



Old Testament Survey

Part Two: Leviticus through Ruth

History of the Law and Conquest

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

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- Survey of the Old Testament by Mike Willis, GOT Foundation
- Old Testament Outlines by Ethan Longhenry, disciple_of_iesus@hotmail.com
- Eerdmans Pulpit Commentary
- Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament
- Gill's Exposition of the Bible
- Barnes Notes
- Matthew Henry's Commentary
- Angelfire, Studies in Old Testament Books
- Keith Sharp, Christ is the Way
- Questions were written by the compiler specifically for this class

Lesson One: Leviticus

LEVITICUS: INTRODUCTION

The name of the third book written by Moses comes from the Greek word *Leueitikon* used in the LXX (Septuagint) which meant "pertaining to the Levites." The Levites are not, however, the major characters of this book. The title rather points to the book as useful to the Levites in their ministry as worship leaders and teachers of morals. The last verse of Leviticus sets the book in its scriptural context: (27:34) "These are the commands [covenant obligations] the LORD [Yahweh, the covenant GOD] gave Moses [the covenant mediator] on Mount Sinai [the covenant place] for Israel [the covenant people]."

There is little historical in the book of Leviticus except for the consecration of the priesthood (Lev. 8-9), of the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, by the hand of God, for offering strange fire (Lev. 10), and of Shelomith's son, by the hand of the magistrate, for blasphemy (Lev. 24). First, Leviticus cannot be understood apart from GOD's purpose for His covenant people. In the account of Moses' struggle with Pharaoh in Ex. 4-12, GOD repeatedly called for the freedom of Israel to worship Him (4:23; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1; 10:3; 12:31). In a real sense the exodus deliverance was incomplete until Israel began the worship of GOD at Sinai (Ex. 3:12), thus fulfilling GOD's goal for the exodus. Israel was set free from Egyptian slavery and brought into a new, covenant relationship with GOD precisely so that they might be free to worship.

Second, Leviticus cannot be understood apart from GOD's desire to be with His covenant people. But because a Holy GOD cannot condone sin, Israel's experiment in idolatry with the golden calf (Exod. 32) presented GOD with a dilemma. Twice GOD warned the Israelites: "You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you" (Ex. 33:3, 5). How could a holy GOD continue to go with a disobedient and rebellious people? Exodus 34-40 and the Book of Leviticus answer that question.

Author: The book of Leviticus is the third attributed to Moses in the Old Testament. In 1:1, the text refers to the Word of the LORD that was given to Moses in the tabernacle of reunion; it constitutes the basis of the entire book. The priests and Levites have preserved its content.

Date of Writing: The experts have dated the book of Leviticus between the epoch in which Moses lived (according to some, in the 15th century B.C. and others in a much later age: the 12th century B.C.) and the epoch of Ezra (6th century B.C.). If the authorship of Moses is accepted, the writing of Leviticus dates back approximately to the year 1440 B.C. The book, which contains little historical information that is useful to determine the exact date, describes the system of sacrifices and worship that preceded the time of Ezra and relates how it was instituted.

Background: The book of Leviticus links holiness with daily life. It goes beyond the question of the sacrifice, and deals with the theme of worship; likewise, it explains the work of the priests in detail. The concept of holiness affects not only the relationship that each individual sustains with GOD, but also the relationships of love and respect that each person should maintain with his neighbor. The code of holiness permeates the work because each one should be pure as GOD himself is, and due to that, the purity of the person makes up the foundation of the holiness of the entire covenant community. Jesus' teaching: "Therefore, all things that you wish men would do with you, thus also do with them; because this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12), reflects the text of Lev. 19:18: "Love your neighbor as yourself".

Content: Leviticus received the Hebrew name of Vayikra, which means "And He called". The title is taken from the first phrase of the book, the way ancient works were titled. The modern title of "Leviticus" derives from a Greek translation of the work and means "Questions concerning the Levites". The title can cause confusion because the book deals with many other themes relative to purity, holiness, the priesthood, the holiness of GOD and of the believer in daily life. The word "holy" appears more than 80 times in Leviticus.

Leviticus has sometimes been considered a difficult to understand work; however, according to primitive tradition, the education of the Jewish child began with the teachings of this book. It deals with character and the will of GOD, especially about the theme of holiness, which the Jews considered something of primary importance. They thought that before turning to other biblical texts, children should be educated about the holiness of GOD and the responsibility that each individual has to live a holy life. Holiness (Kedushah in Hebrew) is a key word in Leviticus, and describes the character of the divine presence. Holiness signifies being set apart from the profane and is contrary to the common or secular.

Another important theme in the book of Leviticus is the sacrificial system. The burnt offering (olah in Hebrew) is appointed to provide expiation, and allowed the person who offered it to eat the meat of the sacrifice. It was sometimes presented on some festive occasion. The sin offering (Chatta't in Hebrew) is employed to purify the sanctuary. The guilt offering (asham in Hebrew), also called the offering of restitution, is presented because of violating the sanctity of GOD's or some other person's property: Sometimes the violation is for swearing falsely. When someone profanes the sanctity of GOD, an offering of atonement is required.

After the sacrifices, the liturgical calendar occupies a special place in the book of Leviticus. The Sabbath year is dedicated to commemorate the emancipation from bondage in Egypt, of the enslaved people, as well as the redemption of the land (see also Exod. 21;2-6; 23:10,11; Deut. 15;1-11,12-18). The year of Jubilee remembers the fact that the land of Israel, as well as its people, belongs to GOD, and not any individual. Therefore, the land must rest after each 49 year period (Lev. 25:8-17), which confirms GOD as its owner: The holiness of GOD and of his character permeates the entire book of Leviticus as well as the need for the congregation to approach him with pure hearts and minds.

Historical Setting: The Book of Leviticus belongs to the period in Israel's history when the people were encamped at Mount Sinai following their miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt. At Sinai Moses received the Ten Commandments and other parts of the Law directly from GOD. He also built and furnished the tabernacle as a place where the people could worship GOD (Exod. 40). Just after the tabernacle was filled with GOD's glory, Moses received instructions for the people regarding worship of GOD in this holy place. It is these instructions which we find in the Book of Leviticus.

Theme: The theme of Leviticus is holiness. The term "holy" (set apart to God) is the key word of the book. Moses uses this word 87 times in Leviticus. Leviticus 19:2 is the key verse and states the theme of the book: "You shall be holy, For I the Lord your God am holy" (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6).

After Israel had been set apart as God's special heritage by the Passover and by the covenant at Mt. Sinai, they almost immediately broke the covenant through idolatry, the worship of the golden calf. Only the intercession of Moses prevented God from destroying the nation. But the Lord refused to go up in their midst to Canaan, warning, "You are a stiffnecked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you" (Ex. 33:5).

Israel gave evidence of their repentance by putting off their jewelry, and Moses again interceded in their behalf. Thus, the Lord promised, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14). He renewed the covenant with Israel. Then the tabernacle was built in which God was to dwell among His people and where they were to come to worship Him.

A key element of Leviticus, and of Old Testament worship, was animal sacrifices. Sacrifices were offered so the sinner might have access to God. They were to "atone" (cover) sin (Ex. 30:10) and to "sanctify" (set apart to God) the offerer (Ex. 29:33; 31:13). The sacrifice was a substitute; it died in the place of the sinner. The steps in animal sacrifice were: (1) the selection of an animal with no defect or blemish, (2) the laying of the hands of the offerer upon the animal to symbolize that the animal bore the penalty for the offerer's sin, (3) the killing of the sacrificial victim by the offerer to suffer the penalty for sin in his place, (4) the pouring out of the blood at the base of the altar as the symbol of a sacrificed life, (5) the smearing or the sprinkling of the blood by the priest upon the altar as a symbol that the sins of the offerer were atoned, (6) the burning of the sacrifice as a sweet-smelling savor to satisfy the judicial wrath of God for sin, and (7) the eating of the sacrificial meal as a symbol of fellowship with God (Eph. 5:2). Every sacrifice had to be salted (Lev. 2:13). Salt preserved meat from rotting and was a symbol of an unbreakable covenant. The salt symbolized the purity of the sacrifice and the covenant of the Israelite with God.

Of course, these sacrifices could not in reality remove the guilt of sin (Heb. 10:4) but showed Israel the need for a sacrifice which could do so and acted as a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ for all (John 1:29; 1Peter 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8).

The "Boring Book" of Leviticus, as it is sometimes called by students. While we recognize that the Bible is inspired and profitable, we also recognize that some parts seem more interesting than other parts. In spite of its reputation, there are many fascinating insights in Leviticus. It is the book that discusses reasons for and nature of sacrifices. Its value for Christians: it is difficult to understand the purpose of Jesus' sacrifice without Leviticus, and it is the book that contains the Law of which King David professed his love for and over which he spent much time meditating upon.

LEVITICUS: OUTLINE

A. Main Sections

1. Instructions regarding offerings (Leviticus 1-7)
2. Ordination of Aaron and sons (Leviticus 8-10)
3. Regulations of Cleanliness (Leviticus 11-15)
4. Holiness (Leviticus 16-21)
5. Dedications and Observances (Leviticus 22-27)

B. Offerings (Leviticus 1-3)

1. Instructions regarding burnt offerings (Leviticus 1)
2. Instructions regarding grain offerings (Leviticus 2)
3. Instructions regarding peace offerings (Leviticus 3)

C. Penance Offerings (Leviticus 4:1-6:7)

1. Instructions for offerings for unintentional sin: High Priest (Lev. 4:1-12)
2. Instructions for offerings for unintentional sin: the whole congregation of Israel (Leviticus 4:13-21)
3. Instructions for offerings for unintentional sin: leader (Lev. 4:22-26)
4. Instructions for offerings for unintentional sin: commoner (Lev. 4:27-35)
5. Instructions for guilt offerings for not providing witness, uncleanness, rash oaths (Leviticus 5:1-13)
6. Instructions for guilt offerings involving dedicated items to the LORD

(Leviticus 5:14-16)

7. Instructions for guilt offerings for any other sin (Leviticus 5:17-19)
8. Instructions for guilt offerings for breaches of faith and theft (Lev. 6:1-7)

D. Priestly Instructions (Leviticus 6:8-7:38)

1. Instructions on the burnt offering (Leviticus 6:8-13)
2. Instructions on the grain offering (Leviticus 6:14-18)
3. Offerings required on the day of Aaron's anointment (Leviticus 6:19-23)
4. Instructions on the sin offering (Leviticus 6:24-30)
5. Instructions on the guilt offering (Leviticus 7:1-10)
6. Instructions on the peace offering (Leviticus 7:11-21)
7. Prohibition against eating fat (Leviticus 7:22-25)
8. Prohibition against eating blood (Leviticus 7:26-27)
9. Instructions regarding peace offerings; priestly portions of the offering (Leviticus 7:28-36)
10. Conclusion of offering instruction (Leviticus 7:37-38)

E. Ordination of Aaron and His Sons (Leviticus 8-9)

1. Assembling of Israel for ordination of Aaron and sons (Leviticus 8:1-4)
2. Aaron and sons washed, clothed, anointed; tabernacle objects anointed (Leviticus 8:5-13)
3. Moses offers sin offering on behalf of Aaron and sons (Lev. 8:14-21)
4. Moses sacrifices the ram of ordination (Leviticus 8:22-24)
5. Moses waves the wave offering (Leviticus 8:25-29)
6. Moses consecrates and charges Aaron and sons (Leviticus 8:30-36)
7. Eight days later, Israel charged to bring forth offerings (Leviticus 9:1-6)
8. Aaron offers the sin offering for himself (Leviticus 9:7-11)
9. Burnt offering sacrificed (Leviticus 9:12-16)
10. Grain, peace, and wave offerings presented (Leviticus 9:17-21)
11. Aaron blesses the people, the glory of the LORD appears and consumed the sacrifices (Leviticus 9:22-24)

F. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10)

1. Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, offer inappropriate incense, are killed by the LORD (Leviticus 10:1-3)
2. Their remains carried away; no mourning allowed (Leviticus 10:4-7)
3. Command to abstain from alcohol when entering the tent of meeting, other instruction (Leviticus 10:8-11)
4. Instruction to eat of the offerings properly (Leviticus 10:12-15)
5. Moses discovers that sin offering was not eaten, but burned; shows anger to sons of Aaron; Aaron defends them, pointing to circumstance; Moses mollified (Lev. 10:16-20)

G. Clean and Unclean Foods (Leviticus 11)

1. General description (Leviticus 11:1-4)
2. Unclean mammals (Leviticus 11:5-8)
3. Clean and unclean sea creatures (Leviticus 11:9-12)
4. Unclean birds (Leviticus 11:13-19)
5. Clean and unclean insects (Leviticus 11:20-23)
6. Uncleanness due to touching or consuming (Leviticus 11:24-28)
7. Unclean "swarming" animals, persons and things made unclean by their contact (Leviticus 11:29-38)
8. Uncleanness by touching or eating a carcass (Leviticus 11:39-40)
9. General statements regarding unclean animals (Leviticus 11:41-44)
10. Conclusion of instruction on animals and cleanliness (Lev. 11:45-47)

- H. Female Uncleanness (Leviticus 12)
 - 1. Female uncleanness after birth of male child (Leviticus 12:1-4)
 - 2. Female uncleanness after birth of female child (Leviticus 12:5)
 - 3. Offerings to be offered (Leviticus 12:6-8)
- I. Skin Conditions (Leviticus 13-14)
 - 1. Instructions regarding skin diseases: leprosy (Leviticus 13:1-3)
 - 2. Instructions regarding skin diseases: eruption (Leviticus 13:4-8)
 - 3. Instructions regarding skin diseases: chronic leprous disease (Leviticus 13:9-17)
 - 4. Instructions regarding skin diseases: boils & leprosy (Lev. 13:18-23)
 - 5. Instructions regarding skin diseases: burns and leprosy (Lev. 13:24-28)
 - 6. Instructions regarding skin diseases: head or beard (Lev. 13:29-37)
 - 7. Instructions regarding skin diseases: white spots (Leviticus 13:38-39)
 - 8. Cleanliness of the bald man (Leviticus 13:40-41)
 - 9. Instructions regarding skin diseases: leprosy on head (Lev. 13:42-44)
 - 10. Instructions regarding conduct of lepers (Leviticus 13:45-46)
 - 11. Instructions regarding diseases within garments (Leviticus 13:47-59)
 - 12. Instructions for the offerings and ritual for a person cleansed of skin diseases (Leviticus 14:1-32)
 - 13. Instructions regarding diseases within buildings (Leviticus 14:33-38)
 - 14. Instructions for offering for a cleansed building (Leviticus 14:39-53)
 - 15. Conclusion of instruction regarding diseases (Leviticus 14:54-57)
- J. Discharges (Leviticus 15)
 - 1. Unclean nature of man with discharge, objects rendered unclean (Leviticus 15:1-4, 9)
 - 2. Spread of uncleanness to those who come in contact with man, his objects (Leviticus 15:5-8, 10-12)
 - 3. Offerings for cleansing from discharge (Leviticus 15:13-15)
 - 4. Uncleanness for seminal discharge (Leviticus 15:16-18)
 - 5. Uncleanness for menstruation (Leviticus 15:19-24)
 - 6. Uncleanness for discharge beyond menstruation (Lev. 15:25-28)
 - 7. Offerings for cleansing from discharge (Leviticus 15:29-31)
 - 8. Conclusion of instruction regarding discharges (Leviticus 15:32-33)
- K. Atonement (Leviticus 16)
 - 1. Preparation for Aaron to enter the Holy Place (Leviticus 16:1-6)
 - 2. The goats of the sin offering: one for sin, one for Azazel (Lev. 16:7-10)
 - 3. Offerings for atonement (Leviticus 16:11-19)
 - 4. Sending out of Azazel's goat (Leviticus 16:20-22)
 - 5. Intermediate cleansing of Aaron, the one who led out the goat (Leviticus 16:23-24)
 - 6. Disposal of sin offering; explanation of the day of atonement; it is a Sabbath day; perpetual statute (Leviticus 16:25-34)
- L. Animals, Blood, and Sacrifice (Leviticus 17)
 - 1. All animals who are killed to be brought to tabernacle (Leviticus 17:1-9)
 - 2. Condemnation of eating of blood (Leviticus 17:10-14)
 - 3. Condemnation of eating animals not executed by man (Lev. 17:15-16)
- M. Sexual Impropriety (Leviticus 18)
 - 1. Generic exhortation to follow God's law (Leviticus 18:1-5)
 - 2. Condemnation of uncovering nakedness of relatives (Leviticus 18:6-18)
 - 3. Condemnation of sex during menstruation (Leviticus 18:19)
 - 4. Condemnation of adultery (Leviticus 18:20)

5. Condemnation of Molech service (Leviticus 18:21)
 6. Condemnation of homosexuality and bestiality (Leviticus 18:22-23)
 7. Exhortation to follow God's laws regarding sexual propriety, warning of condemnation if they are violated (Leviticus 18:24-30)
- N. The Holiness Code (Leviticus 19-20)
1. Need to be holy (Leviticus 19:1-2)
 2. Sabbath observance (Leviticus 19:3)
 3. Condemnation of idolatry (Leviticus 19:4)
 4. Proper conduct with offerings (Leviticus 19:5-8)
 5. Proper cultivation; leaving some for the dispossessed (Lev. 19:9-10)
 6. Fairness, equity, and love in dealings with others (Leviticus 19:11-18)
 7. Statutes to be kept; no mixing of cattle or types of cloth (Lev. 19:19)
 8. Legislation regarding sex with a slave (Leviticus 19:20-22)
 9. Legislation regarding fruit trees (Leviticus 19:23-25)
 10. Not to conform to people around them: no eating blood, telling omens, rounding hair around temples, cutting for the dead (Lev. 19:26-28)
 11. Keep Sabbath; consider the tabernacle holy; do not make daughter into prostitute; avoid sorcerers; honor the elders (Leviticus 19:29-32)
 12. Justice to sojourners, in measurements, in balances (Lev. 19:33-37)
 13. Condemnation of Molech service (Leviticus 20:1-5)
 14. Condemnation of turning to sorcery (Leviticus 20:6)
 15. Need to follow the statutes of the LORD; condemnation of those cursing parents (Leviticus 20:7-9)
 16. Condemnation of various sexual improprieties (Leviticus 20:10-22)
 17. Demonstration of need to be separated from the people of Canaan, to be a holy people to God: separation of clean and unclean animals, condemnation of sorcerers (Leviticus 20:23-27)
- O. Holiness of the Priests (Leviticus 21)
1. Priests are not to be made unclean for the dead; no mourning rituals (Leviticus 21:1-6)
 2. They must marry virgins; be holy to God (Leviticus 21:7-8)
 3. Daughter of priest who is sexually immoral to be burned (Lev. 21:9)
 4. High Priest to follow the same guidelines (Leviticus 21:10-15)
 5. Exclusion of blemished humans from the tabernacle, priestly portions (Leviticus 21:16-24)
- P. The Dedicated Things (Leviticus 22)
1. Condemnation of approaching tabernacle while unclean (Lev. 22:1-3)
 2. Levite cannot partake of priestly portion while unclean (Lev. 22:4-9)
 3. Non-priests not to eat holy things; legislation regarding who can eat them (Lev. 22:10-16)
 4. Need of offering unblemished animals for sacrifice (Leviticus 22:17-25)
 5. Legislation regarding animals and their kin in sacrifices; conclusion (Leviticus 22:26-33)
- Q. Festivals (Leviticus 23)
1. The Sabbath (Leviticus 23:1-3)
 2. The Passover (Leviticus 23:4-5)
 3. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6-8)
 4. Offering of First Fruits (Leviticus 23:9-14)
 5. Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-22)
 6. Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:23-33)
 7. Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:34-44)

- R. Miscellaneous Instructions (Leviticus 24)
 - 1. Perpetual light in the lampstand (Leviticus 24:1-4)
 - 2. Daily bread of the Presence (Leviticus 24:5-9)
 - 3. A man blasphemes God's name; condemned to death by stoning (Leviticus 24:10-16, 23)
 - 4. The lex talionis, appropriate punishments for crimes (Lev. 24:17-22)
- S. Sabbaths and Jubilee (Leviticus 25)
 - 1. The Sabbath year of rest for the land (Leviticus 25:1-7)
 - 2. The Jubilee: return of every man of his property (Leviticus 25:8-13)
 - 3. Fairness in light of the Jubilee (Leviticus 25:14-17)
 - 4. God will provide a blessing to see the people through (Lev. 25:18-22)
 - 5. Legislation regarding land redemption (Leviticus 25:23-34)
 - 6. Legislation regarding lending to Israelites (Leviticus 25:35-38)
 - 7. Legislation regarding debt slavery (Leviticus 25:39-43)
 - 8. Making slaves of other nations (Leviticus 25:44-46)
 - 9. Redemption of an Israelite sold to stranger or sojourner (Lev. 25:47-55)
- T. Blessings and Cursings (Leviticus 26)
 - 1. Recitation of basic commands (Leviticus 26:1-2)
 - 2. Blessings for obedience (Leviticus 26:3-13)
 - 3. Cursings for disobedience (Leviticus 26:14-39)
 - 4. Redemption for the repentant (Leviticus 26:40-46)
- U. Valuations (Leviticus 27)
 - 1. Valuation of people (Leviticus 27:1-8)
 - 2. Valuation of animals (Leviticus 27:9-13)
 - 3. Valuation of a house (Leviticus 27:14-15)
 - 4. Valuation, redemption of a field (Leviticus 27:16-24)
 - 5. Valuations by the tabernacle shekel (Leviticus 27:25)
 - 6. Firstborns, devoted things cannot be valued; legislation regarding vowed unclean animals (Leviticus 27:26-29)
 - 7. Tithes holy to the LORD (Leviticus 27:30-33)
 - 8. Conclusion (Leviticus 27:34)

LEVITICUS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Leviticus 6:24-30 - Holiness of the sin offering
 - 1. Jesus was a sin offering our behalf so that we can be made holy in Him (2Cor. 5:21)
- B. Leviticus 10:1-3 - Foolishness of Nadab and Abihu; a warning to take what God says seriously
- C. Leviticus 15:25-28 - Background for the woman of Luke 8:43-48; unclean for 12 years, and cleansed by Jesus
- D. Leviticus 19:2 - We are to be holy because God is holy (1Peter 1:15-16)
- E. Leviticus 19:18 - (Matthew 22:39; Romans 12:18-21)

CONCLUSION:

- A. A lot to consider: laws and regulations, specific instructions about offerings
- B. It may be "boring" to some, yet Leviticus provides many important lessons for Christians:
 - 1. Lessons regarding sin offerings teach us to be thankful for Christ our sin offering
 - 2. Exhortations to holiness teach us to be a holy people, set apart for God and His service

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

1. Who is the author of the Book of Leviticus?
2. What is the purpose and primary message of Leviticus?
3. What other Old Testament Writer loved to read and meditate about the Law?
4. Who were the original recipients of Leviticus?
5. In what Dispensation was Leviticus written?
6. Are the laws contained in Leviticus binding on God's people today?
7. What value is there in reading and studying the book of Leviticus?
8. What two persons in Leviticus died practicing the Law? What caused their deaths?
9. What is "atonement"?
10. What was offered in sacrifice for the atonement of Israel?
11. What was offered for the atonement of Christians?
12. Among Israelites, what was considered the most frightening illness?
13. Name three kinds of offerings. Name the creatures or materials used for sacrifice.

14. What is a tithe? What relevance does the tithe have for Christians?
15. Could ordinary Israelites conduct their own worship services? Who was authorized?
16. Could anyone be a priest? Name some of the qualifications.

17. Who are the priests among Christians? What are their qualifications?

18. Leviticus is part of what five book collection? Name the other four books.

19. What purpose did the cleanliness laws serve?
20. What is the measurement of cleanliness (holiness) among Christians?

Lesson Two: Numbers

NUMBERS: INTRODUCTION

The fourth book of the Bible is called *bemidbar* ("in the wilderness") in the Hebrew Bible. The name accurately describes the contents of the book: the history of Israel in the wilderness. Both at the beginning and at the end of the book, the fighting men of Israel were numbered. From this event, the English title of the book was derived. The children of Israel were still camped at Mt. Sinai when the book opened. They had been there nearly two full years. God commanded Moses to number the men who were able to fight, since plans called for an invasion of Canaan within a few months. The number of men capable of fighting was 603,550. Since the Levites served the tabernacle, they were not included in the number of men capable of fighting. Moses also organized the camping procedures of the Israelites by giving each tribe a set place to camp.

A month had passed since the setting up of the tabernacle, and the Law delivered from Sinai was now complete. The events and accounts from Exodus at Mount Sinai and the listing of the Laws in Leviticus took place just before their departure from there. A census was taken for religious purposes, and a second census was taken, which would serve as a basis for civil and military arrangements. Numbers contains an account, not only of the census and disposition of the tribes during the journey and the dividing of the inheritance in the Promised Land, but also of the victories and failures of the children of Israel along the forty year journey to Canaan.

Author: The authorship of Numbers is attributed to Moses, the central personage of the book. Numbers 33:2 makes a specific reference to Moses who wrote about the journey in the desert. The term Numbers is taken from the title of this book (*arithmoi*) in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which was kept in the Latin translation of the Vulgate (*numeri*). In the Hebrew text, the name of the book is *In the desert*, taken from the first phrase in the text, "Jehovah spoke to Moses in the desert of the Sinai".

Date of Writing: If the authorship of Moses is assumed, it was probably written around the year 1400 BC, shortly before his death. The events written about in the book extend through about forty years and begin shortly after Exodus, in the year 1440 BC.

Content: The division of the first texts of the Old Testament into five books or rolls (called "The Pentateuch", i.e., "five rolls"), shouldn't conceal the fact that each one of them is a continuation of the previous. Moses, whose birth is related in Exodus 2 and his death in Deuteronomy 34, is the figure that unifies that which is told from Exodus until Deuteronomy.

The Book of Numbers continues the history of the events of the Mosaic period that began in Exodus. It begins with Israel still in the Sinai. The Israelites' entrance into Sinai is related in Exodus 19:1 and their exit in Numbers 10:11.

The Book of Numbers has two principal divisions: 1) the section that contains what Moses received when he found himself in the Sinai (1:1-10:10); and 2) the journeys in the desert that cover the route between Sinai and the fields of Moab, beyond the Jordan, in the Promised Land (10:11-36:13). The instructions from Sinai deal with the preparations for the journey and the rest of the book with the work day itself. The instructions in Sinai (1:1-10:10) cover a great variety of topics, but those related to the preparations for traveling occupy the first place. Chapters 1-4 contain a series of instructions about the realization of a census of various groups, followed by a report about the fulfillment of the task. Chapters 5 and 6 deal with ritual impurity, conjugal infidelity and the Nazarites. In chapter 7 the leaders of the people bring offerings to the

tabernacle. Chapter 8 is occupied with the consecration of the Levites. Chapter 9 with the celebration of the Passover, the cloud and pillar of fire over the tabernacle; the instruments used to convoke the people are reconsidered in 10:1-10, where the instructions are imparted by means of trumpets.

The section of Numbers that deals with the journey (10:11-36:13) is divided into two parts. The first, 10:11-25:18 describes the death of the generation that was liberated from Egypt by Jehovah. Key aspects in the section are the stories of the complaints, the rebellions and the disobedience of the first generation that caused their death. Moses' leadership ability is pushed to the limit in Numbers as the people grumble about everything from the food they have to eat to the water supply. Time after time GOD supplies their needs by sending manna, quail, and water; but still they cry out in a stubborn spirit. Finally, in exasperation, Moses struck a rock with his rod to produce drinking water. This was a clear violation of GOD's command, since He had instructed Moses to speak to the rock. Because of his disobedience, Moses isn't allowed to enter the Promised Land.

The second subsection (26-26) narrates the preparations of the second generation to enter into the Promised Land. They begin with a new census (compare with chapter 1), which reveals that all the first generation, except Joshua, Caleb, and Moses had died in the desert. The section ends with the partitioning of the land among the tribes after having entered the Promised Land.

Historical Setting: The events in the Book of Numbers cover a span of about 39 or 40 years in Israel's history - from 1445 BC, when they left their encampment at Mount Sinai, to 1405 BC, when they entered the land of Canaan by crossing the Jordan River near Jericho. These were years of preparation as well as punishment. Their harsh life in the desert wilderness prepared them for the task of pushing out the Canaanites.

The Book of Numbers clearly shows why the Israelites did not proceed immediately to take the land after leaving Mount Sinai. Moses chose 12 spies or scouts and sent them into Canaan along its southern border to explore the land and check its defenses. Ten of them returned with a pessimistic report about the warlike Canaanites who held the land. But two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, encouraged the people to take the land; for GOD had promised to prepare the way. When the Israelites refused, GOD sentenced them to two generations of aimless wandering in the wilderness before they could enter the Promised Land (Num. 14:1-38).

Theme (HBH) The Book of Numbers is more than a mere travelogue tracing Israel's journey from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab. The narratives and laws in Numbers give the conditions of Israel's possession and enjoyment of the Promised Land. These conditions included an unflinching desire to possess the land GOD promised, respect for GOD-ordained leaders, and concern for maintaining the holiness of the covenant community and of the land of promise. Frequent warnings of the danger of rebellion and the certainty of GOD's judgment on sin likewise prodded Israel ahead to the Goal of possession of the land.

Numbers documents that when GOD's people were faithful to the covenant conditions, their travels and lives went well. When they were disobedient, however, they paid the price in defeat, delay, and death in the wilderness. The book thus teaches subsequent generations that covenant conformity brings blessing but covenant rejection brings tragedy and sorrow.

Numbers also documents the effective organization of the tribes into a discernible religious and political community in preparation for their conquest and occupation of Canaan. This explains the extraordinary interest in the numbering of the tribes, their arrangement for travel and encampment, and the centralizing of the tabernacle and priesthood as the focal point of Israel's life as a covenant people. This

also explains the introduction of new legislation, especially of a cultic or ceremonial nature. The commandments and statutes appropriate for the forthcoming settlement in Canaan could not in every case be relevant and therefore provides special instruction for those times and conditions.

The great bulk of Numbers describes a nearly forty-year period of Israel's history in a story or almost "diary" form. Moses apparently kept a log book in which he noted significant events that could and did constitute his personal memoirs (compare 33:2). Numbers, then, is history but narrative history of an individualistic type.

In addition to narrative materials, Numbers contains census lists (1:5-46; 3:14-39; 4:34-49; 26:5-51), an organization manual for encampment and march (2:1-3), and regulations for the priesthood and Levitical orders (3:40-4:33; 8:5-26; 18:1-32). It also contains laws of sacrifice and ritual (5:1-7:89; 9:1-10; 15:1-41; 19:1-22; 28:1-30:16), instructions about the conquest and division of the land (32:33-42; 34:1-35:44), and laws regulating inheritance (36:1-12). Numbers even contains poetry; a portion of "The Book of the Wars of Yahweh" (21:14-15), the "Song of the Well" (21:17-18), the "Song of Heshbon" (21:27-30), and the various prophetic oracles of Balaam (23:7-10,18-24; 24:3-9,15-24).

Purpose: The diverse materials in Numbers point toward a common goal - the possession of the land GOD promised the patriarchs. Numbers opens with a census that reveals GOD had blessed Israel with the strength necessary for the conquest of the Promised Land (11:2:34). Organization for worship (3:1-4:49), instructions for preserving the purity of GOD's people (5:1-6:27), and the building of the tabernacle (7:1-8:26) all made possible GOD's dwelling with this people (9:15) - a necessary condition for conquest (10:11-36), their hearts repeatedly longed for Egypt (11:1-35; 14:2-4; 20:2-5; 21:4-5). They rejected Moses, the leader GOD had appointed to lead them to the land (12:1-15). Ultimately, Israel rejected GOD's gift, Israel was condemned to wander in the desert (15:1-22:1). Again and again Israel rebelled against GOD's chosen leaders and suffered judgment (16:1-50). Even Moses failed to trust in the power of GOD's Word (20:1-29) and was excluded from the land of promise.

GOD, however, is true to His promises. GOD overcame obstacles to Israel's possession of the land - the external threat of Balaam's curses (22:2-24:25) and the internal threat of Israel's idolatry and immorality (25:1-18). After the death of the rebellious generation, GOD again blessed Israel with a force capable of conquering the land (chapter 26). GOD rewarded the daughters of Zelophehad who, unlike the previous generation, earnestly desired their share in the land (27:1-11; 35:50-36:13). GOD's provision of Joshua as Moses' successor prepared for the successful conquest of the land.

Even the legal texts in Numbers anticipated life in the promised land. These texts regulated its worship (chapter 15) and maintained its purity (chapters 19, 35). The Book of Exodus tells how the Israelites placed themselves under GOD's sovereignty - with all the responsibilities and privileges that entailed - by accepting the terms of the Sinaitic covenant. They became a holy nation (their status) and a kingdom of priests (their function). Numbers tells of Israel's successes and failures in living out the covenant as they made their way to the land of promise. The wilderness became a proving ground, an arena in which Israel had opportunity to display their commitment to the GOD who had called and commissioned them. It was historically their first opportunity to move beyond the place of covenant reception and enter the sphere of covenant implementation.

Israel's inability or, at least, refusal to exhibit its role as obedient mediator became clear again and again. They rebelled at Taberah and Kibroth Hattavah (11:3,34). They challenged Moses' authority as covenant representative (chap. 12). They

rejected the spies' report that encouraged conquest of the land of Canaan (14:1-10). They rejected the priestly role of Aaron (chap. 16). They committed idolatry and immorality of Baal Peor (chap. 25). Each case of rebellion was met by divine displeasure and punishment. The constancy of the LORD, His faithfulness to His covenant pledge, however, remained unaltered. Indeed, the ancient Abrahamic promise that those who blessed Israel would be blessed and those who cursed Israel would be cursed remained intact (24:9). Even more remarkable, since it came from the lips of the pagan seer Balaam, was the great messianic revelation that "a star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel" (24:17), a word that confirmed the function of Israel as the source of redemptive and reigning blessing for the whole world (compare Gen. 49:10).

NUMBERS: OUTLINE

A. Main Sections

1. Census and Logistics (Numbers 1-4)
2. Laws, Offerings, and the Tabernacle Service (Numbers 5-10)
3. Israel's Rebellion and its Consequences (Numbers 11-17)
4. Israel in the Trans-Jordan (Numbers 18-36)

B. The First Census (Numbers 1-2) (See also Exodus 30:11-16)

1. Census commanded by God, assistants chosen (Numbers 1:1-19)
2. Census numbers: men who could fight (Numbers 1:20-46)
3. Explanation of exception of Levites (Numbers 1:47-54)
4. Description of the camp, location of each tribe relative to the Tabernacle; order of the march (Numbers 2)

C. Levitical Orders (Numbers 3-4)

1. Lineage of Aaron (Numbers 3:1-4)
2. Duties of Aaron and sons (Numbers 3:5-10)
3. Levites taken as opposed to firstborn of Israel (Numbers 3:11-13)
4. Listing of sons of Levi (Numbers 3:14-22)
5. Location, duties of the Gershonites (Numbers 3:23-26)
6. Location, duties of the Kohathites (Numbers 3:27-32)
7. Location, duties of the Merarites (Numbers 3:33-38)
8. Redemption of firstborn of Israel by the Levites; remuneration for firstborn of Israel beyond number of Levites (Numbers 3:39-51)
9. Duties of the Kohathites (Numbers 4:1-20)
10. Duties of the Gershonites (Numbers 4:21-28)
11. Duties of the Merarites (Numbers 4:29-33)
12. Census numbers of the Levites (Numbers 4:34-49)

D. Various Laws (Numbers 5-6)

1. Removal of unclean persons from camp (Numbers 5:1-4)
2. Restitution for incurring guilt (Numbers 5:5-10)
3. Process of trial for woman accused by jealous husband (Num. 5:11-31)
4. Instructions regarding the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-12)
5. Offerings to be provided at the end of the Nazirite vow (Num. 6:13-21)
6. The High Priestly Blessing of Aaron (Numbers 6:22-27)

E. Offerings (Numbers 7)

1. Offerings of the chiefs of the tribes (Numbers 7:1-10)
2. Offerings of each tribe (Numbers 7:11-89)

F. Levitical Instruction (Numbers 8)

1. Aaron sets up the lampstand (Numbers 8:1-4)
2. Cleansing, consecration of Levites (Numbers 8:5-21)
3. Guidelines for service in the Tabernacle (Numbers 8:22-26)

- G. The Passover and the Cloud (Numbers 9)
 - 1. Observance of the second Passover (Numbers 9:1-5)
 - 2. Observance of Passover for unclean persons (Numbers 9:6-14)
 - 3. The cloud and fire over the Tabernacle leading Israel (Num. 9:15-23)
- H. Israel Sets Out (Numbers 10)
 - 1. Trumpets to be made; meaning of trumpet blasts (Numbers 10:1-10)
 - 2. Israel leaves Sinai in order; listing of each tribe and its leader (Numbers 10:11-28)
 - 3. Plea for Reuel, father-in-law of Moses, to go with Israel (Numbers 10:29-32)
 - 4. Moses' prayers of going out and coming in (Numbers 10:33-36)
- I. Murmurings (Numbers 11-12)
 - 1. Complaints of people lead to fire from the LORD; Moses averts disaster; name of place Taberah (Numbers 11:1-3)
 - 2. People crave meat, despise manna; Moses complains about the people (Numbers 11:4-15)
 - 3. Portion of the Spirit on Moses given to 70 elders; God promises Israel meat; Eldad and Medad prophesy in the camp (Numbers 11:16-30)
 - 4. Meat to Israel; plague upon the people; place named Kibroth-hattaavah (Numbers 11:31-35)
 - 5. Aaron and Miriam murmur against Moses and his Ethiopian wife; God strikes Miriam with leprosy for seven days; Aaron and Miriam humbled (Numbers 12)
- J. The Spies and their Consequences (Numbers 13-14)
 - 1. Order for spies to go into Canaan; spies listed (Numbers 13:1-20)
 - 2. Spies investigate the land, bring grapes from Eschol (Num. 13:21-26)
 - 3. All spies speak well of the land; 10 speak of the greatness of the people there, magnifying the challenge; Caleb and Joshua trust in the LORD that He will have the victory for Israel (Numbers 13:27-33)
 - 4. People believe the ten, seek to return to Egypt (Numbers 14:1-4)
 - 5. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, implore the people to repent; people about to stone them (Numbers 14:5-10)
 - 6. The LORD appears, intends to destroy Israel; Moses intercedes for them (Numbers 14:11-20)
 - 7. The LORD then sentences all the generations over 20 years of age to death in the wilderness, Caleb exception (Numbers 14:21-34)
 - 8. The ten spies die by plague before the LORD (Numbers 14:35-39)
 - 9. Israel repents, goes to take Canaan by force; defeated by Amalek (Numbers 14:40-45)
- K. Interlude: Laws (Numbers 15)
 - 1. Presentation of flour and oil with offerings (Numbers 15:1-16)
 - 2. Offerings of the first of the dough (Numbers 15:17-21)
 - 3. Offerings for unintentional sin by the congregation (Numbers 15:22-26)
 - 4. Offerings for unintentional sin by an individual (Numbers 15:27-28)
 - 5. Intentional sin to be cut off from the people (Numbers 15:29-31)
 - 6. Man found gathering sticks on Sabbath; ordered to be stoned (Numbers 15:32-36)
 - 7. Tassels for garments (Numbers 15:37-41)
- L. Korah's Rebellion (Numbers 16-17)
 - 1. Korah stands in opposition against Moses (Numbers 16:1-3)

2. All involved in the rebellion to take censers, stand before the LORD (Numbers 16:4-19)
 3. God indicates that He will destroy the conspirators; Moses establishes that if the earth swallows Korah, Dathan, and Abiram up, the LORD has sent Him; the earth swallows them up (Numbers 16:20-33)
 4. Israel fears; other conspirators consumed by fire (Numbers 16:34-35)
 5. Proper care of the censers established (Numbers 16:36-40)
 6. Accusations of the people against Moses; God sends a plague among the people; 14,700 die (Numbers 16:41-50)
 7. God again demonstrates His choice of Aaron by having Aaron's staff bud; his staff placed in the Ark (Numbers 17:1-10)
 8. The people humbled (Numbers 17:11-13)
- M. More Priestly Guidelines (Numbers 18-19)
1. Aaron to guard priesthood, sanctuary (Numbers 18:1-7)
 2. Gift of all devoted things to Aaron; rules of what can be eaten and where; redemption of firstborn given to Aaron (Numbers 18:8-19)
 3. Levi to have no portion in Israel; tithe will be their part (Num. 18:20-24)
 4. Tithe of the tithe (Numbers 18:25-32)
 5. Offering of the red heifer (Numbers 19:1-10)
 6. Ritual uncleanness on account of the dead; what is made unclean; purification rites (Numbers 19:11-22)
- N. Israel from Zin to Edrei (Numbers 20-21; the 40 years has passed)
1. Israel enters the Wilderness of Zin; Miriam dies (Numbers 20:1)
 2. Israel complains for water; Moses and Aaron commanded to speak to a rock; they take the glory from God, say they are bringing forth water, and strike the rock (Numbers 20:2-11)
 3. God condemns Moses and Aaron to death without crossing the Jordan for doing so; place named Meribah (Numbers 20:12-13)
 4. Request to pass through Edom; denied; Israel to Mount Hor (Numbers 20:14-22)
 5. Aaron dies on Mount Hor; Eleazar his successor (Num. 20:23-29)
 6. King of Arad fights Israel; Israel destroys them; named Hormah (Numbers 21:1-3)
 7. On the road, Israel grumbles; fiery serpents bite them; Moses makes bronze serpent, provides deliverance (Numbers 21:4-9)
 8. Israel to the border of Moab (Numbers 21:10-20)
 9. Israel against Sihon: Sihon defeated, Israel takes over his land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok (Numbers 21:21-32)
 10. Israel against Og; Og defeated; Israel takes his land (Num. 21:33-35)
- O. Balaam, Balak, and Israel (Numbers 22-24)
1. Balak and Midianites send for Balaam to curse Israel (Numbers 22:1-7)
 2. Balaam forbidden to go (Numbers 22:8-14)
 3. Balak sends higher emissaries; Balaam goes (Numbers 22:15-21)
 4. Balaam and his donkey; donkey inspired by Spirit, speaks to him; he sees the angel of the LORD (Numbers 22:22-35)
 5. Balaam and Balak (Numbers 22:36-41)
 6. Balaam's first blessing of Israel (Numbers 23:1-10)
 7. Balaam's second blessing of Israel (Numbers 23:11-26)
 8. Balaam's third blessing of Israel (Numbers 23:27-24:9)
 9. Balak is angry at Balaam (Numbers 24:10-11)
 10. Balaam prophesies regarding Israel and Moab (Numbers 24:12-25)

P. Baal of Peor (Numbers 25)

1. Israelites consort with Midianite women, worship Baal of Peor (Numbers 25:1-5)
2. Chief of Israel takes Midianite chief's daughter into tent; Phineas son of Eleazar kills them both with a spear (Numbers 25:6-8, 15)
3. Plague averted by this means, but 24,000 still died; Phineas will be next high priest because of his zeal for God; Israel to attack Midian (Numbers 25:9-18)

Q. The Second Census (Numbers 26-27)

1. God commands the second census to be taken (Numbers 26:1-3)
2. Census data provided by tribe, with each clan listed (Numbers 26:4-51)
3. This census the basis of dividing of inheritance (Numbers 26:52-56)
4. Census of Levi (Numbers 26:57-63)
5. Only Caleb and Joshua left of the previous census; all others had perished (Numbers 26:64-65)
6. The daughters of Zelophehad petition for inheritance; it is granted, and legislation established (Numbers 27:1-11)
7. Moses charged to see Canaan, appoint Joshua his successor (Numbers 27:12-23)

R. More Laws (Numbers 28-30)

1. Standard food offering (Numbers 28:1-8)
2. Sabbath offering (Numbers 28:9-10)
3. Beginning of month offering (Numbers 28:11-15)
4. The Passover offering (Numbers 28:16-25)
5. First Fruits offering (Numbers 28:26-31)
6. Feast of Trumpets offering (Numbers 29:1-6)
7. Day of Atonement offering (Numbers 29:7-11)
8. Feast of Tabernacles offering by day (Numbers 29:12-40)
9. Vow legislation: a man (Numbers 30:1-2)
10. Vow legislation: an unmarried woman (Numbers 30:3-5)
11. Vow legislation: a married woman (Numbers 30:6-16)

S. War Against Midian (Numbers 31)

1. Israel to fight Midian with 1,000 from each tribe (Numbers 31:1-5)
2. Israel fights Midian, kills all the men (including Balaam), plunders women and animals and property (Numbers 31:6-13)
3. Moses angry because the male children and non-virgin females have been spared; Israel kills them all; purifications (Numbers 31:14-24)
4. Plunder separated out for warriors, those left behind, the Tabernacle (Numbers 31:25-54)

T. Allotment for Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh (Numbers 32)

1. Reuben and Gad request the land conquered in the Trans-Jordan (Numbers 32:1-5)
2. Moses charges them with discouraging Israel (Numbers 32:6-15)
3. Reubenites and Gadites swear to help Israel conquer Canaan; Moses permits them to prepare the land and for war (Numbers 32:16-27)
4. Command proclaimed before all Israel (Numbers 32:28-32)
5. Land and cities given to Reuben, Gad, and to Machir son of Manasseh in the Trans-Jordan (Numbers 32:33-42)

U. Recapitulation of Israel's Wilderness Wanderings (Numbers 33:1-49)

V. Instructions (Numbers 33:50-36:13)

1. Instructions to possess Canaan, dispossess nations, allot inheritances; warnings regarding disobedience (Numbers 33:50-56)
2. Boundaries of Israel (Numbers 34:1-12)
3. Appointment of men who will portion out inheritances (Num. 34:13-29)
4. Levite cities and pasturelands (Numbers 35:1-8)
5. Cities of refuge; legislation regarding the one who seeks refuge and the avenger of blood (Numbers 35:9-34)
6. Concerns over the daughters of Zelophehad and whom they will marry; agreement that they will marry within their clans (Numbers 36:1-12)
7. Conclusion of all commands Moses gave by Jordan (Num. 36:13)

NUMBERS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-12)
 1. Set a pattern imitated in part by many subsequent prophets (Samson, John the Baptist)
- B. The High Priestly Blessing of Aaron (Numbers 6:22-27)
 1. Elements of it often repeated as greetings in New Testament epistles
- C. Israel and the Spies (Numbers 13-14)
 1. 1Cor. 10:1-12 - Their faithlessness led to their condemnation
- D. Korah's Rebellion (Numbers 16)
 1. A byword for rebellion against God
 2. Emphasized Israel being God's chosen people, not Israel's need to obey God - Jude 1:11
- E. Israel at Meribah (Numbers 20:2-13)
 1. Byword for hardness of heart (Psalm 95:8)
 2. Part of Hebrew author's argument in Hebrews 4:1-11
- F. Fiery Serpents (Numbers 21:4-9) - John 3:14
- G. Balaam (Numbers 22-24)
 1. A treacherous, duplicitous man - 2Peter 2:15; Rev. 2:14

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

1. What is the Hebrew name and its meaning for the Book of Numbers?
2. What had to be done to prepare Israel for a census?
3. Name the three groups of servants of the Levites?
4. What is a Nazirite?
5. Write down the priestly blessing of Numbers 6. What is its equivalent in the New Testament?
6. Who was Reuel and why did Moses want him to come with Israel?
7. Name the foods craved by the mixed multitude. How strong was the craving? What did Moses ask God to do to him?

8. What did Joshua want Moses to do when Eldad and Medad began to prophesy in the camp of Israel? What was Moses response?
9. What complaint did Aaron and Miriam have against Moses? What was God's response?
10. What was the report of the ten spies regarding the land? What was the report of Joshua and Caleb?
11. What was the response of Israel to the reports of the spies? What was God's answer to Israel?
12. What was "Korah's Rebellion"? How did God respond to it?
13. What was the tithe of the tithe? Who was responsible to offer it?
14. When Israel murmured for water, what did God tell Moses to do to the rock? What did Moses do instead? What was God's answer to Moses?
15. Describe the incident with the fiery serpents. What was the cure? What is its New Testament equivalent?
16. Who was Baalam? What did he come to symbolize in the New Testament?
17. Who was Aaron's successor as high priest?
18. Which two and a half tribes remained in the Trans-Jordan region?
19. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge?
20. Why should Christians study about the triumphs and failures of children of Israel? (Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:11)

Lesson Three: Deuteronomy

DEUTERONOMY: INTRODUCTION

Moses is the author of the book of Deuteronomy (1:1-5). Chapter 34 was probably appended by Joshua after the death of Moses. The name "Deuteronomy" means second law and is taken from the Septuagint (Greek) translation of 17:18. The term "law" ("torah") (4:44) is the comprehensive word for the code of law comprising God's covenant with Israel, the heart of which was the Ten Commandments spoken directly to the people by the Lord on Mt. Sinai, written by the finger of God on the two tablets of stone and preserved in the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Law has four characteristics: it is the expressed and binding will of the ruler (Nehemiah 9:13-14), it is a rule of action (Romans 2:13), it is the standard of judgment (James 2:9,12), and it requires obedience (Luke 6:46). Four terms are used descriptively of parts or aspects of the law in Deuteronomy: "statutes," meaning things prescribed or enacted by law; "judgments," i.e., rights, whether public or private, all that each could claim as his due, and all that he was bound to render to God or to his fellow men as their due; "testimonies," i.e., ordinances attested and confirmed by God; and "commandments," that is, charges laid upon men as the expression of divine will and which demand obedience. The law is also called a "covenant." This term means a divine ordinance, with signs and pledges on God's part, promises for Israel's obedience, penalties for disobedience, and ordinances for Israel to accept.

Moses was 120 years old at this time and the Promised Land was in sight. He had led the Israelites out of the Egyptian captivity and through the desert, where they received the Law of GOD. Because of Israel's refusal to enter the land of Canaan, which GOD had promised them, they wandered aimlessly in the desert for 40 years. Now they were camped at the eastern boundary of Canaan in the hills of Moab, opposite Jericho and the Jordan Plain. While the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, they faced a crucial moment in their history; new dangers, new temptations and a new leadership. Moses gathered the people to remind them of the LORD's faithfulness to his promises and called them to be faithful and obedient to GOD, while they took possession of the Promised Land.

Theme: The theme of Deuteronomy is obedience (30:1-3,8-20). The book is a series of exhortations by Moses to Israel, delivered in the plains of Moab just before his death (1:1-3), in view of the fact he would not be able to lead them into the land of Canaan, to obey the law of the Lord in the land of Canaan. The old generation had died in the wilderness, the region east of the Jordan River had been conquered, and Moses was 120 years young (34:7) and had led Israel through the wilderness for 40 years (1:3). He must die, and Joshua was to take his place. Moses, the servant of the Lord, delivered a series of stirring farewell addresses to the new generation. The great deliverer-lawgiver-prophet presented three reasons for obedience: History, God's past goodness to Israel; Law, the goodness of God's law; and Prophecy, God's promised goodness to them for obedience.

Lessons: God demanded that Israel obey His law. They could not plead that they were unable to do so, for Moses assured them the law was not impossible to obey (30:11-14). But, for Israel to obey God's law, they had to keep all His commandments always (30:2,8; 31:12), keep them carefully (5:32; 15:5), keep them diligently (11:13,22), and keep them with all their hearts and souls (11:13; 26:16; 30:2,10; 32:46). But Israel did not so keep God's law (1:19-46; 9:4-24). Thus, the Lord was just in condemning them (27:11-26; 28:15-68).

These truths in principle apply to the law of Christ but with one crucial difference (18:18-19; Acts 3:19-26). As Israel, we are able to obey all God's law (I Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 5:3), but we do not always do so, i.e., we sometimes sin (Romans 3:9,23; 1 John 1:8,10). Thus, God is just in condemning us (Romans 6:23; 8:3). The critical difference is that the animal sacrifices of the law of Moses could not take away the guilt of sin (Hebrews 10:1-4), whereas the sacrifice of Christ perfectly cleanses the inner man of the taint of iniquity (Hebrews 9:13-14; 10:12-17).

Content: Deuteronomy contains a series of farewell messages addressed by Moses to the Israelites, while he prepared to die and they readied themselves to enter the Promised Land. Although GOD had prohibited him from entering Canaan, Moses experienced a feeling of anxiety in the days leading up to that event. That which the LORD had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob centuries before, was about to become a reality. Deuteronomy represented the proclamation of a second chance for Israel, which for lack of faith and disloyalty had hindered the conquest of Canaan previously. Most of the people who found themselves alongside Moses facing the Promised Land hadn't participated in the events of Sinai; they had been born and raised in the desert. Thus Moses exhorts them 35 times to "go and possess" the land. Thirty-four times he reminds them that this is the land which GOD offers them.

While this generation of Israelites prepares to enter the Promised Land, Moses reminds them of GOD's faithfulness throughout history and the special covenant that unites them with Him. Moses tells them that the Israelites' greatest temptation in the Promised Land will be to forget GOD and hand themselves over to the worship of Canaanite idols. Thus his concern for maintaining relations established by the covenant. In order to prepare the people for life in the new land, Moses expounds on the commandments and statutes given by GOD in his covenant. Obedience to GOD equips them for life, blessings, health and prosperity, just as disobedience brings death, cursing, illness and poverty. The covenant shows the sons of GOD the way to live in companionship with Him and with others. So powerful is Deuteronomy's message, that it's cited more than 80 times in the New Testament.

DEUTERONOMY: OUTLINE

A. Main Sections

1. Israel from Sinai to Jordan (Deuteronomy 1-3)
2. General Exhortations (Deuteronomy 4-11)
3. Specific Legislation (Deuteronomy 12-26)
4. Blessings, Cursings, and the Covenant (Deuteronomy 27-30)
5. Moses' final blessings and death (Deuteronomy 31-34)

B. Moses' Speech: Recounting the Wilderness (Deuteronomy 1-3)

1. Introduction (Deuteronomy 1:1-4)
2. Appointment of leaders at Sinai (Deuteronomy 1:5-18)
3. The spies and the results of Israel's rebellion (Deuteronomy 1:19-46)
4. Passing by Edom and Moab (Deuteronomy 2:1-23)
5. Sihon and Og (Deuteronomy 2:24-3:11)
6. Reuben, Gad, half of Manasseh receive land in the Trans-Jordan; their obligations (Deuteronomy 3:12-20)
7. Moses' futile plea before God; his sentence (Deuteronomy 3:21-29)

C. Serve God and Keep His Law (Deuteronomy 4)

1. Introduction, not to transgress boundaries of law (Deuteronomy 4:1-2)
2. Baal-peor was a warning for Israel (Deuteronomy 4:3-5)
3. Superiority of Israel's laws (Deuteronomy 4:6-8)

4. Need for Israel to remember the circumstance of hearing God on Sinai; as they did not see a form, they are not to make an image of God, or worship any created thing (Deuteronomy 4:9-20)
 5. Moses' sentence (Deuteronomy 4:21-22)
 6. Do not forget God; not to make images (Deuteronomy 4:23-31)
 7. Uniqueness of Israel's deliverance, communication with God; Exodus a demonstration that YHWH is God (Deuteronomy 4:32-40)
 8. Moses establishes cities of refuge in the Trans-Jordan; conclusion; description of land of Israel in the Trans-Jordan (Deuteronomy 4:41-49)
- D. Revisiting the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5)
1. God made covenant with Israel; restatement of Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:1-22)
 2. People did not want to hear God's voice any longer; Moses intermediary between God and people (Deuteronomy 5:23-31)
 3. Need to keep God's ways (Deuteronomy 5:32-33)
- E. What Israel Must Hear (Deuteronomy 6-8)
1. Israel to hear and follow God's instruction (Deuteronomy 6:1-3)
 2. The shema; declaration of God's unity and the need to be devoted to Him (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
 3. Devotion to God's instruction: recitation, contemplation, instruction (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)
 4. Do not forget God when in the land of Israel; condemnation of idolatry (Deuteronomy 6:10-15)
 5. Do not test God; do what He says; He dispossess nations (Deuteronomy 6:16-19)
 6. Explanation to children regarding God's laws (Deuteronomy 6:20-25)
 7. Destruction of Canaanites, not integration (Deuteronomy 7:1-6)
 8. Israel chosen because of smallness, not greatness (Deut. 7:7-8)
 9. Do God's will; if Israel does so, they will be blessed (Deut. 7:9-16)
 10. No need to fear the nations; what God will do to them; their participation (Deuteronomy 7:17-26)
 11. Forty years in the wilderness for discipline; God has provided for them (Deuteronomy 8:1-6)
 12. The good land God is giving to Israel (Deuteronomy 8:7-10)
 13. Warning to not forget God after being satisfied with the blessings of the land (Deuteronomy 8:11-20)
- F. Israel's Stubbornness (Deuteronomy 9)
1. God will accomplish the dispossession of nations (Deuteronomy 9:1-3)
 2. Israel is gaining land not by their righteousness but because of Canaan's sinfulness and God's promises to the fathers (Deut. 9:4-5)
 3. Recounting of events surrounding golden calf (Deuteronomy 9:6-21)
 4. Later incidents of rebellion & stubbornness recounted (Deut. 9:22-29)
- G. God's Statutes (Deuteronomy 10-11)
1. Recounting of recreation of tablets (Deuteronomy 10:1-5)
 2. Parenthetical statement about Ark and Levites (Deuteronomy 10:6-9)
 3. Charge to possess land recounted (Deuteronomy 10:10-11)
 4. Summation of Israel's obligation to God (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)
 5. Greatness of God; need to show love because of His love; Israel not to be stubborn (Deuteronomy 10:14-22)
 6. Need to love God; Israel to consider what God did to Pharaoh, Dathan, and Abiram (Deuteronomy 11:1-7)

7. Keep Law to gain and keep land; description of land (Deut. 11:8-12)
 8. Blessings God will give if Israel is obedient (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)
 9. Condemnation for idolatry (Deuteronomy 11:16-17)
 10. Israel to keep law, meditate and speak on it, teach it (Deut. 11:18-21)
 11. Israel gains land if they keep the law; its boundaries (Deut. 11:22-25)
 12. Blessings and cursings on mounts Ebal and Gerizim (Deut. 11:26-32)
- H. A Holy and Separate Nation (Deuteronomy 12-15)
1. Destruction of pagan altars (Deuteronomy 12:1-4)
 2. Sacrifices at the Tabernacle (Deuteronomy 12:5-7)
 3. Israel to go to Tabernacle to bring offerings and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 12:8-12)
 4. Sacrifices nowhere else; meat can be eaten elsewhere; blood cannot be eaten (Deuteronomy 12:13-16; 20-25)
 5. Tithes, freewill offerings, etc. to be brought, enjoyed in Tabernacle; care for the Levite (Deuteronomy 12:17-19; 26-28)
 6. Do not seek information about Canaanite deities to serve YHWH in similar ways; do not depart from God's way to the right or left (Deuteronomy 12:26-32)
 7. Prophets not to be heeded who say to serve other gods; such are tests for Israel; such a prophet to be stoned (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)
 8. Family members or close associates who incite to idolatry to be stoned; Israel to fear, not do such things (Deuteronomy 13:6-11)
 9. A city in which some incite to idolatry to be investigated; if true, city to be devoted to destruction; need to do God's will (Deut. 13:12-18)
 10. Israel chosen; no cutting or intentional balding (Deuteronomy 14:1-2)
 11. Clean and unclean foods (Deuteronomy 14:3-21)
 12. Tithe of produce (Deuteronomy 14:22-26)
 13. Care for Levite; every third year's tithe for Levites and dispossessed (Deuteronomy 14:27-29)
 14. The Sabbath year release (Deuteronomy 15:1-3)
 15. Lack of poverty in land if people follow God (Deuteronomy 15:4-6)
 16. Assisting fellow Israelites in need (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)
 17. Care for Israelite debt slaves (Deuteronomy 15:12-18)
 18. Dedication of the firstborn; eating it before God; must be unblemished; cannot eat its blood (Deuteronomy 15:19-23)
- I. Festivals (Deuteronomy 16)
1. Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Deuteronomy 16:1-8)
 2. Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:9-12)
 3. Feast of Booths (Deuteronomy 16:13-15)
 4. Presentation of males before YHWH thrice yearly (Deut. 16:16-17)
 5. Justice to be shown; no Asherahs (Deuteronomy 16:18-22)
- J. In the Land of Israel... (Deuteronomy 17-26)
1. Proper animals for sacrifice (Deuteronomy 17:1)
 2. Stoning for idolaters (Deuteronomy 17:2-7)
 3. Difficult homicide cases to be brought to Tabernacle for decision; decision rendered final (Deuteronomy 17:8-13)
 4. Guidelines for a future king of Israel: limitations, should have a copy of the law, to remain humble (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)
 5. The Levites and their portion (Deuteronomy 18:1-8)
 6. Condemnation, destruction of abominations of Canaanites (Deuteronomy 18:9-14)

7. A prophet like Moses coming (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)
 8. Validation of prophet; fulfillment of what he says (Deut. 18:20-22)
 9. Cities of refuge to be established in Israel; explanation of the manslayer, his situation, what is to be done (Deuteronomy 19:1-13)
 10. Not to move landmark; not to allow only one witness (Deut. 19:14-15)
 11. False witness and its consequences (Deuteronomy 19:16-21)
 12. Going out to war; who should and should not fight (Deut. 20:1-9)
 13. First offer peace; if refused, storm the city, kill all the men, take everything else (Deuteronomy 20:10-15)
 14. Those in Canaan, however, to be entirely devoted to destruction so that Israel will not be tempted (Deuteronomy 20:16-18)
 15. Trees for food not to be cut down in a siege (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)
 16. Guidelines for handling a dead man found in a field (Deut. 21:1-9)
 17. Guidelines for taking a prisoner of war as wife (Deut. 21:10-14)
 18. Inheritance division for a bigamist (Deuteronomy 21:15-17)
 19. Stoning for disobedient sons (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)
 20. Provisions for people hung on trees for crimes (Deut. 21:22-23)
 21. Restoration of neighbor's property (Deuteronomy 22:1-4)
 22. Women should not wear men's clothing, vice versa (Deut. 22:5)
 23. Do not eat mother and eggs of birds (Deuteronomy 22:6-7)
 24. No intermixing of seeds, animals plowing, cloth types; tassels for garments (Deuteronomy 22:8-12)
 25. Guidelines for a man questioning virginity of bride (Deut. 22:13-21)
 26. Condemnation, stoning of adulterers (Deuteronomy 22:22)
 27. Guidelines for rape case; no marriage to stepmother (Deut. 22:23-30)
 28. Those cut off from the assembly of YHWH (Deuteronomy 23:1-6)
 29. Greater favor to Edom and Egypt (Deuteronomy 23:7-8)
 30. Requirement of cleanliness of the camp (Deuteronomy 23:9-14)
 31. Handling escaped slaves (Deuteronomy 23:15-16)
 32. No cult prostitutes; no interest on loans to Israelites; charge interest to foreigners (Deuteronomy 23:17-20)
 33. Fulfillment of vows (Deuteronomy 23:21-23)
 34. Picking your neighbor's grapes or grain (Deuteronomy 23:24-25)
 35. Legislation regarding remarrying an ex-wife (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)
 36. Newly married guideline (Deuteronomy 24:5)
 37. Death for kidnappers (Deuteronomy 24:6)
 38. Guidelines for skin diseases (Deuteronomy 24:7-9)
 39. Pledges; fairness with hired persons; showing justice; benevolence to the dispossessed (Deuteronomy 24:10-22)
 40. Punishments for wrongdoing; not muzzling ox (Deuteronomy 25:1-4)
 41. Levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)
 42. Punishment for woman who puts hand on a man in an inappropriate place (Deuteronomy 25:11-12)
 43. Fair balances (Deuteronomy 25:13-16)
 44. Charge to exterminate Amalek (Deuteronomy 25:17-19)
 45. Ritual guidelines for offering of first-fruits when Israel enters the land (Deuteronomy 26:1-11)
 46. Ritual guidelines for tithe offering for dispossessed (Deut. 26:12-15)
 47. Israel should follow these rules; God has made them a treasured possession, a holy people (Deuteronomy 26:16-19)
- K. Blessings and Cursings (Deuteronomy 27-28)

1. Stones to be erected with the law written upon it (Deuteronomy 27:1-3)
 2. Altar to be erected with offerings offered on it (Deuteronomy 27:4-8)
 3. Dedication of Israel to God (Deuteronomy 27:9-10)
 4. Blessings and cursings from mounts Gerizim and Ebal (Deut. 27:11-14)
 5. The cursings: call and response (Deuteronomy 27:15-26)
 6. Blessings if Israel obeys God (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)
 7. Cursings if Israel disobeys God (Deuteronomy 28:15-68)
- L. The Words of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 29-30)
1. Israel to remember what it saw, know YHWH is God; dispossession of Sihon and Og (Deuteronomy 29:1-9)
 2. God making a covenant with Israel (Deuteronomy 29:10-15)
 3. Egypt an example of idolatry, Israel not to follow after them; take care against idolaters present, lest they be condemned (Deut. 29:16-21)
 4. The desolation caused will be a testament to nations (Deut. 29:22-28)
 5. Secret things are of God; Israel to do His law (Deuteronomy 29:29)
 6. Later restoration of the people to God; God renews the covenant and will bless them (Deuteronomy 30:1-10)
 7. Nearness and ability to follow the commands (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)
 8. Life and death set before Israel; Israel should choose life and follow the commandments (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)
- M. Moses' Final Words and Blessings (Deuteronomy 31-33)
1. Declaration of Moses' end at 120; Joshua will lead the people into the land; God will defeat their enemies (Deuteronomy 31:1-8)
 2. Moses writes the law, gave it to Levites and elders (Deuteronomy 31:9)
 3. Law to be read to all the people on the Feast of Booths of the Sabbath year (Deuteronomy 31:10-13)
 4. God intends to commission Joshua; prediction of Israel's faithlessness; song to be taught as a witness against Israel (Deuteronomy 31:14-23)
 5. Moses writes book of law, gives command to Levites; declaration of Israel's faithlessness and stubbornness; Moses speaks words of the song before all Israel (Deuteronomy 31:24-30)
 6. The song of Moses: God's greatness, Israel's idolatry and stubbornness, disaster overtakes Israel (Deuteronomy 32:1-44)
 7. Moses to go up on Nebo to see land before he dies (Deut. 32:45-52)
 8. Moses' blessings to each tribe of Israel (Deuteronomy 33)
- N. Moses' Death (Deuteronomy 34)
1. Moses goes up on Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah; sees all the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 34:1-4)
 2. Moses dies; buried by God in undisclosed location; strength of Moses; Israel mourns (Deuteronomy 34:5-8)
 3. Joshua takes over; no prophet had been seen like Moses after him (Deuteronomy 34:9-12)

DEUTERONOMY: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Deuteronomy 4:2
1. Importance of following God according to His will
 2. Not to go beyond either to the left or to the right!
- B. Deuteronomy 5:16 - Ephesians 6:1-3
- C. Deuteronomy 6:4-5
1. Demonstration of unity of God - Matthew 22:38-40
- D. Deuteronomy 6:16 - Matthew 4:7

E. Deuteronomy 8:3 - Matthew 4:4

F. Deuteronomy 11:18-21

1. Devotion to the law as a reminder for those under the New Covenant

G. Deuteronomy 17:6

1. Principle of two or more witnesses - Matt. 18:16

H. Deuteronomy 18:15-19 - Moses prophesies of Jesus

I. Deuteronomy 21:23 - Galatians 3:13-14

J. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 - Matthew 19:1-9

K. Deuteronomy 25:4 - 1Cor. 9:5-14; 1Tim. 5:17-18

L. Deuteronomy 29:29 - Isaiah 55:9-10

1. Good to remember that man does not and cannot know everything

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

1. Who is the narrator and author of Deuteronomy? What New Testament person confirmed this?
2. What "brother" nation made it difficult for Israel to journey to the Promised Land? What Old Testament prophet spoke of their downfall?
3. What did Moses plead with God for permission to do (3:23-28)? What was God's answer to him? What lesson can be learned from this exchange?
4. Who was the future prophet that would be like Moses?
5. What is the test of a true prophet?
6. What is stoning? Why do you suppose it was an appropriate punishment?
7. What did the Law of Moses say about cross-dressing?
8. Describe the events that occurred at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim.
9. How old was Moses at his death? Who was his successor?
10. What does Deuteronomy say about deviating to the right or left of God's Law?
11. What does Deuteronomy say about honoring parents? Who quoted this in the New Testament?

12. What does Deuteronomy say about tempting God? Who quoted this in the NT?

13. What does Deuteronomy say about living by bread alone? Who quoted this in the New Testament?

14. What does Deuteronomy say about the testimony of two or three witnesses? Who quoted this in the New Testament?

15. What does Deuteronomy say about someone who has been hanged? Who is the object of this quotation in the New Testament?

16. What does Deuteronomy say about tempting God? Who quoted this in the NT?

17. What does Deuteronomy say about divorce? Who quoted this in the New Testament?

18. What does Deuteronomy say about muzzling oxen? Who quoted this in the New Testament?

19. What does Deuteronomy say about secret (unrevealed) matters?

20. Where did Moses die and where is he buried? Who buried Him? (Think carefully)

Lesson Four: Joshua

JOSHUA: INTRODUCTION

It is not certain who wrote the book of Joshua, but the man Joshua, for whom the book is named, is the probable author (24:26), except for the postscript (24:29-33). The name "Joshua" means "Jehovah saves." In Greek "Joshua" is "Jesus." The book was primarily written to Israel.

The theme of Joshua is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Land Promise (Gen. 12:7; 15:18-21; Josh. 21:43-45). Premillennialists (those who believe in a future, one thousand year, material kingdom of Christ on earth with a restoration of national Israel to Canaan) claim that the Abrahamic Land Promise has not been fulfilled and that national Israel must yet inherit physical Canaan. But Joshua declared, "Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord spoke to the house of Israel. All came to pass." (21:45)

The lesson of Joshua is "Serve the Lord." (1:5-9; 5:13-15; 24:13-18). After Israel had conquered Canaan and shortly before Joshua's death, Joshua challenged Israel. The Book of Joshua is named after the book's focal character, who as Moses' successor led Israel into the Promised Land. The English title is derived from the Greek and Latin translations. The Hebrew name Joshua (Yehosua) means The LORD is salvation. The shortened form of Joshua (Hebrew Yesua) is Jesus in Greek. (HBH)

Authorship is disputed since the book is anonymous. Some interpreters believe the book was completed in the seventh or sixth centuries BC after a long process of compilation by unnamed editors as part of a large history influenced by the themes of Deuteronomy. Other scholars argue for a view closer to the traditional opinion, dating the book within one generation of the events recorded (fourteenth century BC). The book includes sources that are contemporary with Joshua (for example, 5:1,6; 6:25; 8:32; 18:9; 24:26) and also sources from a later time (for example, "to this day", 4:9; 5:9; 7:26; 10:27; 13:13). The book probably was based on an early core of testimony that was supplemented by an author no later than the tenth century BC. There are hints that the book came from the early monarchy. (Compare, for example, the "book of Jashar" quoted in 10:13 and 2Sam. 1:18.) The Book of Joshua addresses many of the same problems faced by Israel's kings. Leadership, land dispute, the location and role of the tabernacle, and how to deal with Canaanite populations were problems shared by Saul and David. Although the book is constituted of different sources, this does not mean that they are inconsistent or contradictory. They have been written and gathered under the supervision of GOD's Spirit to present a unified message to GOD's people. (HBH)

Date of Writing: The book covers some 25 years of Israel's history under the direction of Joshua, Moses' assistant and successor. The date for Joshua's death that is commonly accepted is 1375 BC. Thus the book embraces the period of Israelite history between 1400 and 1375 BC; it appears that the stories contained in Joshua were compiled some time later.

Background: The book begins in the period leading up to Israel's entrance into Canaan, a territory that was divided into many city-states, each one of them with its own autocratic government and fighting with the others. From a moral viewpoint, a great corruption existed; illegalities and brutality were common. The Canaanite religion emphasized fertility and the symbols associated with it, snake worship and child sacrifice. The stage was prepared and the land was ready to be conquered.

In contrast, the people of Israel had wandered without a territory in which to establish themselves for 400 years (Gen. 15:13). They had lived in submission to the Egyptian pharaohs, and later had to wander aimlessly through the desert for 40 years. But they still remained faithful, although not totally, to the only true GOD, and held to the

promise that Jehovah had made to their ancestor, Abraham. Centuries before, GOD had promised to make Abraham and his descendants a great nation, and to give them Canaan as a home, with the condition that they would always be faithful and obedient (Gen. 17). Now they were about to see the fulfillment of that promise.

Content: The book of Joshua is the sixth of the Old Testament and the first of a group of books called the "Former Prophets". Collectively, these books describe the advances of the kingdom of GOD in the Promised Land until the Babylonian captivity, a period of some 900 years. Joshua relates Israel's entrance into Canaan by means of conquest, the division and settlement of the Promised Land.

JOSHUA: OUTLINE

A. Main Sections

1. Crossing the Jordan and conquering Jericho and Ai (Joshua 1-8)
2. Southern and northern conflicts (Joshua 9-11)
3. The Land and Allotments (Joshua 12-19)
4. Joshua's Final Preparations and Exhortations (Joshua 20-24)

B. Preparations to Cross the Jordan (Joshua 1-3)

1. God speaks with Joshua, encourages him (Joshua 1:1-9)
2. Joshua readies the people, especially the men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (Joshua 1:10-15)
3. They respond eagerly (Joshua 1:16-18)
4. Joshua sends spies to Jericho; they come to Rahab's inn (Joshua 2:1)
5. Rahab hides the spies, covers for them (Joshua 2:2-7)
6. Rahab indicates her recognition that God is with Israel, pleads for mercy (Joshua 2:8-13)
7. Rahab and spies make agreement, its stipulations; spies led out another way, return to Joshua (Joshua 2:14-24)
8. Final preparations and instructions made; follow the Ark (Joshua 3:1-6)
9. Declaration of the event to take place: God will part the Jordan as He parted the Red Sea (Joshua 3:7-13)
10. When priests carry Ark in the river, waters recede (Joshua 3:14-17)

C. Israel in Canaan (Joshua 4-5)

1. 12 stones gathered, set in the Jordan as a memorial of Israel's crossing; men of war of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh cross over; priests come forth, waters return to their banks; instruction for children (Joshua 4)
2. Men of Israel circumcised (Joshua 5:1-9)
3. Passover observed; manna ceases (Joshua 5:10-12)
4. Joshua sees commander of the LORD's host (Joshua 5:13-15)

D. Jericho (Joshua 6)

1. Jericho shut up; God instructs Joshua about marching around it (Joshua 6:1-5)
2. Marching around for six days (Joshua 6:6-14)
3. The seventh day: seven times around the city; horns blow, walls fall down (Joshua 6:15-20)
4. Jericho as firstfruits for God, placed under the ban: all things devoted for destruction, save Rahab's family, metal objects (Joshua 6:21-25)
5. Joshua curses the one who would rebuild Jericho (Joshua 6:26-27)

E. Achan and Ai (Joshua 7-8)

1. Anger of God because of Achan (Joshua 7:1)
2. Spies sent to Ai; small army sent, beaten back (Joshua 7:2-5)

3. Joshua and elders mourn; God indicates that one has taken of the devoted things (Joshua 7:6-12)
 4. Israel presented to God; lot eventually falls on Achan (Joshua 7:13-18)
 5. Achan's confession (Joshua 7:19-23)
 6. Achan, family, and property stoned, burned; thus the Valley of Achor (Joshua 7:24-26)
 7. God will now give Ai into Israel's hand; ambush to be developed (Joshua 8:1-2)
 8. Joshua sends out the ambush squad (Joshua 8:3-9)
 9. Joshua takes army out, flees before Ai; all of the men of Ai pursue (Joshua 8:10-17)
 10. Signal given; city taken; men of Ai see it, flee; 12,000 of Ai die (Joshua 8:18-25)
 11. Everything taken; city made a heap of ruins (Joshua 8:26-29)
 12. Joshua builds altar on Ebal, reads blessings and curses on Gerizim and Ebal as Moses directed (Joshua 8:30-35)
- F. Gibeon's Treachery (Joshua 9)
1. Preparations for war against Israel (Joshua 9:1-2)
 2. Gibeonites devise treachery; pretend as if they are distant travelers, seek to make a covenant with Israel (Joshua 9:3-13)
 3. Israel does not consult God (Joshua 9:14)
 4. Covenant made; treachery discovered; Israel feels compelled to honor covenant; Gibeonites as servants (Joshua 9:15-27)
- G. The Southern War (Joshua 10)
1. King of Jerusalem disturbed at recent events, makes coalition, wages war with Gibeon (Joshua 10:1-5)
 2. Gibeonites appeal to Joshua; march made in one evening; coalition put to rout (Joshua 10:6-10)
 3. God fought for Israel with hail; Joshua prays for the sun to remain in its place; wish granted (Joshua 10:11-15)
 4. Five kings hide in Makkedah; Joshua brings them out, executes them (Joshua 10:16-27)
 5. Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, Debir attacked, conquered; Joshua and Israel in control of the southern part of Canaan (Joshua 10:28-43)
- H. The Northern War (Joshua 11)
1. King of Hazor develops coalition to fight Israel (Joshua 11:1-5)
 2. God delivers them into Joshua's hand; Hazor burned, other cities captured but not destroyed (Joshua 11:6-15)
 3. Land conquered; Joshua did what he was charged to do; end of Anakim; rest for the land (Joshua 11:16-23)
- I. Recounting of kings killed by Moses and Joshua (Joshua 12)
- J. Land to Take, Previous Grants (Joshua 13)
1. Land left to be captured; charge to allot land to tribes (Joshua 13:1-7)
 2. Transjordan land allotted (Joshua 13:8-13)
 3. No land to Levites (Joshua 13:14, 33)
 4. Reuben's allotment (Joshua 13:15-23)
 5. Gad's allotment (Joshua 13:24-28)
 6. Half of Manasseh's allotment (Joshua 13:29-32)
- L. Allotments (Joshua 14-19)
1. Inheritances to be given out by lot (Joshua 14:1-5)

2. Caleb receives Hebron as special inheritance from Moses' promise (Joshua 14:6-15)
 3. Judah's allotment (Joshua 15:1-12)
 4. Caleb attacks, conquers Hebron (Joshua 15:13-15)
 5. Attack on Debir; Othniel takes Debir and thus Achsah, Caleb's daughter, as wife; gift of springs (Joshua 15:16-19)
 6. Cities of Judah (Joshua 15:20-63)
 7. 2 tribes of Joseph's allotments (Joshua 16)
 8. Manasseh's allotment; lack of contentment with it (Joshua 17)
 9. Seven portions of rest of land cut out, rest of tribes to get portion each by lot (Joshua 18:1-10)
 10. Benjamin's allotment and cities (Joshua 18:11-28)
 11. Simeon's cities and allotment (Joshua 19:1-9)
 12. Zebulun's allotment and cities (Joshua 19:10-16)
 13. Issachar's allotment and cities (Joshua 19:17-23)
 14. Asher's allotment and cities (Joshua 19:24-31)
 15. Naphtali's allotment and cities (Joshua 19:32-39)
 16. Dan's original allotment & cities; conquering of Dan (Joshua 19:40-47)
 17. Joshua given his allotment (Joshua 19:48-51)
- M. Cities of refuge explained, appointed (Joshua 20)
- N. Cities and pasturelands given to Levites throughout Israel (Joshua 21)
- O. The Altar of Witness (Joshua 22)
1. Joshua blesses the men of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh; they return home (Joshua 22:1-9)
 2. They build a large altar; all Israel gathered for war; Phinehas and delegation sent to three tribes to ascertain situation (Joshua 22:10-20)
 3. Tribes explain their purpose- not to offer sacrifices, but as a witness of their share in the LORD (Joshua 22:21-29)
 4. Phinehas, others satisfied; war averted (Joshua 22:30-34)
- P. Joshua summons Israel, presents message of encouragement; warning to observe God's statutes (Joshua 23)
- Q. Joshua's Final Speech (Joshua 24)
1. Lesson: God's plan from Nahor to their own day (Joshua 24:1-13)
 2. Declaration of need to decide whom Israel will serve (Joshua 24:14-15)
 3. Israel chooses the LORD (Joshua 24:16-18)
 4. Joshua brings witness against the people that they have chosen the LORD (Joshua 24:19-24)
 5. Covenant with God renewed; Joshua again writes the Law of God; Israel sent to their tribal holdings (Joshua 24:25-28)
 6. Joshua's death at 110; his burial; faithfulness of his generation (Joshua 24:29-31)
 7. Interment of Joseph's remains (Joshua 24:32)
 8. Eleazar the High Priest dies; Phinehas takes his place (Joshua 24:33)

JOSHUA: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Joshua 2:9-11
1. God successful in His purposes: the nations know what He does for Israel and they fear
 2. Rahab's belief in God - Matthew 1:5
- B. Achan (Joshua 7)
1. A good warning about trifling with that which belongs to God

2. Consider how much was lost for his sin
- C. Joshua 9:14
1. Rash decisions by Israel lead to difficulty
 2. Demonstration of value of consulting God
- D. Joshua 22 - the need to communicate before acting
1. The problems that come from listening to rumors
- E. Joshua 24:15, 31

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

1. What was God's primary instruction to Joshua in chapter one? (Hint: He repeated it three times)
2. Where did the spies hide when sent into the city of Jericho?
3. Rahab the harlot was an ancestor of what well known Bible persons?
4. Describe the means by which the city of Jericho was taken?
5. Were the children of Israel permitted to take spoil from Jericho? Why or why not?
6. Who disregarded the commandment regarding spoils of Jericho? What did he take?
7. What happened to Israel as a result of spoils being taken from Jericho? What happened to the guilty man and his family?
8. Who were the Gibeonites and how did they deceive Israel? What were the consequences for Israel and Gibeon?
9. What two miraculous interventions of God helped Joshua and Israel in the battle against the Jerusalem coalition at Gilgal?
10. What portion of the land did the Levites receive?
11. How many pagan kings had to be eliminated in the process of conquering the Promised Land? Why do you suppose it was necessary to do away with so many people?
12. If God was giving Israel the Promised Land, why was it necessary for Israel to fight for it? What does this imply about God's gift of salvation in the New Testament?

13. What danger did a rumor about Reuben, Gad, and Mannaseh pose for Israel after the conquest ended? What does this say about listening to rumors?
14. Describe Joshua's closing challenge to Israel to serve the Lord. How long did Israel faithfully serve God afterward?
15. What city has the shortest name in the Bible?
16. Where and when did the manna cease to fall from heaven to feed Israel?
17. What were the cities of refuge and what was their purpose?
18. What is the meaning of the name Joshua? What New Testament person had the Greek equivalent of this name?
19. How old was Joshua when he died? What other important person died at that time? What third person was buried at about that time?
20. Joshua's name is associated with victory in the Old Testament. Who gives us victory in the New Testament? Victory over what?

Lesson Five: Judges

JUDGES: INTRODUCTION

Following the death of Joshua, the Israelites attempted to control the land of Canaan without a central earthly leader. They were able to possess the mountainous regions but were unable to drive the Canaanites out of the well fortified cities in the valleys. The influence of the Canaanites caused Israel to apostatize from Jehovah. When the Israelites began to worship Baal, pagan god of the Canaanites, God allowed the Canaanites, Philistines, Midianites or others to oppress Israel. Since Israel had no centralized government under a king, no unified effort was made against her enemies. To end the oppression “the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them” (2:1). These judges were more like strong military leaders than court officials. The history of the period of the judges ended after nearly 300 years when Israel rejected the judges which God appointed in favor of a dynasty of kings. That rejection is recorded in 1Samuel 8.

1. Othniel. When Israel began to worship the Baalim, Cushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, subdued Israel for eight years. Othniel, the son-in-law of Caleb, fought against and defeated Cushanrishathaim giving Israel rest from oppression for forty years.

2. Ehud. Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. Eglon, king of the Moabites, allied with the Ammonites and Amalekites to subdue Israel and make them pay tribute. Ehud, the left-handed judge, took the tribute money to Eglon, a very obese king. Ehud requested permission to speak privately to the king. When the two were alone, Ehud stabbed an 18 inch sword so deep into Eglon that the fat of his body covered the handle of the sword. Ehud escaped and later led Israel in the defeat of the Moabites. The land was at rest for 80 years.

3. Shamgar. Shamgar saved Israel by killing 600 Philistines with an ox-goad.

4. Deborah. When Israel began to practice evil again, Jabin, king of Canaan oppressed Israel for 20 years. He had 900 chariots of iron under the command of Sisera. Deborah, a prophetess, called Barak to lead Israel against Jabin, but Barak would agree to lead the army only if Deborah would go with him. In the battle which was fought near Megiddo, a rain storm caused the Kishon River to overflow onto the battleground immobilizing the iron chariots. Israel won the battle. Sisera, captain of Jabin’s host, fled on foot. A Kenite woman named Jael gave Sisera a glass of milk and hid him in a rug in her tent. When he fell asleep, she drove a tent pin through his temple and he died. Israel had rest for 40 years.

5. Gideon. When Israel sinned again, the Midianites allied themselves with the Amalekites and some Bedouin tribesmen from the east to oppress Israel for seven years. The Israelites had to flee to the mountains for safety and could only harvest their crops in secret. God called Gideon to fight against the Midianites. That night, Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal. When the men of the city sought Gideon’s life, Joash, his father, called all of Israel to rally to his defense.

Two signs were given to Gideon to convince him to lead the attack. He put his fleece of wool on the threshing floor and the next morning, dew was on the fleece but not on the floor. The next morning, he found dew on the floor but not on the fleece.

Thirty-two thousand men assembled to fight against the Midianites. To convince Israel that deliverance came from God and not from their military strength, the number of the soldiers had to be reduced; 22,000 soldiers were sent home because they were afraid. At a place of water, only the ones who lapped water like a dog were allowed to fight with Gideon. His “army” consisted of 300 men.

Armed with trumpets, empty pitchers, and torches within the pitchers, Gideon attacked the Midianites. At his command, the men blew their trumpets, broke the pitchers, and held the torches while shouting, "The sword of Jehovah and Gideon." The Midianites panicked. They began to kill each other and to flee. Gideon then called all of the Israelites to take part in the defeat of the retreating and confused enemy. He won the victory and gave Israel rest for 40 years. Israel tried to make Gideon king but he refused. Shortly after defeating the Midianites, Gideon led Israel into idolatry. He had 70 sons.

6. Abimelech. Abimelech was one of Gideon's 70 sons who desired to be king over Israel. He murdered 68 of his brothers (only Jotham escaped) and began to reign at Shechem. Jotham later gave a speech in the form of a fable which led the Shechemites to rebel against Abimelech. After subduing the Shechemites, Abimelech was killed by a woman who dropped a millstone on his head while he was trying to conquer the people of Thebez who were in a high tower. Abimelech reigned in Israel for three years.

7. Tola. Tola judged Israel for 23 years.

8. Jair. Jair judged Israel for 22 years.

9. Jephthah. The Philistines subdued Israel for 18 years before a decisive battle in favor of Israel occurred at Gilead. The people of that city needed help. They called on Jephthah who sometime earlier had been driven out of the city after being deprived of his share of his father's inheritance because he was the son of a prostitute. He formed a powerful band of vain men. When trouble came, the Gileadites asked him for help. He consented to give them help if they would make him king if he were victorious.

Jephthah promised to sacrifice to God the first thing which came out of his tent to greet him if God would give him the victory. When Jephthah returned home after the victory, his daughter was the first one to greet him. Jephthah kept his vow.

The Ephraimites became angry with the men of Gilead because they were not asked to help in the fight against the Philistines. Civil war followed during which 42,000 Ephraimites died.

10. Ibzan. Ibzan judged Israel for 7 years.

11. Elon. Elon judged Israel for 10 years.

12. Abdon. Abdon judged Israel for 8 years.

13. Samson. For 40 years the Philistines oppressed Israel. During this period, a man named Manoah had a barren wife. An angel of God appeared to them and promised them a child who should not drink wine or strong drink and who should never shave his head. The son who was born was named Samson.

Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman from Timnah. At the wedding feast, he asked the Philistines a riddle and bet thirty changes of clothing that they could not answer it. The Philistines threatened the parents of Samson's bride so she told them the answer to the riddle. Samson went down to Ashkelon, killed 30 Philistines, and took their clothes in order to pay his gambling debt.

When Samson went back for his wife, she had been given to another man. Samson caught 300 foxes, and attached firebrands between the tails of each pair of foxes. He then released the foxes in the grain fields of the Philistines. The Philistines made Israel capture Samson and give him to them. They bound him with ropes and gave him to the Philistines. Samson broke the ropes, picked up the jawbone of an ass, and killed 1000 Philistines.

Samson went to visit a harlot at Gaza. The Philistines surrounded the city waiting to kill Samson the next day. At midnight, Samson left the city, tore down the city gates, and carried them to the top of a nearby mountain.

Afterward Samson fell in love with Delilah, another Philistine woman. She asked Samson what was the secret of his strength in an attempt to help the Philistines conquer Samson but he lied to her three times. Finally he told her that if his hair were cut, he

would lose his strength. She cut his hair and bound him in order that the Philistines could capture him. They put out his eyes and put him in prison where they forced him to turn the millstone which ground their grain. While there grinding the grain, Samson's hair grew out.

The lords of the Philistines held a great feast during which they brought Samson from prison in order to tease him. A lad led Samson from the prison to the house. Samson stood between the two pillars supporting the house. Putting one hand on each pillar, he toppled them causing the house to collapse and killing himself and all of the Philistines in the house. Samson killed more Philistines in his death than he killed during his entire life.

Two other accounts appear at the conclusion of the book of Judges apparently to describe the moral corruption of the Israelites during the period when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

An Ephraimite named Micah built a graven image to Jehovah and hired a Levite to serve his idol. During this period, the Danites were unable to conquer the land given to them by Joshua so they sent out spies to find land to which they could move. The five spies stopped at the house of Micah and saw his idol. The Levite foretold a safe and profitable trip for the spies. Later, when the Danites moved north, they stole Micah's idol and persuaded the Levite to go with them by offering him a better position than Micah could offer him.

The other incident tells of a Levite who had as his concubine a harlot from Bethlehem. The harlot ran away from her home in Ephraim and returned to her father in Bethlehem. After the Levite went after her, he stopped for rest at Gibeah on his way back home. The men of Gibeah took the Levite's concubine and raped her all night. The next day, the Levite cut her into twelve pieces and sent her body throughout Israel. Eleven of the tribes armed themselves to punish the city of Gibeah; the tribe of Benjamin rose to her defense. In the battle which followed, the tribe of Benjamin was practically annihilated; only 600 men and no women were left. The Eleven tribes attacked and defeated the town of Jabesh-gilead in order to capture virgin women for the Benjamites; 400 women were taken and given to the Benjamites at Shiloh.

- A. God's intention when He established Israel was to have twelve autonomous tribes united in their devotion to Him
 1. Israel disappointed Him in the Book of Judges
- B. Covers the period of time from Joshua to Samuel
 1. A troubled time in Israel's history that was self-inflicted
 - a. They did not need to suffer as they did, but they instead chose not to serve God as they should
 2. Their history ran in the same cycle:
 - a. God would bless them with a time of peace and prosperity
 - b. They would forget God and wander off into idolatry and sin
 - c. God would allow an oppressor to come in and take over
 - d. They would cry out to God in sorrow and repentance
 - e. After a time, God would answer their cry with a deliverer (judge)
 - f. The deliverer would save Israel from oppression and the cycle would begin again
 3. Read Judges 2 and 21:25 for an explanation of the conditions

JUDGES: BACKGROUND

- A. Authorship
 1. Author is entirely unknown
 2. Seems consistent with Joshua; perhaps same author

3. Acts 13:20 - Paul speaks of Judges
 4. Hebrews 11:32 - Hebrew author attests to Judges
 5. Verifies its inspiration
- B. Date of writing
1. Dating of Judges poses some difficulties
 2. According to the boundaries set by other texts, judges judged about 320-340 years (1Kings 6:1)
 3. Perhaps between 1400-1080 BC
 4. The book may have written not long after Judges period (Judges 1:21)
- C. Recipients
1. The readers of the book is Israel during the period of the kings
- D. Purpose of writing
1. To describe the history of Israel from Joshua to Samuel
 2. To demonstrate need for Divinely ordained central leadership in Israel
 3. To demonstrate the condemnation that comes from serving other gods

JUDGES: OUTLINE

- A. Main Sections
1. Early Judges (Judges 1-5)
 2. Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson (Judges 6-16)
 3. Appendices (Judges 17-21)
- B. Land Conquered and Unconquered (Judges 1:1-2:10a)
1. Judah and Simeon fight for land, conquer Adoni-bezek, Jerusalem (Judges 1:1-8)
 2. Recapitulation of Caleb conquering Hebron, Othniel capturing Kiriath-sepher (Judges 1:9-15)
 3. Kenites dwell in Judah; conquests of Judah, Simeon (Judges 1:16-20)
 4. Benjamin does not possess Jerusalem (Judges 1:21)
 5. Joseph takes Bethel (Judges 1:22-26)
 6. Cities Manasseh, Ephraim, Asher, and Napthali did not take (Judges 1:27-36)
 7. Angel of the LORD delivers message: Israel did not take the land as commanded, the people would be left as a temptation and a snare; weeping of Israel (Judges 2:1-5)
 8. Death, burial of Joshua; faithfulness of that generation, the one afterward; passing of that generation (Judges 2:6-10)
- C. The Judges Cycle (Judges 2:10-23)
1. Generation arises not knowing God (Judges 2:10)
 2. Served other gods; the LORD angry with them, delivers them into oppressor for oppression (Judges 2:11-15)
 3. Judge raised by God who would deliver them; still would not listen; the next generation would be more corrupt; cycle would begin anew (Judges 2:16-19)
 4. God swears to not dispossess any more of the nations in Israel (Judges 2:20-23)
- D. Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar (Judges 3)
1. List of nations left in Israel (Judges 3:1-4)
 2. Intermarriage of Israel with nations, other gods served (Judges 3:5-7)
 3. Eight year oppression of Cushan-rishathaim of Mesopotamia; deliverance by Othniel (Judges 3:8-11)

4. Eighteen year oppression of Eglon king of Moab; Ehud arises; left-handed man, kills Eglon; Israelites kill 10,000 Moabites; Moab subdued (Judges 3:12-30)
 5. Shamgar kills 600 Philistines with oxgoad, saves Israel (Judges 3:31)
- E. Deborah and Barak (Judges 4-5)
1. Twenty year oppression of Jabin king of Hazor, Canaanite, and his 900 iron chariots; Sisera his army commander (Judges 4:1-3)
 2. Prophetess Deborah judging Israel; summons Barak to fight Canaan (Judges 4:4-7)
 3. Barak will only go if Deborah goes; because of it, glory will go to a woman; 10,000 summoned (Judges 4:8-10)
 4. Heber and Jael, Kenites, dwelling near Kedesh (Judges 4:11)
 5. War between Sisera and Barak; the LORD gives Barak the victory, all of Sisera's army destroyed (Judges 4:12-16)
 6. Sisera flees to tent of Heber and Jael; Jael welcomes him, gives him milk; he rests; she kills him with a tent peg (Judges 4:17-21)
 7. Barak comes by, Jael shows him Sisera's body; Israel continues to press and finally destroys Jabin of Hazor (Judges 4:22-24)
 8. Song of Deborah, commemorating Israel's victory, Jael's deeds, Sisera's defeat (Judges 5)
- F. Gideon (Judges 6-8)
1. Seven year oppression of Midian and the eastern peoples; severity of oppression (Judges 6:1-6)
 2. Israel cries out; God sends a prophet, denouncing idolatry of Israel (Judges 6:7-10)
 3. Gideon son of Joash called to deliver Israel (Judges 6:11-16)
 4. First sign for Gideon: miraculous fire consuming an offering (Judges 6:17-24)
 5. Gideon called to destroy Baal altar and Asherah, erection of altar to God; inhabitants seek Gideon's death; let Baal contend with him; Jerubbaal his new name (Judges 6:25-32)
 6. Midian encamped; Gideon summons tribes of Israel for war (Judges 6:33-35)
 7. Second sign for Gideon: dew on the fleece, not the ground; dew on the ground, not the fleece (Judges 6:33-40)
 8. 32,000 men mustered; too many for God; 22,000 who were afraid left (Judges 7:1-3)
 9. 10,000 still too many; water drinking test; 300 remain (Judges 7:4-7)
 10. Third sign for Gideon: the Midianite dream (Judges 7:8-15)
 11. Night attack on the Midianite camp; Midianites flee, and Ephraimites come out and slaughter many, including the princes of Midian (Judges 7:16-25)
 12. Ephraim's contention and Gideon's placation (Judges 8:1-3)
 13. Taunting of Gideon by Succoth and Penuel (Judges 8:4-9)
 14. Midianite kings encamped with rest of their army; Gideon attacks, army in panic, kings captured (Judges 8:10-12)
 15. Punishment of Succoth and Penuel (Judges 8:13-17)
 16. Execution of kings of Midian (Judges 8:18-21)
 17. Call for Gideon and descendants to rule Israel; Gideon refuses; Gideon creates an ephod with gold from Midianite earrings, leads many astray by it (Judges 8:22-28)

18. Gideon has seventy sons and Abimelech; dies in good old age; Israel again serves other gods (Judges 8:29-35)

G. Abimelech (Judges 9)

1. Abimelech hatches conspiracy with Shechem, executes all but one of Gideon's sons; Abimelech made king (Judges 9:1-6)
2. Jotham, Gideon's remaining son, speaks forth the parable of the thornbush; invokes curse on Abimelech and Shechem (Judges 9:7-21)
3. Three year reign of Abimelech; controversy between him and Shechem; Gaal speaks insurrection, Abimelech comes to fight Shechem (Judges 9:22-41)
4. Abimelech captures Shechem, destroys it, sows it with salt; burns the Tower of Shechem with 1,000 persons inside (Judges 9:42-49)
5. Abimelech besieges Thebez; hit by millstone cast down by a woman; begs his armor bearer to kill him, death of Abimelech; curse of Jotham came down on both Shechem and Abimelech (Judges 9:50-57)

H. Other Judges (Judges 10)

1. Tola and Jair (Judges 10:1-5)
2. Israel sins, God delivers them into hand of Ammonites 18 years (Judges 10:6-9)
3. Israel cries out; God not willing to hear because of their idolatry, tells them to ask deliverance from gods they serve (Judges 10:10-15)
4. Israel puts away those gods; the LORD now impatient to save Israel (Judges 10:16-18)

I. Jephthah (Judges 11-12)

1. Jephthah an illegitimate child, cast out from family; becomes gang leader (Judges 11:1-3)
2. In desperation, elders of Gilead make Jephthah their leader (Judges 11:4-11)
3. Historical disputation between Jephthah and Ammon: who has rights to the land of Gilead? (Judges 11:12-28)
4. Jephthah's vow: whatever comes to him first from home a burnt offering (Judges 11:29-31)
5. Jephthah defeats Ammon; his daughter meets him first from his house; vow to be kept, she laments her virginity, he offers her in some manner; yearly observance of event (Judges 11:32-40)
6. Ephraim's discontent, war with Gilead; Jephthah defeats Ephraim; "shibboleth" test at the water; 42,000 Ephraimites die (Judges 12:1-7)
7. Ibzan, Elon, Abdon judge Israel (Judges 12:8-15)

J. Samson (Judges 13-16)

1. Forty year oppression of Philistia (Judges 13:1)
2. Manoah and wife childless; angel of the LORD visits them, announces that they will have a son, a Nazirite from birth (Judges 13:2-14)
3. Offering provided; angel departs in the offering (Judges 13:15-23)
4. Birth of Samson; spirit of the LORD stirs in him (Judges 13:24-25)
5. Samson finds, marries a Timnite; LORD's opportunity against Philistia (Judges 14:1-4)
6. Samson meets a young lion, kills him bare-handed; later finds a beehive in the lion, takes honey and eats (Judges 14:5-9)
7. Feast; Samson sets forth riddle of lion and honey; Philistines threaten his wife if they lose the bet; she nags him for answer (Judges 14:10-17)

8. Samson loses bet, kills men of Ashkelon for clothing; does not take his wife with him, wife given to another (Judges 14:18-20)
 9. Samson seeks wife, learns she was given to another; in retaliation, he sets fire to Philistine grain via foxes (Judges 15:1-5)
 10. Philistines then kill Samson's ex and her father; in retaliation, he kills some Philistines, flees to Judah (Judges 15:6-8)
 11. Philistines come into Judah; men of Judah bind Samson, hand him over; Samson unbound, takes jawbone of donkey, kills 1,000 Philistines (Judges 15:9-17)
 12. Samson greatly thirsty; God brings water from jawbone; Samson judges Israel twenty years (Judges 15:18-20)
 13. Samson visits Gazan prostitute; ambush set for him; he lifts city gates and carries them until Hebron (Judges 16:1-3)
 14. Samson and Delilah; Delilah constantly nags Samson to learn of his strength; he finally capitulates to her, captured and blinded by Philistines (Judges 16:4-21)
 15. Philistines exult over Samson; Samson prays to God for strength, collapses house on himself and Philistines; Samson dies with 3,000 or more Philistines (Judges 16:22-31)
- K. First Appendix: Micah and the Danites (Judges 17-18)
1. Micah admits to taking silver from mother; mother happy, commissions Micah to make molten image of YHWH with it (Judges 17:1-4)
 2. Made a shrine, household gods, installed son as priest; no king in Israel, all do what is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:5-6)
 3. Levite from Bethlehem seeking new home, comes by Micah's; Micah invites him in, gives him room, board, and stipend, and Levite serves as Micah's priest; Micah assured of God's blessing (Judges 17:7-13)
 4. Danites seek homeland; spies sent, come to Micah's house; inquire of Levite, who says that YHWH will bless their way (Judges 18:1-6)
 5. Spies find Laish, bring report to Danites; Danites all prepare for war and journey, make it to Micah's (Judges 18:7-13)
 6. Danites turn aside to Micah's, induce Levite to go with them, takes the molten image, ephod, household gods, etc. (Judges 18:14-21)
 7. Micah chases after them; can do nothing since Danites are stronger; goes home empty handed (Judges 18:22-26)
 8. Danites capture Laish, name it Dan; Levite, Jonathan, and his descendants priests of Dan until the exile; molten image set up in Dan (Judges 18:27-31)
- L. Second Appendix: Benjamin's Demise (Judges 19-21)
1. Levite of Ephraim has concubine who leaves him; he goes to Bethlehem to get her back (Judges 19:1-3)
 2. Girl's father keeps hindering them from leaving; finally set out in middle of afternoon of fifth day (Judges 19:4-10)
 3. Make it near Jerusalem by evening; they go on to Gibeah of Benjamin, intend to spend night in city square (Judges 19:11-15)
 4. Sheltered by old man of Ephraim living in Gibeah (Judges 19:16-21)
 5. Men of Gibeah seek to violate visitor; man sends his concubine out; they assault her to death (Judges 19:22-28)
 6. Outraged, Levite sends pieces of her body to all parts of Israel (Judges 19:29-30)

7. Israel gathered at Mizpah, 400,000 men; hear the story of the Levite; need to repay Benjamin for outrage (Judges 20:1-11)
8. Benjamin refuses to give up men of Gibeah; war on (Judges 20:12-17)
9. First two days go poorly for Israel; 40,000 men killed; weeping before the LORD (Judges 20:18-26)
10. On third day, the LORD gives Benjamin into the hand of Israel; ambush of Gibeah; 25,000 Benjaminites die, all cities destroyed; only 600 men of Benjamin left (Judges 20:27-48)
11. Mourning and repentance for near destruction of a tribe of Israel; vow had been vowed by Israel to not give their daughters as wives for Benjamin (Judges 21:1-7)
12. Jabesh-gilead did not come up to fight; city destroyed, everyone killed but virgin women; 400 virgin women given to Benjamin; 200 Benjaminites without wives (Judges 21:8-14)
13. Shiloh festival; 200 men of Benjamin encouraged to lie in wait, kidnap girls involved in the dances; they do so; kidnapping not technically giving in marriage (Judges 21:15-23)
14. Everyone goes home; no king in Israel, everyone does what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:24-25)

JUDGES: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Judges 4, 6-8, 11-12, 13-16
 1. Provides background for Hebrews 11:32
 2. Commended for their faith, not their follies; Heroes with feet of clay
- B. Many lessons from Judges
 1. Jephthah: do not make foolish vows
 2. Gideon: it is not enough to begin well; one must finish well
 3. Samson: strength is not everything; danger of mixed marriages; futility of the vengeance cycle
 4. Micah: presumption against God; a demonstration of depravity of man
- C. From the spiritual and moral triumphs of Joshua's day to the incredible spiritual and moral decay of the period of the Judges, including fratricide

CONCLUSION:

- A. Judges describes a tragic time of suffering and pain that need not happen
 2. Israel did not seek after the LORD
 3. Punishments were severe
- B. One can see from Judges how man cannot direct his own steps, and what great sins he falls into when he tries to do so
 1. Wickedness in Israel similar to Sodom and Gomorrah
 2. Abominations in the sight of God and man
 3. Many judges had dozens of children by multiple wives and concubines.
- C. The lesson from the book of Judges: let us seek after God, do what is right in His eyes, and be ruled by Him

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES

1. Describe the purpose of the Judges. Approximately how long did the period of the Judges last?
2. Outline the cycle of Israel's history during the period of the Judges.

3. Why did Israel suffer so much hardship during the period of the Judges?
4. Which Judge was left-handed? How did this give him an advantage in delivering Israel from King Eglon?
5. Who was the only female Judge? What did Barak, leader of Israel's army, require of her before he would go to battle?
6. Which Judge was called while threshing grain in a winepress? What signs did he require before he would believe the calling?
7. How many soldiers came to fight the Midianites with Gideon? How many soldiers actually went to battle? Describe the weapons and tactics they used to drive away the enemy?
8. What vow did Jephthah make? What was wrong with this promise?
9. Who was the strong Judge? What was the seat of his strength? What was his greatest personal vulnerability?
10. What did Samson find inside the carcass of a lion? What riddle did it generate?
11. What woman finally became Samson's undoing? How did she take away his strength?
12. How did Samson die? How many Philistines died with him?
13. Who built an idol to Jehovah and who did he get to help him with worship? What does this say about the spiritual condition of Israel at this time?
14. Briefly describe what happened to the concubine of the Levite, and what the Levite did in response? What does this say about the moral condition of Israel at this time?
15. How was the tribe of Benjamin nearly annihilated? How did they obtain wives?
16. Name three women who had important roles (good or evil) during the period of the Judges?
17. What did Manoah, father of Samson, pray about for his son?
18. Name the Judges who were not immoral or weak?
19. Which Judges are named in the New Testament?
20. Explain how Judges 21:25 summarizes the book of Judges.

Lesson Six: Ruth

RUTH: INTRODUCTION

Author and Date: The experts differ about the date in which the book was written, but the epoch in which the plot took place is evident. That which the book of Ruth relates occurred during the period of the Judges, as part of the events that took place between Joshua's death and the rise of Samuel's influence (probably between 1150 and 1100 BC).

Rabbinic tradition holds that Samuel wrote this book in the second half of the 11th century BC. Although recent critics suggest a date after the exile (around 500 BC), the language used in the book, as well as its references to the customs and prevailing conditions in the 12th century BC, recommend the acceptance of the much earlier date. It's also reasonable to suppose that Samuel, who witnessed the decadence of Saul's kingdom and was led by GOD to anoint David as the chosen heir to the throne of Israel, had written the book of Ruth. This beautiful story had already begun to form part of the oral traditions of the people, and the final genealogy would serve the purpose of establishing a link with the patriarchs, giving a satisfactory response to all those Israelites who desired to be sure of the family ascendancy of their king.

Purpose: Nearly all the commentators consider the Book of Ruth to be an essay about GOD's sovereignty that emphasizes his mercy and relates the happy ending of a story that begins with a scene of hunger, death and grief. Unfortunately, those observations are often made citing the repeated laments of Naomi, who complained bitterly that GOD's hand had been raised against her (1:13,20,21). Twice, in her lamentations, Naomi uses the term "Almighty" to refer to GOD, emphasizing that his irresistible power had turned against her. However, it's not necessary to assume that Naomi's point of view should be accepted as a spiritual revelation called to become doctrine. On the contrary, her words are better understood as an expression of human perplexity picked up by the story.

This explanation, when considering Naomi's words, appears essential for a healthy interpretation of the text. Attributing the disasters that appear in this book to the intention or hand of GOD doesn't agree with the revelation that Scripture offers, as a whole, about the divine nature. The famine (1:1) was a natural byproduct of sin, a punishment that the people imposed upon themselves for their disobedience. The LORD had warned them that the land itself would turn against them if they were unfaithful (Deut. 28:15,16,23,24,38-40). Even more, Elimelech's decision to move with his family to the land of Moab (1:2) isn't presented as a fruit of some divine instruction, but of his own choice. Why suggest that the events that occur next (his death and that of his sons) is due to divine providence? Another reason exists to affirm that these unfortunate events, although they didn't escape the divine omniscience, don't represent a punishment from GOD, but the natural results of circumstances beyond the divine promise. GOD's protection is for those who remain obedient in the inheritance that they have received from Him.

Naomi, although she obviously was a sincere and believing woman, she is revealed as vulnerable to the common practice of blaming GOD for those events that take away, cause death or harm to his people, before which helpless humanity can do nothing. But the Scripture reveals, through the integrity of its message, that such misfortunes do not proceed directly from GOD, but are the result of the punishment human beings bear for original sin, or the fruit of the flesh when deciding to follow their own ways, no matter how malicious or innocent the attempt, or the consequence of the direct assault of our great adversary, the Devil (John 10:10).

Ruth is a book that demonstrates that GOD's sovereignty isn't minimized by these observations. On the contrary, it stresses that His objective is His sovereign grace and power. As Almighty He allows man to be free and doesn't oppose him, but transforms the restrictions, damage, difficulties and counsels that lead us to failure and are the result of sin, the flesh, or the Devil.

Content: The German poet, Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe described Ruth as "the most beautiful short story". This striking, fascinating and historically significant narration can be called the most precious jewel of the Old Testament. It's not only a masterpiece of universal literature, but thanks to it we know the genealogy of David, called by GOD to head up the lineage that led to the eternal kingdom of the Messiah.

Historical Setting: The events in the book occurred at a dark time in Israel's history - in "the days when the judges ruled" (1:1), according to the historical introduction. This was a period when the nation lapsed again and again into worship of false gods. What a contrast this is to Ruth, who remained faithful to GOD, although she was a Moabite by birth - one considered an alien by GOD's Chosen People.

Lessons: Ruth's life gives us a beautiful example of the providence of GOD. He brought Ruth to precisely the right field where she could meet Boaz. GOD is also portrayed in the book as the model of loyal and abiding love (2:20). ("Illustrated Bible Dictionary", published by Thomas Nelson Publishing)

The story provides a transition from the patriarchs to the monarchy. The genealogy at the end of the book traces the lineage of Boaz from Perez, the son of Judah, down to King David. For many Israelites the most important word of the book was the last - David.

The story of Ruth shows how GOD sovereignly, though almost imperceptively, achieves His purposes through the faithfulness of His people. The book speaks about GOD indirectly through the prayers and blessings of the story's characters. Although the book reflects a strong belief in GOD's lordship over history, it equally convinces readers that human decisions and actions play a significant role.

The book teaches that GOD's will is sometimes accomplished by common people with uncommon faith. The Book of Ruth does not have miracles or revelations. It does not mention the institutions of Israel's religion, such as tabernacle and prophecy. It has simple people going about everyday affairs.

The theological emphasis of Ruth can be summed up by two key words - kindness (*hesed*) and kinsman-redeemer (*goel*). The word kindness indicates covenant faithfulness and occurs three times in the prayers and commendations spoken by the characters (1:8; 2:20; 3:10). There is an implied contrast between the story's characters, who are righteous, and those of Judges, who "did as he [they] saw fit" (Judg. 21:25).

The story teaches that GOD rewards the faithfulness of His people. GOD accomplished this by using Boaz as the family's "kinsman-redeemer" (2:20; 3:12-13; 4:1-10). Kinsman-redeemer refers to a relative who helped a troubled family member so that the family was not dispossessed of land or left without an heir (Lev. 25:25-34; Deut. 25:5-10).

The story corrected the Jews when they made the worship of GOD exclusively the prerogative of Israel. Although Ruth was a Moabitess, she was blessed by GOD.

In the midst of the depravity of the days of the Judges is the account of Ruth, an example of faith and devotion from one foreigner to Israel. In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth follows Proverbs; appropriate as Ruth is a living example of Proverbs 31.

RUTH: OUTLINE**A. Main Sections**

1. Naomi's Despair (Ruth 1)
2. Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 2-3)
3. Redemption (Ruth 4)

B. The Situation (Ruth 1)

1. Man of Bethlehem & 2 sons sojourns in Moab during famine (Ruth 1:1)
2. Elimelech the man, wife Naomi, sons Mahlon and Chilion (Ruth 1:2)
3. Elimelech dies in Moab (Ruth 1:3)
4. Mahlon and Chilion take Moabite wives, Ruth and Orpah (Ruth 1:4)
5. Mahlon and Chilion die; women left alone (Ruth 1:5)
6. Naomi resolves to return to Bethlehem; food there; daughters-in-law intend to go with her (Ruth 1:6-7)
7. Naomi pleads for daughters-in-law to return to parents' houses, marry others (Ruth 1:7-13)
8. Orpah leaves; Ruth stays; Naomi insists that she also leave (Ruth 1:14-15)
9. Ruth shows her resolve; Naomi demurs (Ruth 1:16-18)
10. They arrive in Bethlehem; Naomi's bitterness (Ruth 1:19-22)

C. Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 2-3)

1. Boaz: near kinsman of Elimelech, wealthy (Ruth 2:1)
2. Ruth goes to glean barley in fields; ends up in Boaz's field (Ruth 2:2-3)
3. Conversation between Boaz, reaper foreman; discussion of Ruth and her labor (Ruth 2:4-7)
4. Boaz speaks to Ruth, instructs her to continue to glean among his fields, stay near his workers; they will not abuse her; does so based upon her faithfulness to Naomi and God (Ruth 2:8-12)
5. Ruth thankful; Boaz invites her to eat dinner with all (Ruth 2:13-14)
6. Boaz instructs reapers to leave some out for Ruth even of the sheaves; Ruth gathers an ephah (Ruth 2:15-17)
7. Ruth returns to Naomi, tells of day's events; Naomi pleased; Ruth continues to glean in Boaz's field (Ruth 2:18-23)
8. Naomi instructs Ruth to prepare herself, to go and uncover Boaz's feet and to do what he says to do (Ruth 3:1-5)
9. Boaz enters threshing floor, goes to sleep; Ruth comes, uncovers his feet, lay at them; Boaz discovers her at midnight, startled (Ruth 3:6-8)
10. Ruth seeks to be redeemed by Boaz; Boaz pleased at this, promises to do what he can; provides her with food for Naomi (Ruth 3:9-15)
11. Ruth returns to Naomi (Ruth 3:16-18)

D. Redemption (Ruth 4)

1. Boaz goes into town, finds nearest redeemer, elders and men of the city; sit at the gate (Ruth 4:1-2)
2. Boaz asks redeemer to redeem that which belonged to Elimelech; initially he agrees (Ruth 4:3-4)
3. Redemption requires marriage to Ruth, propagation of Elimelech's line; redeemer gives up right of redemption to Boaz; Boaz redeems property of Elimelech, Ruth (Ruth 4:5-12)
4. Ruth conceives a child; Naomi the nurse/foster mother of child; blessings; child named Obed, grandfather of David (Ruth 4:13-17)
5. Generations of Perez to David, including Boaz & Obed (Ruth 4:18-22)

RUTH: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Ruth 1:16-17
 1. Ruth's tenacious clinging to Naomi
 2. Used often in wedding ceremonies
- B. Ruth 3:10-13 - Deut. 25:5-10 - Levirate marriage law
 1. Under the Law of Moses, Ruth was obligated to marry a near relative of her deceased husband.
- C. Ruth 4:18-22
 1. Ruth as part of David's ancestry
 2. Matthew 1:5 - thus part of Jesus' ancestry
 3. Rahab, a harlot from Jericho, and Ruth, a Moabitess, became part of the ancestry of Jesus Christ. This foreshadows the backgrounds of those who would be welcomed into the new kingdom under the new covenant.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Ruth a great example of faith
 1. Destitute, with her destitute mother-in-law, remains with her and God in spite all the misfortune that occurred
 2. God's non-traditional family was a success
 3. Non-traditional families can be a model of spirituality
- B. God rewarded her and her faithfulness
 1. Redeemed by Boaz, bore a son
 2. In the lineage of David and Jesus Christ, in spite being a Moabitess
 3. Noteworthy that during the time of great wickedness in the period of the Judges that Ruth (a foreign woman) and Boaz (a lonely bachelor) conduct themselves with moral propriety

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH

1. Name the two sons of Ebimelech. Name the wives of all three men. What happened to all three men within ten years?
2. Where did Orpah go? Where did Ruth want to go?
3. What was Ruth's response when Naomi told her to go home? What was Naomi's home city?
4. What does the name Naomi mean? What name did she choose for herself upon returning home? What does her new name mean?
5. Who was Boaz? In what time of the year did Ruth meet Boaz?
6. Why did Ruth find favor in the eyes of Boaz? (2:8-12)

7. What is “gleaning”? What does the Law of Moses say about it?

8. What role did Naomi take on behalf of Ruth relationship with Boaz? What advice did she give Ruth?

9. What was the ancient custom that sealed an arrangement of exchange and redemption? Does it have any significance today? What kinds of customs today seal similar arrangements?

10. What was the name of the son born to Ruth and Boaz? How did Naomi’s neighbors describe the relationship between her and her grandson?

11. List the lineage of Boaz through King David.

12. Where is one most likely to hear the vow of Ruth to Naomi today? Why do you suppose that it is used on such an occasion?

13. What is the Levirate marriage law, and how did it apply to Ruth and Boaz?

14. Can a non-traditional family serve God faithfully and succeed in life?

15. Did Naomi and Ruth set out to have a non-traditional family, or was it thrust upon them by circumstances? Why is this significant?