 25 was intended to show the nation that The Promised Land was given to Israel for a higher purpose than selfish, self-centered materialistic gain. Israel Was **Blessed To Be A Blessing** to all people including the aliens and poor people in the land.

- Chapter 26 was an important message for the people on **obedience**. All of the promised blessings of God were not unconditional - God's Blessings Are Based Upon Obedience! (Note also, Deuteronomy chapters 27 and 28). The history of Israel can only be fully understood in relation to this context.
- Chapter 27 contains Laws concerning **Vows and tithes**. The principle here is a holy people must be trustworthy and honest in their commitments and giving.

The events surrounding the Exodus of Abraham's children from Egypt and the giving of the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai were the most important and formative experiences for the nation of Israel: they entered Egypt a small family, but left Mount Sinai a great nation, fully and divinely equipped to meet all the

challenges of fulfilling their destiny to conqueror and settle the Promised Land. As they contemplated the mighty works of God and meditated upon His laws, the people could envision what a wonderful place the Promised Land would be. The God of Israel had established a set of laws that if followed would create a social order where fairness, forgiveness, safety, and hope would fill the land. Injustice, abuse, petty rivalries, violence, prejudice, and blasphemy would be absent.

Israel would need God's grace and mercy; and the Lord made sure that it was provided. Through the sacrificial system administered by the Levitical priesthood, the intimacy of fellowship the Lord desired with His Chosen People would remain unbroken. Christians can gain a much deeper appreciation of Christ's death on the cross – once for all – through a careful study of the different sacrificial offerings. The Son of God's sacrifice on the cross amounted to all the burnt offerings, sin, guilt, fellowship, and Day of Atonement sacrifices that ever needed to be offered. Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God took our place and the place of every animal substitute ever needed. The priests of Israel had to offer the sacrifices continually for the forgiveness of sins. Christians know that their pardon and cleansing – and the pardon and cleansing for all who believe – is permanently, and eternally complete because of the superiority of Christ's sacrifice:

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24)

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-10

Numbers “The Children of Israel in the Wilderness”

Lesson Outline for the Student:

The narratives of Numbers and Deuteronomy demonstrate God's **consistency from generation to generation**. God kept the Covenant He made with Abraham and his descendants even when they did not. The unbelief and disobedience of the generation that left Egypt caused them to perish in the Wilderness never experiencing the blessings of the Promised Land. Still God is merciful and remains faithful to His chosen people and a new generation is born. Numbers and Deuteronomy were written not only for the generation of Israelites that survived the forty years of wandering in the Sinai wilderness, were also for every generation that followed. As the student examines these books, they should note the following themes:

- The Lord's **faithfulness** to His Covenant
- God's **mercy and compassion** shown to His chosen people
- God's **justice** for Israel's disobedience
- The **poor choices** Israel makes and the **consequences** for their unbelief
- Israel's **hope for the future** secured by the promises of God

Israel had camped out at Mount Sinai a whole year. During that time God had fully equipped them with all they would need to take possession of and then dwell peacefully in the Land of Promise. Israel entered the Promised Land united as a nation chosen by God. The generation of Israelites that left Egypt had experienced the **divine interventions** of God on their behalf. These miracles were intended to develop confidence and faith in the people that God was able to fulfill His promises to them. Moses brought them God's moral, civil, and ecclesiastical law codes that would guide them and **bind the community together**. Israel was to be holy people in the earth, serving a holy God. The important **memorial feasts** were instituted as a means to remind Israel of their past, unify them in their present, and give them hope for a future. God also gave them detailed instructions for **the construction of the tabernacle** – the place where God would dwell in the midst of His people. Moses and Aaron were the ultimate, **God-given leaders** divinely selected, confirmed, and the pattern for all of Israel's leaders to follow. The new nation of Israel was now ready to move forward and capture their homeland.

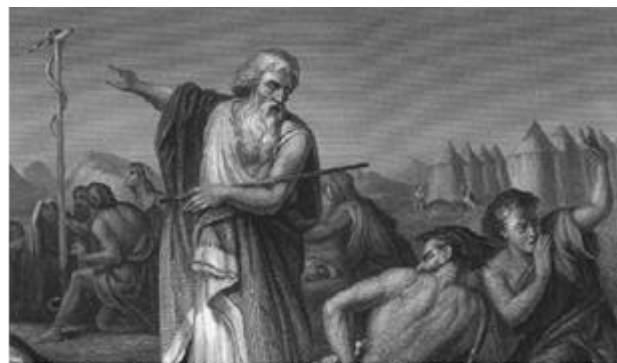
Numbers 1:1 – 10:10 contain the details of Israel’s **preparations for the journey**. The first census of the nation is taken of all men twenty years old or more so that Israel’s fighting force could be **evaluated and organized**. (See HANDOUT “The Problem with Numbers”).

God had promised them victory, but that did not mean they would not face serious opposition along the way, and even greater opposition once they entered Canaan. The Promised Land was populated by warlike tribes and minor kingdoms, and they were not going to give up their territory without a fight. As Israel departed Egypt, they were too weak and disorganized to fight against Pharaoh’s army, so God intervened at the Red Sea. Before Israel could reach Sinai, they were attacked by the Amalekites; here the fighting men of Israel were able to make a stand and defeat them with the aid of supernatural strength (Exodus 17:8-16).

The opening chapters of Numbers meant the nation of Israel would approach the Promised Land not like a disorganized rabble of ex-slaves, but like **an army on the march and ready to conquer**.

Every clan and family was instructed exactly how to set up camp and march under their banners. Even though the nation of Israel was organized like an army on the march, they were to be unlike any army that ever set out to conquer another land. Israel was to be a holy nation with the Levites at the center surrounding the Tabernacle, which was the physical reminder of God’s presence in the midst of the camp. Their leaders received their marching orders from God as the pillar of fire and cloud led them from place to place.

When examining the Book of Numbers, the student should first realize that the book was not intended to be Moses’ personal journal of his experiences leading Israel in the Wilderness; neither was it intended to be a detailed history of the life of the nation during this period. God led Moses to write down key events during that forty-year sojourn that would serve as examples and instructions for those who came out of the Wilderness, and for generations to follow. The first nine chapters span a period of only a few weeks and describe **Israel’s final preparations** to depart from Mount Sinai and begin their journey to the Promised Land.

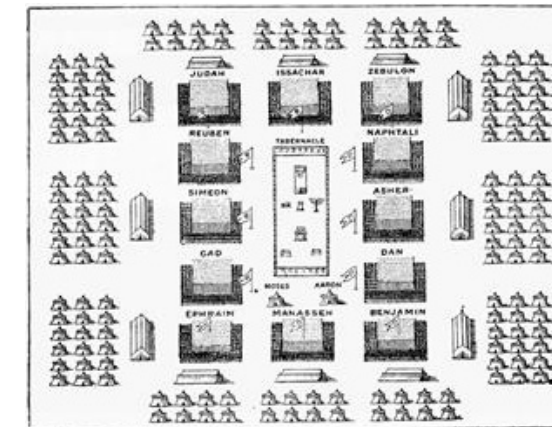


MOSES AND THE BRONZE SERPENT (NUMBERS 21:4-9)

The next eleven chapters (10:11 – 21:4) describe Israel’s **Wilderness wanderings** and spans approximately **39 years**. The final chapters (22 – 36) describe the final preparations for **a new generation** to enter the Promised Land and cover a period of a few months. Therefore, it becomes clear that the thirty-six

chapters of Numbers cannot begin to tell the whole story of the nation’s Wilderness wanderings from Mount Sinai to Moab, and huge gaps in the story obviously exist.

Numbers 33 gives the detailed itinerary of Israel’s long journey from Egypt to Moab. Reflecting the opening theme of the book’s numbering of Israel’s fighting men, the itinerary reads like the standard military report of the day. In fact, three lists from Egypt that are contemporary with Moses’ list provide the same series of place names in almost identical order in which they are found in the biblical text (33:44-49). This should not be surprising since Moses was trained and educated in Egypt as an administrator and therefore would have followed that pattern of reporting. Also, the fact that the names should appear in the same order as non-Biblical accounts meant that God did not lead the people by some strange or circuitous route around the Wilderness, but took them stage by stage along a known trade route where food and water might be found. No doubt, Israel would have encountered other nomadic tribes and caravans traveling to and from Egypt. Thus the news of their miraculous Exodus from Egypt and their progress towards Canaan would have quickly spread throughout the region (Note Numbers 22:1-2; and Joshua 2:8-11).



ISRAEL'S CAMP IN THE WILDERNESS

It was not God’s intention for the nation of Israel to be a disorganized rabble, stumbling their way through the Wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. Therefore, it should be noted that the arrangements of the tribes of Israel described in chapter two were intended to reinforce God’s plan for symmetry and order to flow from the very center of the camp where the Tabernacle was positioned and through concentric lines of authority starting with the Levites and ending with the other tribes positioned at the four compass points. “The listing of a tribal leader for each tribe and a lead tribe for each three-tribe division laid out lines of authority, a continuing motif throughout Numbers. And the concentric camp displayed concentric holiness, with holiness increasing as one worked from the boundaries of Israel’s tribal camps to the inner cordon of Levites, the Tabernacle walls, and finally all the way into the Ark inside the Holiest Place.” (Dale A. Brueggemann, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Volume 2: Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, General Editor Philip W. Comfort, Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Ill., © 2008, Pg. 237). **The arrangement of the camp indicated that they were to be a holy nation – a royal priesthood –**

on the march to fulfill their destiny to be God’s chosen instrument on the earth. The stories told in Numbers and Deuteronomy of the first generations on the way to Canaan were intended to instruct the generations to follow of the **blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience** that were sure to follow them once they settled into their Homeland. God’s ways were not going to change once they entered the Promised Land. Therefore, the lessons learned in the Wilderness would be for all generations.

KEY EVENTS OF NUMBERS AND LESSONS LEARNED:

- **The first census of the nation.** Israel was to be an orderly nation under the authority of God’s law with the Levites appointed for special service for the Lord (1:1 – 4:49).
- **Commands given** for holiness and ceremonial purity to be maintained in the camp of Israel (5:1 – 9:14). God is holy. Therefore, His people must be a holy nation unlike the pagan, idolatrous nations they were displacing.
- **Final instructions given** before departing from Sinai (9:15 – 10:10). The blessings of God are not unconditional. Certain conditions must be met in order for Israel take possession and prosper in the Promised Land – including respect for and obedience to God-ordained leaders, and their need to obey God’s commands to maintain the holiness of the covenant community in the land of the promise.
- **Failed first approach** to the Promised Land (10:11 – 14:45). There are terrible consequences to be paid for unbelief. All of the wonderful promises of God did not do any good to the first generation of Israelites who were delivered from bondage in Egypt because when the time for testing came, they did not have faith to believe God would deliver on those promises; only those who have faith in God can enter into his place of rest. (Note Hebrews 4:1-3). The reasons for this failure can be seen almost from the day they leave Mount Sinai. Although they were given manna from heaven to eat, the people began to complain because they lacked the fine food they enjoyed in Egypt. This lack of gratitude brought upon them the fire of God’s judgment. Moses interceded and once again, God relented and sent quail to fill their stomachs. Still the people gorged themselves on the quail never giving thanks to God and many became sick and died because of their sin.

The second reason Israel failed to enter into the Promised Land is seen in chapter 12 when Miriam and Aaron created dissention and division in the camp by opposing Moses’ authority. Again, the Lord’s judgment comes, and both are struck with leprosy. Once again Moses intercedes, and they are healed of their disease. The final act came in Chapter 13 when all the spies (except Joshua and Caleb) that were sent ahead to scout out the Promised land came back into the camp with tales of woe about how powerful the inhabitants of Canaan were and how impossible it would be for the children of Israel to conquer the land. Their lack of courage fueled their unbelief. Their unbelief caused them to murmur against Moses and their God-given leaders. Their rebellion at the threshold of the Promised Land once again brought God’s wrath and once again, Moses interceded to keep the Lord from completely destroying the nation:

“And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, “As I live,” says the LORD, “just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.”’”
Numbers 14:26-35 (NKJV)

- **Wandering in the Wilderness** begins (15:1-41). Immediately after hearing the Lord’s judgment upon them, Israel tried to turn back and enter Canaan, believing God would forgive them this one more time. But God’s judgment was final, and the attempt was met with defeat at the hands of the

Amalekites and Canaanites. At first this may seem like an odd place for the Lord to insert additional legislation into the story, but the purpose becomes clear when it is noted that twice the Lord instructs Moses to tell the children of Israel, “when you come into the land...” this legislation shall be in effect. The children of Israel may well have wondered IF they would be forever banished to wander in the Wilderness, but here the Lord assures them of a future hope. All may have been lost for the first generation because of their presumptuous sins (15:30, 31), but there was still hope for the next generation if they did not fall into the same pattern of sins.

- **Rebellions** against Moses and Aaron (16:1 – 17:13). The theme for the generation that came out of Egypt might be “will they ever learn?” Not long after the Lord’s instructions are given to cut off from the community those who are guilty of presumptuous sins, a major rebellion against Moses and Aaron erupts in the camp. Korah (representing the Levites) along with Dathan and Abiram, (sons of Reuben representing the firstborn) joined forces to oppose Moses and Aaron. This was a raw power struggle over control of the nation. Korah wanted primacy through the priesthood, and the Reubenites wanted primacy through the civil government. The consequence for the rebels was disastrous: the ground opened up below their feet and swallowed them up along with their entire households and all of their possessions. It would seem that this would be enough to silence any further rebellions against Moses’ and Aaron’s authority; but not for this stubborn and stiff-necked generation. On the very next day all of the congregation complained against Moses and Aaron and accused them of killing “the people of the Lord.” Once again, the Lord’s anger brings judgment, and a plague of death breaks out in the camp. Once again it takes the intercession of Moses and Aaron on behalf of the children of Israel to stop the Lord from destroying the whole rebellious lot. One final sign of Moses’ and Aaron’s divine authority to lead is given to the people when, alone of the twelve rods of the heads of the tribes that were set before the Lord, Aaron’s rod budded, produced blossoms, and yielded ripe almonds (17:1-13). The matter is settled and there can be no more challenges to divine authority of the Aaronic Priesthood for the nation. (see HANDOUT “Israel’s Complaints in the Wilderness.
- **The Duties of the priests and Levites** (18:1 – 19:22). With authority comes responsibility. The priestly hierarchy had been challenged (chapter 16) and defended by the God of the Tabernacle (chapter 17), but it was the duty of the priests and Levites to maintain the purity and holiness of the Tabernacle,

to keep sacred all the “holy offerings” and the objects involved with the worship of the community. The Levites were the spiritual buffers or insulators who protected the Israelites from the force of God’s wrath. Their service of presenting the sacred offerings of the people to a holy God prevented the Lord’s fiery judgment from consuming the fallen and sinful nation. (Note: 1 Peter 2:9 NKJV “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...”)

It could be said that the priests and Levites were to Israel, what Christians are to the Gentile nations in this generation. That being so, Christians should carefully consider their responsibility to serve as “salt” and “light” to the Gentiles.

- **The new generation:** Miriam and Aaron die; Moses’ sin at Kadesh prevents him from leading the people all the way into the Promised Land (20:1-29). Israel is nearing the end of its exile in the Wilderness. Most of the first generation has died out in desert, and now it is Miriam’s turn. Moses and Aaron must mourn her passing. However, the sins of the parents are still infecting the camp and soon after the people start to complain against Moses and Aaron, this time Moses’ patience has come to an end. In his anger, he forgets himself and does not honor the Lord in his words and actions. As a result, Moses – and Aaron, his accomplice in the incident – will not be able to enter the Promised Land. The judgment may seem harsh for Moses who had so faithfully served the Lord for forty years, but it is a strong lesson for all who seek a privileged position of spiritual leadership: “to whom much is given, much is required.”

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau and therefore kin. The Lord was not willing to allow Israel to tear open the wounds of Jacob’s and Esau’s ancient feud. Their ancestors had successfully buried their animosity, but Esau’s descendants did not trust Jacob’s descendants to not treat them with the same shrewdness as their ancient ancestor. Moses, unable to persuade them, chose another, longer route around Edom to avoid setting off another blood feud. As they come near the final stage of their journey, the Lord reveals to Moses it is time for his brother, Aaron to be “gathered to his people.” It is a sad day for Moses and for all of Israel, as Moses presides over the ceremony that passes the mantle of the High Priest from Aaron to his son Eleazar. Moses is now all alone and the last of his generation to have experienced every event of the Exodus. As the Lord had promised, of their generation only Joshua and Caleb would enter Canaan. Moses had presided

over two family funerals, confrontations with critics in the camp, and a personal failure at Kadesh. Yet in spite of his heartache and the weariness of soul and body, he picks up his rod and carries on with the work the Lord has for him to complete. “Victorious Christian service, like the victorious Christian life, is a series of new beginnings. No matter what mistakes we’ve made, it’s always too soon to quit.” Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, David C. Cook Pub, Colorado Springs © 2007, pg. 281

- **The journey to Moab** (21:1-35). The closer anyone gets to fulfilling their spiritual destiny, the greater will be the opposition from the devil, their adversary. And on this leg of their journey, the children of Israel learned some valuable lessons concerning overcoming opposition. The Lord had promised them victory over their enemies, and at Hormah (21:1-3), the approach to Moab (21:10-20), and the battles with kings Sihon and Og (21:21-35) the Lord proved true to his promises. Still in the midst of their victories, the internal, spiritual battle against the uncontrolled tongue brought another curse upon their heads (21:4-9). The Children of Israel were able with the Lord’s help to defeat the external enemies around them, but **they failed to overcome their own sinful hearts that led them again and again to bitterly complain against the Lord and His chosen leaders about the difficulty of their circumstances** – for “out of the abundance heart, the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34), and so their sinful hearts and wagging tongues brought the just punishment of fiery serpents into their camp. And as James would later write in the New Testament Scriptures, “the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity” (Note James 3:1-12). The bronze serpent would serve as a constant reminder to the people of the consequences for their uncontrolled tongues, and the grace and mercy of God that forgives.
- **The Story of Balaam** (22:1 – 24:25). The story of Balaam is of great significance because it involves the first major test of the new generation of Israel and the last major test they will experience before approaching the walls of Jericho. When Balak, the king of Moab saw how quickly Israel crushed every opponent that stood in their way to Canaan, he realized that his military strength was no match for Israel. He was wise enough to recognize that he needed supernatural help to defeat them. He therefore sent for the renowned prophet, Balaam to come and place a curse on Israel so their string of successes would be stopped on the threshold of Moab. Balak sent for Balaam, promising him a great financial reward if he would

successfully curse Israel and bring about their defeat. However, the Lord visited Balaam first and warned him not to go to the king of Moab and not to curse Israel. **It is interesting to note that although Balaam was not a prophet of the Lord, the Lord spoke to him and used him to accomplish His purposes on this occasion.** The lure of money was too great for Balaam and he circumvented the angel of the Lord on the road and answered Balak’s summons.

Three times Balak asked Balaam to curse Israel, and three times Balaam could only bless them, reminding the king of Moab, “Did I not also speak to your messenger whom you sent to me, saying, ‘If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do good or bad of my own will. What the Lord says that I must speak.’?” (See Numbers 23:12, 26; and 24:13). However, Balaam could not resist the devil’s schemes and in the end revealed to Balak how he might bring about Israel’s defeat from within by tempting them with sexual sin and idolatry. “This combination of sexual sin and idolatry, it turns out, was Balaam’s idea (see 31:16; Revelation 2:14), the same Balaam who had just blessed Israel and who appeared to be on their side. It is easy to see how the Israelites were misled, for Balaam seemed to say and do all the right things—at least for a while (22-24). Not until Balaam had inflicted great damage on them did the Israelites realize that he was greedy, used sorcery, and was deeply involved in pagan religious practices. We must be careful to weigh both the words and the deeds of those who claim to offer spiritual help.” *Life Application Study Bible*, Notes on Numbers 25:1-3, © 1996, Tyndale House Pub., Wheaton, IL.

- **Events at Moab and preparations for the second approach to the Promised Land** (25:1 – 36:13). After Balaam’s fourth prophetic message (24:15-25), that should have been the end of his involvement with the nation of Israel. But Israel later discovered (31:16) that Balaam was working behind the scenes and in secret to bring about Israel’s destruction; his plan almost worked (25:1-9). Later, Israel would exact their revenge and kill Balaam for encouraging the women of Moab and Midian to tempt the children of Israel to worship idols (Note the words of Jesus: “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” Matthew 18:6-7 NKJV). After their recovery from their harlotry in Moab, God calls

for another census of the nation. Numbers begins with the census of the generation to come out of Egypt and as it draws near an end, that generation has died out in the Wilderness and a census of the new generation is called for. After the census is completed, final preparations are made for entering the Promised Land:

1. Inheritance laws are added, and along with instructions for offerings, the feasts, and holidays to be observed after settling into Canaan
2. Joshua is confirmed as the next leader of Israel. Joshua's public commission before the death of Moses meant there would be a smooth transition of leadership without any destructive power struggles among the tribes for control.
3. The law concerning vows was reaffirmed. No one was forced to make a vow, but once a vow was made, it had to be fulfilled (note Exodus 20:16).
4. Vengeance is taken on the Midianites for their evil plans to tempt the men of Israel to sin and cause the God of Israel to destroy His own people.
5. Next the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were granted permission to settle on the east side of the Jordan River.
6. The book of Numbers comes to a close with the new generation of Israelites camped on the plains of Moab and in sight of the Promised Land. There, Moses reflects upon Israel's long journey from Egypt to the point where they are ready to fulfill their long awaited destiny. Looking forward to the time when the rest of Israel would be settled in Canaan,
 - boundaries are set and Moses gives instructions to set aside cities for the Levites; six "cities of refuge" were designated where those guilty of accidentally killing another person could be protected.
 - Laws concerning marriage and female heirs when no male heirs exist are written down.

"These are the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho." (Numbers 36:13 NKJV)

Here ends the last of the three travel narratives told by Moses. From the Red Sea to Sinai (Exodus 13 – 19), from Sinai to Kadesh (Numbers 10:11 – 14), and from Kadesh to the Transjordan (Numbers 20 – 32). Each of these travel narratives contains similar elements:

1. Battles with enemies that stand in their way to reach Canaan (Ex. 14; 17:8-16; Numbers 14:45; 21:1-31; 24)
2. Israel's internal battles with sin in the form of complaints about lack of food and water and lack of faith in divine provision (Ex. 15:22 – 17; Numbers 11:1-15; 20:2-13)
3. The struggle to have faith in God to keep His promises (Ex 14:30, 31; Numbers 14:11-25; 20:12)
4. The authority of divinely chosen leaders Moses, Aaron, Miriam (Ex. 15:20; Numbers 12; 16; 20:22-29; 27:12-23)

These elements move forward the overarching narrative of the emerging nation of Israel on its way to the land promised to their forefathers, and prepares the way for Moses' final instructions to the nation before entering Canaan.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-11

Deuteronomy Part One: “Principles for Godly Living from the Law of Moses”

“These *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.” **Deuteronomy 1:1 (NKJV)**

Deuteronomy Outline

God kept His promise to Abraham and now a great nation – a new generation – tried and tested in the Wilderness’ furnace of affliction stood on the threshold of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants those many years ago.

Moses could go no farther; the time had come to pass the torch to the new generation under **Joshua’s leadership**. One thing remained for Moses to do, and that was to make **his farewells to the nation**.

The book of Deuteronomy is in fact composed of **three formal addresses** to the nation. Combined, these addresses are typical of a treaty of the day between a **king and his vassal state**.

- THE FIRST ADDRESS (1:1 – 4:43): Moses reminded the people of the **mighty acts God** performed on behalf of the nation.
- THE SECOND ADDRESS (4:44-28:68): Moses gave the **blessings of obedience** and warned of the **curses of disobeying** the terms of the Covenant that the nation entered into at Sinai. The theme for this second address can be stated: **“Principles for Godly Living in the Promised Land.”** Included in this section are Moses’ amplifications – amendments and qualifications – of the law given at Sinai which would be relevant to the new generation that would no longer be sojourners in the Wilderness, but were about to **conquer and settle the land** ahead of them.
- THE THIRD ADDRESS (29:1-30:20): in this final address Moses calls for the people to remain **fully committed to the Lord**.



Moses Atop Mount Nebo

DEUTERONOMY: THE “SECOND LAW”

More than four centuries had passed since Jacob led his small tribe of seventy souls to the land of Egypt and into the waiting arms of his “resurrected son” Joseph. So much had happened since then – most of it not pleasant. However, God kept His promise to Abraham and now a great nation – a new generation – tried and tested in the Wilderness’ furnace of affliction stood on the threshold of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants those many years ago. Moses could go no farther; the time had come to pass the torch to the new generation under Joshua’s leadership. One thing remained for Moses to do, and that was to make his farewells to the nation.

Deuteronomy was written by Moses to be a key bridge document between the generation that left Egypt and the new generation about to enter into Canaan. The lessons of Deuteronomy are clear: because of what God had done on their behalf in the past, the nation of Israel should have hope in the present and follow him. As the new generation coming out of the Wilderness heard the message of Deuteronomy, they remembered how God expressed his kindness in their journeys and recommitted themselves to trust, love, and obey the Lord’s commands as they entered the land of Canaan.

“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.” (Deuteronomy 7:9 NKJV)

MOSES' FIRST ADDRESS (1:1-4:43) “These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness...” The theme of Moses’ first address is **“what God Has Done For Israel.”**

Modern students of the Bible must always keep in mind the fact that at the time these events took place there were no media archives, no newspapers or magazines, no printed books, or any other means of preserving the records of a people except for oral transmission and a few documents written on clay tablets, or scrolls of papyrus or animal skins that few could read. Public documents and proclamations would be read aloud to the concerned audience, and they would verbally consent to the contents of that statement. So when Moses gathered the people east of the Jordan River on the plains of Moab and reviewed the mighty acts of God for the nation of Israel in what came to be called the book of Deuteronomy, his intention was to remind those who had passed through the Wilderness of the events of past forty years – many of which were still fresh in the minds of his audience. Moses' intent was to highlight those events that demonstrated God's special involvement in the lives of His people and give them **hope and encouragement for the future**.

Moses began his account with the events at Mount Sinai and highlighted the most important steps along the journey through the Wilderness, concluding with the arrival of the Children of Israel on the plains of Moab where they now stood. Moses' address reminded the people of God's great power to **deliver them from any difficulty or danger**; at the same time he did not "sugar coat" Israel's times of unbelief and failure along the way. He reminded Israel of God's provision and protection in the Wilderness; and that the way to continued blessings in the Promised Land would be through their obedience. "Moses stressed that if the people remembered the goodness of God who redeemed them from Egypt and if they obeyed the laws and decrees revealed to them on Mount Sinai, they would indeed 'live long in the land' the Lord was giving them (4:40). But should they choose to rebel against the Lord and worship idols, they would be destroyed and driven out of Canaan (4:26-27)." Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, Ill., © 1991, p. 247

Embedded in this address is a prophecy concerning Israel's future. In chapter 4 verses 25-31, Moses speaks a prophetic word about Israel's future. A time will come, Moses says – after they have been in the land a long time – that they will defile themselves by making idols. Then the Lord will become very angry with the people because of their sin. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day," Moses told the people, "that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed." Still there is hope; Moses continues his prophecy declaring that the Lord will scatter the few remaining people among the nations where they will worship idols made from wood and stone. But at that same time, they will begin to search once more for the Lord their God, "...and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in

distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."

MOSES' SECOND ADDRESS (4:44-28:68)

Theme: Principles for Godly Living in the Promised Land

By far the longest section of Deuteronomy, these chapters contain six significant matters concerning the commandments Israel needed to obey if they were going to have a healthy relationship with their God and maintain the well-being of the nation in the Promised Land. If the children of Israel were to fulfill their destiny to be a kingdom of priests and a holy community before God, they would require a set of objective, clear, and well-defined standards, defining God's expectations of them. These commandments revealed **the character of God**. Israel would reflect God's character in a land polluted by idols and idol worshipers by keeping His commands, and thus bring Him praise. (see HANDOUT "The Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy Chapter 5")

"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess." Deuteronomy 5:32-33 (NKJV)

Love is the motive for what God has done for the people and the motive for them to obey the covenant precepts (6:1 – 12:15)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NKJV)

Deuteronomy 5:4-5 is known as the *shāma* after the first word in the passage "hear" (Hebrew שָׁמַע). These two short verses constitute the very heart and soul of the Jewish faith even to this day. "It is Israel's doctrinal confession in its most essential form. From a covenant perspective, it is the cardinal principle of which all else is interpretive. When Jesus was asked, what is the most important commandment, he replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart,

all your soul, and all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment’ (Matt 22:37-38).

Without love the law becomes a drudgery that enslaves instead of what it was intended to be: a guide for those who loved the Lord their God and wanted to stay within the boundaries of His love for them.

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (NKJV)

God had provided the children of Israel with everything they would need to succeed and fulfill the promises given Abraham. To succeed through all the trials and years of waiting, Israel would need specific things to **unite them and hold them together** as a **unique people** on the earth with a unique **destiny**:

- Separation (ethnic and within families)
- Circumcision
- Sufferings in Egypt
- Promise of a permanent homeland
- A unique law code that would distinguish them from other nations
- Divine interventions to save the people from destruction

All of these things would be for nothing if the lessons they learned from God were not handed down from generation to generation. It is for this reason that **the Lord made religious instruction and integral part of the life of His people and central to Jewish theology**. For the children of Israel religious instruction was meant to be much more than sharing information; it is God’s design for His word to be taught in a way that relates that word to the daily life of the people. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 demonstrates how God intended for that to happen:

- **“Hear, O Israel”** immediately engages the people and involves them. “Listen up, people! This is important!”
- **“You shall love the Lord... with all your heart, soul, strength... And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart”** made it clear that receiving God’s instruction and obeying it are only possible when His people are in a love relationship with their heavenly Father. As Jesus would later say, “If you love me you will keep my word...” (John 14:21) “If you keep my commandments you will abide in My love...” (John 15:9). This

should be the pattern and motivation for Israel’s instruction for their children; to teach them first to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength so that they will be able to keep His commandments and thereby abide in His love and blessings.

- **“You shall teach them diligently to your children... and talk to them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and rise up...”** Instruction in the word is not intended to be a Sabbath Day event; parents must be engaged and involved in teaching their children to see God in every aspect of life, and not just those events that are related to the worship at the Tabernacle. Note that this is the pattern for how Jesus taught His disciples; as he moved from town to town, in the country, in the fields, and in the mountains and across rivers and lakes everything became a teaching opportunity for Jesus. And as parents we ought to be aware of these teaching moments – even in the simple act of giving thanks for the food they eat, or thanking God for a beautiful sunset, or the melody of a bird’s song – anything can be used as a teaching moment when parents are tuned into God’s Spirit. Even the difficult struggles in life and in their failures, or when disappointments come their way, these events can be used by parents to teach their children of God’s faithfulness even when they are not.

This is what it meant to make their teaching **life-oriented** and not just **information oriented**. God knew it was the difference between effective teaching that will stand the tests and trials of life and those teachings that will collapse in the face of trouble, disappointments, and opposition. It was the method God used to teach Israel the lessons in the Wilderness. Every event was used by the God of Israel as a special “teaching moment” for His people. It is critical for the student of the Bible to understand this method of teaching because it is the basis for the historical background of the Old Testament kings, priests, and prophets, as well as the Gospels and Acts.

- **“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.”** To this day, the Jews still do this (see HANDOUT “The Jewish Frontlet”). Jesus did not criticize anyone for observing this command, but criticized the Pharisees only for making a public spectacle out of wearing their phylacteries. And that criticism could extend to anyone who makes a public show of their faith. Children can spot insincerity and religious hypocrisy when it is in the home. So wearing God’s word on the forehead and on the arm was a visual reminder to the people that their very thoughts and the way they conduct their life in public and private should be influenced by God’s word. The act of wearing a frontlet was symbolic of the fact that every thought and action of

God’s people should be guided by His word. This is what Paul meant when He said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1, 2 (NKJV)

- **“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”** Israel’s responsibility for teaching their children to love God and to follow His commandments began and ended at the home. If the children failed to follow the commandments of Yahweh, it would not be the fault of the Levites or the leaders of the tribes; God would not call the community as a whole into account or blame His prophets. **The statutes, commandments, precepts, ordinances, etc. of God are most effectively learned in the loving environment of a God-fearing home.** If parents were not the living by example and teaching the word of God in the home, the children would grow up believing that it is normal to have a disconnect between what the word of God says and how their parents lived. Writing the statutes of their God on the doorposts of the home and their gates would be a visual reminder that the *Torah* was to be an integral part of the home and family life. (Note: Judges 2:10 describes a time when parents in Israel would violate this command with the result that a whole generation of Israelites would grow up not knowing the Lord.)

OBEDIENCE

Deuteronomy 8:1 tells us to obey God's commandments. We do this by obeying God with:

OUR HEART – By loving him more than any relationship, activity, achievement, or possession

OUR WILL – By committing ourselves completely to him OUR MIND – By seeking to know him and his Word, so his principles and values form the foundation of all we think and do

OUR BODY – By recognizing that our strengths, talents, and sexuality are given to us by God to be used for pleasure and fulfillment according to his rules, not ours

OUR FINANCES – By deciding that all of the resources we have ultimately come from God, and that we are to be managers of them and not owners

OUR FUTURE – By deciding to make service to God and man the main purpose of our life's work...” *From the Life Application Study Bible*

After laying the foundation in 6:4-9, Moses continues by reminding the people that they were chosen by God not because they were superior or better than the other nations, but were chosen by **grace because of God’s love** (Deuteronomy

7:7-9). At the same time, the Lord makes it clear that He not only hates sin, but also will have no mercy on the sinners who hate Him and refuse to repent (7:10-11).

“And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (8:2). God’s grace and mercy towards those He loves is rooted and grounded in His love: He fed them with *manna* when they were hungry, and their clothes did not wear out – even His discipline was as a father who punishes his children whom he loves. God’s reminder of His blessing comes with another warning for Israel **not to forget the One who blesses them** once they are enjoying those blessings.

A new generation stood on the threshold of the Promised Land and were about to cross the Jordan River and begin to dispossess the nations on the other side – nations that were much greater and more powerful than they were. But God promised the people that He would be like a “consuming fire” so that the children of Israel would quickly conquer them and drive them out (8:1-3).

The pattern of the discourse continues and after the reminder of the blessing comes the warning for them not to be full of pride and self-righteousness after their success of taking possession of the Promised Land (9:3-6): “...understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

Moses retells the story of how the two stone tablets, upon which the Ten Commandments were written, came into being and were placed inside the Ark of the Covenant (see HANDOUT “Where is the Ark of the Covenant?”). Connected to this story is how the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to take care of the Tabernacle and minister to the Lord, “Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance...”

Moses called the people to reflect upon their journey before the Lord; to remember God’s unconditional love and mercy that He showed them along the way. Then Moses now asked the people “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NKJV)

Moses continued to address the people and reinforced the first and foundational imperative to **love and keep God’s commands** made in verses 12 and 13 with four other imperatives:

- **Obey because of who God is (10:14–22).** “*The highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it...*” The God of Israel is “God of gods and Lord of lords” who did great and awesome

things which they all witnessed – their ancestors entered Egypt with seventy persons, and the Lord, God of Israel kept His promise and made them “as the stars of heaven in multitude.” Love is the central element of every plea for Israel to obey God’s commands. Moses uses the word “love” no less than six times in this section (Deut. 10:12, 15, 19; 11:1, 13, 22). Some will ask if it is possible to love and fear the Lord at the same time, and the Lord’s answer is found here. Yes, it is possible.

- **Obey because of God’s care (10:21—11:7).** This new generation about to enter the Promised Land was walking in the shadow of those who witnessed the plagues the Lord brought upon Egypt, saw the salvation of God at the crossing of the Red Sea, and experienced God’s grace through forty years of the harsh conditions of the wilderness. Moses’ address is a plea for this generation and all those who would come after not to forget and learn from their history.
- **Obey because of God’s covenant promises (11:8–25).** *“Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’”* (8-9). The land of Canaan was not like any other land because it was a land “for which the LORD your God cares...” Note that the material blessings of God are different from the spiritual blessings Jesus described in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12). The spiritual blessings are unconditional whereas the material blessings of prosperity and victory in battle are always dependent upon obedience.
- **Obey because of God’s chastening (11:26–32).** “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.” Included in this section is a commandment for the people to hear the blessings and curses proclaimed from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. This commandment is fulfilled after Moses’ death when Joshua, the new leader gathers the people before these two mountains west of the Jordan River (Joshua 8:30-35) and fulfills this covenant ceremony.

1. Laws for proper worship 12-16:17

“These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth...” Deuteronomy 12:1 (NKJV)

Israel was the instrument through which God would bring His final judgment and destruction of the Canaanites and their religion. Some non-believers have asked if it was fair for God to destroy these people, and some have gone further and accused the “Old Testament God” of being bloodthirsty and cruel for His commands to Israel to totally wipe out a whole race of people. But these questions ignore some very basic facts about the time and place of these commands. (see HANDOUT “Was the God of the Old Testament Cruel and Bloodthirsty?”)

The first four of the Ten Commandments form the foundation for Israel’s theology; the dominant theme is that the uniqueness of Israel’s worship must reflect **the holiness and uniqueness of the Lord**. In this section of Moses’ second rendering of the Law, he delivers the message that once settled in the land, Israel must have a central place of worship. The worship of Yahweh excludes the worship of all other gods (5:7-10). Israel was given the charge to root out and completely destroy every religious system in Canaan that supported idol worship. The Lord commanded that the names of every pagan god be obliterated so that only the name of Yahweh would be remembered. Yahweh’s name would forever be the only name of any deity associated with the Holy Land. Nothing less than the holiness of the nation was at stake (7:1-6) – a nation that was created to serve the one, true, living God in the place God chose for them.

Canaanite worship was highly personal and individual and varied from tribe to tribe. They could worship at any place they considered sacred. Worship of Yahweh was opposite to the Canaanite cults; the nation of Israel was to be united in their worship as a single **covenant community**. Having a single designated place where the people as a whole were **called to worship together** would serve to reinforce the idea of their oneness.

“In the past, as the sacred record makes clear, individuals and families could erect altars and worship God wherever they encountered him (cf. Gen 8:20; 12:7; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 35:1, 3, 7; Exod 17:15). Even after the Sinai revelation, worship, though largely confined to the Tabernacle, was carried out wherever the Tabernacle was located at any given time. Moreover, provision was made even at Sinai for stone altars to be erected and used in the future in whatever places God would be memorialized (Exod 20:24-26). The record again is replete with

examples of such local shrines where individual or small congregations could worship God with his full endorsement and blessing (cf. 16:21; Judg 6:24-27; 13:19-20; 1 Sam 7:17; 10:5, 13; 2 Sam 24:18-25; 1 Kgs 18:30).” Eugene H. Merrill, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, Gen. Editor Philip W. Comfort, Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Ill., © 2008, p. 552.

That pattern would change. Once they settled in Canaan there would be a permanent place of worship and Israel would not be allowed to offer sacrifices anywhere they pleased. The **centralizing of community worship** at one location would serve to seal the twelve tribes of Israel into a **theocratic community** united for their common destiny to demonstrate how any nation in covenant relationship with the one, true, living God over all creation must **live and worship**.

2. Laws for ruling the nation 16:18 – 20:20

“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.” Deuteronomy 16:18 (NKJV)

Once the people settled into the new land, they would need a means to govern themselves. The word of God is clear throughout that Yahweh was deeply concerned that justice and honesty be the character of His people. God was fully aware of the power money has to corrupt: “You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous” 16:19 (NKJV). In order for Israel to survive and prosper in the Land of Promise, justice must prevail in all their institutions.

The Lord’s instructions in verses 17:2-7 may seem harsh, but when looking into future history of Israel, it becomes clear that if idolatry is not rooted out from the beginning, it will only fester and grow like a cancer until it destroys the whole nation (Note 2 Kings 7:17-23; and 2 Chronicles 36:15-20).

It is at this point (17:14-20) that Moses is inspired to place a prophetic warning along with His instructions concerning Israel’s future kings. Once again Moses expressed the Lord’s concern that those who serve the people do so according to His commands (18:1-8). Because priests and Levites could not own property or pursue outside business interests, God made special arrangements so that people would not neglect them or take their service for granted. The Lord instructed Israel to honor and care for the leaders He gave them.

The priests and Levites served much the same function as Christian ministers today. Their responsibilities before God and the people included (1) teaching the people about God from their Holy Scriptures, (2) setting an example of godly living that the people were to apply to their own lives, (3) caring for and maintaining the purity of the sanctuary and its workers, (4) making sure the sacrifices and offerings were made according to the high standards prescribed by Moses from the mouth of God.

“When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations” (Deuteronomy 18:9 NKJV). It was because of these wicked practices that God would drive out the pagan nations (Deuteronomy 18:12). The Israelites were clearly instructed to destroy these false religions and replace their evil practices with the worship of the one true God (18:9-13). By this time, the command expressed in verse 13 (to walk blamelessly before the Lord) is a familiar theme in Moses’ final sermons (see HANDOUT “Why God’s People Are Commanded Not to Worship Idols”).

Here the messianic prophecy is given that the Lord will raise another like Moses so that the spirit of prophecy will continue among them (18:15-18; see Acts 3:22; 7:37; John 6:14). From the ancient days up until this day, there have always been those who claim to be messengers from God, but are not. In 18:21-22 God tells His people how to discern if people are speaking for Him or not. God still speaks to his people by His Holy Spirit (John 14:25, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; Romans 12:26; 1 Corinthians 14:5, 6, 22, 24, 31), but believers must be very cautious before believing or following anyone claims to be speaking a prophecy from the Holy Spirit. We are instructed not to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), but we are also warned to test every spirit, whether they are of God (1 John 4:1-3).

BIBLICAL STUDIES

OT 101-12

Deuteronomy Part Two: “God’s Call to Obedience”

God’s call to obedience has a direct correlation between obedience to Him and His commandments concerning the people’s relationships with one another. The requirements for His people’s obedience to Him are established in the first four commandments (Deuteronomy 5:1-15); beginning in verse 16, the Lord shifts His focus onto the human relationships between His people. In order to be a holy people serving a holy God, His people must also treat each other with honor and respect. God-fearing parents are recipients of special respect and obedience because in the divine hierarchy, they stand in for God Himself in raising and teaching God’s commandments to their children.

The Lord’s commandment, “You shall not murder.” (5:17) is unequivocal. Apart from punishment for the capital crime of murder, there is no excuse for any human to take the life of another person (Genesis 9:6). However, because of mankind’s fallen nature, God’s people will always have to deal with the problems of manslaughter, murder, and war. Human history is impossible to trace apart from touching upon the subject of “man’s inhumanity to man” at practically every turn.

There exists throughout the Old Testament a constant tension between the fact that God holds all human life sacred and precious, and the fact that God’s justice demands a life for a life (Genesis 9:5-7; Exodus 21:23-25). In the Old Testament God’s justice is a double-edged sword that gives hope to the poor and powerless who suffer under the heavy hand of oppression. God’s justice is the dread of all those who are guilty of wrongdoing (see HANDOUT “Cities of Refuge”)

The Promised Land had been polluted by the blood of constant warlike tribes fighting over possessions, and territory – and worse yet, by the blood of the innocents who were routinely slaughtered on the altars of Baal. Israel was commanded by God not to pollute the land with more violence and bloodshed except in those cases where God’s justice demanded a payment in blood for blood. Of course, murder was a capital crime, but others included:

- Idolatry and sorcery (Lev. 20:1–6)
- Blasphemy (24:10–16)
- Violating the Sabbath (Num.15:32–36)
- Willful and repeated disobedience to parents (Deut. 21:18–21; Ex. 21:15, 17)
- Kidnapping (Ex.21:16)

- Bestiality (22:19)
- Homosexuality (Lev. 20:13)
- Adultery, and the rape of an engaged maiden (Deut.22:22–27)

Modern secular societies do not have as many capital crimes, but it would be a serious mistake to apply the same values and legal standards of a modern, industrialized, secular state to ancient Israel, which operated as a theocracy where their laws were God’s laws. The nation of Israel entered into a voluntary, covenant relationship with God whereby God would be their savior and protector, and the people would abide by God’s standards of holiness. To break these laws was more than a breach of societal codes, but was a sin against the Lord that could bring terrible consequences upon the whole community. The people needed to understand without a doubt the seriousness of such actions.

In Deuteronomy, Moses is always looking ahead to the time when Israel would settle in the Promised Land. Each tribe had been assigned its own territory with clearly defined borders (Numbers 26:52-56; Joshua 14:1-2). Since there were no means by which the land could be accurately surveyed and recorded, each family and clan would make its own claim and mark it out with boundary stones. Every person was expected to honor the landmarks (boundary stones), because to move the stones was stealing land from your neighbors and their descendants (Prov. 22:28). Stealing the land of defenseless widows and orphans by moving their ancient boundary marks was particularly offensive to the Lord; a person guilty of doing this would find themselves in danger of being cursed by God (Proverbs 23:10). The Lord’s command, “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15) encompassed not only real estate, but personal property as well. Those in charge of Israel’s government are cautioned not to abuse their public trust by making unjust laws designed to rob the poor and the powerless. A slanderer or false witnesses is the moral equivalent of a thief since their lies are intended to rob the innocent of their good name (Deut. 19:15–21); and it is often the case that a good reputation is more difficult to restore than stolen property. Israel’s system of justice would depend on honest citizens knowing the truth and speaking the truth. Perjury breaks God’s commandment (Ex. 20:16) and if allowed to continue would undermine the foundations of a just society and destroy their legal system. The requirement of Jewish law for two or three witnesses to give testimony in order to convict was (and still is) the best way to prevent a false witness to undermine the legal system and cause an innocent person to be condemned.

War in the land (20:1–9, 16–18): after fully addressing the moral and legal issues regarding the Mosaic Law and killing, Moses then turns his attention to the moral and legal issues of war. The Canaanites were a violent and warlike people; they fought for survival in the land and there was no indication that they were

about to lay down their arms and leave peacefully when Israel arrived on their doorstep. The Lord distinguished the warfare His people must fight to conquer the Promised Land, and grow the territory of Israel beyond Canaan to the farthest limits of the territory set by God (see HANDOUT “Who Owns the Land?”). His instructions were contrary to the customary ways and means of total warfare used by the nations surrounding Israel. Inside of Canaan, God commanded Israel to destroy the people in the cities and show them no mercy (20:16–18; 7:1–11). This policy served two purposes: 1) it would execute God’s justice upon those who shed innocent blood and practiced all sorts of abominable religious rites; and 2) it would help remove dangerous temptations from the Jewish people to engage in idol worship. For those cities far away, first they must seek a peace treaty. If the treaty was rejected, then it must be destroyed, and its inhabitants killed or taken captive (20:10-18). When they go to war, they must take care not to waste the natural resources of other lands. Defeating the enemy was of primary importance, but conserving natural resources and preserving the productivity of the land was also important. It was only when the Lord really wanted to humble a nation that He commanded His people to destroy the good trees (2 Kings 3:15–17), but this approach was the exception (20:19, 20).

Laws for human relationships 21:1 – 26:19

“And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening.” Exodus 18:13 (NKJV)

No doubt, in the forty years of wandering through the Wilderness, Moses and the other elders appointed to judge disputes between the people (Exodus 18:13-26) had heard just about everything possible. Chapters 21- 26 appear to anticipate some possible special “what if...” circumstances that might come before the judges once they arrived in the Promised Land concerning:

- Human relationships
- Strayed or fallen livestock
- Proper attire for men and women
- Preservation of birds
- How to build a safe house
- Avoiding odd mixtures
- Concerning fringes upon their garments
- The reputation of a wife challenged
- Sexual sins that compromise the chastity of women
- Preserving of the purity and honor of the community
- Runaway slaves
- Cult prostitutes
- Borrowing and lending money

- Performance of vows
- Use of a neighbor’s field or vineyard
- Divorce
- Newlyweds and war
- Kidnapping
- Leprosy
- Proper security for loans
- Treatment of servants
- Charity to the poor
- Non-capital punishment of the guilty
- Treatment of work animals
- Marriage to a brother’s widow
- Punishment of an indecent woman
- Just weights and measures
- Treatment of their enemy the Amalekites
- First fruit offerings
- Use of the tithe

When studying these laws, do not dismiss them as outdated and arbitrary restrictions that have no relevance to today, but look for the reasons behind these laws. They were given to **teach, protect, order, and set the standards** to maintain Israel as distinct, holy people in a sinful and idolatrous world.

“This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.” **Deuteronomy 26:16-19** (NKJV)

The benefits of obedience and consequences disobedience 27:1 – 28:68

“Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: ‘Keep all the commandments which I command you today...’” Deuteronomy 27:1 (NKJV)

The spiritual principle upon which Israel’s future depended was very simple: obeying God’s laws would bring the **blessings of prosperity** , but disobeying them would bring only **destruction and loss** . Through Moses, God had clearly communicated to His people that from Egypt to the Red Sea, and throughout the Wilderness Experience, He kept His promises to **protect and provide** for His people; Yahweh also kept His promise to **punish disobedience** . This was the heart

and soul of the agreement God made with his people. Although the New Testament church is not a part of the covenant God made with the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this spiritual principle holds true for all who are of the faith of Abraham (Galatians 3:7) and in a Covenant relationship with the Lord through His Son, Jesus Christ: obedience and disobedience carry with them inevitable consequences in this life as well as the next.

“Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, ‘Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today’” **Deuteronomy 27: 9-10**



MOUNT GERIZIM AND MOUNT EBAL TODAY

The final chapters of this second address to the people are dedicated to what the people must do to insure that they do not forget all that was spoken to them that day. In 27:1-10 specific instructions were given that as soon as they crossed over the Jordan River they were to write all the words of the law upon large stones and set up these stones on top of Mount Ebal. There they were to build an altar

to the Lord according to God’s instructions (Exodus 20:24-26) where burnt offerings and peace offerings would be made.

This solemn assembly was commanded so that once this new generation came out of the Wilderness, crossed over the Jordan, and was safely inside of Canaan, they would not get the idea that the Laws given at Mount Sinai and reinforced on the other side of the Jordan no longer applied to them. Instructions were given for Joshua and the tribal leaders to assemble all the people in the valley between two mountains (Ebal and Gerizim) where the laws would be read to them. The blessings were read on **Mount Gerizim** and the curses read on **Mount Ebal** (27:11-13). The curses (27:15-26) were presented as part of a series of oaths patterned after the ancient treaties given by kings to conquered nations. Each oath was spoken by the Levites and immediately affirmed by the people with shouts of **Amen or “So be it.”**

There are two extremes the modern Bible student should avoid when studying any of the Old Testament verses describing God’s curses upon those who break His commandments: the first is to look at these curses as if the Old Testament God is an angry, jealous God with a bad temper that is out to crush anyone who dares to step out of line. The second extreme to avoid is to dismiss these curses of disobedience as no longer relevant because the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ has rendered the Law null and void, and replaced it with grace. Some Christians read the Old Testament as if it is to be discarded like an old wineskin; since the “new wine” of the Gospel has come, the Old is treated at best as ancient history. However, adopting either of these extreme positions will produce an unsatisfactory theology that cannot harmonize the Old Testament with the New (see HANDOUT “New Wine in Old Wineskins?”).

Deuteronomy declares that the Lord is the King and Israel is His chosen nation and special people. Therefore, **the responsibilities** of those who live under the **Lord’s authority** must be fully understood and the people must commit themselves wholly to Him. Saying “Amen” openly in a public ceremony, meant the people took responsibility before God and each other for their actions. It was not enough for God’s people to hear the promised blessings and privileges of the covenant; they must also accept **the terms and conditions** that are involved and **obey them.**

Apart from Deuteronomy 10:12-13, the curses for disobedience can only be seen as severe threats from an angry God. However, when they are heard in context of “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?” the curses are no longer seen as threats, but as **loving warnings** about the **destructive power of sin.** A holy and just God must withdraw from the presence of sin, and apart from God’s loving protection, the principalities and powers... the rulers of the darkness of this age, and the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places will swoop into their midst and destroy every blessing God provided (Note: Ephesians 6:10-18).

“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God...” Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (NKJV)

It is God’s mercy that causes Him to speak the truth plainly and warn His people in advance. Those who truly have seen the Lord will understand that the curses set before the people from Mount Ebal were motivated by God’s love and not by His anger. The Lord’s strong warnings here are intended to help all believers to avoid the serious consequences that result from turning away from God and sinning against Him, our neighbors, and ourselves. But consistent throughout the Old Testament Scriptures – from Moses to Malachi – is the fact that God does not leave His people with only curses or hopeless consequences. So immediately following these curses, are the great blessings called down from Mount Gerizim that come from living for God and obeying His commands (28:1-14). These blessings gave Israel extra incentive to obey God’s laws. Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount that not all of the unconditional spiritual blessings of the kingdom described in the Beatitudes will come in the lifetimes of His followers, but those who obey God and keep His commandments will experience the fullness of His material blessings throughout this lifetime.

MOSES' THIRD ADDRESS (29:1-30:20)

“All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones and your wives – also the stranger who is in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water – that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today...” (29:10-12).

Moses’ final address to the nation is a call for **total commitment** to the God of Israel. He quickly and succinctly recaps all the Lord did for them from Egypt to where they stood that day (verses 2-9). In his previous addresses, Moses established the truth that the commitment God called for was to be **rooted and grounded in love** – the love of God the Father for the nation in covenant with Him, and the whole-hearted love of the nation for the Lord who saved them and blessed them. “I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, but with him who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with him who is not here with us today...” (29:14-15).

Once again, **corporate thinking** over **individualistic thinking** is necessary to understand that the covenant entered into that day was not just for those present, but was for every successive generation as well. It was no different for this present generation being addressed; the decision of their parent’s generation at Sinai was

just as binding on them as the decision they would make this day would be binding on their children, and their children’s children... and so on. This fact highlights the previous command of God to diligently teach their children all of God’s laws, precepts, and commandments that was expressed in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

If anyone turned away from God and started worshiping idols, they would be without excuse. They could not come before the judgment seat of God and say, “I’m sorry, but I did not know what sins were attached to worshiping idols.” Moses reminds them how they had seen for themselves the detestable things idol worshippers did – first in Egypt and then in the nations they passed on the way to Canaan. Idolatry acts like a cancerous root “bearing bitterness or wormwood” that will eventually ruin the individual who turns to idols, and then spreads to their family and tribe. If left unchecked, eventually the entire nation will be affected. Jesus expressed a similar thought when He warned His disciples against the “Yeast” of the Pharisees and of Herod (Matthew 16:11, 12); the images in both passages symbolize evil. Moses was warning the people to remain fully committed to their Lord because just as only a small amount of yeast or a small amount of wormwood is all that are needed to affect the whole, so too the hard-heartedness and rebellion of the idolater could saturate and contaminate the entire society and make it rise up against the Lord, bringing down these curses on the entire community. “All nations would say, ‘Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?’” (Deuteronomy 29:1-29 NKJV).

One way or the other— either as an example of God’s ability to bless those in right relationship with Him, or as an example of God’s capacity to judge and curse those who stubbornly rebelled against Him – Israel was destined to be an example to the nations around them. One thing the Jews failed to understand throughout their history was their awesome responsibility to be **a banner or sign to the nations**, and to draw all people to the one, true, living God over all nations. Once they entered the Promised Land and drove out all those nations who were stronger and more numerous than they, the other nations surrounding them would be compelled to ask, “How did a small tribe of shepherds, enter into Egypt, become enslaved by the greatest military power on the earth for 400 years, emerge from Pharaoh’s control as a great nation, and then go in and conquer all the kingdoms in Canaan without an army?” Then the Israelis would answer, “Let me tell you about my God...” On the other hand, if the children of Abraham forgot the Lord their God and started worshiping idols, bringing the curses of God upon themselves and the land, when the nations around them saw the devastation and how the people lost everything, they would ask, “Why has God done this to His people and His land? Why was He so angry?” And they will be told, “Because the people of the land broke the covenant they made with the Lord, and worshiped other gods, the anger of the Lord was hot against this land, so that all the promised curses came

upon them. In great anger the Lord rooted them out of their land and threw them away into another land.”

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.” Deuteronomy 30:1-3 (NKJV)

Deuteronomy 30 takes the form of a prophetic message. God knew and confirmed through His chosen servant, Moses that His people would ultimately **fail to keep their part of the Covenant**. In his capacity as a great prophet (Numbers 12:6-8) Moses not only gave them a severe warning about the cursed circumstances they would find themselves in, but also gave them a message of hope: in their darkest hour, when all seems lost forever, if they will again obey the voice of the Lord, and once again do all they were commanded to do, the Lord will forgive them, restore them to the land, and bless them once more “...if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

In both the Old and the New Testaments, the promise of God’s salvation is not unconditional. That means it requires **a response from those seeking salvation**. Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again” (John 3:3). And Israel was told they must repent and turn from their sins before God would reach out and rescue them (Numbers 21:7-9; John 3:14, 15). God’s promise of salvation by grace through faith was meant to assure even the greatest of sinners that if they repent and believe, they shall have their sins pardoned, and be restored to God’s favor, not because they did anything to deserve salvation, but because of God’s providential love for them (John 3:16, 17). Christians often fail to live by the highest standards of holiness, and when they do, they cannot expect to continue to experience God’s rest (Hebrews 3:7 – 4:16). Sins have their own consequences and although they might seem pleasant for a season, in the end they will bring ruin (Hebrews 6:1-8). But the promises of God for Israel and for the church are equally faithful – if they will repent and turn once more to God, and keep His commandments to love the Lord with their whole heart and soul while loving their neighbor as themselves, then God will forgive and pour out His blessings into their life (Matthew 22:35-40;

Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:18-29). “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” (Deuteronomy 30:1-20 NKJV).

THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP: MOSES' LAST DAYS (31:1 – 34:12)

The final chapters of Moses’ story are coming to a close (See HANDOUT “The Third Person Narrative Style of the Pentateuch”). Moses completed His final appeal for the people to keep the commandments of the Lord on the other side of the Jordan. “And he said to them: ‘I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in...’” He recalled that the LORD told him he would not cross over this Jordan with the rest of the nation (31:2). But Moses encouraged the people that the Lord Himself would lead them and destroy the nations living there. Joshua would be the new commander of the new generation, as the Lord instructed, and under his leadership, the Lord would keep His promise to help them destroy the nations living there. Therefore, Moses said, “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (31:6 NKJV).

These verses contain clear evidence that Moses wrote out the laws he delivered to the people and gave them to the priests; Moses also gave copies of the laws to the elders of Israel. The Lord commanded that these laws be read to all the people at the end of every seventh year—the Year of Release (15:1-6)—at the Festival of Tabernacles, when all Israel would assemble before the Lord at the sanctuary. It was God’s intention that everyone, including the children could hear His laws. The laws were to be read to the whole assembly so that everyone, including the children, could hear them. Every seven years the entire nation would gather together and listen as a priest read the law to them. Because there was no efficient means to spread God's word in written form at that time, the people had to rely on word of mouth and an accurate memory. Memorization was an important part of community worship because ignorance would be no excuse for breaking God’s law. Therefore everyone was responsible to **hear and know the law**.

The day of Moses’ death had arrived (31:14); the official passing of the mantle of leadership to Joshua happened when both men presented themselves before the Lord at the Tabernacle. The Lord confirms once more to Moses that once he is gone it will not be long before the people will begin worshipping foreign

gods in the Promised Land, will forget about the Lord, and break the covenant He made with them. “Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’” (31:17). Israel had been warned of the terrible consequences of breaking God’s commands in visual reminders (31:26) and in words written and spoken. Now Moses recites the words of a song (psalm) to give the people of Israel another warning on top of all the others.

The Lord instructed Moses to summon all the elders and officers of the tribes so he can speak to them one last time, and “**call heaven and earth to witness against them.**” Moses warns them that after his death they will be unable to help themselves and will utterly defile themselves and turn away from God and his commands. When those days of evil come, the Lord will crush Israel for they will do what the Lord says is evil, making him very angry. Moses, the great leader, author, prophet, and composer of songs, takes that opportunity to recite to the whole assembly of Israel the entire song God gave him (32:1-43). Lyrics set to melody make it much easier to remember. This song was an excellent means to **remind the people** of their sins, **warn them** to avoid repetition of those sins, and **offer the hope** that comes only in trusting in God’s forgiveness and ultimate salvation. Moses, with Joshua by his side, finished reciting all the words of this song to the people, and urged them to meditate upon everything he gave them that day, and pass them on to their children; “For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess” (Deuteronomy 32:47 NKJV). Moses received his final instructions from the Lord to go to **Mount Nebo in the land of Moab** across from Jericho and there climb to its heights and look out across the land of Canaan, to see the land His God is giving to the people of Israel and there he will die, having seen, but never going in to possess the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 33 is Moses’ **final blessings** to the tribes of Israel before his death. He had **preached a farewell sermon** to them, had given them **a song of remembrance**, and seemed to have taken final leave of them in the close of the foregoing chapter. But there always seems to be just one more thing to finish – something left undone at the end of one’s life. And here Moses is compelled to bring closure to his leadership over the nation by **dismissing them with a blessing**. It is a blessing that first pronounces them all blessed by what God had already done for them – especially in giving them **His law** (v. 2-5). Then Moses pronounces blessings upon each tribe, which are both a prayer for them and a prophecy of their happiness and well-being. He declares each tribe blessed on the

account of what God had been and would continue to be to them if they remained obedient to His word.

Moses’ Epitaph Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (NKJV)

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.”

So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.

Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

The book of Deuteronomy shows how the stories of Moses’ life, the Exodus, and the Wilderness wanderings of God’s people can be intricately woven together into a single narrative. Deuteronomy explains how the nation of Israel came to be and why God would be so involved with Moses and the descendants of Abraham. Although Moses was far from a perfect person, his life was a model for those whose heart’s desire is to live uprightly and carry out God’s commands. In the end Moses died with integrity and was honored by both men and God. New Testament believers can learn many great spiritual lessons from Israel’s Wilderness

experience. It could be argued that one of the most important lessons to be learned from Deuteronomy about that experience is that although those who are in covenant relationship with God may be imperfect and make some serious mistakes, that should not stop them from pursuing until the end a life lived with integrity, holiness, and godly commitment.

OT-101 Conclusion

The Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) is often referred to in Judaism as the Torah (Law) or as “The Law of Moses.” Torah also means “teaching” or “instruction” – which conforms to the intent of the divine Author. Although presented in modern Bibles as five separate books, they are in fact one book composed of five sections or chapters. Each chapter (book) builds upon the next to create a whole picture of God’s interaction with the human race through a series of key events and selected individuals leading up to His choice of Abraham and his descendants that would become a great nation according to God’s promise to him.

The stories of the Pentateuch must be understood in context of the background of the area of ancient West Asia from Egypt to Tigris and Euphrates Rivers known as the Fertile Crescent. The civil, moral, and ecclesiastical laws of the Hebrew people distinguished them from the surrounding nations. As the Lord revealed His intentions and His instructions to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses it was clear that He had in His mind the time and place where His people would eventually settle. Embedded between the lines of Scriptures written by Moses was the promise of a future grander than they could imagine – a future prepared for the descendants of the emerging nation formed in the fires of affliction of Egypt and shaped on the anvil of forty years of experiences in the Wilderness. New Testament believers can clearly see how the Lord’s promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) looked forward to this age when the Gentiles would be saved by grace through their faith in the Jesus Christ, the Son of the God of Abraham, and his descendants.

The Creation story of Genesis 1 – 2 laid the foundations of history not only for the Hebrew people, but also for all of mankind. Apart from the divine intentions of the Creator of all things, mankind would never know their true destiny or purpose. The Creation story, The Fall, Noah’s Flood, and the scattering of the nations at Babel gave essential context to the moment God called one man, Abraham, to be His instrument to bless all the nations on the earth. The stories of the four great patriarchs contained in Genesis moved Moses’ narrative forward from Babel. Their stories revealed the many threats and challenges to the ultimate fulfillment of God’s purpose for calling Abraham. Moses described how God’s grace and mercy kept His covenant promises the Hebrews (His chosen seed) in spite their sins and their many failures to keep their end of the covenant.

A major shift in the story takes place in Exodus as God no longer works with individual patriarchs, but starts to work with the nation of Israel as a whole. Exodus and the books that follow reveal how God used the 400 years of oppression under Pharaoh, His laws, separation, circumcision, and Israel's Hopes and Dreams

to build them into a strong nation capable of fulfilling their divine destiny to someday be a “banner to the nations” and a “light to the Gentiles.”

The Wilderness experience recounted by Moses in the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy describe the failure of the first generation (the emerging nation that came out Egypt) to seize their destiny and conquer the land of Canaan. Because of their disobedience and unbelief, they stopped short of the Promised Land and perished in the sands of the Wilderness, never entering into God’s rest. But their future was not without hope; the torch was passed to a new generation that was ready, willing, and able with the Lord’s help to fulfill their destiny to be His Chosen People. They departed the Wilderness a holy nation ready to possess the land that had been chosen for them by their God.

In a series of addresses just before his death, Moses reminded the people of all they had been through while he led them as a shepherd for forty years. Moses had brought them to the verge of entering the Promised Land. In his last words to the nation, he reminded them

- of the many divine interventions of God on their behalf
- of the essential requirement that they keep the Law of God delivered to them at Sinai
- to keep the memorial feasts, maintain the Tabernacle with its Levitical priesthood and sacrifices (not forgetting the significance of those things and to tell the world who they are in relation to the God of all Nations)
- that they should obey their God-given leaders so all will go well with them once they enter into Canaan

The Pentateuch closes on sad and ominous notes. First, there are the final prophetic words from Moses. Moses told them that in spite of his best efforts to warn them of the dire and dreadful consequences for abandoning their God and disobeying His commandments, it would not take long for sin to raise its ugly serpentine head. The people would soon succumb to the temptation to worship the gods of the nations around them. Israel’s disobedience in the future would set in motion all of the promised curses of God and they would lose all God had provided. The final chapter of Deuteronomy describes Moses’ death, and Israel loses the greatest and the most important leader they will ever have “...since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel” (Deuteronomy 34:10-12 NKJV).

Still Israel is not without hope. For even in the worst of circumstances, God’s love and mercy means there is always hope for redemption. Although they

have lost their greatest leader, the Lord had already selected and inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun to be their next great leader. At the moment of his appointment, the Lord encouraged Joshua to “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you” (31:23). In Deuteronomy 30:1-6 the Lord reveals that after all that His people do in the future to provoke Him (bringing upon them all the curses Moses listed) if they repent they can return to Him. The Lord will rescue them from their captivity and will come and gather them out of all the nations where they have been scattered. If they will wholeheartedly obey all of His commandments, God promised they would possess the land once again, and the Lord would bless them even more than he did their ancestors. An even greater promise is given when the Lord declares through His servant Moses: “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (30:6). In just a few verses (30:1-6), Moses prophetically encapsulated the theme all of the historical books to follow.



Rev. Dr. Frederick Osborn traveled the world teaching and preaching the Word of God. His first trip to South Asia was in 2001, and since 2005 he has been fully involved in ministry. Currently he volunteers his time on the mission fields of South Asia and around the world as a speaker and lecturer, distributing Bibles and biblical resources to pastors, evangelists, and ministry leaders. His books and study guides have been used in classrooms by hundreds of students.

In 2013 he earned his M.Div. from Andhra Christian Theological College in Hyderabad, India and in that same year was officially ordained into the ministry in a holy convocation administered by Indian pastors representing AG, CSA, and other independent ministries. In 2017 he completed his D.Min. from Covenant Bible College & Seminary, Florida, USA. He and his wife, Deena, now live near Atlanta, GA where he continues to preach, teach, write, and publish his books and study guides.

Books Written by Frederick Osborn

1. *Church Planting Movements – India*
2. *Daniel: Kingdoms in Conflict*
3. *Deceived! Overcoming the Age of Mass Deception*
4. *Disciple-to-Disciple: Making Disciples Like Jesus*
5. *Disciple- to-Disciple: Making Disciples Like Jesus, Study Guide*
6. *Exploring the New Testament*
7. *Exploring the Old Testament: Vol. One – The Pentateuch*
8. *Following Christ on the Indian Road: A Missionary's Story of Discipleship*
9. *From Genesis to Revelation: Interpreting the Book of Revelation Through the Old Testament Scriptures*
10. *Healing Miracles of the Bible*
11. *Jesus Over India: A 52 Week Spiritual Journey Through the Heart of India*
12. *Judges: A 21st Century Prophetic Commentary*
13. *Keys to Effective Faith: Living by a Faith that Can Move Mountains*
14. *Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming Like Jesus*
15. *Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming a Disciple Like Jesus, Study Guide*
16. *Kingdom Economics*
17. *Living in Dystopia: A Christian Guide Victory in an Orwellian World*

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18. *One Holy Passion: A Daily Devotional Guide for 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for the 1040 Nations*
19. *Our Jehovah Rapha: A Christ Centered Holistic Approach to Wellness*
20. *Reviving A Nation*
21. *Seven Laws of Dying to Self*
22. *Spiritual Lessons for the Grafted-In*
23. *The Apocalyptic Vision: Understanding the Apocalyptic Writings of the Bible*
24. *The Blood*
25. *The Book of Acts: The Holy Spirit's Handbook for Church Planting Movements*
26. *The Book of Acts: The Holy Spirit's Handbook for Church Planting Movements- Study Guide*
27. *The Gospel of John: Speaking Truth to Power*
28. *The Gospel of Salvation*
29. *The Gospel of Salvation: Study Guide*
30. *The Healthy Heart*
31. *The Holy Spirit in You: Nourishing the Life of Holiness and power in You*
32. *The Keys to Effective Prayer*
33. *The LGBTQI Community and the Church*
34. *The Legacy of Women in the Bible – Study Guide*
35. *The New Reformation: An Assessment of the New Apostolic Reformation from Toronto to Redding*
36. *The Physics of Heaven: The Theology of the New Apostolic Reformation*
37. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: John the Apostle's Heavenly Vision of Christ the King*
38. *The Spirit of Religion*
39. *The Way, the Truth, and the Life: the Teachings and Ministry of Jesus the Messiah*
40. *This Gospel of the Kingdom*
41. *This Gospel of the Kingdom – Study Guide*
42. *To the Heart of the Nations – Prayer Journal*
43. *Twelve Woes*

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Supplemental Handout Materials

HANDOUT OT 101-1

Basic Reference Library for Conservative Bible Studies

1. STUDY BIBLE
2. CONCORDANCE
3. TOPICAL BIBLE INDEX
4. BIBLE DICTIONARY
5. WORD STUDIES
6. BIBLE HANDBOOK
7. COMMENTARY
8. ATLAS
9. ONLINE RESOURCES
10. BIBLE SOFTWARE

1. STUDY BIBLE – the cornerstone of any good reference library is the Study Bible. There are many, many excellent Study Bibles available in English. Here are a few of the best:
 - Life Application Study Bible – This is the #1 best-selling Study Bible. It is available in several versions, but the material is the same for each. Just a few of its features:
 - ✓ Thousands of Life Application notes help explain God's Word and challenge readers to apply the truth of Scripture to life
 - ✓ Personality profiles highlight over 100 important Bible characters
 - ✓ Book introductions provide vital statistics, overview, and timeline to help readers understand the message of each book
 - ✓ 200 thumbnail maps highlight important Bible places and events
 - ✓ 260 charts help explain difficult concepts and relationships
 - ✓ Cross-references
 - ✓ Harmony of the Gospels built right into the text of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
 - ✓ Dictionary/concordance
 - Harper Study Bible – is primarily for students, clergymen, and laymen who desire the RSV with annotations helpful to an understanding of the text.
 - Ryrie Study Bible – The Expanded edition of this study Bible features more than two thousand new notes and two hundred new in-text maps, charts, diagrams, and timelines. Available in the most popular versions.
 - NIV Study Bible - The Zondervan NIV Study Bible is the #1 best-selling Study Bible in the NIV translation. And includes 20,000 in-text study notes and a library of study resources at your fingertips. The latest editions also include a 130-page topical index for more in-depth study. Excellent for home school use.
 - Thompson Chain Reference Study Bible - offers all the tools necessary for fully self-directed study. It provides verse-by-verse access to all the themes and topics of the Bible—allowing the student to discover and develop Scriptural principles that apply directly to his or her own life or ministry situation. Includes 75 departments of Helps, over 7,000 topics, and over 100,000 references.

SPECIALTY BIBLES – There are literally hundreds of Bibles available that are intended for special study. Here are two, but any good Bible bookstore will have a selection of some of the most popular ones.

- Archaeological Study Bible – available in the most popular NIV translation, this Bible highlights the archaeological, historical, and cultural background of the Bible in full color. Visually pleasing text with page layouts including nearly 500 photos. This Bible is packed with the latest evidences for the historical accuracy of the Bible texts.
- Chronological Study Bible published by Thomas Nelson – arranges the Bible texts in chronological order to allow the serious student to understand the texts in relationship with the texts of the Bible. There are several Chronological Study Bibles available (for example, the Reese Chronological Study Bible has been around for more than 30 years), but the one, published by Thomas Nelson, is as visually pleasing and as packed with information as is Zondervan's Archaeological Study Bible.

2. CONCORDANCE – second only to a good Study Bible for the serious student is the Concordance. The Concordance lists the key words of the Bible and gives the Scripture references so it makes looking up every related passage quick and easy.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance: is considered the best by professors and students alike. It contains every word in the Bible and includes not only the Scripture references, but also keys by number each word to the original Greek or Hebrew word. In the back of the Concordance are the original Greek and Hebrew words. So you do not have to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar to look up and discover the original meanings of the words in the Scriptures. There are some smaller, pocket-size concordances available, but Strong's Exhaustive is the best and most comprehensive.

3. TOPICAL BIBLE INDEX – a topical Bible index arranges key people, places, and subjects from the Bible into orderly topics. This enables the student to not only quickly find a key word, but also organizes them in topical order. For example, if you look up “Abraham”, the topical Bible will give you every reference to “Abraham” in the Bible and arrange them in topics like: “God’s covenant with”... “Angels appear to”... “Faith of”... etc.

Nave's Topical Bible is one of the best, but there are many others.

Nelson's Biblical Cyclopedic Index combines features of a concordance, a topical Bible, and a Bible dictionary. It offers more than 8,000 subjects, names, places, things, concepts, events, and doctrines of the Bible.

4. BIBLE DICTIONARY – a good Bible dictionary is another essential tool for the serious student of the Bible. The people, places, and things in the Bible are often unfamiliar to students who live in the modern world or far away from the Bible lands. A Bible dictionary will help define the basics for the student. Here are just a few of the good Bible Dictionaries available:

Smith's Bible Dictionary
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary
Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary
Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary

5. WORD STUDIES – It is now possible to dig into the original Greek and Hebrew words of the Bible without being a scholar in ancient languages. Word Studies have done all the work for you, so now you can quickly and easily dig out the original intended meanings of key words of the Bible. A few of the best are:

Word Meanings in the New Testament by Ralph Earle

Complete Word Study, Old Testament and New Testament (Two Volumes) By: Spiros Zodhiates

Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies by William Wilson

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words by W.E. Vine

6. BIBLE HANDBOOK - a basic Bible Handbook is the student's companion text to the Bible. It should include a concise Bible commentary, important discoveries in archaeology, related historical data, church history, maps, and more. Here are just a few of the Handbooks available:

Halley's Bible Handbook by Henry H. Halley

Willmington's Bible Handbook by Harold L. Willmington

The Holman Bible Handbook by David S. Dockery

Illustrated Bible Handbook by Lawrence O. Richards

Zondervan's Handbook to the Bible

7. COMMENTARY – Bible commentaries are useful tools for the Bible student because they give scholarly depth to the Word of God. When written by men and women of faith and Spirit, they offer useful spiritual insights to the Bible student. The best commentaries are written by men and women who have dedicated their lives to communicating the absolute, inerrant truth of God's word to their readers. Of course, the problem with commentaries is that ANYONE with a Bible and talent for writing can write a commentary, so how do you know which ones are good? Here are some keys to help find a good commentary:

- Check out who is the publisher. If the publisher has a reputation for printing high quality materials from a conservative perspective, then most likely, the commentary conforms to those high standards. If the commentary is from a secular publisher, known to print commentaries that undermine the veracity and authority of God's word, then it is likely to be from a liberal perspective (i.e. modern science and man's reason over the authority of God and His revealed Word).
- Check out who is the author. If the author of the commentary has a long, respected, reputation within Conservative circles, then his commentary is likely to be useful to increase your understanding of the Bible texts while supporting and reinforcing your faith in the authority and truthfulness of the Bible as God's inspired Word.
- Check out the educational background of the author. There are certain Bible Colleges and Universities that are known for their conservative studies. If the author is a graduate or a tenured professor at one of these institutions, his work probably conforms to solid conservative principles. However, this is not a fool-proof method as more and more Bible institutions in the US and Europe are being taken over by intellectual elites that are long on credentials, but short on faith. Bible commentaries written by men or women who are graduates of secular educational institutions should be examined very carefully before using them.

- Check out the ministry background of the author. If the author is a pastor, evangelist, missionary, or ministry leader affiliated with a conservative, mainline Christian denomination that is a good sign. Avoid like the plague commentaries written by authors from pseudo Christian denominations (like the Mormons/Church of Later Day Saints, or Jehovah’s Witnesses to name just two).
- Today there are hundreds of new commentaries arriving on bookshelves every year. There are certain “red flags” that will indicate which commentaries to avoid. If the publisher or author is claiming some “new revelation”, some “startling new discovery”, or some “shocking new insight” into the Bible texts, then most likely, they are by liberal theologians seeking an audience for their book. Conservative scholars tend to build upon tried and true methods of biblical hermeneutics and exegesis, which keeps them on the rails of orthodoxy. Liberal scholars or those that belong to one of the Christian cults tend to jump the rails of orthodoxy and bring in outside, non-biblical sources, the opinions of “men of science”, or ancient Gnostic texts to support their comments. Their conclusions are sometimes amusing speculations for conservative scholars, but for the unwary, or novice Bible student, they can act like a slow poison that if taken in often enough and in large enough doses, will end up killing their faith in God’s word and eventually in God Himself.

Having said all of that, here is a short, but by no means complete list of some of the best-known Bible commentators. They are from a variety of theological backgrounds, but all share a generally conservative perspective on the Bible:

Matthew Henry	Bruce Wilkinson
Andrew Murray	Lawrence O. Richards
D.L. Moody	Herbert Lockyer
Warren Wiersbe	Larry Richards
James Montgomery Boice	John F. Walvoord
H.A. Ironside	Alfred Edershiem
Henry Blackaby	John Wesley
F.B. Meyer	Watchman Nee
John MacArthur	Joyce Meyer
R.C. Sproul	Beth Moore
William Barclay	F.F. Bruce
Henry M. Morris	J. Vernon McGee
John R.W. Stott	

8. ATLAS – most Bibles include a set of maps in the back to help the student find places mentioned in the Scriptures. However, there are some excellent Bible Atlases available that are much more detailed and helpful for the serious Bible student. Here are a few recommendations:

[Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts, Revised and Updated](#)
[Crossway ESV Bible Atlas](#)
[Holman Bible Atlas](#)
[Zondervan Atlas of the Bible](#)
[Harper Collins Atlas of Bible History](#)
[The IVP Atlas of Bible History](#)
[Concise Bible Atlas: A Geographical Survey of Bible History](#)

9. ONLINE RESOURCES – in our 21st century world, the Internet has become a vast sea of resources for the Bible student – some good and a lot of bad. The old saying, “don’t believe everything you read in the newspapers” is applicable a million times over when it comes to cyber surfing the web for Bible research. However, there are many good sites available if you are willing to take the time to search for them.

SGM recommends: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>. However, if you follow the same guidelines as for finding good Bible Study reference materials, and you will not go astray.

www.biblereferenceguide.com/index.html
www.biblespeak.com/Commentary_Downloads.htm
www.bible-history.com
www.followtherabbi.com/
www.heraldofhope.org.au/graphics.html
www.theologicalstudies.org/

For Creation Research:

www.answersingenesis.org (Young Earth Creation answers)
www.icr.org (Young Earth Creation answers)
www.reasons.org (Old Earth Creation a.k.a. Intelligent Design)

For purchasing books online

www.christianbook.com

10. BIBLE SOFTWARE – today there are a variety of packages available for the student to download on their home PC. Most Bible software is “upgradeable” so you can start with the basics and build up from there. Here are a few starters all less than \$50:

HANDOUT OT 101-1

Inductive Bible study is an approach to God’s Word focusing on three basic steps that move from a focus on specific details to a more general, universal principle. Through these three steps, we apply inductive reasoning, which is defined as the attempt to use information about a specific situation to draw a conclusion. The steps are observation (what does it say?), interpretation (what does it mean?), and application (what does it mean for my life?). Inductive Bible study is a valuable tool in understanding and applying the principles of God’s Word. Inductive Bible study can be done on many different levels. The shorter version is good for a brief devotional. The more extensive study is wonderful for digging deeper into the mind and heart of God.

A sample verse to illustrate the method is 2 Samuel 9:1: “David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’” As we observe this verse and ask ourselves "what does it say?", we see that David simply wants to know if there are any living relatives of Saul’s that he may be kind to for Jonathan’s sake. Whether or not there are any relatives or why David is asking are to be determined in the next step. The first step of observing the verse is generally confined to a simple understanding of what the verse is saying. At this first step, there may be words or phrases that are unfamiliar to us, in which case checking different Bible translations is helpful.

The second step—interpretation (what does it mean?)—requires a more in-depth examination than the first step. At this step, we want to be careful to find the meaning of the verse in its context. For our sample verse, as we look into the background of the incident we find that the relationship between David, God’s anointed future king of Israel, and Jonathan, son of King Saul, was very close. Jonathan had saved David’s life when Saul was pursuing him (1 Samuel 20). David had described their relationship as “extraordinary” and he mourned Jonathan’s death greatly (2 Samuel 1:25-27). In this context, we see David wanting to do something nice for any of his relatives who might still be alive. His love and loyalty were still strong even though Jonathan had been out of his life for some time. David did not sit passively and wonder about this; he took action and searched for these people.

The third step in inductive Bible study is the practical application of the principles (what does it mean to me?). Among the ways we can apply our sample verse to our own lives is to see David’s action as one of love and loyalty. We might ask ourselves: How loyal am I to my earthly friends and my heavenly Friend? Am I casual and passive about the relationships? Or am I willing to go out of my way to honor them? What can I do this week to let them know that I love them? Based on my detailed research, what did God communicate to me? Has He given me any commands, warnings, promises, or encouragement? Part of the application process is asking ourselves where we go from here. How can we use what we have learned from the passage in the future? A crucial part of any Bible study is asking God to implement the principles into our lives and praying for His wisdom as we go forward with this knowledge.

It is important to note that, while inductive Bible study or any other method is helpful to

Christians as we delve into God’s Word, ultimately it is the Spirit of God who opens the Scriptures to us because He has first opened our hearts to Truth. It is the Spirit who interprets spiritual truth to those who are spiritual. The natural man does not and cannot understand spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). So before attempting any Bible study method, we must be sure we have the Holy Spirit living in our hearts (1 Corinthians 6:19) through faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/inductive-Bible-study.html>

HANDOUT OT 101-1

Why Study the Bible?

FIVE REASONS CHRISTIANS SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE

1) To Build A Sound Base of Biblical Knowledge in Your Life

“My people are perishing for lack of knowledge.” Hosea 4:6

2) To Provide an Overview of God’s Word

To see the Bible as a whole, unified, and progressive revelation of the nature of God and His redemptive work in all creation.

To understand the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

To gain confidence in your faith based on knowledge of God’s Word.

3) To Retain Essential Bible Concepts and Truths

Understanding Important Concepts with coordinated lesson materials

Discovering God’s Truths in the Scripture

Test your knowledge by writing papers and outlines from what you have learned

4) To Take Seriously the Complexity and the Holiness of the Scriptures

To train yourself to Study and apply the Word of God in your heart and daily living, and not to merely imitating it.

5) To equip yourself as a member of the body (the church) to teach others the Word of God.

To effectively teach others, you must first learn how to handle the Word of God with confidence and accuracy.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

ALSO:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16

WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR BIBLE STUDY?

Is the Lord well pleased?

Is my work well done?

Is His word well used?

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

PRAY “...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his

glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:17-23

The Bible is a spiritual book and cannot be understood without the guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual condition of the student greatly affects their understanding of scripture. Therefore, PRAY for:

- The Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth (John 16:13)
- Self-discipline to make time to study (2 Tim. 2:15)
- Productive and fruitful study time (Col. 1:10)
- Economy of study time (Jas. 3:17)
- Open ears to hear the Word of God (Matt. 13:14-17)
- Open eyes to perceive the Word of God (Matt. 13:14-17)
- An open mind to understand the scripture (Rom. 12:2)
- A heart prepared to receive the truth (1 Jn. 3:18-21)
- The faith and the desire (will) to live the Word (Col. 1:21-23)

OBSTACLES TO UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WORD

- 1) Not born again – the Holy Spirit not dwelling within (John 3:3-15)
- 2) Unconfessed sin or disobedience toward God (Eph. 2:1-3; 5:6)
- 3) Not practicing the Word of God (1 John 3:8-10)

HANDOUT OT 101-1

Introduction To The Old Testament

CANON: What is the Bible?

**Facts About the Bible**

1. The Bible contains 66 books, divided among the Old and New Testaments.
2. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.
3. The word *Testament* means “covenant” or “contract.”
4. Spiritually speaking, the Holy Spirit is the divine author of the Bible. However, it was written by over 40 different authors from all walks of life: shepherds, farmers, tent-makers, physicians, fishermen, priests, philosophers and kings. Despite these differences in occupation and the span of years it took to write it, the Bible is an extremely cohesive and unified book because the Holy Spirit provided the inspiration for each of its authors.
5. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch; the books of Moses are the foundation of the Bible.
6. The Apostle Paul wrote 14 books (over half) of the New Testament.
7. The Bible was written over a period of some 1,500 years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to around 100 A.D. (approximately 60 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ).
8. James is probably the oldest book of the New Testament. It may have been written as early as A.D. 45. The youngest book in the New Testament is the Book of Revelation it was written about 95 A.D.
9. The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament, and koine Greek for the New Testament.
10. The word *Canon* is derived from the Greek word “Kanon,” signifying a measuring rod. Thus, to have a book of the Bible “canonized” meant that it had been measured by the standards and tests of divine inspiration and authority. The individual books of the New Testament became the collection of books or writings accepted by the apostles and leadership of the early Christian church as a basis for Christian belief. The entire New Testament as we know it today, was canonized before the year 375 A.D. The Old Testament had previously been canonized long before the advent of Christ. The Bible is the standard by which all Christians throughout the ages live and worship.

HANDOUT OT 101-1

FORMATION OF OLD TESTAMENT CANON

1. The apocryphal book of 2 Esdras tells the story of how Ezra the scribe lamented the loss of religious writings during the Babylonian captivity. Ezra was then directed by God to choose five secretaries to whom he dictated ninety-four books in forty days. The first twenty-four correspond to the entire Old Testament canon, and were intended to be circulated among the Jewish exiles. The remaining seventy were reserved only to the scholars, scribes, and teachers of the law. The miraculous elements of this story are often disputed by scholars, but what is most important from an historical perspective is the fact that there was an early effort to collect, preserve, and arrange the Hebrew Scriptures that has a direct correlation with the Old Testament we have today.
2. After Alexander the Great’s conquest of the vast territories of the Fertile Crescent, the Greek language became the unifying language of territories controlled by his successors. In the late 3rd century BC, a group of 72 Hebrew scholars went to work on a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Later called the Septuagint (or LXX for the Latin *seventy*), this translation became the best known and most complete translation of the Hebrew writings into Greek. It is important to note that all the books of western canons of the Old Testament are found in the Septuagint, but not all of the well-known Jewish documents of that time were included in the Greek translation. Therefore, some sort of selective process must have been used by the Jewish scholars to separate out those writings that were not considered part of the Jewish canon.
3. The 1st century Jewish historian Josephus confirmed the idea that when the Jewish religious scholars drew up lists of the books included in the Hebrew canon, they were not conferring authority but only recognizing the authority that already was in place. Josephus described the Jewish holy books in *Contra Apion* 1.8, dated c. 93-95 AD. He confirmed the Pentateuch as the work of Moses [Rost.JOHC, 24; Leim.CHS, 32], and that “the prophets who followed after Moses” recorded their deeds in books. Josephus described the remaining books as comprising hymns to God and rules of ethical conduct for men. Josephus does not provide us with a detailed list of the canonical books, but he does confirm that the Jews did have an established canon by the 1st century AD.
4. The Babylonian Talmud is considered the most important ancient text of Judaism. The Talmud (Hebrew: *instruction, or learning*) is a central text of mainstream Judaism, and is considered second only to the holy written Torah. It takes the form of a record of rabbinic discussions of everything regarding the Jewish religion. The whole Talmud is over 6,200 pages long, is written in Aramaic, and quotes the Hebrew Bible at least once each page with the Hebrew version in use at the time. The Talmud contains the opinions of thousands of rabbis on a variety of subjects, including law, ethics, philosophy, customs, history, theology, lore and many other topics. One text from around the first century AD clearly identifies twenty-four books that make up the Jewish collection of sacred writings. This same portion of the Talmud also sets forth a threefold division of the Hebrew Bible as the Law, Prophets, and Writings.

All of the historical and literary evidence concerning the formation of the Old Testament suggests a considerable amount of fluidity throughout the process that finally resulted in the acceptance of a biblical canon among the Jews at the end of the first century AD. Rabbinic tradition speaks of “book correctors” attached to the Temple in Jerusalem to correct scrolls prior to the destruction of the city in 70 AD. The existence of “book correctors” in the Temple leads Bible scholars to conclude that an authoritative text did exist by which the content and accuracy of copies of the Hebrew Bible were measured. Rabbinical rules for maintaining accuracy and rejecting any incorrect copies of the sacred texts before they could get into circulation meant that by early in the first century some form of stabilization was long under way, which led to the final fixing of the Hebrew biblical text by the second century AD.

The Council of Jamnia

Yohanan ben Zakai (c. 30 - 90 CE), was one of the most important Jewish sages in the era of the Second Temple, and a primary contributor to the core text of Rabbinical Judaism, the Mishnah. He is widely regarded by Jewish historians as one of the most important figures of his time. After the loss of the Jewish temple along with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Army in 70AD, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai relocated to the city of Jamnia where he obtained permission from the Romans to found a religious academy.

In 1871 the Jewish historian, Heinrich Graetz, concluded from his studies of the formation of the Jewish canon that there must have been a late 1st century Council at Jamnia which had finally decided the question of Jewish canon. Graetz’s theory quickly became the prevailing scholarly consensus and was popular for much of the twentieth century. However, it was increasingly questioned from the 1960s onward, and is now no longer accepted as having taken place the way Graetz proposed. Even though there is no longer a scholarly consensus as to when the Jewish canon was set, the outcomes attributed to the *Council of Jamnia* did occur – whether gradually or in a single, definitive, authoritative council.

In the period following the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple, a number of concerns were of great importance for the remaining Jewish communities in Israel and around the world. The academy of Jamnia would have been heavily involved in the outcomes of the problems created by the loss of the temple and the system of worship that revolved around it: the loss of the national language, and the growing problem of conversions to Christianity in particular. The solutions that emerged from this era were:

1. Rejected as Jewish canon the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), which was widely used in Hellenistic Judaism.
2. Rejected from the Jewish canon any books that did not exist in Hebrew or Aramaic.
3. Rejected from the Jewish canon any book that was written after the time of Ezra. (Note: the Book of Daniel is included in the Hebrew Bible, which makes a strong counter-argument to the liberal theologians that place the composition of the book long after Ezra’s day.)
4. Cursed as heretics any Jews who deviated from the classical teachings of Judaism derived Jewish law. This curse included Jews who believed in Jesus Christ.
5. Preserved the Hebrew language at least for religious use (even among the diaspora)
6. The final separation and distinction between the Jewish and Christian communities

7. The foundation of a Jewish Rabbinic religion apart from the priestly, Temple sacrifices

HANDOUT OT 101-1

FOUR MOST COMMON THEORIES OF BIBLE INSPIRATION:

1. **Neo-orthodoxy** – states that God is totally beyond human comprehension. We can know only what God chooses to reveal about Himself. The people of biblical times expressed their understanding of God as best they could, but their reports were filled with paradoxes and errors. The neo-orthodox theory asserts that the Bible is a witness to the word of God or contains the word of God but is not the actual word of God.

The Bible is more than a witness to God’s word. It is God’s word (note again: 2 Tim. 3:16-17). As stated above: the Bible clearly says that God revealed His word to His people who faithfully recorded His message.

2. **Dictation Theory:** states that God chose certain individuals and dictated His word to them. God gave them the exact words He wanted to use and the writers wrote only what God dictated to them.

Sometimes God did communicate a precise, word-for-word message to one of His prophets (Note: Jer. 26:2; Rv. 2: 1,8; * Hab. 2:2), but we see in the Psalms, the New Testament Epistles and other poetic writings that God allowed the writers to express their own personalities as they wrote. The Holy Spirit insured the finished work accurately communicated God’s message. Thus, the dictation theory accounts for some of the biblical writings, but not all.

3. **The Limited Inspiration Theory:** this view holds that God inspired the thoughts of the biblical writers, but not necessarily the words they chose. They expressed God’s message in their own ways and may have included errors in historical details and made statements that are hard to reconcile. They believe the Holy Spirit inspired the doctrinal portions of Scripture and protected God’s message of salvation. The Bible does contain many stories that may be difficult to accept as history, but our response should not be to admit error wherever archeology or modern science challenge the Bible. New archaeological finds are confirming much of the biblical record, and we should trust in the entire Word of God as we await further evidence to clarify the difficulties.

4. **Plenary Verbal Inspiration Theory:** this theory asserts that God’s inspiration extends to all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. (plenary = “full” or “complete”, verbal refers to the words of Scripture). Verbal inspiration means God’s inspiration extends to the very words the writers chose. God allowed the writers express their own personalities through the words they chose, but the Holy Spirit so guided the process that the words they chose accurately conveyed the meaning God intended. God guided the writers no less when they recorded historical details than when they discussed doctrinal matters.

HANDOUT OT 101-1

HOW DO WE KNOW THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT IS ACCURATE?

We know the Bible text is accurate because of the faithful work of hundreds of individuals over several generations. These individuals, called scribes, copied God's word by hand, taking great care to maintain its accuracy.

SCRIBES played a crucial role in the ancient world:

- They recorded the kings edicts
 - They recorded every important business transaction
 - Administrative officials counted on scribes to record important documents
- Mistakes could have serious consequences – political, economic, or otherwise.

The Masoretes (A.D. 500-1000) were one of the most important groups of ancient scribes. They believed they were copying the very words of God and took great care to preserve the copies they had received. They received their name from *masora*, a complex system of markings they developed to ensure accurate transmission of the Hebrew texts of the Bible.

Three Steps the Masoretes Took to Ensure Textual Accuracy:

1. They developed a system for writing vowels.
2. They developed a system of accents (helped in pronouncing the text, but also showed the relationship of various words and phrases in a sentence to each other).
3. They developed a system of detailed notes on the text (provided a means to check the accuracy of a copied text).

Hebrew word for “scribe” is “to number, or count” and the Masoretes counted everything in the text to ensure accuracy.

- They knew that the Torah contained 400,945 letters
- They knew the Torah's middle word
- They knew the Torah's middle letter

HANDOUT OT 101-1

WHO WROTE THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The simple answer to “Who wrote the Old Testament?” is the Holy Spirit is the Divine Author. This Old Testament Survey rejects the arguments of all liberal theologians and will remain consistent throughout with the traditional, conservative, orthodox view of divinely inspired authors who are for the most part known to us through thousands of years of Jewish testimony and conservative Christian scholarship. The main body of lessons will cover only those Old Testament books that are accepted as part of the Protestant Bible.

The Old Testament is composed of 39 books – 17 historical, 5 poetic, 17 prophetic. Their order, relative size, and inspired authors are:

HISTORICAL (47% of the Old Testament)

Genesis - 50 chapters, Moses
 Exodus - 40 chapters, Moses
 Leviticus - 27 chapters, Moses
 Numbers - 36 chapters, Moses
 Deuteronomy - 34 chapters, Moses
 Joshua - 24 chapters, Joshua
 Judges - 21 chapters, author not identified
 Ruth - 4 chapters, author not identified
 1 Samuel - 31 chapters, author not identified
 2 Samuel - 24 chapters, author not identified
 1 Kings - 22 chapters, author not identified
 2 Kings - 25 chapters, author not identified
 1 Chronicles - 29 chapters, author not identified, possibly Ezra
 2 Chronicles - 36 chapters, author not identified, possibly Ezra
 Ezra - 10 chapters, Ezra
 Nehemiah - 13 chapters, author not identified, possibly Nehemiah or Ezra
 Esther - 10 chapters, author not identified

POETIC (22% of the Old Testament)

Job - 42 chapters, author not identified
 Psalms - 150 chapters, various authors including David, Asaph, Solomon, the sons of Korah, and Ethan
 Proverbs - 31 chapters, at least partly by Solomon
 Ecclesiastes - 12 chapters, Solomon
 Song of Songs - 8 chapters, Solomon

PROPHETIC (31% of the Old Testament)

Isaiah - 66 chapters, Isaiah
 Jeremiah - 52 chapters, Jeremiah
 Lamentations - 5 chapters, Jeremiah
 Ezekiel - 48 chapters, Ezekiel

Daniel - 12 chapters, Daniel
 Hosea - 14 chapters, Hosea
 Joel - 3 chapters, Joel
 Amos - 9 chapters, Amos
 Obadiah - 1 chapter, Obadiah
 Jonah - 4 chapters, Jonah
 Micah - 7 chapters, Micah
 Nahum - 3 chapters, Nahum
 Habakkuk - 3 chapters, Habakkuk
 Zephaniah - 3 chapters, Zephaniah
 Haggai - 2 chapters, Haggai
 Zechariah - 14 chapters, Zechariah
 Malachi - 4 chapters, Malachi

HANDOUT OT 101-1

Literary Methods Used by the Biblical Writers

The numbers of literary forms vary greatly depending upon how they categorized. However, the major categories found in the Bible can be narrowed down to a few, and the sub-categories arranged however it suits the particular scholar studying the Bible's texts.

Historical Reporting of an Event: "Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, 'Go, view the land, especially Jericho.' So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there." Joshua 2:1 (NKJV) Large portions of the Old Testament are written as straight historical narrative and are intended to be taken literally: the Books of the Law, the Historical Books, and portions of the Major and Minor prophets, in particular.

Historic event in poetic media: "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam! Judges 5:12 (NKJV) It was not unusual for the Old Testament authors to use poems and songs to describe important events. For example, in Judges Chapter 5, a song of praise is dictated by Deborah a prophetess that is a poetic version of the history recorded in Chapter 4 of Judges. The substance of this song transmits the memory of Deborah's great achievement. The dramatic images in songs and poems are often used to aid memorization.

Personification: "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." **Isaiah 55:12 (NKJV)** Personification is a literary device where human qualities are attributed to objects or abstract notions Personification can also be 1) somebody who is a perfect example of something; or 2) the representation of an abstract quality as human. (Also note the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 1:20.) In this verse from Isaiah, personification is used to describe the joy and fertility of the millennial age.

Historical Allusion through fable: "The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them..." Judges 9:8-15 is a good example of the use of fable – a short tale to teach a moral, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters. Jotham, the only surviving son of Gideon, in an ingenious parable, testifies against the wicked men who had murdered his family and set Abimelech to be king over Israel. The valuable and useful trees represented the godly men who chose to serve others as God appointed them and not to rule over Israel as worldly kings. The worthless bramble represents Abimelech – a cruel, ambitious and godless man – who promises protection to those who place their trust in him, forgetting that God is the one who is the true guarantor of peace and safety for Israel!

Allegory: "Thou didst bring a vine out of Egypt; thou didst drive out the nations and plant it..." Ps. 80:8-12. Here the psalmist is pleading with God for mercy and grace in a time of great trouble for Israel. He uses allegory (the symbolic expression of a deeper meaning through a story or scene acted out by human, animal, or mythical characters) to describe how God brought Israel from Egypt, placed them in Canaan, drove out the heathen nations, and allowed His people to flourish in the land.

Imagery and symbolism: "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth..." Ecclesiastes 12:1-7. The physical decline of old age is skillfully described in symbolic images in this passage. Most readers are not familiar with the common phrases and metaphors used in Solomon's time; so a good Study Bible or commentary is useful to understand the symbolism used here:

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 (NKJV)

¹ Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years

draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them":

² While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened, And the clouds do not return after the rain;

³ In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, And the strong men bow down; When the grinders cease because they are few, And those that look through the windows grow dim;

⁴ When the doors are shut in the streets, And the sound of grinding is low; When one rises up at the sound of a bird, And all the daughters of music are brought low;

⁵ Also they are afraid of height, And of terrors in the way; When the almond tree blossoms, The grasshopper is a burden, And desire fails. For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets.

⁶ Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well.

⁷ Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Allusion, delusion, or illusion? (from the Encarta World English Dictionary)

Allusion and illusion are the closest in sound but the furthest apart in meaning: an *allusion* is a process of alluding, that is, an indirect reference to a person, thing, or event. For example: 'The story contained an allusion to his childhood in Africa.' whereas an *illusion* is a false or misleading impression or perception, either by the senses or by the mind. For example: The shimmering effect on a hot road is an optical illusion. Or, 'By shutting himself in his room for hours he kept

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on Verses 3-7

Verse 3

keepers of the house – namely, *the hands and arms* which *protected* the body, as guards do a palace (Ge 49:24; Job 4:19; 2Co 5:1), are now palsied.

strong men . . . bow – (Judges 16:25, 30). Like supporting pillars, *the feet and knees* (Song 5:15); the *strongest* members (Ps 147:10).

grinders – the molar teeth.

cease – are idle.

those that look out of the windows – the eyes; the powers of vision, looking out from beneath the eyelids, which open and shut like the casement of a window.

Verse 4

doors – *the lips*, which are closely *shut* together as *doors*, by old men in eating, for, if they did not do so, the food would drop out (Job 41:14 Ps 141:3 Mic 7:5).

in the streets – that is, toward the street, "the *outer doors*"

sound of . . . grinding – The teeth being almost gone, and the lips "shut" in eating, the sound of mastication is scarcely heard.

the bird – the cock. In the East all mostly rise with the dawn. But the old are glad to rise from their sleepless couch, or painful slumbers still earlier, namely, when the cock crows, before dawn (Job 7:4). The least noise awakens them

daughters of music -- the organs that produce and that enjoy music; the *voice* and *ear*.

Verse 5

that which is high -- The old are afraid of ascending a *hill*.

fears . . . in the way – Even on the level *highway* they are full of fears of falling, &c.

almond . . . flourish – In the East the hair is mostly dark. *The white head* of the old among the dark-haired is like *an almond tree*, with its white blossoms, among the dark trees around. The almond tree *flowers* on a leafless stock in *winter* (answering to *old age*, in which all the powers are dormant), while the other trees are flowerless. GESENIUS takes the *Hebrew* for *flourishes* from a different root, *casts off*; when the old man loses his gray hairs, as the almond tree *casts* its white flowers.

grasshoppers -- the dry, shrivelled, old man, his backbone sticking out, his knees projecting forwards, his arms backwards, his head down, and the apophyses enlarged, is like that insect. Hence arose the fable, that Tithonus in very old age was changed into a grasshopper. "The locust *raises itself* to fly"; the old man about to leave the body is like a locust when it is assuming its winged form, and is about to fly.

a burden – namely, to himself.

desire shall fail – satisfaction shall be abolished. For "desire," *Vulgate* has "the caper tree," provocative of lust; not so well.

long home – (Job 16:22 Job 17:13).

mourners – (Jer 9:17-20), hired for the occasion (Mt 9:23).

Verse 6

A double image to represent *death*, as in Ec 12:1-5, *old age*:

(1) A *lamp* of frail material, but *gilded* over, often in the East hung from roofs by a *cord* of silk and *silver* interwoven; as the lamp is dashed down and broken, when the cord breaks, so man at death; the golden bowl of the lamp answers to *the skull*, which, from the vital preciousness of its contents, may be called "golden"; "the silver cord" is *the spinal marrow*, which is white and precious as silver, and is attached to the brain. (2) A *fountain*, from which water is drawn by a *pitcher* let down by a rope wound round a *wheel*; as, when the pitcher and wheel are broken, water can no more be drawn, so life ceases when the vital energies are gone. The "fountain" *may* mean the right ventricle of the heart; the "cistern," the left; the pitcher, the veins; the wheel the aorta, or great artery [SMITH].

The circulation of the blood, whether known or not to Solomon, *seems* to be implied in the language put by the Holy Ghost into his mouth. This gloomy picture of old age applies to those who have not "remembered their Creator in youth." They have none of the consolations of God, which they might have obtained in youth; it is now too late to seek them. A good old age is a blessing to the godly (Ge 15:15 Job 5:26 Pr 16:31 Pr 20:29).

Verse 7

dust -- the dust -- formed body.

spirit -- surviving the body; implying its immortality (Ec 3:11).

When studying a passage of Scripture, an honest effort to distinguish between the different avenues of expression used by the Bible writers will prevent the student from interpreting the Bible's

message from a rigid literalism that often creates distortions of the original intended meaning by the author. Those who do not have a proper understanding of the literary methods listed above often end up forcing a verse or passage of the Bible to say things that it was not designed to say by being preoccupied with the details of a point they are trying to make rather than with the original message within the passage. For example, the phrase in **Isaiah 65:5** that says, “These *are* smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day” has been used by some Christians in a modern context as a proof text against smoking tobacco! Of course, no Christian should defend the tobacco habit, but **to use this particular passage**, alluding to the smoke of self-righteous sacrifices bringing the fire of God's wrath, which is exhibited in the smoke that breathed forth from His nostrils, is a gross abuse of Scripture. In Hebrew imagery, the nose is the seat of anger; and the nostrils swollen in wrath, are figuratively said to breathe forth smoke.

HANDOUT OT 101-1



Replica of The Ten Commandments

OVERVIEW OF THE PENTATEUCH

Genesis: The book of beginnings, Genesis can be divided into two parts. The first part (chapters 1-11) describes four major events leading up to the patriarchs: Creation, The Fall, Noah's Flood, and the Tower of Babel. The second part (chapters 12-50) tells the stories of the four great patriarchs of the Hebrew people: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Exodus: *Exodus* means the “way out.” The book begins with Israel in slavery in Egypt. It tells the miraculous story of God's deliverance of the people starting with Moses' birth and selection as God's instrument of deliverance. Central to the story is the

presence of Yahweh (Jehovah) as the savior of the nation. Yahweh delivers them from slavery, saves them from their enemies, and leads them through the Wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. Yahweh's continuing presence with Israel, His chosen people, calls for obedience to the covenant commitments given to them at Sinai. Primary to Israel's survival is their absolute loyalty to the Lord in worship.

Leviticus: Throughout Moses' struggle with the Egyptian Pharaoh, the Lord repeatedly called for His people to be free from slavery so they might worship Him (Exodus 4:23; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1; 10:3; 12:31). Once free from the bonds of Egypt, the Lord led them to Sinai where the covenant was established, commandments were given, and the pattern for worship defined. However, there is a major problem: a sinful people cannot enter the presence of a Holy God. Leviticus details the God of Israel's ways and means for atonement to be made for the sins of the people so the Lord could remain with them. The key to the book of Leviticus is the phrase: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)

Numbers: The Hebrew name for this book is translated “in the desert” and best describes its contents since the entire setting of this book is the Wilderness area between Egypt and the Promised Land of Canaan. The title “Numbers” comes from the opening verses of the book that describe the census of the tribes of Israel that came out of Egypt. The narratives and laws in Numbers:

- Describe the organization of the tribes into an orderly religious and civil community in preparation for their conquest and occupation of Canaan
- Describes the growing unity of a people on their way to possess the Promised Land
- Gives the conditions for Israel's possession of and prosperity in the Promised Land – including respect for and obedience to God-ordained leaders, and their need to maintain the holiness of the covenant community in the land of the promise
- Contain frequent warnings to the people of the terrible penalty of God's judgment that rebellion will bring upon the corporate community

- Describes how the laws, tabernacle, priesthood, and other instruments of worship become important unifying factors in the life of the covenant community on their way to the Promised Land.

The last verse of the book of Numbers gives the best summary of the whole by saying, “These *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.” Numbers 36:13 (NKJV)

Deuteronomy: The book of Deuteronomy (Greek “*second law*”) is Moses’ amplification of the law given at Sinai. Forty years had passed since the Exodus from Egypt and the first, rebellious generation of Israelites had died out and now a new generation was about to enter and take possession of the Promised Land. A major change in the life of Israel was about to take place as this new generation experienced the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham to give his descendants a permanent place to dwell. Following the form of Late Bronze Age covenant documents, Moses was inspired by the Lord to present the covenant statement to the nation as his farewell address. Moses retold the history of God’s covenant faithfulness and exhorted the new generation not to follow in the rebellious footsteps of their parents, but to be obedient to the terms of the covenant. Moses repeated the mandates of the covenant given at Sinai but added amendments and qualifications relevant to the new generation about to conquer and settle the land ahead of them. Deuteronomy forms a bridge document between the generation that left Egypt and the new generation about to enter Canaan.

The authorship of the Pentateuch

Proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis (DH) claim that the Pentateuch is an anonymous work composed by an unknown number of redactors (editors) who stitched together various narratives from Hebraic and non-Hebraic sources, classified as (JDEP). This denigrating hypothesis does not consider the following facts:

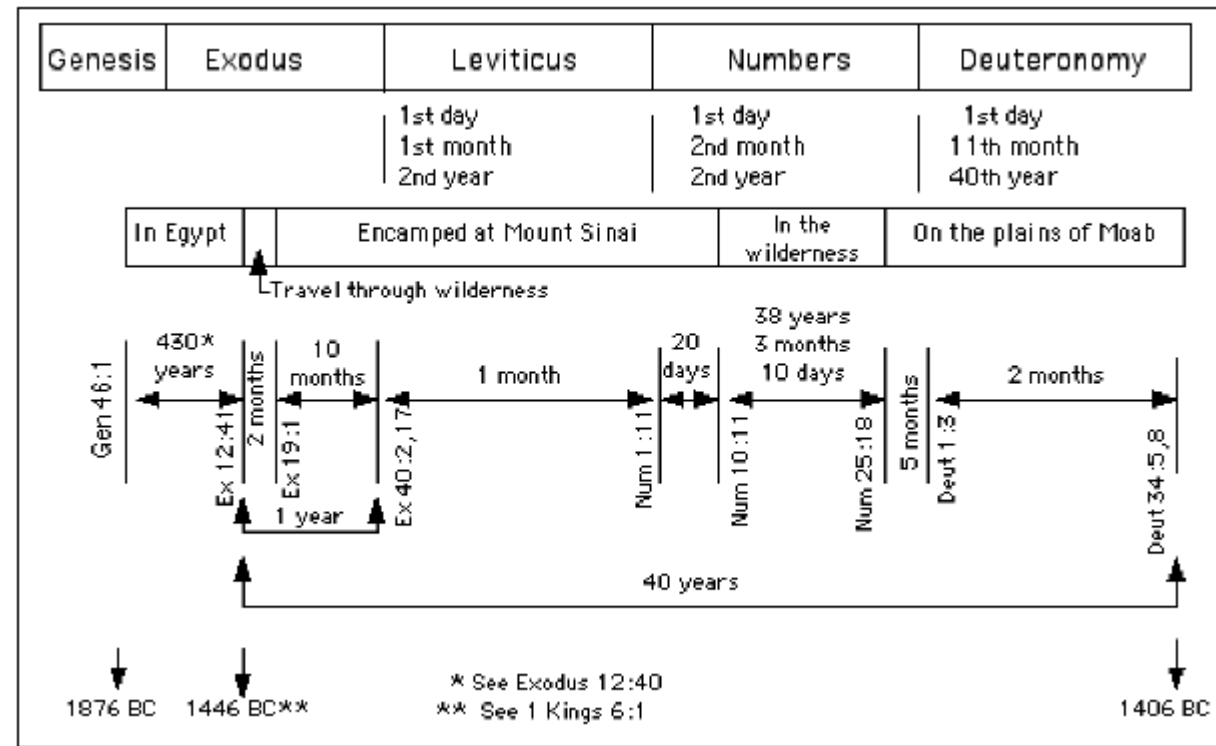
5. The books give indications of Moses as the writer: he was ordered to write historical facts (Ex 17:14; Numbers 33:1-2), laws (Exodus 24:4, 7; 34:27ff) and one poem (Deuteronomy 31:9, 22). For the DH to be true, these passages would have to be classified as false or misleading.
6. Moses is affirmed as the author in the rest of the Old Testament: (Joshua 1:7-8; 8:32, 34; 22:5; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Daniel 9:11-13; Malachi 4:4). Every one of these passages would have to bear false witness since they attest to Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
7. The New Testament writings referred to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (Matthew 19:18; Mark 12:26; Luke 2:22; 16:29; 24:27; John 5:46-47; 7:19; Acts 13:39; Roman 10:5). Since Jesus Christ Himself referred to Mosaic authorship of these books, Jesus would have to be ignorant and mistaken if they were not.
8. Moses is unanimously testified to be the author of the whole Pentateuch in the Jewish Talmud and by the Church Fathers. So all Jewish and Christian scholarship prior to the

modern era would have to be proven false if the DH were true. However, the proponents of the DH cannot prove their theories are the **only** possible explanation for the existence of the Pentateuch. They may offer them as an alternative to the conservative/orthodox view, but no more.

It is important to remember that when one affirms Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, this does not mean that there were no editorial contributions involved in the process of delivering the final canonical forms of the books. Certainly, Moses could not have written about his own death at the end of Deuteronomy (34:5ff). In addition, Moses was obviously not an eyewitness to the Genesis events. It is reasonable to conclude that these narratives were preserved from Adam to Noah through oral or some other unknown, written tradition until the time of the Exodus when Moses finally put them down in the earliest form of Hebrew writing. However, it is not necessary to accept the various theories of scholars who insist that their Documentary Hypothesis is the only rational explanation for the formation of the Pentateuch.

HANOUT
OT 101-1-2

Timeline of the Pentateuch



HANDOUT OT 101-2

GENESIS 1:1 IS ATTACKED FROM ALL SIDES

Genesis 1:1 Is Attacked From All Sides Because It Refutes:

- THE ATHEIST (There is no God) – “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good” (Psalm 14:1). Genesis 1:1 confirms that God exists. He lives all around the universe and within the human heart. He is Creator of all things.
- THE PANTHEIST (the belief that God is the sum of all things that leads to the worship of “Mother Earth” or nature.) Genesis 1:1 means that God is separate from and transcendent to all He created.
- THE POLYTHEIST (Worship of many gods) “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the Lord is one!” Deut. 6:4 and “You shall not have any other gods before me” confirm and affirm Genesis 1:1.
- THE MATERIALIST (Physical matter is the only reality) – Genesis 1:1 means that God is supernatural and matter has a supernatural beginning.
- THE DUALIST (Two opposing characteristics in one entity) God is not good *and* evil. The God of Genesis 1:1 is good, and therefore, everything He created is good. God is holy, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.
- THE HUMANIST (Everything revolves around mankind. “Man is the measure of all things.” God is not factored into any equation of life – God-less) Genesis 1:1 means that God, not man is the ultimate reality. God is the maker and measure of all things!
- THE DARWINIST (The spontaneous generation of life from lifeless matter. The variety and complexity of life on earth is the result of Natural Selection, and the Survival of the Fittest. Man evolved from lower species of animals.) No one can say it better than the atheist, Richard Bozart: “Christianity has fought, still fights, and will fight science to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus’ earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the son of god. Take away the meaning of his death. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing!” *The Meaning of Evolution*, from *The American Atheist*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Feb. 1978
- THE FATALIST (Everything is determined by fate.) The Genesis story of creation means that God has a plan and a purpose for everything He has

made. Ecclesiastes 3 recalls the concept of creation that “Everything is appropriate in its own time. But though God has planted eternity in the hearts of men, even so, man cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end.” (3:11 from The Living Bible)

- SYNCRETISM (The combining or mixing different beliefs.) No other god or belief system compares with the perfect, eternal, all-powerful, and loving creator of the universe revealed in Genesis 1:1.
- THE DEIST (Believes in the existence of God as the creator of the universe; but after setting it in motion, He abandoned it, assumed no control over life, exerted no influence on natural phenomena, and gave no supernatural revelation.) Genesis and every book of the Bible that follows it reveal a God of miracles who is active in creation, and is deeply involved with the human race. The Genesis account of the creation reveals a God who binds Himself to His creation, has a consuming interest in all that He brought into being, and watches over all of creation – guards it, protects it, preserves it, loves it, and sustains it with His power. “I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.” Psalm 121:1-8 (NKJV) For Christians, Genesis 1:1 means they can trust God to be there when they call out to Him. In fact God earnestly desires that all human beings be in fellowship with Him. Jesus said, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (John 4: 23-24 NKJV)

HANDOUT OT 101-2

The Documentary Hypothesis

The Documentary Hypothesis (DH) theory, also known as the Graf and Wellhausen theory, holds that the Pentateuch was not the product of Moses, but is an anonymous work derived from a very long process that stitched together various conflicting and incomplete narratives from Hebraic and non-Hebraic sources. The Pentateuch was eventually combined into its present form by an unknown number of anonymous redactors (editors) sometime around the first century before Christ was born. The most commonly held view by those scholars who accept this theory is that there are four identifiable Hebraic sources for the text of the Torah which predate its final compilation by centuries: the Jahwist (J) source is considered the oldest, dating to as early as the 10th century BCE, along with the Elohist (E), the Deuteronomist (D), and the Priestly source (P), dating to the 8th to 6th centuries. The final compilation of the text is dated to around the 6th or 5th century BCE.

However, this denigrating hypothesis is not shared by conservative Christian theologians because it does not take into account the following facts:

1. The books do give indications of Moses as the writer: he was ordered to write historical facts (Ex 17:14; Numbers 33:1-2), laws (Exodus 24:4, 7; 34:27ff) and one poem (Deuteronomy 31:9, 22). For the DH to be true, these passages would have to be classified as false.
2. Moses is affirmed as the author in the rest of the Old Testament: (Joshua 1:7-8; 8:32, 34; 22:5; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Daniel 9:11-13; Malachi 4:4). All of these passages would have to bear false witness since they attest to Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
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4. Moses is unanimously testified to be the author of the whole Pentateuch in the Jewish Talmud and by the Church Fathers. So all Jewish and Christian scholarship prior to the modern era would have to be proven false if the DH were true. However, the proponents of the DH cannot prove their theories are the **only** possible explanation for the existence of the Pentateuch. They may offer them as an alternative to the conservative/orthodox view, but no more.

It is important to remember that when one affirms Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, this does not mean that there was no editorial redaction involved in the process of delivering the final canonical form. Certainly Moses could not have written about his own death at the end of Deuteronomy (34:5ff). In addition Moses was obviously not an eyewitness to the Genesis events. It is reasonable to conclude that these narratives were preserved from Adam to Noah through oral and/or some other unknown, written tradition until the time of the Exodus when Moses finally put them down in the earliest form of Hebrew writing. However, it is not necessary to accept the various theories of scholars who insist that their Documentary Hypothesis is the only rational explanation for the formation of the Pentateuch.

HANDOUT
OT 101-2

Ancient Creation Narratives

“In contrast to the Biblical creation narratives, ancient creation stories from Mesopotamia, Egypt and Syria-Palestine do far more than try to explain how the physical world came into being. Creation myths often elevated the particular god of a particular shrine to supremacy over all other gods in order to validate the prestige of that deity, that shrine or the city in which the shrine was located...

Common motifs in creation myths include a spontaneous generation of gods, sexual reproduction among gods and the deification of nature (e.g., of the sun and moon). A creation myth often focuses on geographic and other elements unique to the shrine associated with the myth. An Egyptian myth, for example, may pay special attention to the creation of the Nile.

Sometimes creation myths relate battles between gods and monsters of a primeval, watery chaos, through which one or more deities rises to supremacy. Sometimes creation occurs when a god defeats a primeval monster and divides its body into two parts, which become heaven and earth or earth and sea, etc. The Babylonian creation myth *Enuma Elish* describes the god Marduk’s defeat of Tiamat, the mother-goddess and sea monster. After a terrible battle in which Marduk slays Tiamat, he cuts her body in half like ‘a fish for drying’ and uses it to form the heavenly dome. This victory purportedly established Marduk’s supremacy among the gods...

Humans in creation myths from various sources are typically created as drudges to perform the gods’ ‘dirty work.’ Some myths depict humans as the gods’ slaves, whose primary function is to feed them with their sacrifices.

The Genesis account implicitly challenges the claims of these ancient creation myths by affirming God’s unity and sovereignty, by portraying the heavenly bodies and great sea creatures as his creations and by presenting humans as God’s stewards – and indeed image bearers – rather than as an afterthought born of divine need or laziness.

The Genesis creation narrative refers to the sun and moon as the ‘great light’ and the ‘small light.’ Why? By describing these celestial bodies in this way, the Bible reduces them to the status of mere physical objects that ‘rule’ only in the sense that they emit light and demarcate the calendar. In contrast, in many ancient languages the words translated ‘sun’ and ‘moon’ also refer to the sun god(dess) or moon god(dess). For instance, the Hebrew word translated ‘sun’ is *shemesh*, but *Shamash* is also the name of the Mesopotamian sun god. The Greek word translated ‘moon’ *selene*, is also the proper name of a Greek moon goddess. Similarly, the ancients regarded the stars (or constellation) as divine beings. In contrast, the terse Biblical statement ‘He also made the stars’ (Ge 1:16) demotes these bodies to the status of created objects.

The Genesis account rejects the central motif of pagan religion: the deification of nature. Interestingly, it does not seek to elevate Yahweh over other gods. Indeed, in the seven-day creation account (Ge 1:1 – 2:3) Yahweh is not named; the Creator is simply referred to as ‘God’ (*Elohim*), a more generic term. Even Genesis 2 – 3 provides no sense that Yahweh needed to establish his supremacy over other deities. There is no conquest of other gods or monster, and no shrine or city is said to be the place from which God began the creative process. No sacred object is mentioned. The God of Genesis 1 is indeed the universal God.”

These excerpts were taken from the article found in the NIV Archaeological Study Bible © 2005 by The Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

HANDOUT
OT 101-2

The “Two Creation Accounts”

Any simple reading of Genesis 1 and 2 will reveal two creation accounts. For thousands of years, scholars recognized the two different accounts without finding it necessary to conclude two different authors from two different sources were involved. Mosaic authorship remained unchallenged until modern liberal theologians decided they would attempt to explain the differences using new theories based upon methods of *Higher Criticism*. This Old Testament Survey will not go into the “pros” and “cons” of liberal arguments except to say that conservative scholars have studied their theories and have concluded that the arguments for two separate creation accounts by two different authors, based upon a subjective view of “style”, JDEP sources, and supposed contradictions in language and content, are highly speculative and unconvincing to anyone who does not share their evolutionary, anti-supernatural biases. Solid, conservative/orthodox discussions of the differences between Genesis 1 and 2 recognize the differences between the two as purposeful, reflecting Moses’ attempt to show different theological emphasis. Certainly, Moses would have had written and or oral traditions passed down from Adam to Noah to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, but that does not negate his authorship any more than a modern historian’s use of earlier records negates their authorship of the history they have written. The story of creation is complex and requires more than one perspective to answer the key question: “Why?” Why did God create the heavens and earth, and why make man in His image?

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses used different literary devices, theological terms, and linguistic styles to give each account a different theological emphasis. For example, note the two names for “God” used in these chapters: Elohim, used in chapter one, suggests “strength,” and exalts God as the mighty Creator. Yahweh, employed in chapter two, is the name that expresses the essential moral and spiritual nature of deity, particularly in terms of His relationship to the nation of Israel. Since Moses himself wrote these accounts in Sinai, long after both terms were in common usage, he had a specific idea in mind when he composed them. Remember, Moses was a Hebrew, speaking to his primary audience of Hebrews.

The multiple employments of titles were common in the literature of antiquity. Moses was an educated, literate man, and most certainly would have been familiar with this device of literary variety. Recent archaeological discoveries that were not available to those who developed their Documentary Hypothesis have amply illustrated this point. Not only that, but proponents of the DH must ignore Genesis 28:13 when the Lord speaks to Jacob and says: “I am Jehovah (Yahweh), the God (Elohim) of Abraham, the God (Elohim) of Isaac” or argue for the multiple authorship of this single verse.

Orthodox scholars are also quick to point out that the liberals’ arguments concluding differences in style or vocabulary unmistakably indicate different authors are not valid for any other body of literature. It is well known by scholars of ancient and modern literature that a single author may vary his style and select vocabulary to fit the themes he is developing and the people he is addressing. For example, it should go without saying that a young science student’s personal letters will vary significantly in vocabulary and style from his master’s thesis. But when it comes to liberals and their theories, they suspend such reasoning, and convey different authorship to every passage that carries the slightest change in style, content, or language. Conservative scholars easily dismiss the liberal arguments for different authorship of the two creation accounts in Genesis because, unlike their liberal counterparts, they look deeply into the Word of God with an open mind, accepting its divine authorship with a heart rooted and grounded in faith.

HANDOUT OT 101-3

Where on Earth is the Garden of Eden?

Scholars have long speculated about the location of the Garden of Eden. The second chapter of Genesis verse eight states only “the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” The geography of the garden is then described by the rivers that flowed around and through the lands occupied by the garden, “A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which flows around the whole land of Havilah... The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which flows around the whole land of Cush...and the name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.” – Genesis 2:10-14.

Most Bible commentaries place the location of the Garden of Eden in Mesopotamia because the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are located there. Ancient cuneiform inscriptions found at Eridu, near the Persian Gulf, describe a mythological garden, “a holy place,” in which there grew a sacred palm tree. Inscriptions depict this “tree of life” with two guardian spirits standing on either side.

The arguments for placing the location of Eden along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers must ignore, invent, or redefine the locations the other two rivers mentioned in Biblical account of Eden. The Pishon is said to flow “around the whole land of Havilah.” The exact location of Havilah is unknown, but has been placed by some scholars in Arabia or Ethiopia. The river, Gihon, “which flows around the whole land of Cush” would place at least part of Eden in east Africa. And some commentaries do in fact identify the Blue and White Nile tributaries as the Pishon and Gihon.

Josephus among others, contended that the Hebrew word translated *Euphrates* is a more general term, meaning “the broad” or “deep” river, and may refer to some other stream than the one named in Mesopotamia. The Greeks thought of the ocean as a river surrounding the world, and Josephus, influenced by this thought, named the four branches of the river that “flowed out of Eden to water the garden” as the Ganges, the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile. Some Medieval stories placed the Garden of Eden on the island of Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) off the coast of India. And later naturalists fixed upon Central Asia as a possible location for the origin of the rivers of Eden. Modern professor, Dr. William F. Warren, presented a theory that places the Garden of Eden under the North Pole. The discovery of abundant remains of fossil plants prove a warm climate surrounded the North Pole in preglacial times, but the arguments for placing the Biblical Eden there are pure speculation.

Is there an answer for all of this confusion surrounding the location of the Garden of Eden? Did God intend for the location of Eden to be kept a secret? Or is the Garden of Eden mythology or parable designed to teach us something about God. The answers to these questions can be found in the seventh chapter of Genesis: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights...” When interpreted within the context of the Flood that wiped everything from the face of the earth in Noah’s time, it becomes clear that the geography describing the Garden of Eden ceased to exist by the time Noah and his family emerged from the Ark. The rivers and countries described were antediluvian geographical features, familiar to Adam and passed on to Noah, who passed on the information to his descendants. All that was left of the world that existed before the Flood were the memories of the survivors of a place that no longer was. It is a natural human characteristic to transfer the memories of earlier people and places to new and unfamiliar surroundings. This explains why names, which were originally antediluvian (Ethiopia, Assyria, Tigris, Euphrates), appeared as names in the postdiluvian world. Certain names were remembered by the

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survivors of the Flood and then given to people or places in the postdiluvian world in memory of the world that was forever lost.

The Garden of Eden and the world in which it existed were completely destroyed in the Flood. Therefore, those who try to place Eden in the present Tigris-Euphrates region may be well-intentioned, but they have failed to recognize the fact that these postdiluvian rivers cannot have any physical connection with their counterparts described in the second chapter of Genesis. The Genesis account was written in both the past tense (verse 10, referring to the garden) and the present tense (verses 11-14, describing the rivers and regions), indicating that Moses used verbal or written accounts handed down from Adam through Noah.

The Garden of Eden and every other place described in the first chapters of Genesis were a reality and not pure fiction. But is it important that we find the exact location of Eden? Will archeologists ever find traces of an ancient civilization buried deep beneath the Tigris & Euphrates River Valley? I think not. Those who believe they have fixed the exact location of the Garden of Eden or have found evidence of Adam and his immediate descendants are I believe engaging in wild speculations. And we have been given the charge not to occupy ourselves with “myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith; whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Timothy 4, 5). The original location of the Garden of Eden is lost forever, and only God knows where it once stood. So unless the Lord intends for it to be found for some reason, it will remain a mystery. But we are not called to look back with nostalgia on a world that is forever lost; instead we are to look ever forward to that day when the New Jerusalem will be revealed in the new heaven and the new earth will come as described in the closing chapters of the Book of Revelation. And there we will find a heavenly river, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb; on either side of this eternal river is where we will find the tree of life, forever yielding its fruits in season.

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HANDOUT OT 101-3

The Bible Timeline: Counting Back To Eden

Since ancient times, Bible scholars have used the Book of Genesis to try to determine the dates for the creation of the world and the other important events described in the early chapters of Genesis. The first eleven chapters of Genesis provide a detailed list of patriarchs from Adam to Abraham that seems to have all the information necessary for exact dating. But a close examination of the dates proposed by those scholars has left major discrepancies unresolved.

Up until the middle of the 19th century the Bible had been the only historical source for our knowledge of early civilizations of the Middle East. Scant non-biblical information was available to historians and archeologists to compare with the stories of people and places mentioned in the pages of the Bible. Placing events from different civilizations in exact chronological order was almost impossible because different civilizations used different calendars at different times to record different events important to them. Most ancient calendars were tied either to solar or lunar cycles, and the births, deaths or reigns of kings, emperors, or pharaohs were used to track the years. It was not until the Gregorian calendar was introduced some three hundred years after the last events of the Bible were recorded that a consistent dating system was adopted in the Western civilization.

Shortly after this calendar – known as the “Christian” calendar because it uses the birth of Jesus Christ as the starting date – was introduced, Bible scholars began the task of lining up the events of antiquity with the dates of this new calendar. The only way these scholars could establish an unbroken timeline from AD325 back to the creation of the world was to follow the genealogies listed in Bible backwards to Adam. Though not all scholars agree with the exact date of Biblical Creation, a date of BC4004 (based on the sum of the ages of all the patriarchs) was worked out in the early seventeenth century by Archbishop James Ussher and was included in most printings of the King James Version of the Bible.

Recent archeological discoveries have confirmed or left unchallenged most of the events recorded in the Bible to around BC2000 (the time of the patriarch Abraham). However, before that time the Biblical and non-biblical timelines seem to be running on two entirely different tracks. Archaeologists, for example, confidently date the ruins of a tower in the famous town of Jericho to at least BC7000. If Biblical and non-biblical chronologies were merged, that would date the tower more than 3000 years before Adam! Accepted non-biblical chronologies also place the beginnings of ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, and Babylonian civilizations before the Biblical date of Noah’s Flood.

Non-believing skeptics and liberal theologians use the recent historical and archeological findings as evidence to prove that some or all of the Bible texts are nothing more than myths or legends of earlier times. While many conservative Biblical scholars ignore the recent discoveries or dismiss them as seriously flawed and stick dogmatically to Ussher’s chronology based upon the Biblical genealogies. Others accept the genealogies as factual, but incomplete; they believe that God placed the genealogies in the Biblical record for spiritual reasons and not to provide a detailed chronological/historical record of the ancient world.

Whatever one believes about the Bible’s timeline and the genealogies of the patriarchs, it is important to remember that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and every Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” 2 Timothy 3:16. Therefore, Christians can be confident that although they may not be able to scientifically set the exact date of creation using the genealogies found in the Bible, they can say that human history can be measured in thousands of years and not millions of years of evolution.

HANDOUT OT 101-3

Types in the Bible

A *type* is a word-picture that is unique to the Bible. A *type* is very similar to a parable in that both use the symbolism found in object lessons of this life to communicate and reveal spiritual truths by comparing one thing to another.

Like the parables, one can make a mistake by making too much of Bible *types* or by making too little of them. For example: although the Jordan River is used as a *type*, it would be a mistake to interpret “Jordan River” as a *type* every time it appears in Scripture. “Rock”, “tree”, “mountain”, “valley”, etc. can all be used as *types* in Scripture, but it can lead to serious misunderstandings or errors in the interpretation of certain passages of Scripture if those words were **always** interpreted as Bible types no matter how they were used. When searching out Bible types, it is essential to keep in mind the fact that sometimes a rock is just a rock, and sometimes a tree is just a tree, and sometimes the Jordan River is just a river.

Not all Bible scholars agree as to what is and what is not a Bible *type* (in the same way not all Bible scholars agree as to what is and what is not a parable). Even by the most conservative method of defining a Biblical *type*, there are several distinctive features:

1. It must be a specific and precise picture of the person or thing it represents –

- Is there a likeness of appearance as “clouds” and “dust” (Nah. 1:3)
- Is there a likeness of actions as “the leopard” and “Alexander the Great” (Dan. 7:6)
- Is there a likeness of effect as “rain and snow” and “the Word of God” (Isa. 55:10)
- Is there a likeness of relationship as “nurse” and “Paul” (1 Thes. 2:7)
- Is there a likeness of value as “gold” and “the Lord Jesus” (Isa. 13:12)
- Is there a likeness of position as “head” and “Israel” (Deut. 28:13)
- Or is there a likeness of character as “the spider” and “the sinner” (Prov. 30:28)

2. It must be of divine origin or appointment –

It is true that types are around us; the Spirit of God can use the things which are seen, to teach us concerning the things which are unseen. However, for a Biblical type to be considered, it must be examined within the context of Scripture. Quite often a person, place or thing is used as the same *type* or the *type* of the same thing by more than one writer. When this happens it confirms the divine origin of the type and assures us of its true meaning.

EXAMPLES: Moses uses the rock as a type of the Messiah in Numbers 20:8. David uses the rock as a type of the Messiah in Psalm 18:2. Isaiah does the same thing in Isaiah 32:2. The Lord Jesus also refers to Himself as the Rock upon which the church is built in Matthew 16:18.

3. It must prefigure or predict someone or something in the future –

Almost all *types* found in the Old Testament are a foreshadowing or prediction someone or something revealed in the New Testament Scriptures. Besides the prophecies, there are numerous examples of *types* defining the Messiah and His kingdom to come. New Testament *types* follow the Old Testament, and point to a time in the future when all things will be fulfilled.

Even after one decides that an object is a *type*, there still remains the problem of learning what it truly represents. It is God’s desire that we know His word and fully understand its meaning. Therefore by asking the right questions and by using the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we can have a good understanding of Bible *types* and what they mean. Questions to guide the student to discover the meanings of Bible *types*:

1. How is the object or subject of the *type* first used in the Scripture? What meaning does it have in the first place where it occurs?

2. To what does this object or subject refer in the last passage where it occurs in the Scripture?
3. What are the characteristics of this object or subject which make it a suitable *type*? (Christ is compared to a lion in Revelation 5. In Isaiah 53, Christ is compared to a lamb. As the characteristics of these two animals are studied, the likeness will be more clearly understood. This plan should be followed in each case.)
4. *Types* should be grouped according to that which they represent. There are *types* of Christ, Israel, the nations, the Christian, the hypocrites, the worker, the state of the soul, Satan, and many others.
5. *Types* should be grouped according to their character. There are types taken from the mineral kingdom, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the celestial kingdom, the human family, human actions, human attitudes, postures, etc.

As has already been stated, types are spiritual “word pictures” in the Scriptures that represent concepts or persons. Their fulfillments are referred to as the “antitype”. They can be verbal or actual. Some have been fulfilled completely, and some have yet to be fulfilled. Therefore, Abraham's sacrifice and the paschal lamb, were types of Christ. To this word is opposed antitype. Christ, in this case, is the antitype. It can be also be said that the paschal lamb, in scripture, is the type of which Christ is the antitype. An antitype then, is defined as something that is formed according to a model or pattern, and bearing strong features of resemblance to it. Again, an antitype is one that is foreshadowed by or identified with an earlier symbol or type, such as a figure in the New Testament who has a counterpart in the Old Testament. The later person or thing was called the *antitype*. There are many types and antitypes found throughout Old Testament History and Prophecy. An example is Aaron (type) and Jesus Christ (antitype) for the high priest who made atonement for the sins of the people. Some more examples of types and antitypes:

TYPE	ANTITYPE
Egypt	The world, its systems and culture
God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt	God separating unto Himself a specific people; the people of God leaving the world (including its systems and culture) to worship God; the salvation of God's chosen from the bondage of sin and the world
Angel of death passing by those households	Christ's blood saving His chosen from eternal destruction in Egypt with blood on the door Posts
Noah saved in the Ark	Salvation in Christ
Ark of the Covenant	Christ, His humanity (ark made of wood) and His deity (gold); as Christ's blood for propitiation (blood sprinkled on mercy seat for propitiation)
The sun – too bright to behold its glory; brings brings life; is the Light of the world	Christ, the Son – too bright to behold His glory; life; is the light of the world
Israel of the Bible (physical Israel) – or will be in heaven	Spiritual Israel – God's chosen people who are God's chosen people on earth
Moses – the deliverer of God's chosen people (spiritual Israel)	Christ – the deliverer of God's chosen people (physical Israel)
Joshua – brought God's chosen people (physical Israel) into the promised land	Christ – brings God's chosen people (spiritual Israel) into the Promised Land (heaven)
High priest for Israel and all of his duties	Christ in His office as spiritual High Priest of His people
David – King of Israel; savior of His people	Christ – King of spiritual Israel (and

against their enemies; shepherd;	over all); Savior of His people against spiritual enemies; Shepherd of the least of his brothers people; clothed in servanthood and humility
Saul – enemy of David	Antichrist/Satan – enemy of Christ (who is the antitype of David)
Goliath – enemy of David and God's people	Antichrist/Satan – enemy of Christ and God's people
The animals slain, and skins clothing for Adam righteousness for His people	Christ's sacrifice with blood, and the clothing of and Eve after the fall
The paschal lamb during Passover	Christ as the sacrificial Lamb
Marriage of a man and a woman	The union of Christ and His bride (the Church)
Jonah – in the belly of the fish for three days and nights (Jonah 1:17); vomited out 12:40) (Jonah 2:10)	Christ – in the grave for three days; resurrected out from the grave after that (Matthew from the belly of the fish after that
Sabbath day rest	Resting alone in Christ's righteousness (working on the Sabbath breaks this “antitype,” in essence claiming our works are our righteousness); eternal rest with Christ in heaven

HANDOUT 101-4

Who Were “The Sons of God”?

The mysterious identity of these “sons of God” mentioned in the opening verses of Genesis 6 has been a source of controversy and much debate amongst scholars of the Old and New Testament for thousands of years. No one really knows for sure who these “sons of God” were, and probably no one will ever know. The purpose here is not to render any absolute answer to this debate, but is to provide for students of this chapter of Genesis some basic information concerning the major views held by Old Testament scholars.

First, it is important to reference the “sons of God” to the immediate context:

“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.” Genesis 6:1-4 (NKJV)

Most Bible commentaries follow one of these two interpretations of this passage of scripture: 1) The Sethite-Cainite Interpretation; or 2) The “Sons of God” as Wicked Angels Interpretation.

The Sethite-Cainite Interpretation

In this interpretation the “sons of God” are understood to be the descendants of Seth, and the “daughters of men” are women descended from Cain. Seth was born to Adam and Eve after the murder of Abel and is believed to have fathered a righteous and godly line. When his progeny entered into “mixed marriages” with the ungodly women descended from Cain, God was grieved and eventually wiped out all but righteous Noah and his immediate family.

The “Sons of God” as Wicked Angels Interpretation

This interpretation defines the “sons of God” as fallen angels that had added to their rebellion against God by cohabitating with the “daughters of men” producing a “super race” of giants called Nephilim. The consequence of this “polluting” of the human race was God’s judgment of the catastrophic Flood.

There are strong arguments for and against each of these views, but in so far as the original Hebrew text is concerned, there seems to be little doubt that the intent of the writer was to convey the image of angels – fallen angels. The term “sons of God” (*bene elohim*) is used three other times to mean angels— all in the very ancient book of Job (1:6; 2:1; 38:7). Jude 6 & 7 seems to support this interpretation by associating the judgment of the angels “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness” with the judgment that fell upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sexual perversions. Peter mentions the angels cast down into hell and the Flood that destroyed the ancient world in the same breath (2 Peter 2:4-5). It is also important to note that the Septuagint renders the phrase *bene elohim* as “angels of God.” Those who accept the interpretation of “sons of God” as fallen angels maintain that

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Satan was attempting to completely corrupt the human race before the promised Seed (Genesis 3:15) could accomplish his defeat.

A union with angelic beings (if possible) would be a brazen attempt by ungodly men to circumvent the will of God by prolonging their lives. This would explain Genesis 6:3, “Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’” However, those who maintain that it is impossible for any kind of sexual union to take place between angels and humans argue such unions would contradict the Lord’s teaching (Matt. 22:30) that angels do not marry or cohabit even among themselves, much less with lower orders of beings such as humans. Why would eternal spirit-beings created by God be given or even need the power of reproduction? Also a race of half-human and half-divine beings would seem to contradict the order of nature as created by God that every creature reproduces “after its kind” – Genesis 1:21; 1:24, 25.

No one can be dogmatic in interpreting the “sons of God” in Genesis 6. However, what we do know for certain is that those who are called to be sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 6:18) are commanded by God to live holy lives of moral purity and to watch for His return.

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HANDOUT OT 101-4

Can the Human Lifespan Reach 1,000 Years -Some Experts Say "Yes"

March 27, 2009



Cambridge University geneticist Aubrey de Grey has famously stated, “The first person to live to be 1,000 years old is certainly alive today ... whether they realize it or not, barring accidents and suicide, most people now 40 years or younger can expect to live for centuries.”

Perhaps de Grey is way too optimistic, but plenty of others have joined the search for a virtual fountain of youth. In fact, a growing number of scientists, doctors, geneticists and nanotech experts—many with impeccable academic credentials—are insisting that there is no hard reason why ageing can't be dramatically slowed or prevented altogether. Not only is it theoretically possible, they argue, but a scientifically achievable goal that can and should be reached in time to benefit those alive today.

“I am working on immortality,” says Michael Rose, a professor of evolutionary biology at the University of California, Irvine, who has achieved breakthrough results extending the lives of fruit flies. “Twenty years ago the idea of postponing aging, let alone reversing it, was weird and off-the-wall. Today there are good reasons for thinking it is fundamentally possible.”

Even the US government finds the field sufficiently promising to fund some of the research. Federal funding for “the biology of ageing”, excluding work on ageing-specific diseases like heart failure and cancer – has been running at about \$2.4 billion a year, according to the National Institute of Ageing, part of the National Institutes of Health.

So far, the most intriguing results have been spawned by the genetics labs of bigger universities, where anti-ageing scientists have found ways to extend life spans of a range of organisms—including mammals. But genetic research is not the only field that may hold the key to eternity.

“There are many, many different components of ageing and we are chipping away at all of them,” said Robert Freitas at the Institute for Molecular Manufacturing, a non-profit, nanotech group in Palo Alto, California. “It will take time and, if you put it in terms of the big developments of modern technology,

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say the telephone, we are still about 10 years off from Alexander Graham Bell shouting to his assistant through that first device. Still, in the near future, say the next two to four decades, the disease of ageing will be cured.”

But not everyone thinks ageing can or should be cured. Some say that humans weren't meant to live forever, regardless of whether or not we actually can.

“I just don't think [immortality] is possible,” says Sherwin Nuland, a professor of surgery at the Yale School of Medicine. “Aubrey and the others who talk of greatly extending lifespan are oversimplifying the science and just don't understand the magnitude of the task. His plan will not succeed. Were it to do so, it would undermine what it means to be human.”

It's interesting that Nuland first says he doesn't think it will work but then adds that if it does, it will undermine humanity. So, which is it? Is it impossible, or are the skeptics just hoping it is?

After all, we already have overpopulation, global warming, limited resources and other issues to deal with, so why compound the problem by adding immortality into the mix.

But anti-ageing enthusiasts argue that as our perspectives change and science and technology advance exponentially, new solutions will emerge. Space colonization, for example, along with dramatically improved resource management, could resolve the concerns associated with long life. They reason that if the Universe goes on seemingly forever—much of it presumably unused—why not populate it?

However, anti-ageing crusaders are coming up against an increasingly influential alliance of bioconservatives who want to restrict research seeking to “unnaturally” prolong life. Some of these individuals were influential in persuading President Bush in 2001 to restrict federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. They oppose the idea of life extension and anti-ageing research on ethical, moral and ecological grounds.

Leon Kass, the former head of Bush's Council on Bioethics, insists that “the finitude of human life is a blessing for every human individual”. Bioethicist Daniel Callahan of the Garrison, New York-based Hastings Centre, agrees: “There is no known social good coming from the conquest of death.”

Maybe they're right, but then why do we as humans strive so hard to prolong our lives in the first place? Maybe growing old, getting sick and dying is just a natural, inevitable part of the circle of life, and we may as well accept it.

"But it's not inevitable, that's the point," de Grey says. "At the moment, we're stuck with this awful fatalism that we're all going to get old and sick and die painful deaths. There are a 100,000 people dying each day from age-related diseases. We can stop this carnage. It's simply a matter of deciding that's what we should be doing."

One wonders what Methuselah would say about all this.
Posted by Rebecca Sato

<http://www.healthbolt.net/2007/07/26/forever-young/>

<http://www.worldhealth.net/p/the-immortal-question-are-we-on-the-brink-of-living-forever-2006-05-03.html>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4003063.stm>

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HANDOUT

OT 101-4

Facts About The Ark

1. The ark was a box-like boat/ or barge. The Hebrew word for “ark” (*tabbah*) is not the word used for “ark of the covenant,” but is the word for the ark of bulrushes in which Moses was hidden as a baby (Exodus 2:3). It is an ancient word for a box meant to float upon water. Flat bottomed, rectangular, square on both sides, straight up on the sides three stories high, with one door in the side and a window at the top.
2. Only one door, and all must enter and leave by the same door. A type of Christ – He is the only way (John 14:6) to the father. He is the one “door” (John 10:7-9) to the resting-place for His sheep, through which the sheep must both enter for safety and rest and go out later for service.
3. Approximate dimensions: 450 feet (137 meters) long; 75 feet (23 meters) wide; 45 feet (38 meters) high; 1,518,750 cu. ft. (119,738 cu. meters) = 569 standard railroad cars.
4. The ark was covered in “pitch” (Heb. *kopher*) – different from other O.T. words for pitch – equivalent to Hebrew *kaphar* (“atonement” or “covering”). First mention of “atonement” in the Bible. This natural substance (“pitch”) covered the ark “inside and out” and provided a perfect covering for the Ark, to keep out the waters of judgment. This covering is a type of the blood of the Lamb that provides a perfect atonement (or covering) for the soul.
5. The Ark was constructed with only two purposes in mind:
 - To house humans and animals and supplies: 8 people and room for an estimated 50,000 animals plus birds, insects, etc.
 - To float: it did not have oars, sails, keel, rudder, or sailors to sail it. The Ark must have been hydro dynamically and aerodynamically stable because the tidal waves and hurricane force winds did not capsize it, and it floated 371 days.

Other interesting facts about the Ark’s construction:

- A noted shipbuilder did not build the Ark; indications are that Noah was a farmer before and after the flood. At any rate Noah did not remain in the shipbuilding business after the flood.
- There are no indications of a large work force involved in the Ark’s construction. There is no mention of how construction was financed, where the materials came from, or how the materials were collected.
- Genesis 6:3 implies that it may have taken 120 years to build the Ark.
- Not until the Cunard Shipbuilding Lines built the “Etruria” in 1884 had there ever been a boat or ship that exceeded the length of Noah’s Ark.

THE ANIMALS OF THE ARK

Skeptics often ask several questions about the animals of Noah’s Ark:

1. How did animals from all over the earth get to the Ark?
Answer: God brought the animals there from all over the earth. He had 120 years to do it. Modern science confirms that many animals have planted in their brains natural migratory patterns.
2. Was there adequate room for all the known species of animal, insect, bird, etc., to be taken onto the Ark?
Answer: The ark would only need to contain 50,000 animals to get a pair of every known species of animal. Skeptics often assume that the animals were full grown adults, but that did not need to be the case. Young birds and land animals, would not pose a tremendous space problem; the Ark had more than enough room.

3. How were they all cared for, fed, etc., by just 8 people for 371 days? What about sanitation problems?
Answer: Although Genesis does not give a detailed description of life on the ark, it is reasonable to conclude that the animals on board the ark probably hibernated. Hibernation results in a very deep sleep – almost like death. No food intake necessary and because of the slowdown of metabolic process there would be a cessation of all other bodily functions – body temperature becoming the same as the temperature where hibernating.

Christians who believe that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are factual should be prepared to answer the skeptics. In the last century evolutionists managed to completely silence creationists and now control the debate within the scientific community with threats and intimidation of anyone who raises the slightest challenge to the theory that life evolved over millions of years.

However, less than one generation after Darwin, Christians began to organize and present scientific responses to the evolutionists. Today the issue of evolution is far from settled and every year more scientists – believers and non-believers alike - are beginning to question if evolution could have happened the way evolutionists claim.

The Institute for Creation Research (www.icr.org) and Answers in Genesis (www.answersingenesis.org) are ministries, dedicated to enabling Christians to defend their faith and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively by providing resources to defend the accuracy of the Bible including the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

HANDOUT
OT 101-5

ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY OF FAITH
GENESIS 12:1 - 25:18

- I. THE CALLING OF ABRAM
 - a. The place (12:1): Ur of the Chaldeans (see Genesis 11:31).
 - b. The promises to Abram = “the pronouncement of a destiny” (12:2-3)
 - c. God will bless Abram and make of him a great nation
 - d. Abram will be a blessing to others
 - e. Through Abram all the families (nations) of the earth will be blessed
 - f. The pilgrimage (12:4-5): Abram travels from Ur to Haran and from Haran to Canaan.
- II. ABRAM ENTERS CANAAN (12:6-9)
 - a. Abram at Shechem (12:6-7): The Lord promises to give Canaan to Abram, and Abram builds an altar there.
 - b. Abram at Bethel (12:8-9): Abram builds another altar.
- III. ABRAM’S FAILURE IN EGYPT (12:10-20)
 - a. Abram flees Canaan to escape a famine (12:10)
 - b. Abram fears for his life because of Sarai, and jeopardizes God’s plan of a “destiny” (12:11-16)
 - c. Abram forces God to intervene to preserve the “destiny” (12:17-20)
- IV. THE SEPARATION OF ABRAM AND LOT (13:1-18)
 - a. Abram returns to Bethel and restores his fellowship with God (13:1-4)
 - b. The herdsmen of Abram and Lot argue over grazing rights. Abram realizes he and Lot must separate, and allows Lot to choose his own land. Lot foolishly chooses the land close to the morally corrupt city of Sodom (13:5-13)
 - c. The Lord reaffirms His promise of a “destiny” to Abram (13:14-18)
- V. ABRAM'S TEST OF LOYALTY (14:1 - 24)
 - a. Kedorlaomer and his allies defeat the armies of the five city-states (including Sodom), plunder their cities and take Lot captive (14:1-12).
 - b. Abram learns of Lot’s capture and leads his trained servants in a surprise night attack against Kedorlaomer. Abram rescues Lot and the captives from Sodom. (14: 13-16)
 - c. Upon returning home, Abram was met by both the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, king of Salem. Abram receives a blessing from Melchizedek, “a priest of the God Most High” and gives him a tenth of the spoils recovered from Kedorlaomer. Abram refused any payment from the king of Sodom (14: 17-24).
- VI. GOD’S COVENANT WITH ABRAM CONFIRMED
 - a. Abram expresses concern to God that the destiny God promised to him will not be fulfilled because he had no heir. (15:1-3)
 - b. God reassures Abram that the promised heir will be Abram’s own son and that Abram’s descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the heavens (15:4-5).
“AND ABRAM BELIEVED GOD; THEN GOD CONSIDERED HIM

- c. God ratified his promised destiny to Abram with a blood covenant, and revealed details of his descendants in a vision (15:17-21).
- VII. ABRAM COMPROMISES GOD’S PROMISE OF AN HEIR – THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL (16:1 – 17:27)
 - a. Following the custom of the day, Sarai prompts Abram to have a child by her servant, Hagar, a woman from Egypt (16:1-3).
 - b. The compromise results in conflict and dissention in Abram's household; Hagar flees into the desert, but is encouraged by an angel of the Lord to return and submit to Sarai's authority. The angel tells Hagar her son will be called Ishmael ("God hears") and will be blessed with descendants "too many to count" (16: 4-14).
 - c. Hagar gives birth to Ishmael. Abram is eighty six years old (16:15-16).
 - VIII. THE COVENANT REAFFIRMED, SEALED BY CIRCUCISION, AND TESTED (17:1 – 20:18).
 - a. Thirteen years after Ishmael is born the Lord again appears to Abram (17:1-27).
 - b. The promises to Abram ("Pronouncement of a Destiny") are restated.
 - c. God changes Abram's name to Abraham ("father of many").
 - d. Circumcision is instituted as a sign of the covenant between Abram's descendants and God.
 - e. God changes Sarai's name to Sarah. Sarah shall bear Abraham's son, Isaac, and the covenant shall be established with him, not Ishmael.
 - f. Abraham obeys God's command; he, Ishmael and his entire household are circumcised in the very same day.
 - g. The Lord himself and two angels visit Abraham near Hebron; Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed (18:1 - 19:38).
 - h. The Lord reveals that Sarah shall have a son.
 - i. The Lord reveals to Abraham his plan to destroy Sodom; Abraham intercedes for Sodom.
 - j. Lot rescued from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Moabite and Ammonite origins.
 - k. Abraham again jeopardizes God's plan for an heir and allows Sarah to be taken as a wife of Abimelech. God intervenes (as he did in Egypt) to preserve the "destiny" promised to Abraham. (20: 1-18).
 - IX. THE PROMISE OF AN HEIR FULLFILLED (21:1 - 25:11)
 - a. Sarah gives birth to the heir of the covenant (21:1- 2)
 - b. Hagar and Ishmael cast out by Sarah. God promises Abraham Ishmael will father a great nation. Hagar and Ishmael delivered in the wilderness. (21:3-21).
 - c. The covenant between Abraham and Abimelech. (21:21-34)
 - d. Abraham passes the greatest test of obedience, and offers his son Isaac as a sacrifice according to God's command. The LORD provides a substitute. The promise to Abraham (Blessed to be a blessing) is repeated. (22:1-23).
 - e. The death and burial of Sarah (23:1-20).
 - f. Abraham sends for a wife for Isaac from amongst his kinsmen. Isaac and Rebekah are married (24:1-67).
 - g. Abraham dies at the age of 175 and is buried next to Sarah (25:1-11).

HANDOUT OT 101-5

DIVINE COVENANTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The spiritual significance of COVENANT in the Old Testament cannot be understated.

COVENANT IS A CENTRAL THEME IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE:

COVENANT = TESTAMENT

Old Testament = Old Covenant

"Old" does not mean, "outdated" or "abolished" but means, old in years.

New Testament = New Covenant

"New" does not replace the "Old" but updates and enhances the Old.

ISRAEL'S COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS THE BASIS FOR INTERPRETING O.T. HISTORY:

Obedience to the Covenant brings blessing

Disobedience brings calamity, curses, and in the end, holocaust

The nation's Hope for deliverance existed even in the worst of Israel's circumstances as long as God did not annul the covenant and Israel repented and returned to the conditions set forth in the covenant.

COVENANT (GENERALLY DEFINED)

A covenant is a contract or agreement made between two parties forming a bond that does not exist by normal ties of blood or social requirements. A covenant is sealed by an oath, usually sworn in a solemn ceremony of ratification.

TWO TYPES:

- Between men or nations (treaty)
- Between God and men (divine)
Can be either unconditional or conditional.

In Old Testament times the Covenant (*בְּרִית* *berit* ALSO *בְּרִית* *berît*) was at the foundation of social relationships. A covenant agreement might represent a treaty between nations, or a business contract, or a national constitution. In each case it represented a binding agreement, and expressed a firm commitment which was to be faithfully honored by all parties involved.

berit = 1. Covenant, league, treaty, or contract
or
berît = 2. (Hebrew) literally; to "cut"

The keys to a covenant are the mutually agreed upon obligations and benefits. Parties are bound to fulfill certain obligations of the covenant. The agreement also contains certain benefits for each party. Covenants may be:

- Bilateral ("two-sided") – where both parties are obligated
- Unilateral ("one-sided") – where only one party is bound

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DIVINE COVENANTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Edenic Covenant (Gen. 2:15-17)

- First of the general or universal covenants
- Adam is charged to populate the earth, subdue and exercise dominion over the earth, dress and till the earth
- Not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under the penalty of death (spiritual and physical)
- Covenant was terminated by man's disobedience

2. The Adamic Covenant (Gen. 3:14-21)

- Second general or universal covenant ("The Covenant With Mankind")
- Sets forth the conditions which will hold sway until the curse of sin is lifted: the serpent is cursed, Satan is judged, the first prophecy concerning the Messiah is given, multiplication of childbirth and increase in pain of childbearing, woman subject to her husband, ground is cursed, pain and sweat associated with working the ground, death and decay enter the world as a result of man's sin

3. The Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9:1-19)

- Third general or universal Covenant
- The provisions made in the Adamic Covenant remain in effect in the postdiluvial world
- The principle of human government is added
- The rainbow is designated as a testimony of the existence of this covenant and the promise never to destroy the earth by flood.

4. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3)

- First of the theocratic covenants (pertaining to the rule of [or government by] God)
- Unconditional covenant (depends solely upon God to bring to pass the promised blessings)

5. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5-8)

- Also known as the Sinai Covenant
- Second of the theocratic covenants
- Conditional ("if you will indeed obey My voice...then you shall be My own possession...")
- This covenant was given to the nation Israel (heirs of the Abrahamic covenant) to govern how they were to conduct themselves until "the seed," the Christ, comes (Gal. 3:10-14)

6. The "Second Law" Covenant (Deut. 29:10-15; 30:11-20)

- Third of the theocratic covenants
- A renewal of commitment to the Mosaic Covenant
- Conditional (Deut. 27 – 29) "Promised blessings for Obedience" and "Promised Curses for Disobedience"

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- Unconditional (Deut. 30:1-9) In the future God will regather the scattered people of Israel and establish them in the land He has promised unconditionally to give them

7. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:4-17)

- Fourth of the theocratic covenants
- David is promised three things: (1) land forever; (2) an unending dynasty; (3) and everlasting kingdom

NOTE: The virgin birth was absolutely essential not only to assure the sinless nature of Jesus but also to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. Jesus receives His "blood right" to David's throne through His earthly mother, Mary, and His "legal right" to David's throne through His adoptive earthly father, Joseph. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus guarantees that one of David's heirs will rule forever.

8. The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

- The fifth and last of the theocratic covenants
- Unconditional
- Not written on scrolls or stone tablets, but God will write His law in his people's hearts. People will not have to be taught about the Lord, because each person will know the Lord personally and will enjoy direct access to him.
- God will forgive His people's sin – sin that formed a barrier between him and them.
NOTE: Hebrews 8:7-13 declares Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, a covenant he established with his own blood (Luke 22:20, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood"). Through his death on the cross, Christ paid for sin once and for all (Heb. 9:12), and his sacrifice brings God's forgiveness to all who place their faith in him (Romans 3:21-24). The Holy Spirit helps believers live according to God's will, and we enjoy direct access to God the Father through Christ (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:3-4).

The CONTENT of all these divine covenants exhibits a unity, continuity and building theme. The circumstances for these covenants may change, but if we keep our eyes on their content, we will note how the everlasting plan of God unfolded for Israel (and for all mankind), both for redemption and holiness.

UNIFYING CONTENTS OF DIVINE COVENANTS

- God always initiates the covenant
- Divine covenants are not mutual – not between equal partners. Humans have nothing to offer God.
- God dictates terms. Humans cannot dictate to God.
- Man's participation in the covenant is RESPONSE.
 - 1) God commands (conditional) > man obeys or disobeys
 - 2) God promises (unconditional) > man believes or disbelieves
- The ultimate fulfillment of unconditional covenants are not dependent upon man's responses
- Divine covenants are based upon RELATIONSHIP: God would be in the midst of His people and they would be His special possession. "I shall be your God... you shall be my people... and I shall dwell in the midst of you."
- The sovereign inclination of God (grace, redemption, goodwill) towards man is revealed.

HANDOUT OT 101-5

THE TWELVE TESTS OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

The Genesis account records twelve specific times that of Abraham's faith was put to the test. Some of them seemed small tests, and others appeared to be impossible, but when all are put together like pieces of a puzzle, they establish a complete picture of Abraham as a person whose faith was genuine. After the last great test of his life, God said to faithful Abraham, "Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (Genesis 22:12). Each of Abraham's tests can have applications for all believers who walk by faith:

- (1) Genesis 12:1-7
 - Test: Abraham left Ur and Haran for an unknown destination at God's direction.
 - Application: If God calls, am I willing to obey even if it means leaving my comforts and security behind?
- (2) Genesis 13:8-13
 - Test: Abraham directed a peaceful separation from Lot and settled at the oaks of Mamre.
 - Application: Do I trust God with my interests even when it means not pursuing the best things this world has to offer? Will I keep my life pure and holy by not engaging in activities with those who pursue ungodliness?
- (3) Genesis 14:13-18
 - Test: Abraham rescued Lot from the five kings.
 - Application: Does my faithfulness to others bear witness to my trust in God's faithfulness? Am I willing to risk my life to save my neighbor?
- (4) Genesis 14:17-24
 - Test: Abraham gave a tithe of loot to the godly king of Salem, Melchizedek, and refused the gift of the king of Sodom.
 - Application: Am I watchful in my dealings with people? Do I give proper honor to God and refuse to receive honor that belongs to him?
- (5) Genesis 15:1-6
 - Test: Abraham trusted God's promise that he would have a son.
 - Application: How often do I consciously reaffirm my trust in God's promises even when they are delayed?
- (6) Genesis 15:7-11
 - Test: Abraham received the Promised Land by faith, though the fulfillment would not come for many generations.
 - Application: How have I demonstrated my continued trust in God during those times when I have been required to wait? "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) Note also Hebrews 11:8-12.
- (7) Genesis 17:9-27
 - Test: At God's command, Abraham circumcised every male in his family.
 - Application: Will I act simply in obedience to God, and not because I understand the significance of what I am doing?

- (8) Genesis 18:1-8
- Test: Abraham welcomed strangers, who turned out to be angels.
 - Application: When was the last time I practiced hospitality?
- (9) Genesis 18:22-33
- Test: Abraham prayed for Sodom.
 - Application: Is my heart eager to see people punished, or do I pray for and minister to people in spite of their sinfulness?
- (10) Genesis 20:1-17
- Test: Abraham admitted to wrongdoing and took the actions needed to set things right.
 - Application: When I sin, is my tendency to cover up, or confess? Do I practice the truth that an apology must sometimes be accompanied by restitution?
- (11) Genesis 21:22-34
- Test: Abraham negotiated a treaty with Abimelech concerning a well.
 - Application: Am I a person of integrity in my business dealings? Can people depend on my words and promises?
- (12) Genesis 22:1-12
- Test: Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.
 - Application: Am I ready, willing, or able to place on the altar and sacrifice anything or anyone that comes before God?

These were all purifying and strengthening experiences for Abraham. And in fact, all those who walk with God will experience similar tests which are designed by God to build solid foundations of faith in the life in their life. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” **John 16:33 (NKJV)**

HANDOUT OT 101-5

GENESIS 15: THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT IS CEREMONIALLY CONFIRMED BY GOD

Abram had just passed a big test. He had successfully rescued Lot from captivity, and had refused reward from anyone, but God. Through Melchizedik, king of Salem, Abram glorified *El Elyon*, The God Most High. Abram's actions showed that he understood how to be a blessing to those who were in the world, but only in ways that were consistent with God's blessing. Chapter 15 is significant because it describes the vision and solemn ceremony God initiated with Abram to affirm His original promise (12:1-3) and seal His covenant with Abram and his descendants.

After the rescue of Lot, Genesis 15:1 describes how the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." Abram had good reason to fear the vengeance of the defeated kings; but God came to him as a faithful and compassionate friend to reassure him. But something more is troubling Abram: the fact that he had no heir was weighing heavily upon him. Sarai was now well beyond child-bearing years; they must have watched as neighbors, servants and relatives had children born to them, and Abram must have wondered why God was withholding a blessing promised long ago. It is only human for unbelief and impatience to set in when promised mercies are delayed, and then feel as though they have been denied forever. Two potential heirs of the promise had already been rejected: Lot (Gen. 12), and Eliezar (Gen. 15:2, 3). And before his life was over, Abraham would see Ishmael (Gen. 16) rejected and would have to wonder at one point if Isaac was rejected as well (Gen. 17).

The dramatic event described in Genesis 15 would be an unforgettable reminder to Abraham to “keep the faith” in his moments of doubt and fear. Verses 4 & 5 contain God's gracious answer to Abraham's questions concerning an heir. God specifically promises a son from Abram's own body. Beyond that, God promised Abram that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars. So every night as Abram looked into the sky, he would be reminded of God's promise. Abraham's response in verse six is one of the most significant verses in the Old Testament: "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Genesis 15:6 is quoted in the New Testament no less than five times – more than any other verse in Genesis (Romans 4:3, 9, 22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). Paul used this verse to show that Abraham was justified by God apart from works of the Law; in James, Abraham's faith was an example of how faith is confirmed by a person's actions.

The basic idea behind the Hebrew verb: אָמַן (*āman*) "to believe" is a firmness or certainty about a person or situation that leads to action. Related to *āman* are the words, *steadfastness*, *faith*, and *truth*. *Āman* is related to the Hebrew אָמֵן, (*āmēn*), which means “truly; genuinely; amen; or so be it.” Hebrews 11:1 expresses the same idea: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” In the Old Testament and in the New, "to believe" did not mean to hope that something might happen, but to be so confident that something would happen that one's actions backed up the belief. Abraham, Sarah (Hebrews 11:11) and all those who by faith "hold fast the confession of [their] hope, without wavering" and believe that He who promised is faithful, are accepted by God. For as the New Testament Scriptures confirm, it

is by the grace of God that all are saved through faith – not of themselves, but it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 1:5; 5:2; and Galatians 4:16).

After Abraham believed, the Lord also confirmed His promise to give him the land of Canaan (Genesis 15:7): "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." In the following verse Abraham seeks a sign from God. God always looks to the heart of a person seeking a sign from Him to see if their motivation is right before acting (Matthew 12:39). Abraham, Moses (Exodus 4:1-9) and Gideon (Judges 6:17, 36-40) are examples of those whose motives were right: they sought a sign from God to strengthen and confirm what God has already spoken to them. Jesus often used signs to teach and encourage His disciples, but here God assents to Abram's request for a sign to (1) Reinforce Abram's faith for the trials that lay ahead of him; and (2) to Confirm the promise to Abraham's posterity and strengthen their faith in the trials that lay ahead of them.

In this same chapter God answers Abraham's request for a sign in a unique covenant ceremony that had supernatural elements to it. Abraham was instructed to prepare the sacrifice in the manner familiar to the custom of the day. The animals are cut and arranged for the parties to pass through (Note: Jeremiah 34:18-20). Abraham's part was to set the scene and guard it – to watch and pray, to be diligent, and not allow anything to render the sacrifices unclean. Matthew Henry noted in his comments on these verses that, "A very watchful eye must be kept upon our spiritual sacrifices, that nothing be [allowed] to prey upon them and render them unfit for God's acceptance"

The story continues in verse 12: "Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him ..." This is reminiscent of the deep sleep the LORD caused in Adam in Genesis 2:21. The darkness produced a holy fear in Abram – a fear that prepared him to hear and remember for the rest of his days what the Lord had to say to him this night. God called Abram out of the darkness and into His light and prophesied to him concerning his future and the future of his descendants: Abraham's descendants will suffer under bondage 400 years; they will be strangers and aliens in a land not their own. But in the end, God will bring judgment upon those who are the cause of their hardship (Remember the promise "I will curse those who curse you..."). Later, Psalm 37:12-15, will say, "The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn the sword and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, to slay those who are of upright conduct. Their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

In the night vision, the future deliverance out of bondage of Abraham's descendants is foretold. They shall come out of Egypt with many possessions, and will take possession of the Promised Land. It is important to note at this point that God ties the return of Abraham's descendants to the condition of the Amorites (vs. 16). Israel cannot possess Canaan until the Amorites are "ripe for ruin" (ready to be dispossessed). God's righteous justice demands that they shall not be cut off before they have persisted in sin so long, and have arrived at such a state of wickedness, that their ruin is seen as just recompense for their sin. The promised blessings to Abram shall be fulfilled, and he will die in peace with God.

The vision closes with God appearing out of the darkness and passing between the halves of the animals as a smoking oven (furnace) and burning torch (lamp). God alone passes through making the covenant unconditional because God alone is responsible to bring everything to pass. The smoking furnace is symbolic of the *affliction* and *testing* God will use to perfect Abraham and his descendants. The burning lamp is symbolic of God's *deliverance* of Abraham and his

descendants out of affliction. God will lead His people out of bondage (Note: the pillar of fire in the Wilderness and Psalm 119:105-112, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path..."). Finally, God disclosed the boundaries of the land to be given to Abram and his descendants. Implicit in Genesis 15:7, 14, 16, 18-21 is that the God who gave this land to Abraham and his descendants is the sovereign Lord over the entire world and:

- He has the authority to dispose of any part of it He chooses.
- He has the power to bring to pass what He has ordained.
- He has the right to judge all the nations of the earth.

HANDOUT
OT 101-6

THE PROMISED LAND

(From *Exploring the Old Testament – Volume One: The Pentateuch, pages 110-112*, © Frederick Osborn)

It has been more than 4000 years since God declared His intention to give this land to Abraham and his descendants. Since that time, many have tried to lay claim to this territory, and today there is tremendous pressure being brought to bear upon the modern State of Israel to relinquish their claims to most if not all of the land granted to them by divine right. The two Old Testament covenants that relate to Israel's right to the Promised Land mean that no matter how hard they try, no ethnic group, no state, nor any alignment of nations can overrule this promise of God to Abraham's descendants. First is the Abrahamic covenant in which the Lord guaranteed the patriarch that his descendants would receive the land as an "everlasting possession." This promise was confirmed more than once:

- Genesis 12:7 – "To your descendants I will give this land."
- Genesis 13:5 – "...for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever."
- Genesis 17:8 – "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

It is noteworthy that in Genesis 17:18-21 Abraham pleads with God to make his firstborn, Ishmael, the covenant heir, but the Lord declared that His covenant promises were non-negotiable; because he is Abraham's son, Ishmael would receive great blessings, but the covenant promises would go to Isaac. To confirm this, the Lord later met with both Isaac and Jacob to acknowledge them as the rightful heirs of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 26:3; 28:13). Later in their history, Abraham's descendants referred to this covenant to justify their right to the land as they went in to claim it after being released from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. "See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers – to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to give to them and their descendants after them" (Deuteronomy 1:8). Note also: 1 Chronicles 16:15-18; Nehemiah 9:8; Ezekiel 33:24.

Some six hundred years after the first covenant promised the land to Abraham and his descendants, the Palestinian covenant was given to Moses (Deuteronomy 28-30). Deuteronomy 28:8 included the words, "He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you." Verse 11 continues, "...in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you." In this passage, the Lord details His blessings of obedience for His chosen people, but He also gives the terrible consequences that await those who break His covenant and forget the God who gave them the land (29:14-29). The Lord will uproot them from the Promised Land "in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land" (Deuteronomy 29:28). As will be described in detail in later chapters of this study, Israel will eventually ignore this warning and backslide into unbelief and rebellion, which will lead to them being broken and scattered

among the nations, but God is true to His word and promised time and again through His prophets that true repentance would bring a final restoration to the land forever.

The promise of land and descendants were interwoven into the consciousness of the Hebrews. In order for God's promises to Abraham to be fulfilled, he would have to have seed, and in order for that seed to become a great nation, it would have to have land. The promises of land and for them to become a great nation sustained Israel throughout their long exile in Egypt and fueled the hope that one day a deliverer would come who would lead them out of captivity and to the Promised Land. Still, the promises to Abraham must be understood in context of the broader picture of God's plan for His creation. In order for God's promise to mankind that a deliverer (the Seed of the woman) would come who would destroy the power of evil and free humanity from the consequences of The Fall (Genesis 3:15), His chosen people would have to maintain ethnic purity from generation to generation until that deliver (Messiah) was born: "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

HANDOUT
OT 101-6

Isaac's Journey of Faith

Isaac's journey of faith straddles two of the greater patriarchs: his father Abraham and his son Jacob who is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. In many ways his story is significant only because of those who came before and after him.

GENESIS

- 20:3-18 God Protects, Isaac, the Promised Child despite Abraham and Abimelech
 21:1-7 The Birth of Isaac
 21:8-21 The Expulsion of Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother,
 22:1-19 Isaac involved in the Divine Testing of Abraham's Faith
 23:1-20 The Death and Burial of Isaac's mother, Sarah
 24:1-67 A Wife for Isaac
 24:1-9 Abraham Requires an Oath from His Servant to Find a Wife for Isaac from His Extended Family
 24:10-61 The Servant's Journey to Find a Wife for Isaac
 24:62-67 Isaac Meets and Marries Rebekah
 25:5-11 Abraham's Death and Burial by Isaac and Ishmael — The Inheritance Goes to Isaac
 25:19 ISAAC'S STORY BECOMES THE STORY OF HIS SONS JACOB AND ESAU
 25:19-34 Struggles Between Jacob And Esau – From Birth to Birthright
 26:1-33 Isaac's Struggles with the Inhabitants of the Land over Women and Possessions
 26:34–28:9 JACOB RECEIVES ISAAC'S BLESSING
 27:1-5 Isaac Plans to Grant the Blessing to Esau despite the Revelation and Previous Actions of Esau
 27:5b-17 Rebekah Schemes with Jacob to Receive the Blessing
 27:34-40 Isaac Predicts a Future of Conflict for Esau with Jacob
 27:41-46 Rebekah Schemes to Save Jacob from Esau's Anger and Thus Spares Isaac and Esau From God's Anger if His Chosen Heir to the Blessing is Harmed
 28:1-5 Isaac Sends Jacob Back to Rebekah's Family to Marry
 35:27-29 ISAAC DIES
"Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, near Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

HANDOUT
OT 101-6

JACOB'S JOURNEY OF FAITH

- A. Jacob and Esau, Isaac's twin sons are born (Gen. 25:19-28)
 1. The Lord reveals to Rebekah that two separate nations are struggling in her womb and that the older shall serve the younger
 2. Esau despises his birthright and sells to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew (Gen. 25:29-34)
 3. Esau disobeys God's commandment to maintain ethnic separation and marries tow Hittite women, who make life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 26:24-35)
 B. Jacob gets Isaac's blessing (Gen. 27:1 – 28:9)
 1. In spite of God's word that the blessing should go to Jacob, Isaac prepares to give the blessing to Esau (27:1-4)
 2. A plot is conceived by Rebekah and carried out by Jacob to deceive Isaac (27:5-29)
 3. The deception is discovered. Esau vows to kill Jacob following the death of their father (27:30-41)
 4. Jacob flees from Isaac. (27:42 – 28:9)
 a. Jacob leaves for his uncle Laban's home in Padan Aram (Haran) with Isaac's blessing and instructions not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.
 b. Esau compounds his sin by marrying a daughter of Ishmael (God had made it clear that the line of Isaac not Ishmael would inherit the Promise)
 C. Jacob's Life at Haran (Gen. 28:10 – 30:43)
 1. Jacob's Vision at Bethel (28:10-22)
 a. The God of Abraham and Isaac appears to Jacob and renews His covenant with Jacob
 b. Jacob vows to serve God all of his days
 2. Jacob Labors Under Laban (29:1 – 30:43)
 a. Jacob meets and loves Rachel
 b. Laban tricks Jacob to marry Leah
 b. Jacob marries Rachel
 c. Children born to Jacob through Leah and Rachel
 d. Jacob's last agreement to serve Laban
 3. Jacob's Flight (31:1 – 55)
 a. Jacob begins his journey home
 b. Laban pursues Jacob
 c. Laban's covenant with Jacob
 D. Jacob's Return (Gen. 31:1 – 33:17)
 1. Jacob Fights with the Angel
 a. Names the place "Peniel" (Face of God)
 b. Jacob given new name "Israel" (lit. "prince" with God; implied "prevails") Jacob is no longer "heal catcher" or supplanter, but is Israel, the one who struggles with God and prevails
 2. Jacob Reconciles with Esau
 a. Jacob and Esau depart in peace

- b. Jacob remains separate from Esau
- E. Jacob's Residence in Canaan (Gen. 33:18 – 36:43)
 - 1. The Defilement of Dinah
 - 2. God appears to Jacob at Bethel
 - a. Reaffirms Jacob's new name "Israel"
 - b. Reaffirms his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and now Israel
 - 3. The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac
 - 4. The Family of Esau
- F. The Story of Jacob's Twelve Sons (Gen. 37:1 – 45:28)
 - 1. Joseph betrayed and sold into slavery by his jealous brothers
 - 2. Judah is shamed by Tamar
 - 3. Joseph's rise to power in Egypt
 - 4. Joseph's brothers go to Egypt
 - a. Famine forces brothers to travel to Egypt to buy grain
 - b. Joseph deceives his brothers
 - c. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and reconciles with them
- F. Jacob Moves His Family to Egypt (Gen. 46:1 – 50:14)
 - a. Jacob blesses Joseph's sons
 - b. Jacob dies and Joseph fulfills his promise to bury him in Canaan
 - c. Joseph reassures his brothers that no vengeance will be taken on them after Jacob's death
 - d. Joseph dies in Egypt

HANDOUT OT 101-6

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD: "THE MYSTERY ANGEL"

The Angel of the Lord first appears in Scripture in an unexpected way. Genesis 16 contains the first mention of this mysterious figure that appears again and again throughout the Old Testament era, but then mysteriously disappears from the pages of the New Testament Scriptures.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HAGAR

What is unexpected about this Angel's appearance is that He does not appear to Abraham or any of his descendants in the Holy Land, but He appears to an Egyptian slave woman fleeing to the wilderness to get away from Sarah, the mother of the Hebrew nation. We all know the story: Abraham and Sarah are childless; they have waited upon the Lord for Him to move, but they think the time has come to take matters into their own hands. According to the custom of the day, Sarah's Egyptian handmaid is chosen as a surrogate mother. Once Abraham's child is conceived, jealousy between Hagar and Sarah erupts and Sarah's abuse of her slave, Hagar, forces her to flee into the wilderness in despair. As she approached Canaan's border with Egypt, that Mystery Angel, "the Angel of the Lord," appears for the first time in the pages of the Bible and comforted the lonely and frightened Egyptian girl.

What We Learn About the Angel from Genesis 16

- If Satan is Scripture's premier bad angel, then the Angel of the Lord is its "good angel". From the beginning, the Angel never acts independently, but always in complete harmony with the will of God. The Angel always works for mankind's good, and never for their destruction.
- The Angel of the Lord displayed special knowledge (Gen. 16:8).
- The Angel of the Lord spoke with God's own authority (Gen. 16:9-12). The Angel of the Lord then proceeded to confirm Hagar's pregnancy, to name her child, and to describe her son's future.
- The Angel of the Lord may have been God cloaked as an angel. Hagar calls Him, "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees". Hagar was convinced that the Angel of the Lord was more than an angel, but that she had met God cloaked in angelic form.

Hagar's experience is closely linked with the other encounters with the Angel of the Lord described in the Old Testament. At the same time, these other encounters increase our understanding of the Angel of the Lord.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAHAM

In Genesis 22 we have the story of Abraham's test of faith on Moriah. God commanded Abraham to take his son, Isaac, and sacrifice him on Mount Moriah (the very place where Solomon would later build the Temple). When the two reached the top of the mountain, Abraham prepared to follow through with the Lord's command (Heb. 11:19 states that Abraham's faith at this time was so great that he believed "God was able to raise him [Isaac] up, even from the dead."). Just as Abraham was about to plunge the knife into his son, the Angel of the Lord appears and said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him." Then Abraham saw a

ram caught in a thicket and offered up the ram in place of his son.

What We Learn About the Angel from Genesis 22

The Angel of the Lord acted at this critical moment to reveal to Abraham (and to all who share Abraham's faith) that although He could demand the ultimate sacrifice from His servant, He Himself would provide. John 3:16 tells us that what God would not allow Abraham to do by sacrificing his son, God did "once for all" in offering His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO MOSES

Exodus 3 tells the story of the Angel of the Lord appearing to Moses. One day Moses saw a bush engulfed in flames, but it was not consumed by the fire. When Moses approached the burning bush, the Angel of the Lord spoke to him from the midst of the fire. The Angel identified Himself as the "God of your father", but Moses hid his face because "he was afraid to look upon God." Then the Lord commissioned Moses to confront the Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of bondage to the Promised Land.

What We Learn About The Angel From Exodus 3

- The Angel of the Lord revealed the meaning of the name "Lord" (13-14). The name Yahweh (Gr. Jehovah) is God's personal name: I AM WHO I AM ("The God Who Is Always Present").
- God will demonstrate that He is always present with His people and will perform wondrous miracles to free His people (17-22). The Angel of the Lord is "The Angel of the Lord's Presence" which means He is the *Presence* in angelic form who expresses the active involvement of God in the affairs of those to whom He appears.

OTHER OLD TESTAMENT APPEARANCES OF THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Balaam (Num. 22:22-35). The Angel confronted Balaam and prevented him from prophesying against God's people. If anyone decides to harm God's people, God will be actively involved on their behalf. Those who act against God's people do so at their own peril.
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to sinful Israel (Judges 2:1-7). The Angel of the Lord appeared to remind Israel that they would be blessed if they remained faithful to God, but there would be consequences if they failed to obey. The Angel of the Lord assures God's total involvement in our lives. He is committed to us; He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5)
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon (Judges 6:11-22). Gideon was an insignificant person; he was just a simple farmer and was hiding from his enemies when the Angel appeared to him. But God understands our weakness and knows our potential. The Angel of the Lord is proof that God is always with us and if we are willing to follow Him, he will lead us to victory.
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife (Judges 13 – 16). The Angel of the Lord promised them a son and gave them careful instructions concerning how they were to raise their son. Samson failed to follow the Lord's instructions, and suffered for it. The Angel of the Lord "Who Is Always Present" is with us as we bring children into the world and as we seek to bring them up to follow God. Even when it seems that we have failed, and our children rebel against the Lord, we can find comfort and reassurance in the fact that God is present with us and with them.
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to King David (2 Sam. 24; 1 Chron. 21:12-18, 30). As much as King David loved the Lord, he still was not a perfect human being, and therefore made

mistakes. One such mistake was to go against the Lord's command not to number Israel. When the destroying angel came against Israel as punishment, the Angel of the Lord stood between heaven and earth with sword drawn and stopped the slaughter. Even when we are unfaithful and feel God's judgment and punishment in our lives, we can be assured that God will not allow us to be destroyed by our sins. Repent and turn from your sins and God's Angel will protect you.

- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Elijah three times (1 Kings 19:7; 2 Kings 1:3; 15). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Elijah in his despair after his great victory over the prophets of Baal (He provided food and drink to strengthen him so he could continue); He appeared a second time to tell Elijah to pronounce God's sentence of death on King Ahaziah, the son of Queen Jezebel; and the Angel appeared a third time to tell Elijah not to be afraid to confront Ahaziah. "The God Who Is Always Present" can play many roles in our lives, just as He did in Elijah's. He can lift us up when we are down; give us purpose when our lives seem empty; and protect us from those who seek to harm us as we do His will.
- The Angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army (2 Kings 19:35; Is. 37:36). King Hezekiah led the people in a great revival, but the King of Assyria came to destroy them. In one night, the Angel of the Lord put 185,000 Assyrian soldiers to death and forced the Assyrian king to retreat. Throughout history, God has guaranteed the survival of His chosen people Israel. Our Lord will go to war for us to protect us; His church will not be destroyed no matter who comes against us.
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah (Zech. 3:5; 12:8). The Jewish people had begun to return to Jerusalem after their long captivity in Babylon. During those days, the Prophet Zechariah received visions from the Lord to encourage the remnant that had returned. The Angel of the Lord promised that a day would come when the offices of priest and king would be combined in one person, and that person would fully restore God's people (3:5, 6). In 12:8 is the promise that in the time when Israel is fully restored, the Angel of the Lord will go before them, and the Lord will destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem. The Angel's word to Zechariah gave the people hope for the future.

The fact that Jesus identified Himself with the 'I AM' of the Old Testament provides strong evidence that the Angel of the Lord may in fact be the preincarnate Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, appearing in angelic form prior to His incarnation as fully human. (Further evidence of this is the fact that there is no mention of the Angel of the Lord after the birth of Jesus).

Smith's Bible Dictionary defines *Angel of the Lord* as "The special form in which God manifested himself to man, and hence Christ's visible form before the incarnation." However, not all theologians are so sure about making that direct of a statement. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* concludes: "The question still remains, Who is theophanic angel? To this many answers have been given, of which the following may be mentioned: (1) This angel is simply an angel with a special commission; (2) He may be a momentary descent of God into visibility; (3) He may be the Logos, a kind of temporary preincarnation of the second person of the Trinity. Each has its difficulties, but the last is certainly the most tempting to the mind. Yet it must be remembered that at best these are only conjectures that touch on a great mystery. It is certain that from the beginning God used angels in human form, with human voices, in order to communicate with man; and the appearances of the angel of the Lord, with his special redemptive relation to God's people, show the working of that Divine mode of self-revelation which culminated in the coming of the Saviour, and are thus a fore-shadowing of, and a preparation for, the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Further than this, it is not safe to go."

However, the intimate connection of the Angel of the Lord with God's covenant promises takes on fresh meaning if the Angel of the Lord is indeed the preincarnate Christ. For the intimate relationship between the Lord and His people can be seen extending all the way from Genesis through the New Testament until today, as Christians are considered the children of Abraham because they share his faith (Gal. 3:7-14).

HANDOUT OT 101-6

CIRCUMCISION AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Acts chapter 10 records a significant event in the life of the church. Up until this time salvation was "of the Jews" (John 4:22), but from this day forward "the hour" Jesus spoke of in (John 2:23) had come for all (circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles) to worship God in "Spirit and truth" (Acts 10:44, 45). The Book of Acts records the historic breaking down of the wall of the separation between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. "All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed," because for the first time, believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit even though they were not circumcised first.

Galatians 5:1-14 teaches us that those who submit to circumcision are "under obligation to keep the whole law" (3), but those who seek to be justified by law have been "severed" from Christ and have "fallen from grace" (4). Circumcision was merely a means to an end because the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (14). Note also, Ephesians 2:1-22.

<u>CIRCUMCISED</u>	<u>UNCIRCUMCISED</u>	<u>IN CHRIST</u>
1. Of the flesh	Separate and excluded Far off	Broke down the dividing wall
2. Under Law (no hope)	Without God in the world (no hope)	Both have peace with God (new hope)
3. Enmity with Gentiles	Enmity with Jews	Made the two into one new man, abolishing the enmity
4. Citizens of God's household	Strangers and aliens	Fellow citizens of God's household

By the blood of Jesus, the circumcised and the uncircumcised are "...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord..."

HANDOUT OT 101-7

THE DIVINE PHARAOH OF EGYPT

The belief in the divine nature of the position of pharaoh was central to the ideology of kingship in ancient Egypt. The term "pharaoh" (per-aa) actually means "great house" and it was not used to describe the ruler himself until the New Kingdom period (c.1550 – c.1069 BC): before that time it was used to refer to the king's palace or the royal court. The divinity of kingship was an important part of the Egyptian system of beliefs and social structure. Some early inscriptions describe the king as *netjer* ("god"), or more usually, *nefer netjer* ("good god"), which may in fact indicate a lesser or minor god. Several inscriptions are also known in which the king is referred to as *aa netjer* ("great god").

The falcon god Horus was a symbol of kingship. Each king had five names, which were each introduced by an important title. One name was given at birth; the other four were bestowed when he was crowned king.

They encapsulated the ideology of kingship. Two of the names were introduced by titles that stressed the rule of the king over the two lands that had been united (upper and lower Egypt). The other two names – "Horus" (*Hor*) and "Golden Horus" (*Hor Nebw*) – could not have more clearly emphasized his identification with the god.

In the ruler's succession and coronation he re-created the myth of Horus rightfully ascending to the throne of his deceased father Osiris. On his accession the king crowned with the Double Crown, which Horus is often depicted wearing in temple and tomb reliefs. The king would also have performed ritual identifying himself with the falcon god. Of particular significance would have been the symbolic triumph over the god Seth. The king would also have performed rituals identifying himself with the falcon god. The pharaoh was thought to be under the protection of Horus, and was often depicted with the falcon-god perched on his shoulder with his outstretched wings wrapped around the crown.

In accordance with the mythology of kingship, the king's father (and thus by definition the deceased king) was identified with the god of the dead, rebirth and vegetation, Osiris. But the divine parentage of the ruler differed according to the context. In the five-fold titles mentioned earlier, the king's birth name was introduced by the title "Son of Re" (*Sa Re*) – that is, son of the sun god, whom the king was thought to join on his death. A variety of religious texts show that the king might be identified with a range of deities, depending on the context. He was often referred to as being "like" (*mi*) a particular god. In fact throughout the Old Kingdom (c. 2686 – c.2181 BC) the king was said to have the divine power of Sia (divine knowledge), Hu (divine utterance) and Heka (divine magic), which were usually attributed to the creator gods.

During the Middle Kingdom (c.2055 – c.1650 BC) the mortality of the man who held the divine office of king was acknowledged for the first time in some of the texts. The new king is warned about the treachery of his subjects in a manner that is contrary to and in conflict with the dogma of divine kingship.

The king was also a high priest in the Egyptian religion. Throughout Egyptian history the pharaoh was nominally the high priest of every god in every temple throughout the country. (In practice high priest had to be appointed in each of the temples to function on behalf of the king.) In this way, the pharaoh stood as the intermediary between every god and the human world. Reliefs on the walls of the temples showed the king making offerings to the gods, and

performing the required rituals before them. It was considered of prime importance that he should be portrayed as the one who presented *maat* (translated as "truth", "order", or "justice") to the gods, because this was what the Egyptian gods lived on. It was the role of the king to ensure the beneficence of the gods and thereby ensure peace, harmony, and prosperity in Egypt.

The king was essential to universal order, and it was his duty to maintain *maat* at all times. This function also involved quelling chaos, which was believed to manifest itself in wild animals and foreigners.

King was often portrayed hunting wild animals, or smiting an enemy in battle or a bound captive. It was essential for the dogma of divine kingship that the Egyptian ruler should always be portrayed as triumphant. Egyptian writings glorified the pharaoh and legitimated his right to rule; it was he who restored and maintained order.

HANDOUT

OT 101-7

GODS AND GODDESSES OF EGYPT

APIS – One incarnation of the god Ptah was the bull god Apis. The priests at Memphis kept a real bull that was thought to be the god's living image. The bull lived in luxurious accommodations near the temple of Ptah, and at regular festivals the Egyptian upper classes were allowed to come and view the bull. When the bull dies, it was mummified in a solemn ceremony and buried in underground catacombs.

HAPI – (Also Hapy) was the god of the Nile floods. He lived in a cave near the cataract of the river. It was his job to keep the land on either side of the river fertile and he did this by scattering seeds into the water as it flowed out of the sluices onto the land. Hapi was portrayed with large, bare breasts and a fat belly, both of which are symbols of fertility. His headdress was adorned with water plants.

ISIS – "The Queen of Heaven" Isis was the most important deity of the Egyptian pantheon for the average Egyptian. She was the embodiment of all that human life stood for and was governed by. She was also called "The Great Mother" and ever-loving wife, and was looked upon as the fierce protector of the family. She is most commonly represented as a seated mother suckling her small son Horus on her lap. She was sometimes regarded as the personification of the throne, and her lap came to be seen as the throne of Egypt.

HEQET (Also: Heket) – Women in ancient Egypt appear to have given birth in a crouching position supported on "birthing bricks." Egyptians placed great importance upon childbirth – in particular royal births since they meant the continuation of the dynasty and were assurance of the continuation of divine provision and protection over Egypt. They sought as much divine assistance and protection as possible (even the bricks were divinely personified as the deity Meskhent, one of the goddesses of fate who governed the future of newly born children). The frog goddess Heqet acted as the divine midwife and was said to attend royal births.

HATHOR – A mother goddess, who was associated with love, fertility, sexuality, music, dance and alcohol. The festivities associated with her appear to have been suitably debauched (Ex. 32:1-6 & 32:17-19) She was depicted in the form of a cow, or as a woman with cow's ears. When in human form, her headdress could be one of cow's horns with a solar disc, or a falcon on a perch. She was also a sky goddess, and was regarded as a vast cow that straddled the heavens, with her four legs marking the four points of the compass. Like Isis, Hathor was considered to be the mother of the falcon deity Horus (and thus of the pharaoh). The pharaoh was sometimes depicted being suckled by the goddess in cow form.

HORUS – the son of Osiris and Isis, was identified as the dutiful son who avenged his murdered father. The pharaoh on earth was identified with the god: the third of the pharaoh's five titles was his "Golden Horus Name," and he was referred to as "the living Horus." As a falcon god, Horus

was Lord of the Sky and took bird form, yet he could also be seen as a small child being nursed on the lap of his mother Isis.

KHEPRI – the god Khepri (lit. "*He who is coming into being*") was a creator and solar deity. He was represented as the scarab or dung beetle, or as a man with the head of a beetle. The natural activities of the scarab beetle made it the choice of Egyptians to portray a creator god and the manifestation of the rising sun. It was observed to roll its eggs in a ball of dung along the ground, and the ball was identified with the sun. The newly hatched beetles were seen to emerge from the dung, as if life was emerging from the primeval mound of Egyptian mythology. Therefore, the scarab beetles were thought capable of spontaneous creation. From the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055 – c. 1650 BC) onwards the image of a scarab was a very popular amulet worn in bracelets and necklaces. Scarabs were used as funerary talismans, and were placed over the heart of the deceased to keep it from confessing sins during its interrogation in the afterlife.

KHNUA (Also: Khnum) – Just above the First Cataract of the Nile lies the island of Elephantine. Here the ram-headed god Khnum was worshiped as the creator. He was said to have created life by molding beings on his potter's wheel. Khnum was also one of the gods of the Nile, controlling the annual flood by opening the sluice gates in the caverns of Hapy, the god of the flood.

NUN – was the divine personification of the primordial waters of chaos, which preceded creation. He was described as the "eldest father" and "maker of humankind." After creation had taken place, chaos was believed to continue to exist beyond the edges of the universe, and in the Netherworld, which was the place of social outcasts and demons. Nun could be represented as a baboon, in human form, or with a frog's head. His consort was the snake-headed goddess Naunet.

NUT – the divine personification of the sky. According to one of the Egyptian creation myths, she was the sister and consort of Geb, the earth god. The darkness at night was explained by the belief that Nut swallowed the sun in the evening and gave birth to it at dawn, so it spent the night hours traveling through her body. This image was often depicted on the ceilings of tombs and on the undersides of sarcophagus lids, expressing the belief that Nut divinely personified the coffin and burial chamber. Because the sun was said to be born from her each morning, the deceased might be reborn from her into the Afterlife. She is usually shown as a woman arching over the earth, but could also be represented as a cow. The "Divine Cow" was believed to carry Re, the sun god, on her back each morning.

OSIRIS – brother of the goddesses Isis and Nephthys, and husband of Isis, became the god of the dead. As such he was one of the most revered gods of ancient Egypt. It was only by passing through the Hall of Judgment and being presented to him as a just person (ma'at *heru* – 'true of voice') that the deceased could ever hope for a life in the afterworld. The Egyptian "heaven" was located in the far west towards the setting sun: one of the major titles of Osiris was "First lord of the Westerners." Abydos, the centre of the cult of Osiris, was the most sacred site in ancient Egypt, and there Seti I (1291—1278 BC) built the finest of all the Egyptian temples.

RA or RE – (Also Atum): the scribes of ancient Egypt recorded several different accounts of the creation. The priests of Memphis believed the god Ptah created the world; while at Heliopolis, the sun god Ra, or Atum, was worshiped as the creator. Ra began as the chaos that existed before

the gods. His name means "the all," indicating that he contained the essence of all future creation, male and female, divine and human. His first act of creation was to gather himself together into the shape of a human. He then spat into the void to create Shu and Tefnut, the forbearers of the gods of Egypt. In another version of the creation story, Ra took the form of a huge snake that would shed his skin at the end of time. Ra would emerge to create the world all over again, so beginning a new cycle of existence.

SEKHMET – this goddess was the ferocious aspect of female divinity. She was associated with war, and helped the king to vanquish his enemies in battle. Her name literally means, "the powerful one," and she was visualized as a lioness, or a woman with the head of a lion. She was shown wearing the sun disc identifying her as the daughter of Re. Sekhmet, who was feared as the bringer of disease, paradoxically became associated with healing because of the need to appease her wrath. In ancient Egypt, the title "Priest of Sekhmet" was synonymous with "doctor."

SET (Also: Seth) – wicked brother of Osiris who murdered Osiris and then declared himself to be king. Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, challenged his evil uncle Set for his father's throne. The epic struggle between Set and Horus is the subject of long texts and reliefs in many of the Egyptian temples. Eventually the gods tired of the continual fighting, and Set and Horus were brought before the Council of Gods where their case was decided after a lengthy debate. Horus was declared the rightful king and Set was banished to the desert, a place of evil, and was also made god of the storms. Thereafter the ruling pharaoh was recognized as the god Horus on earth and became a god among the gods at his death.

"When Pharaoh will not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst." Exodus 7:4 – 5

HANDOUT 101-7

THE PRINCIPLE OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MORAL AND CIVIL LAWS OF MOSES

When studying the Mosaic Laws, it is important to keep in mind the fact that the Hebrews did not differentiate between individual and corporate guilt. There are a number of examples in the Mosaic Law where the principle of corporate solidarity in both the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience seems to be operative. Moses counsels, "therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). The most obvious example is in the Ten Commandments, where the Lord reveals Himself as One "visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands [of generations] of those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exod 20:5, 6). The corporate thinking of the whole community is further revealed by the collective responsibility of the community to obey the Lord's commandment to punish the sin of an evil person within the community, and thus, to root out the contagion of sin from the community, or as Scripture puts it, to "put away the evil from your midst" (Deut 13:5; 22:21, 22, 24; etc.).

In Moses' account of the covenant curses found in Leviticus 26, God indicated the linkage between the sins of the forefathers and the sins of the contemporary generation in the punishment. For example, verse 39 states, "And those of you are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away." Because of this corporate responsibility for sins committed, the children are to confess both their own sins and the sins of their fathers: "But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers . . . then I will remember my covenant with Jacob . . . I will remember the land" (vss. 40, 42).

Another way the corporate solidarity of the nation is uniquely emphasized in the Mosaic legal code is by means of a continual shifting from the plural "you" to a singular "you." For example, Exodus 23:9 states, "Also you [singular] shall not oppress a stranger, for you [plural] know the heart of a stranger, because you [plural] were strangers in the land of Egypt." Again, Exodus 23:13: "And in all that I have said to you [plural], be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your [singular] mouth." (Examples of this ease of shifting from singular to plural or vice versa may be found throughout the legal sections of the Pentateuch.)

HANDOUT 101-7

FIVE NAMES FOR THE TABERNACLE IN SCRIPTURE

Each name reveals something important about its purpose; it was called:

1. “a sanctuary” (Ex. 25:8) – something set apart for a holy God
2. “Tabernacle (Ex. 25:9) – a dwelling place for God among His people
3. “Tent” (Ex. 26:36) – designated as a *temporary* dwelling place of God
4. “The tabernacle of the congregation” (Ex. 29:42) – it was there that God would meet with His people
5. “The tabernacle of testimony” (Ex. 38:21) – indicated that the law given to Moses was to be kept in the ark of the covenant located in the Holy of Holies. The Tabernacle itself would stand in the midst of the people of Israel as a testimony of the one true living God.

The tabernacle was given to represent the eternal truth and the everlasting glory of the God they served to the chosen nation. But that testimony was not for them alone; it was to be shared with all the nations of the world around them.

The tabernacle was intended to be the place where God’s people could commune with Him. The God of Israel was not a distant God far removed from His people. It was God’s desire to dwell among His people and to be intimately involved with their lives (Exodus 25:8).

In the Wilderness

When the cloud of God’s presence covered the Tabernacle, the glory of the Lord filled the Holy of Holies. When the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, no one was able to enter. Whenever the cloud lifted and moved, the people of Israel followed it wherever it led them. Wherever the cloud stopped and stayed in place, they stayed in that place until it moved. (Exodus 40:34-37).

HANDOUT OT 101-10

PROBLEM WITH NUMBERS

According to Numbers 1 there were in the exodus generation 603,550 men aged twenty years and older able to go to war. Based on records of other peoples of the time, this figure suggests an enormous over-all population, perhaps as large as 2.5 to 3 million. Exodus 12:38 also says that they took large numbers of livestock with them as well. The obvious questions raised by the size of this great multitude are:

1. How they could have survived in the desert where there is little pasture and water to have supported them?
2. How could they have kept any kind of discipline after their departure from Egypt?
3. How could the original seventy Israelites who went down to Egypt have multiplied to more than two million in a few generations?

A simple reading of the census figures of Numbers 1 suggest that the tally be taken at face value, and there is no reason, as some scholars argue, that the numbers be taken symbolically or as an attempt to create an epic style myth to express the great miracle of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. Further evidence from the Pentateuch supports the fact that the numbers of Israelites that escaped from Egypt were vast. Exodus 1:7-9 states that the Israelites had multiplied so steadily that the pharaoh complained that “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us.” But other evidence from the Bible and a common sense application of numbers suggested by the census creates a whole new set of problems for the student of Numbers to consider:

- ❖ Exodus 1:9 can easily be interpreted as how the pharaoh may have perceived the Israelites, based on his fear and hatred of foreigners, and not actual numbers.
- ❖ It is difficult to visualize an army of over 600,000 being panic-stricken at the sight of being pursued by only 600 chariots (Ex 14:5-12).
- ❖ If Exodus 1:15 is to be taken literally, then all Israel used only two midwives. Some theorize that they were actually representative leaders of a large midwifery guild, but again, the text makes no mention of it.
- ❖ Numbers 3:43 reports 22,273 firstborn males in Israel, which suggests that only 22,273 mothers had borne sons. Taking into account the 603,550 sons under age twenty, an average projection of birthrates of the time would mean there would have been at least one million Israelite males in total. If these numbers are taken literally, each mother would have to have at least 44 sons! A more realistic projection of an average of five brothers for every firstborn son would make a total of approximately 133,638, a figure still far too low to reconcile with the census results in Numbers 1.
- ❖ If there were 603,550 men-at-arms, the majority of whom would likely have been married, how could there have been only 22,273 firstborn sons?
- ❖ In contrast to the census figures in Numbers, Deuteronomy 7:7 states that Israel was ‘the fewest of all peoples’ (cf. Ex 23:29-30). If the Israelites numbered in the millions, that would make them one of the largest of all peoples in the region.

Old Testament scholars have been wrestling with these numbers for centuries and have come up several theories to explain them. Liberal theologians tend to dismiss these figures as epic myth, or as some kind of editorial mistake (one popular theory is that the figures were in fact a “misplaced” census list from the time of the Monarchy that was inserted into the text of Numbers by some unknown scribe for some unknown reason). Conservative scholars developed the theory that the Hebrew word translated ‘thousand’ (אלף *eleph*), in Moses’ time could also mean something like “squad or troop,” “family/tent group” or with slightly different vocalization, “chieftains.” Therefore, the data represent both the number of squads or tribes and the number of men in them. For example, the figure for Reuben, using this hypothesis, would be reduced from 46,500 to “46 squads; 500 men.” If we add up all the numbers in this way, the final tally for men-at-arms in Numbers 1 is 5,550. If this theory is correct, the total population would have been about 20,000. But this theory, as attractive as it seems, has its difficulties as well.

In the end, the problem with numbers in Numbers must remain unsolved. For the conservative scholar who remains true to the orthodox view, the numbers recorded by Moses may be taken literally, but not necessarily understood the same way modern census-takers understand numbers. Apart from any absolute proof to the contrary, it is always best for the conservative scholar to avoid the wildly speculative claims of liberal theologians and trust the Word of God to speak for itself. No one who studies Numbers today can say with any absolute certainty what the total population was that came out of Egypt, but the Scripture can be trusted where it indicates that it was quite large. Exodus 1 indicates a population explosion among the Israelites that caused the Pharaoh such concern that he took the extreme measure of ordering all male Hebrew babies killed at birth. For the exodus, the large numbers of Israelites were organized into smaller tribal groups which the leadership could handle. The geology of the region suggests that at the time of the exodus, the wilderness was much more fertile than today, and was capable of supporting more people and flocks. The biblical text also makes it clear that food and water were often in short supply, but the LORD miraculously provided whenever necessary.

HANDOUT
OT 101-10

ISRAEL’S COMPLAINTS IN THE WILDERNESS

SCRIPTURE	ISRAEL’S COMPLAINT	MOSES’ RESPONSE	GOD’S RESPONSE
Ex. 14:11	Grumbled and fearful at the sight of Pharaoh’s army	Encouraged the people to trust God	Opened the sea to deliver Israel
Ex. 15:24	Grumbled about the Bitter water	Cried out to God to help	“Healed” the bitter water
Ex. 16:2	Grumbled about the Food supply	Rebuked Israel for lack of faith	Supplied manna
Ex. 17:2	Grumbled about the Lack of water	Prayed to the Lord for help	Water from the rock
Num. 11:1	Grumbled about God’s Provision of food	Anger and prayer	Judgment: Fire burned them
Num. 14:2	Grumbled about Moses’ leadership Failure to possess Canaan	Pled with Israel, prayed to the Lord	Judgment: 40 years in Wilderness
Num. 16:2	Grumbled about Moses’ Leadershi	Rebuked and prayed	Judgment: Rebels Destroyed
Num. 16:41	Accused Moses and Aaron	Prayed	Judgment: Plague kills 14,700
Num. 20:2	Grumbled about Moses And Aaron because of a lack of water	Rebuked Israel Struck rock	Supplied water
Num. 21:4	Grumbled about Moses And the manna	No response	Judgment: fiery serpents

HANDOUT
OT 101-11**EIGHT WORDS FOR “LAW” USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Mosaic laws were given at Sinai and at various stages on their Wilderness journey; they were completed in Deuteronomy, the last book of the Pentateuch. Not all Mosaic laws were equal to the moral law expressed in the Ten Commandments. Mosaic laws served as the personal and national guide for a covenant people living under God’s authority. They were intended to direct the moral, spiritual, and social lives of the community. The laws were given to the nation by God through Moses in order to protect them and enable them to maintain a moral, civil society committed to God even while being surrounded on all sides by Pagan nations who did not share their commit or values.

Original Language	Transliteration	Strongs #	Total Occurrences (Law)
תּוֹרָה	tôrâh	<H8451>	219 (219)
מִצְוָה	mišwâ	<H4687>	181 (1)
מִשְׁפָּט	mishpât	<H4941>	421 (2)
עֲדוּת ,	‘ēdût	<H5715>	27 (0)
פְּקֻדָּה	ḥuqqâ	<H2706>	127 (4)
פְּקֻדָּה	piqqûd	<6490>	24 (0)
דָּבָר	dābār	<H2706>	1439 (0)
דָּת	dāt	<H1882>	14 (11)

Christians are often confused and fall into error concerning the Old Testament laws because they do not distinguish between the moral, ecclesiastical, and civil law codes found in the Pentateuch. Which laws – if any – are Christians supposed to follow? If Christians are required to follow some of these laws, then why are they not required to follow all of them? A good way to help understand these laws and to help clear up any confusion is to recognize the different words used in the Old Testament for “law” and understand their meanings.

1. TORAH

Hebrew Word: תּוֹרָה

Transliteration: *tôrâh*

English Words used in KJV:

law 219

[Total Count: 219]

“Law” (*Torah* or *Tora*) is simply defined as a *precept* or *statute*, and can be specifically applied to the *Decalogue* (Ten Commandments) or to the *Pentateuch* (The Five Books of Moses). The purpose of *Torah* is “to point out” or “to instruct and teach” those who seek to live by it. *Torah* is both a law of God and a revelation to enlighten a person’s walk with God, “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18 NKJV). God’s law is His word and it binds His people to obedience. His laws are His rules of conduct, and therefore, guide, direct, and instruct His chosen people in the way of holiness, “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy”” (Leviticus 19:1-2 NKJV).

Usage Notes: The noun “law; direction; instruction” occurs 220 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Wherever the noun does not appear with a definite article, *torah* signifies primarily “direction, teaching, instruction.” For example, “The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life, to turn *one* away from the snares of death.” (Proverbs 13:14 NKJV); and “Receive, please, instruction [*tôrâh*] from His mouth, and lay up His words in your heart” (Job 22:22 NKJV).

The "instruction" given by God to Moses and the Israelites became known as “the law” or “the direction” (*hattôrâ*), and quite frequently as “the Law of the Lord”: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord” (Psa. 119:1 NKJV), or “the Law of God”: “Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, [Ezra] read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner” (Nehemiah 8:18 NKJV), and also as “the Law of [given through] Moses.” The prophets often called Israel to repent by returning to the *torah* (“instruction”) of God (Isaiah 1:10). The last prophet of the Old Testament reminded the priests of their obligations (Malachi 2) and challenged God's people to remember the *torah* ("law") of Moses in preparation for the coming Messiah “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments” (Malachi 4:4 NKJV).

2. MIŠWĀ

Hebrew Word: מִצְוָה (or מִצְוָה)

Transliteration: *mišwâ* (or *mitsvah, mizvah*)

English Words used in KJV:

commandments 177
 precept 4
 commanded 2
 law 1
 ordinances 1
 [Total Count: 181]

The Hebrew word “Commandment” means “to set up” or “constitute” ...as in a constitutional command. It is a direct, definite, and clear command of God – such as “Thou shalt not steal.” These commands, laws, ordinances, or precepts are orders from God to His people. His will concerning what should and what should not be done is absolute and is to be obeyed without question.

Usage Notes: The noun “commandment” occurs 181 times in the Old Testament. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 26:5, where *mišwâ* is synonymous with *ḥōq* (“statute”) and *tôrâ* (“law”): “...because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (NKJV). In the Pentateuch, God is always the Giver of the *mišwâ* “commandment.” For example: Deuteronomy 8:1-2 (NKJV) “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.” A “commandment” of God may be a prescription (“thou shalt do ...”) or a proscription (“thou shalt not do ...”). The commandments were given in the hearing of the Israelites who were to “do” and “keep” them (Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 4:2; 11:13; Leviticus 4:2ff; Psalm 78:7) Any failure to do so signified a covenantal breach, transgression, and apostasy (Num. 15:31; 2 Chron. 24:20; 1 Kings 18:18).

The plural of *mišwâ* often denotes a “body of laws” given by divine revelation. They are God’s “word”: Psalm 119:9 (NKJV) “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.” They are also known as “the commandments of God.” Outside the Pentateuch, “commandments” are given by kings (1 Kings 2:43), fathers (Jeremiah 35:14), people (Isaiah 29:13), and teachers of wisdom (Proverbs 6:20). Only about ten percent of all occurrences in the Old Testament fit this category.

3. MISHPĀṬ

Hebrew Word: מִשְׁפָּט
Transliteration: *mishpāṭ*

English Words used in KJV:
 judgment 296
 manner 38

right 18
 cause 12
 ordinance 11
 lawful 7
 order 5
 worthy 3
 fashion 3
 custom 2
 discretion 2
 law 2
 measure 2
 sentence 2
miscellaneous translations 18
 [Total Count: 421]

The noun “Judgment” (*mishpat*) appears around 420 times in the King James Version of the Bible; it means “to set straight” or “upright” and refers to a judicial or governing decision or decree. This word is intended to convey the judgments or decisions God has laid down about human situations. The word “judgments” or “ordinances” then is the standard given for fair dealings between man and man that are to be their guidance system.

Usage Notes: This word conveys two main thoughts; the first deals with the act of sitting as a judge, hearing a case, and rendering a proper verdict. Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV) “For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” is one such occurrence. *Mishpāṭ* can also refer to the “rights” belonging to someone as in Exodus 23:6 (NKJV) “You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute.” The word also relates to the sphere in which things are in proper relationship to one’s claims as in Genesis 18:19 (NKJV) “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.” *Mishpat* can also refer to a judicial verdict as in Deuteronomy 17:9 (NKJV) “And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them*; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.” The word can refer to the statement of the case for the accused as in Numbers 27:5 (NKJV) “So Moses brought their case before the LORD”; and an established ordinance as in Exodus 21:1 (NKJV) “Now these *are* the judgments which you shall set before them”.

4. ‘ĒDŪT

Hebrew Word: עֵדוּת, ‘*ēdūt*
Transliteration: ‘*ēdūt*

English Words used in KJV:
 testimony 55
 witness 4
 [Total Count: 59]

Testimony or Testimonies (*eduth, edah*): the Hebrew meaning is “to reiterate”, “to go back and go over”, “to testify”, or “to witness.” The testimonies spoken of in this context refer to God’s revealed law. It is the witness that Yahweh/Jehovah will keep His promises. In Deuteronomy 31:26, Israel was told to place the book of the law beside the Ark of the Covenant that it may remain there for a witness against the people. Paul reflected this idea when he wrote in Romans 3:19 (NKJV) “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” In other words, the law (torah) with its high standards and clear warnings is meant to be a testimony to remind people that God’s word is unchangeable, trustworthy, and true. Therefore, the law, which is God’s revealed will, is beyond question and beyond contradiction – it is to be observed wholeheartedly. “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” Psalm 19:7 (NKJV).

Usage Notes: “testimony; ordinance.” This term appears 83 times in the Bible, but only after the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. *Eduth* refers to the Ten Commandments as a solemn, divine charge or duty. The word specifically refers to those commandments that were written on the tablets and displayed as a reminder and “testimony” of Israel’s relationship and responsibility to God: “And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” Exodus 31:18 (NKJV). In Exodus 25:16, the tablets of the law are called simply, “the testimony.” Because these tablets were stored in the Ark of the Covenant, the ark became known as the “ark of the testimony” (Exodus 25:22). In Exodus 16:34 (the first biblical occurrence of the word) it is simply “the testimony.” The tabernacle itself – as the housing for the ark containing these tablets – could also be called the “tabernacle of testimony” or the “tent of the testimony” (Exodus 38:21; Numbers 9:15).

In Psalm 19:7 (NKJV) the word refers to the entire law of God: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple...” (Here is an example of the Hebrew literary device of a “parallel” which is used synonymously to reinforce a larger concept of the law.) Special or particular laws are sometimes called “testimonies.” For example: 1 Kings 2:3 (NKJV) “And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn...” In Psalm 122:4 the annual pilgrimage feasts are called “the testimony of Israel.”

5. HUQQÂ

Hebrew Word: הַחֻקִּים (Original Word: חֻק, *hōq*)

Transliteration: huqqâ

English Words used in KJV:

statute 87

ordinance 9

decree 7
 due 4
 law 4
 portion 3
 bounds 2
 custom 2
 appointed 1
 commandments 1
miscellaneous translations 7
 [Total Count: 127]

Statute, or Ordinance (*huqqa*): this noun is derived from the Hebrew verb *hāqaq*, “to cut in”, “determine, decree” or “to engrave” or “to inscribe.” The noun refers to a statute that is an engraved word or decree chiseled out on a stone. *Huqqa* speaks of the binding force of God’s word in definite prescribed written laws. The statutes of God are fixed laws; they are very authoritative, and the full power of God is behind them. These statutes, ordinances, prescriptions, rules and regulations are there to mark the way for His people and to describe the line of conduct that they are to pursue and observe.

Usage notes 1: The original word, *Hōq* occurs 127 times in biblical Hebrew. The first usage of *hōq* is in Genesis 47:22 (NKJV) “Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations *allotted to them* [an enactment; hence an appointment (of time, space, quantity, labor or usage) appointed, bound, or decreed] by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.” The word *hōq* also signifies “law,” or “statute.” Used in a general sense it can refer to the “laws” of nature like rain (Job 28:26; Jeremiah 5:22; Psalm 148:6). Note the use of *hōq* in Jeremiah 31:35-36 (NKJV) “Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): ‘If those ordinances depart From before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.’” The word may also denote a “law” promulgated in a country as in Genesis 47:26 when Joseph made it a law in Egypt that a fifth part of the harvest should be given to Pharaoh.

The most important use of in the Scriptures is for a “law” given by God. Exodus 18:16 (NKJV) “When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes[*hōq*] of God and His laws[*tôrâ*].”

Because the synonyms for *hōq* “statute” are *mišwâ*, “commandment”, *mishpāt*, “judgment”, *berît*, “covenant”, *tôrâ*, “law”, and *‘ēdūt*, “testimony”, it is not easy to distinguish between these synonyms, even when they are found in conjunction with each other as in Deuteronomy 6:17 (NKJV) “You shall diligently keep the commandments [*mišwâ*] of the LORD your God, His testimonies [*‘ēdâ*], and His statutes [*hōq*], which He has commanded you.”

Usage 2 Notes: The Hebrew term *huqqâ* is used about 104 times in the Bible.

English Words used in KJV:

statute 77
 ordinance 22
 custom 2
 appointed 1
 manners 1
 rites 1
 [Total Count: 104]

Huqqâ is found for the first time when God commends Abraham in Genesis 26:5 (NKJV) (note the synonyms *mishmeret*, *mišwâ*, and *tôrâ*) “... because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge [*mishmeret*], My commandments [*mišwâ*], My statutes [*huqqâ*], and My laws [*tôrâ*].”

The primary use of *huqqâ* is in the Pentateuch, especially in Leviticus and Numbers. When the word is used to mean "fixed" it is similar to the usage of *hōq*, in the sense of the laws of nature (Jeremiah 33:25; Job 38:33) or a fixed period of harvest – from April to June (Jeremiah 5:24). In addition to regularity of nature, the word *huqqâ* is used to signify regular payment to the priests that the Lord commanded to be given them by a statute “forever throughout their generations” (Leviticus 7:36). The word *huqqâ* is also used to refer to the customs of the nations. Israel was commanded to abstain from pagan practices in that they were considered to be degenerate (Lev. 18:3, 30; 20:23).

The most significant usage of *huqqâ* is God's “law” (*hōq* denotes general word for "law," whereas *huqqâ* denotes a particular “law”). Examples of particular laws relating to festivals or rituals are: the “law” of the Passover (Exodus 12:14), the “law” of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:17), the “law” of the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:41), the “law” of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29ff.), the “law” of the priesthood (Exodus 29:9), and the “law” of the blood and fat (Leviticus 3:17). The word *huqqâ* has several synonyms. At times it forms a part of a series of three as in Deuteronomy 8:11 (NKJV) “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments [*mišwâ*], His judgments [*mishpāt*], and His statutes [*huqqâ*], which I command you today...” And at other times *huqqâ* appears in a series of four: Deuteronomy 11:1 (NKJV) “Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge [*mishmeret*], His statutes [*huqqâ*], His judgments [*mishpāt*], and His commandments [*mišwâ*] always.” (Also note Genesis 26:5 above with *tôrâ* instead of *mishpāt*).

The prophet Ezekiel condemned Judah for rejecting God's holy "statutes": Ezekiel 5:6 (NKJV) “She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes [*huqqâ*] more than the countries that *are* all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes [*huqqâ*].” The prophet also challenged God's people to repent and return to God's "statutes" that they might live: Ezekiel 33:15 (NKJV) “...if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes [*huqqâ*] of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die.”

6. PIQQÛD**Hebrew Word:** פִּקּוּד

Transliteration: piqqûd

English Words used in KJV:

precept 21
 commandment 2
 statute 1
 [Total Count: 24]

Precept (*piqqud*) literally means “to take oversight”, “to take charge”, or “to look closely and responsively into a situation and take action.” The word is used to mean “properly appointed,” as in a **mandate** of God. (The plural form is used only in a collective sense for the *Law*.) A “precept” is to be followed like a prescription that the doctor gives – for the person receiving it is responsible to obey it. *Piqqud* is used exclusively for “precept” in Psalm 119. Here are a few examples of how the word is used in the Psalm:

- You have commanded us to keep Your **precepts** diligently.” (4)
- I will meditate on Your **precepts**, and contemplate Your ways. (15)
- And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your **precepts**. (45)
- I will never forget Your **precepts**, for by them You have given me life. (93)
- Through Your **precepts** I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. (104)
- Therefore all Your **precepts** concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way. (128)
- I keep Your **precepts** and Your testimonies, for all my ways *are* before You. (168)

There is power in a precept because God’s full authority is behind it.

7. DĀBĀR**Hebrew Word:** דָּבָר

Transliteration: dābār

English Words used in KJV:

word 807
 thing 231
 matter 63
 acts 51
 chronicles 38
 saying 25
 commandment 20
miscellaneous translations 204
 [Total Count: 1439]

Word occurs 1,440 times in the Bible. It is a noun that means “word; matter; thing.” *Dābār* refers, first, to what is said, to the actual “word” itself, which is different from the Hebrew *’ēmer* which is essentially oral communication (the act of speaking).

Usage Notes: This noun is used to convey the idea or content of what is spoken. For example, when God “did according to the word of Moses” (Exodus 8:13), He granted his request. The noun can connote a specific “matter” or “affair,” as in Genesis 12:17 where it is reported that God struck Pharaoh’s household with plagues because of the “matter of Sarah” (KJV, “because of Sarai”). *Dābār* can refer to a record of events of a specific period or of a particular person as in Gen. 15:1; 1 Kings 11:41 and 14:19.

The term can be used as a more general term in the sense of “something”, or “everything” (note Genesis 24:66 NKJV “And the servant told Isaac all the things [*dābār*] that he had done.) This noun also appears to have had a technical status in Israel’s law procedures in that anyone who had a *dābār* (“matter”) before Moses had a law case (Exod. 18:16).

As a phrase, “the word of the Lord” is quite important in the Old Testament Scriptures; it occurs about 242 times, and in all but a few cases the term chosen for “word” is *dābār*. In this case, “word” is intended to focus the meaning of the phrase upon the content (meaning) of what was said, but it also implies the actual “words” themselves and indicates God’s thoughts and will. It was the “word of the Lord” that came to Abram in a vision after his victory over the kings who had captured Lot (Genesis 15:1). In most cases *dābār* is expressly applied to prophetic revelation (about 225 times).

Some scholars argue that the closest word in the New Testament to capture the idea of the Hebrew *dābār* is the Greek, *rhēma* (“that which is said, a word”). A *rhēma* word can be like a precept in that it is a word prescribed by God for a person’s good, but John 1:1 takes the idea much further and expresses the idea of Jesus being the “word” *logos* of God – that is the expression of God’s thoughts and will manifested in human form. Once a “word of the Lord” (*dābār* or *rhēma*) is received by an individual, they are to take charge of that word because it is meaningful to their well-being and in almost all cases is intended to be shared. (Note Numbers 15:31; 1 Kings 2:27; Jeremiah 7:1-3; Luke 2:17).

8. DĀT

Hebrew Word: דָּת
Transliteration: *dāt*

English Words used in KJV:
law 11
decree 3
[Total Count: 14]

Decree, law (*dāt*) corresponds to another similar word of an uncertain derivative (perhaps a foreign Syriac; Persian loan-word) meaning a royal *edict* or statute. *Dāt* is a noun that has very limited uses in the Bible.

Usage Notes: The Biblical Hebrew term used here for **decree, law** has slightly different meanings.

1. A **decree** of king in [Daniel 2:13,15](#); [Ezra 7:26](#); with suffix [Daniel 2:9](#) *decree against you*.
2. An **unchangeable law** of Medes and Persians [Daniel 6:9](#); [Daniel 6:13](#); [Daniel 6:16](#).
3. A **law of God** (in mouth of non-Jews): [Daniel 6:6](#); [Ezra 7:12,14,21,26](#), also (absolute) [Daniel 7:25](#); *laws of God* [Ezra 7:25](#).

HANOUT
OT 101-11

The Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy Chapter 5

No other gods (5:6-7). God had exclusive claim to Israel's allegiance. No false rival to their worship of the one, true, living God should be allowed to exist.

No idols (5:8-10). God's people must worship in Spirit and Truth (Note: Is. 40:18-20 & John 4:24). Idol worship is based upon a false spirituality.

Do not take the name of God in vain (5:11). Yahweh means the "One Who Is Ever Present." To take His name "in vain" means to consider the name empty or meaningless: to deny or doubt His presence and power while invoking His name.

Keep the Sabbath holy (5:12-15). The Sabbath Day is a day of rest to honor God's creative acts. The Sabbath is the Lord's Day; God is holy and His people must keep it holy. Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, reminds New Testament believers that, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:27, 28).

Honor father and mother (5:16). Disrespect for parents leads to rebellion against all God-given authority. Rebellion against God-given leaders is the same as rebellion against God.

Do not murder (5:17). The sacred right of every person to life is protected. ANY act that unjustly robs another person of life is included in the prohibition.

Do not commit adultery (5:18). Marriage is a sacred institution designed by God to build strong families for nurturing, and caring for one another. Adultery destroys family life, destroys the love and trust between husband and wife, and defiles the purity of the sexual intimacy intended for one man and one woman to share only with each other. Adultery left unchecked will destroy the community of believers.

Do not steal (5:19). This commandment protects rights of individuals to possess personal, private property they have labored for and that are an important part of their daily existence.

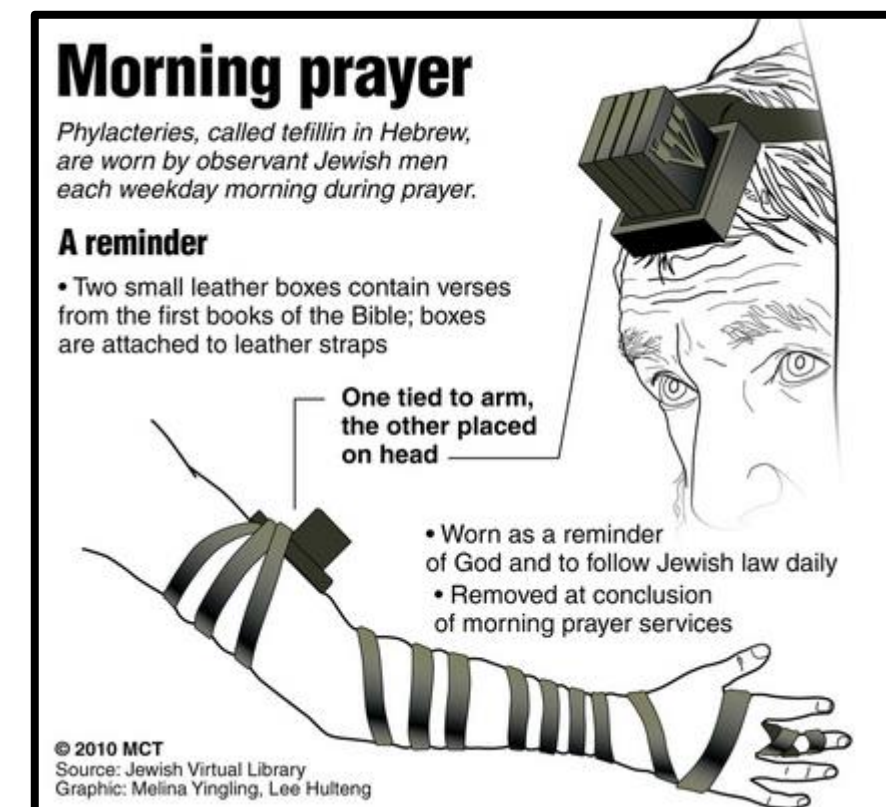
Do not give false testimony (5:20). An individual's reputation is to be respected along with his life and property. Gossip and perjury cause dissention and destroy the unity of the community.

Do not covet (5:21). When a person's thoughts dwell on taking what belongs to another, they have begun the process that leads to committing sin. Refusing to covet will help God's people to keep all the other commandments.

HANDOUT

OT 101-11

The Jewish Frontlet



The Phylactery (Tefillin) or Frontlet was made of strips of parchment on which were written four passages of Scripture: Ex. 13:2-10, 11-17; Deut. 6:4-9; 13-23. They were rolled up in a case of black calfskin, which was attached to a stiffer piece of leather, having a thong one finger broad and one and a half cubits long. One was placed at the bend of the left arm and another one was worn on the forehead. Most of the Jewish males wore them during prayer, but the Pharisees made an exception and wore them all the time.

HANDOUT OT 101-11

Where is the Ark of the Covenant?

by Thomas S. McCall, Th.D.

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<http://www.levitt.com/essays/ark.html>

Introduction

The Ark of the Covenant disappeared off of the pages of history by the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Nothing in the Bible is said about the Ark in the Old Testament after the return from Babylon, but the Apocrypha states that the Ark could not be found when the Jewish people rebuilt the Temple at the time of Ezra and Zechariah. The explanation in the Apocrypha was that Jeremiah hid the Ark in a cave in Mt. Nebo before the Babylonian invasion, and that its location would not be revealed until God was ready for it to be found.

No Ark in the Second Temple

Thus, the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple was an empty chamber, without the Ark of the Covenant. When the Roman General Pompey conquered Jerusalem around 63 B.C., he demanded the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. When he did, he came out saying that he could not understand what all the interest was about the sanctuary, when it was only an empty room.

The fact that the Ark of the Covenant was not used in the Second Temple has led to the speculation of where the Ark is, or if it still exists on the earth. The Ark was so important in Israel from the time of Moses through the Judges and the First Temple era, that it seems remarkable that nothing is said of it in the Bible after the Babylonian Captivity, until the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. In Hebrews it is described as it was in the original Tabernacle made by Moses; and in Revelation, the Ark is seen by John in heaven. In neither case is the Ark mentioned as something that remains on the earth now.

Is the Ark Needed for the Tribulation Temple?

One question that arises is, can the Temple be rebuilt if it does not contain the Ark? The Scriptures indicate that the Temple will be rebuilt and standing during the Tribulation period,

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and that the Tribulation Temple will be desecrated by the Antichrist. How can the worship of Yahweh be resumed as it was in ancient times if there is no Ark in the Holy of Holies? We have already seen, though, that the absence of the Ark of the Covenant did not keep the Temple from being rebuilt at the conclusion of the Babylonian Captivity.

The Second Temple stood for over 500 years without containing an Ark, and it was fully recognized as a valid house of worship for the Lord. Christ Himself declared the Temple to be His Father's House. So it would not be unthinkable to build the Tribulation Temple, even if the Ark is not discovered. If the Ark does still exist, however, and it were somehow discovered, it would certainly give rise to a strong movement in Israel and around the world to rebuild the Temple to house the Ark properly.

Is the Ark Hidden in the Temple Mount?

There persists a legend that the Ark does exist on earth, but is hidden. A recently published book by Randall Price, entitled *In Search of Temple Treasures*, presents the various views on what has happened to the Ark. Some of the traditions place the Ark outside of Israel, such as at Mt. Nebo, Egypt and even far-off Ethiopia. But all of these traditions have problems and seem unlikely, since there is a lack of any scriptural evidence for them.

A view that has predominated in rabbinic circles is that the Ark was hidden in a cave beneath the Temple Mount in the very heart of Israel. The theory goes that the priests hid the Ark beneath the Temple Mount, perhaps as early as during the time of King Josiah, since the coming prophesied invasion by the Babylonians was only a matter of time. By hiding the Ark and other Temple treasures, the priests felt that the priceless sacred articles could be protected from desecration by the pagan invaders.

Why Didn't Israel Use the Ark in the Second Temple?

As it turned out, the Babylonians did invade Jerusalem. They destroyed the Temple and carried away many of the vessels and implements to their capital city a thousand miles away. No mention is made in the Scriptures of the Babylonians taking the Ark, the Menorah, or other key Temple items. If the Ark and the other implements were hidden under the Temple, why weren't they recovered and used after the Captivity? It's hard to imagine that the priests would have knowingly left the Ark out of the Holy of Holies if they could have utilized it during the 500 years of the Second Temple.

The explanation offered is that they felt that as long as Jerusalem was subject to domination by the succeeding powers of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome, the Ark and other treasures could be desecrated and captured by the Gentile armies. Thus, the sacred items would remain in seclusion until it was considered safe to bring them out to be placed in the Temple.

The Rabbinical Attempt to Find the Ark

At any rate, Rabbi Shlomo Goren and Rabbi Yehuda Getz, the rabbis in charge of the Western Wall area, are convinced that the Ark has been hidden in a cave in the Temple Mount directly

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under the site of the Holy of Holies, since the time of King Josiah. They probably represent the majority of Orthodox rabbis in their views. They have a concept of vertical air space, by which the space of the Holy of Holies sanctifies the ground directly below it. Thus, the ancient priests would have been careful to locate the cave repository for the Ark in the sanctified area below the Holy of Holies. The evidence for all of these suppositions about the location of the Ark, as Rabbi Getz concedes, comes more from the Talmud than the Scriptures. Nevertheless, there is a large and growing group of Orthodox Jewish adherents who believe that the Ark is in this cave below the Holy of Holies, and awaits the right time to be found.

Rabbi Getz believes that in 1982 he was very close, within 40 feet, to finding the cave in which the Ark resides. He was conducting a search in an old tunnel that had been filled with the debris of centuries, which runs perpendicular to the Western Wall and under the Temple Mount. However, when the Moslems discovered that there were diggings being conducted under the Dome of the Rock, they threatened a general riot and the diggings were stopped. The rabbi explains that, for the sake of maintaining peace with their Moslem neighbors, the Israelis had to reseal the entrance to the tunnel, and it remains blocked up to this day.

Temple Interest an Indication of the Imminent Rapture

The Scriptures are not clear as to whether the Ark of the Covenant still exists on the earth, but they are clear that the Temple will be rebuilt and standing during the Tribulation. There is no question that if the Ark were found, it would give enormous impetus to the rebuilding of the Temple to house it. Bible-believing Christians should keep a sharp eye out for any developments surrounding the Temple Mount, realizing that it is a key element leading to the Tribulation era. The closer we get to the Tribulation, the closer we are to the imminent Rapture of the Church, which, we believe the Scriptures teach, will precede the Tribulation. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

<http://www.levitt.com/essays/ark.html>

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HANDOUT OT 101-11

WAS THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CRUEL AND BLOODTHIRSTY?

“These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth...” Deuteronomy 12:1 (NKJV)

Israel was the instrument through which God would bring His final judgment and destruction of the Canaanites and their religion. Some non-believers have asked if it was fair for God to destroy these people, and some have gone further and accused the “Old Testament God” of being bloodthirsty and cruel for His commands to Israel to totally wipe out a whole race of people. But these questions ignore some very basic facts about the time and place of these commands:

- First the Canaanites were given 400 years to repent and change their ways while God allowed His children to suffer in Egypt (Genesis 15:13-16). Rather than repenting, the Canaanites sank ever deeper into sin and debauchery (Note Romans 1:18-32). Their cultic practices ritualized behaviors that were filthy and abhorrent to the Holy God of Israel. The Canaanites had forty years to watch the approach of the Israelites who did not sneak their way into Canaan by some backward route.

The story of Balaam and Balak (Numbers 22-25) was not only an object lesson for the tribes of Israel that could be applied here, but it also indicated that the Canaanites were fully aware of what was coming and still had a chance to repent, but chose not to. Those who accuse the God of Israel of being a cruel and bloodthirsty God ignore the fact that the Canaanite peoples were the guilty ones in that they practiced child sacrifice as part of their fertility cult. They worshipped a multitude of gods and goddesses, but Baal, the storm god, and Ashtoreth, his consort were the most important. The wooden Ashtoreth poles were phallic symbols and were erected in their “sacred places” where the men would make use of both male and female cult prostitutes as a means to worship their gods. Since the Canaanite religion was a fertility cult the purpose of their religious practices was to please or appease the gods through sorcery, blood, and sex so that their gods might influence the powers of nature to give them bountiful crops for themselves and for their flocks and herds. The Canaanites polluted God’s land from every mountain and hill (“the high places”) where they established places of worship in the false belief that it would get them closer to the abodes of the gods. The Canaanites also worshipped under the large trees, which were also symbols of fertility.

However, more than just being God’s instrument of judgment, Israel was commanded to destroy the nations in the land where they would live so that they would not be tempted and seduced into following them, like they did at Moab (Numbers 25). Sexual desire is a very powerful force and Satan often uses sex in the name of religion to capture and destroy the souls of men. As the history of the Children of Israel unfolds, it will be seen how their failure to be 100% obedient in this command to destroy all vestiges of idolatry in the land will come

back time and time again to damage them; and in the end will lead to destruction and captivity. Not only must Israel obey for their sakes, but if after the Lord drives out the Canaanites, His own people engage in the same practices as the Canaanites, it would be a great insult to the Lord. *“You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”* Deuteronomy 12:31-32 (NKJV)

HANDOUT OT 101-11

Why God’s People Are Commanded Not to Worship Idols

It is for our own good that God commands His people to avoid the temptation to follow those who worship idols. We cannot walk blamelessly before the Lord and worship idols:

1. **Because it will make us repulsive to God.**
Those who preach that God hates sin, but loves the sinner insult the integrity and holiness of God. Yes, God wants all people to repent and receive His love and mercy, but He will in no way tolerate sin or the sinner. The first four of the Ten Commandments make it clear that God considers idol worship to be sinners.
2. **Because the horrible practices associated with idolatry will lead to the ruin of those who worship idols.** The Israelites were not just witnesses for God; they were the instruments God used to bring His judgment upon those who reveled in sin and rebellion. It would be folly, and an insult to the Lord if those who say they believe in the God of the Bible to practice the very same things that God’s Word says He hates (see Romans 1:18-32).
3. **Because we are given clear instructions to obey the Lord’s commandments.** The blessings of health, protection and prosperity for God’s people depended upon our obedience to the Lord’s commandments. First of all we, we are to have no other gods before Him; and second, we are not to make any manmade object into something to worship. Idolatry brings an end to God’s blessings and brings His curses upon His people instead. God’s people have been given clear instructions and fair warnings not to participate in those evil practices. Therefore, regardless of what others do, it is expected for God’s people to be perfect as the God they serve is perfect. (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 John 5:21).

HANDOUT
OT 101-12**CITIES OF REFUGE**

“Without justice, society would fall apart, anarchy would take over, and it wouldn’t be safe for people to leave their homes. Israel didn’t have the elaborate police system we have today, so locating and punishing guilty criminals depended primarily on the elders and the judges. By singling out the ‘cities of refuge,’ the Lord promoted justice in the land.” Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, Published by David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, © 2007, p.347

The Lord instructed Israel to set aside special **Cities of Refuge**. Six Levitical cities were specially chosen for refuge to protect anyone suspected of involuntary homicide. The guilty party could remain in the city until released from banishment by the death of the high priest. (Numbers 35:6, 13, 15; Josh 20:2, 7, 9). The following cities (three on each side of the Jordan River) were designated as sanctuary cities of refuge.

1. KEDESH, in Naphtali. 1 Chr 6:76
2. SHECHEM, in Mount Ephraim. Josh 21:21; 1 Chr 6:67; 2 Chr 10:1
3. HEBRON, in Judah. Josh 21:13; 2 Sam 5:5; 1 Chr 6:55; 29:27; 2 Chr 11:10
4. On the east side of Jordan - BEZER, in the tribe of Reuben, in the plains of Moab. Deut. 4:43; Josh 20:8; 21:36; 1 Macc. 5:26.
5. RAMOTH-GILEAD, in the tribe of Gad. Deut. 4:43; Josh 21:38; 1 Kin 22:3
6. GOLAN, in Bashan, in the half-tribe of Manasseh. Deut. 4:43; Josh 21:27; 1 Chr 6:71

Source: *Smith's Bible Dictionary: Comprising Antiquities, Biography, Geography, Natural History, Archaeology and Literature*.

Human reason alone has led civilizations to create laws to govern people whenever they live together. Therefore, it is only reasonable to find similarities between Mosaic Law and other ancient law codes. But when comparing the biblical law of homicide relative to that of the other ancient codes, the student should concentrate on discovering the progressiveness of the biblical law relative to those of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. In a general sense, in non-biblical law codes economic and political concerns predominate. On the other hand, biblical law contains a religious evaluation based upon the holiness of God, the sanctity of life, and the need for the community to respect the Lord who is their King.

The modern laws of most Christian nations still follow Mosaic Law in making a distinction between murder and manslaughter (Ex. 21:12–14; Lev. 24:17). Cities of refuge allowed all the parties involved to seek justice before the law was taken into their own hands and vigilante punishment at the hands of “the avenger of blood” prevailed. Taking matters into their own hands would only lead to more violence and bloodshed and embroil the whole community in the conflict. Cities of refuge were not intended for the guilty to go free, but were created to be a safe haven for the accused until the facts of the case could be sorted out and a just verdict declared. Even if a person was found innocent of a capital crime, he or she still paid a price for unintentionally killing another human being. The same applies today in the cases of wrongful death where civil damages can be sought by a victim’s family. The greater issue involved here is that Israel was not to be like the Canaanites they were driving out.

HANDOUT
OT 101-12**New Wine in Old Wineskins?**

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." Matthew 9:14-17 (NKJV)

There is a great debate among Christians concerning the Laws of the Old Testament. Some Christians say the Old Testament law is to be discarded like an old wineskin. Since the “new wine” of the Gospel has come, we are no longer under the Law but live by grace; the Old Testament is at best ancient history. However, anyone who attempts to argue that the Laws of the Old Testament are irrelevant or have been swept away has to contend with the words of Jesus in His sermon: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-20 NKJV).

The answer to this question will be found when we carefully examine all of Jesus’ teachings concerning the Law of Moses. Jesus’ most extensive teachings on the Law are found in “His Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew chapters 5 – 7). These chapters in Matthew are reminiscent of the final chapters found in Deuteronomy – except that in Matthew, Jesus speaks to the people from one mountain instead of two (Deuteronomy 27:11-13). Jesus begins His sermon by pronouncing the unconditional blessings (Beatitudes) of those who follow Him. The blessings Jesus describes are unconditional and by grace, and therefore, are not the same as the blessings described in Deuteronomy. The blessings of obedience described in the final chapters of Deuteronomy are all material blessings – abundant crops, herds, protection from foreign invasion, earthly prosperity, and a healthy family life. The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount are all spiritual blessings – citizenship in kingdom of heaven, comfort for the troubled soul, imputed righteousness, mercy, God’s presence, and sonship with the Father. The rewards Moses described in Deuteronomy are temporal and temporary; the rewards Jesus described in Matthew are heavenly and eternal.

Far from rendering null and void the Mosaic Laws with their accompanying blessings and curses, Jesus’ sermon affirms and vindicates the authority of the law found in the Pentateuch. From the totality of Jesus’ teachings on the Mosaic Law, it is clear that Jesus in no way condemns it or ignores it. Jesus’ arguments with the Jewish authorities swirl around human

additions to the law (traditions like fasting, washings, and many of the Sabbath observances that were added by the Pharisees and teachers of the law centuries after Mosaic Law was given on Mount Sinai). Jesus also confronted the religious leaders over their errors about the place of the law in the community of faith. Jesus had no issues with the commandments to worship God alone and to make no idols, but He did contend with those who placed their wealth and possessions ahead of seeking first the kingdom of God and righteousness. Jesus had no issues with the Sabbath laws written in the books of the Law and the Prophets, but he did contend with those who made the Law into their god. The religious leaders of Jesus' day used the Law of Moses as a wedge to separate from God's mercy those who needed it most. They were turning His people into slaves to the laws that were intended to free them from the curse of sin, and liberate them to a life lived by the grace and mercy of God. **Jesus fulfilled the Law by rightly interpreting it and applying it in the way it was intended. Jesus' teachings on the Law can be summed up in His statement: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28 NKJV).**

Some might ask, "Does this mean that Christians are obliged to keep the same Laws the Jews were required to obey? The answer is "For righteousness' sake, no." But no one can expect God to bless them with health, wealth, and prosperity in this life if they live in total rebellion against His moral Law that is expressed in His Ten Commandments. The righteous who live by faith are more than *hearers* of the law, but are also *doers*. "...the righteousness of the disciples can never be a personal achievement; it is always a gift, which they received when they were called to follow him. In fact their righteousness consists precisely in their following him, and in the beatitudes the reward of the kingdom of heaven has been promised to it. It is righteousness under the cross, it belongs only to the poor, the tempted, the hungry, the meek, the peacemakers, the persecuted – who endure their lot for the sake of Jesus; it is the visible righteousness of those who for the sake of Jesus are the light of the world and the city set on the hill. This is where the righteousness of the disciple exceeds that of the Pharisees; it is grounded solely upon the call to fellowship with him who alone fulfills the law. Their righteousness is righteousness indeed, for from henceforth they do the will of God and fulfill the law themselves. Again, it is not enough to teach righteousness that comes by faith, it must be *done*; otherwise it is no better than the old law. In what follows, the disciples are told how to practice this righteousness of Christ. In a word, it meant following him. It is the real and active faith in the righteousness of Christ. It is the new law, the law of Christ." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Touchstone, New York, N.Y., 1995, p. 125.

HANDOUT OT 101-12

WHO OWNS THE LAND?

Stanley A. Ellisen, *Who Owns the Land?* Multnomah Press, Portland, © 1991, pg. 17-19

"Two Old Testament covenants relate specifically to Israel's divine right to the land of Palestine. The first is the Abrahamic covenant in which the Lord guaranteed the patriarch that his descendants would receive the land as an 'everlasting possession' (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 17:8). In response to Abram's plea to make Ishmael the covenant heir, the Lord declared that his covenant promises were non-negotiable; Ishmael would receive great blessings, but the covenant promises would go to and through Isaac (Genesis 17:18-21). To emphasize this the Lord later met with both Isaac and Jacob to confirm the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 26:3; 28:13). The later prophets further appealed to this covenant to justify Israel's right to the land as they went in to claim it (Deuteronomy 1:8; 1 Chronicles 16:15-18; Nehemiah 9:8; Ezekiel 33:24). Though Abraham only 'sojourned' in the land, his descendants were promised the land as an everlasting inheritance.

The Palestinian Covenant with Israel

Some six hundred years later, the Palestinian covenant was given to Moses (Deuteronomy 28 – 30). It confirmed the earlier promise to Abraham as Israel was about to cross Jordan into Canaan. In it the Lord itemized the conditions under which his people were to occupy the land. He emphasized that the land belonged to him; it was his special covenant land which he was giving to his covenant people. Grounded on the Abrahamic covenant, this promise too was unconditional; it guaranteed that Palestine would eventually belong to Israel forever (Genesis 13:14-15; Psalm 105:9-11). But its benefits were conditional, depending upon Jewish obedience and conduct (Deuteronomy 28:1ff). Should Israel persist in disobedience, the Lord warned he would "[uproot] them from their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath" (Deuteronomy 29:28, NASB). As the Lord's covenant people, they could occupy the covenant land only if they observed the covenant law. That land belonged to the Lord whose name was Jehovah (YHWH or "Covenant Lord").

Though this Palestinian covenant promised discipline and dispersion for disobedience, it also promised restoration whenever the nation would return to the Lord. When 'you return to the Lord your God and obey Him... then the Lord your God will restore you... and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you' (Deuteronomy 30:2-3, NASB). Knowing the people's propensity for evil and how they would fail miserably in the following centuries, the Lord yet assured them of their final return and restoration after being scattered to 'the ends of the earth' (Deuteronomy 30:4, NASB).

These final words of Moses to the fledgling nation constituted both a divine warning and encouragement: a warning that unbelief and rebellion would bring the Lord's judgment through a worldwide scattering; but a promise that repentance would bring final restoration to the land forever. Thus the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants were Israel's divine guarantee of the land and became the basis of her later claims to Palestine."

HANDOUT
OT 101-12

The Third Person Narrative Style of the Pentateuch

Those who study the literary style of the Pentateuch quickly recognize that most of the events involving Moses were written in the third person. Literary scholars have long recognized third-person narration as a legitimate and useful tool that provides the greatest flexibility to the author and thus is recognized as the most commonly used narrative mode in literature. In the third-person narrative mode, each and every character of the story is referred to by the narrator as "he", "she", "it", or "they", but never as "I" or "we" (first-person), or "you" (second-person). The third-person narrative is intended to give the author an objective authority in telling the story. Since the narrator is merely an unspecified entity or uninvolved person, in Moses' case it conveys that as the author he is not subjectively involved as a character within the story being told.

In the Pentateuch, when Moses appears as the third-person narrator of the story, he writes as if he was not present, or if present, he was not the main character and the story being told is about someone else. Although much of the story told in the Pentateuch is narrated from his objective perspective as the author, Exodus thru Deuteronomy is not to be read as Moses' own story. To further drive home the idea that the Pentateuch is not to be read as Moses' own story, he uses the objectivity axis of third-person mode, which means there is no attempt on his part to express his personal, inward thoughts or feelings of the events, even when he is at the center of them. The objectivity axis Moses uses is more narrowly classified as the "limited axis," narrative style in which a limited narrator may know absolutely everything about a single character (Moses) and every piece of knowledge in that character's mind, but the narrator's knowledge is "limited" to that character — that is, the narrator cannot describe things unknown to the focal character. In the final chapter of the Pentateuch, an unknown author (Joshua?) completes Moses' story by describing his death using the same literary style Moses incorporated throughout most of the story.

Proof