

BIBLE OVERVIEW 1.

Creation to Moses

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

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BIBLE OVERVIEW

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PREFACE

Frameworks. We usually don't see them, but without them structures would fall. Buildings need a solid framework. So do groups and organizations. God even created our body with a strong framework, our skeletal system. Can you imagine what we would be like if God had not put bones in our bodies? A framework gives stability and structure.

Not only are frameworks essential, they must come first so other things can be built around them and kept in place by them. Businesses and governments, as well as homes and shops, have an inner structure that must come first so everything else can be kept in its proper place.

That being the case, it is no surprise that God has given structure to His Word. He has built it around a framework that shapes it and gives it flow and direction. Unfortunately many Christians do not understand the structure of the Bible. They will study one portion, but without seeing where it fits in the flow of God's plan and how it relates to other times in history, they lose its full meaning. When building a house or building, you don't just build the front wall by itself, complete with doors and windows, and then when it is finished start on a side wall. A good solid framework that can hold the whole structure must be constructed first, and then details added until the building is complete. That's the only way to really understand the Bible as well.

In order to know and apply God's Word one must first have a thorough grasp of its structure. The development and flow of it builds as time goes on. We must know the outline of Bible history in order to correctly understand how God's plan flows through history. Knowing the context of Scripture, starting with the overall flow of the book itself, is of extreme importance. Only then can a person discover the purpose of each Bible book and how it relates to the rest. This is the foundation of understanding individual passages as well.

My desire in writing this book is to give you an overview, an outline, of the whole Bible. I love studying God's Word, but, as with any book, I must first understand the purpose of the individual writers. It is my prayer that this book will help you better understand and appreciate that most wonderful book of all, the Book that is greater than all other books, God's Word, our Bible.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Read this book along with your Bible. It is not meant as a substitute to reading your Bible but as a way to help you better understand it. Find someone you can teach what you are learning. Pass the truths onto your children and family, your friends and your church. You can teach the Bible one period at a time. You can spend several sessions on each period if necessary. Use the flash cards which are part of this book as memory aids. Review them regularly so that the flow of events is well known. If you are a pastor you can preach a sermon on each time period, showing how it relates to and builds on what has come before. You can pick a main person during each time period and study that life, using that to explain the time period.

I encourage you to take notes as you read this book and your Bible. You can go back to them later to remember what God was showing you, review what you learned and find material for sermons of Bible studies. God's Word is a never ending source of wisdom, encouragement, enlighten and comfort for God's children.

There are many ways to do this. The only wrong way is to not do it at all. We are to feed on God's Word, for it nourishes our soul (John 21:15-17). Only in this way can we grow and mature spiritually (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

INTRODUCTION

A framework is necessary for a structure to exist and function. I want to help you see the framework, the structure, the outline of God's plan for man as revealed in His Word. In order for a building to last it must have a solid foundation. The larger the building the more secure the foundation must be. The foundation isn't the whole house, just the beginning of it, but a well-built foundation is the key to the success of the rest of the building. The Old Testament in the Bible is the foundation for all our understanding that comes after it. A solid understanding of all that happened between creation and the birth of Jesus is very important to properly understanding Jesus' life and the rest of the Bible.



The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the framework that builds on the foundation of the Old Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John can only be properly understood in light of Genesis through Malachi. Jesus' life is like the structure of a building. It puts in place the main pillars and beams which will hold up the rest of the construction. Everything that comes after it is supported by this framework. A correct understanding of Jesus' life, death and resurrection is essential to understanding the rest of the New Testament.

When we have a correct understanding of the four Gospels then we can move on to the rest of the New Testament. Acts through Revelation build on the framework of Jesus. The walls, windows, doors and roof finish the building but are held up by the unseen inner framework. So, too, Jesus teachings are applied and lived out in the rest of the New Testament. They bring protection and enjoyment to life, as the walls and roof do to a building. They are the part seen by all who are outside. They don't see the foundation or the framework, just the outer walls. So, too, when people see us they see the Christian life being lived in daily life. We show them that the framework of Jesus built on the Old Testament truths and principles results in a life that brings glory to God.

In this book I want you to understand the Bible, the whole Bible. We will start with the foundation, the Old Testament. Then we will build upon that the life of Jesus and the Gospels. Finally we will see how the rest of the New Testament shows us how to live in Jesus and reveal Him to the world.

This is an exciting journey, one well worth your time and effort. Everything else you do in this life will one day end, but what you learn about God and His Word will last forever throughout all eternity (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25). I know God will bless you as you learn His Word, both in this life and for all eternity.

THE BIBLE OVERVIEW SUMMARIZED

My method of teaching you an overview of the Bible will be to break it down into 27 sections and study each time period one at a time. Twenty one of these are in the Old Testament and six in the New Testament. Below is a summary to introduce you to them.

In the beginning God made the heavens, earth, trees, animals and water. This was His **CREATION**. He then made **ADAM & EVE**. Satan came to the garden and lied to Eve. Sin came into the world. Sin got so bad that God sent the **FLOOD**. The people didn't learn from the flood and built the **TOWER OF BABEL**, where God again judged sin.

God then chose one man to make a nation He would work through to reach the world. **ABRAHAM** was chosen. He had a son named **ISAAC** and Isaac had a son named **JACOB**. Jacob's son, **JOSEPH**, was taken to Egypt. Eventually all of his family moved there. They were up under bondage for 400 years. Then God sent a man named **MOSES** to lead them out of Egyptian slavery. **JOSHUA** took over for Moses and led the people into the Promised Land.

Then, for 400 years, God would send judges to lead His people. These included people like Gideon, Samson and Deborah. The last judge, who was also the first of many prophets, was named **SAMUEL**. When he grew old the people insisted on a king, so God allowed them to have **SAUL** as the first king. Samuel anointed him as well as his replacement, **DAVID**. The third king was David's son **SOLOMON**. He built God's temple, but because of high taxes and other issues the northern 10 tribes rebelled and the nation **SPLIT** into two. The northern 10 tribes, Israel, had a series of ungodly kings. The southern 2 tribes, Judah, weren't much better. God sent **PROPHETS** to warn the people to turn back to Him or suffer destruction and captivity. After 250 years the north went into **ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY**. The south followed 150 years later, going into **BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY**. One of those taken captive was **DANIEL**.

After Judah's 70 years of captivity, God allowed **EZRA** to lead some Jews back to the land and rebuild the temple. Later **NEHEMIAH** brought another group of people back and they rebuilt the walls. The Jews lived there for **400 SILENT YEARS** until **JESUS** was born.

One of Jesus' disciples was a man named **PETER**. He became a leader in the early church in Jerusalem. God called **PAUL** to spread His gospel to other countries and people groups. The **CHURCH** continued to grow, and still does so today.

The next event on God's program is the **RAPTURE**, when Jesus returns in the sky and takes His believers to heaven to be with Him. Following that the seven-year **TRIBULATION** will bring judgment to the earth. Following this comes the 1,000 year **MILLENNIUM** and then **ETERNITY**.

BIBLE OVERVIEW EVENTS WITH BIBLE BOOKS

1. Creation – Genesis 1
2. Adam & Eve – Genesis 2-4
3. Noah & the Flood – Genesis 5-10
4. Babel – Genesis 11
5. Abraham – Genesis 12-25, Job
6. Isaac – Genesis 21-28, 35
7. Jacob – Genesis 25-37, 46-50
8. Joseph – Genesis 37-50
9. Moses - Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
10. Joshua - Joshua
11. Samuel - Judges, Ruth
12. Saul - 1 Samuel
13. David - 2 Samuel, Psalms
14. Solomon - 1 Kings, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
15. Split - 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles
16. Prophets - to north (Israel): Hosea, Amos, (Elijah, Elisha)
 - to south (Judah): Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk
 - to Nineveh (Assyria): Jonah, Nahum
 - to Edom: Obadiah
17. Assyrian Captivity (north)
18. Babylonian Captivity (south) - Jeremiah, Lamentations
19. Daniel - Daniel, Ezekiel
20. Ezra (Return) - Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Malachi, Esther
21. 400 Silent Years
22. Jesus – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - a. Birth
 - b. Baptism & Temptation
 - c. Miracles
 - d. Disciples and Teachings
 - e. Crucifixion
 - f. Resurrection
 - g. Ascension and present
23. Peter
 - a. Peter – Acts 1-7; 1 & 2 Peter
 - b. Philip, Peter, Paul – Acts 8-12 (James)
24. Paul – Acts 13-28- , Romans thru Philemon
 - a. Paul, Background
 - b. 1st Missionary Journey – Acts 13-14
 - c. Jerusalem Council – Acts 15 (Galatians)
 - d. 2nd Missionary Journey – Acts 16-18 (1, 2 Thessalonians)
 - e. 3rd Missionary Journey – Acts 19-20(1, 2 Corinthians, Romans)
 - f. Trip to Rome – Acts 21-28 (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon)
 - g. Final Travels (1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy)
 - h. Early Church (Hebrews, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude, Revelation)
25. Church
26. Rapture
27. The Tribulation & Millennium - Tribulation, Millennium, Eternity

BIBLE BOOKS AND THEMES

GENESIS	Beginnings
EXODUS	Redemption
LEVITICUS	Holy Living
NUMBERS	Walk by Faith
DEUTERONOMY	Obedience
JOSHUA	Conquest
JUDGES	Defeat & Deliverance
RUTH	Kinsman-Redeemer
1 SAMUEL	Look Inside
2 SAMUEL	Effects of Sin
1 KINGS	Idolatry
2 KINGS	Judgment
1 CHRONICLES	Faithfulness
2 CHRONICLES	Faithfulness
EZRA	Return
NEHEMIAH	Renewal
ESTHER	Providential Care
JOB	Suffering
PSALMS	Worship
PROVERBS	Wisdom
ECCLESIASTES	Life Without God Is Empty
SONG of SOLOMON	Married Love
ISAIAH	God is Salvation
JEREMIAH	Final Chance
LAMENTATIONS	Sorrow
EZEKIEL	Glory
DANIEL	Sovereignty
HOSEA	Loyal Love
JOEL	Day of the Lord
AMOS	Accountability
OBADIAH	Retribution
JONAH	Obedience
MICAH	Hope
NAHUM	Justice

HABAKKUK	Patience
ZEPHANIAH	Day of the Lord
HAGGAI	Priorities
ZECHARIAH	History
MALACHI	Repentance
MATTHEW	Jesus the King
MARK	Jesus the Servant
LUKE	Jesus the Man
JOHN	Jesus the God
ACTS	Early Church
ROMANS	Salvation
1 CORINTHIANS	Worldly Wisdom
2 CORINTHIANS	A Godly Ministry
GALATIANS	Christian Liberty
EPHESIANS	In Christ
PHILIPPIANS	Joy
COLOSSIANS	Christ is Supreme
1 THESSALONIANS	Jesus is Coming Again
2 THESSALONIANS	Jesus is Coming Soon
1 TIMOTHY	Church Order
2 TIMOTHY	Faithful Service
TITUS	Daily Walk
PHILEMON	Christian Courtesy
HEBREWS	Christ is Superior
JAMES	True Faith
1 PETER	Suffering
2 PETER	Keep the Faith
1 JOHN	Fellowship
2 JOHN	Walk in Truth
3 JOHN	Hospitality
JUDE	Apostasy
REVELATION	Prophecy

BIBLE OVERVIEW

1. CREATION

MAIN EVENT: Creation of the world

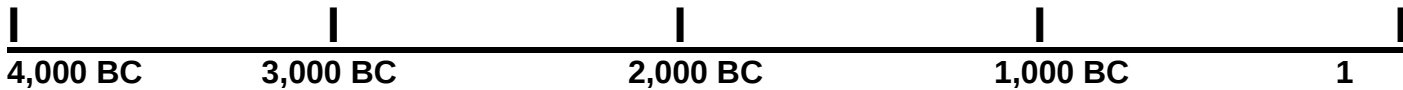
MAIN PEOPLE: God

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 1

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

TIME: 4,700 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Universe



Let's start in the beginning – Genesis chapter 1. Here is where we begin the foundation that we will build on as we go through the whole Bible. The opening chapter of any book is important, for it sets the stage for what is to come. The background information is crucial to understanding the rest of the book. To skip the first chapter and start elsewhere makes one always wonder what is missing, what has been revealed which the reader doesn't know. It's important to pay closer attention to the first chapter, then the rest of the book makes more sense. The same is true with the Bible. Genesis, the first 'chapter' in the Bible, is very important. Make sure you really understand the book of Genesis before going on to the rest of the book.

Everything starts with God. Genesis starts with God in the first verse, Genesis 1:1. God has always existed, something hard for us to grasp with our limited understanding. God never tries to explain or prove His existence in the Bible. There is ample evidence in the world around us because nature itself shows there must be a power greater than itself and outside itself to bring it into being (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-6). When we see the intricate design in the world around us we know it must have been designed by Someone greater than it. When we look at a watch we know it must have been designed by someone, for something so intricate could not just happen. The same is true of the world around us.

We know God exists because we see Him in the world around us, but we also know He exists because He has written basic standards of right and wrong into our hearts (Romans 1:19, 32; 2:15; Ecclesiastes 3:11). There is an empty space in our hearts that only God Himself can fill, and we search in vain until we allow Him into our lives to fill that space. People don't reject God because there isn't enough evidence for His existence, they reject because they do not want to submit themselves and be accountable to the one true God of the universe, the One who has absolute standards to which He holds them accountable.

The Bible was given by God to provide a clearer, more detailed revelation of God. It is the only authoritative, true and inspired revelation from God to the world. If God hadn't revealed Himself and His truths to us in the Bible, we wouldn't be able to know Him and follow Him. Because He is God, He is very able to inspire a book that tells about Him. Because He is God He is able to keep it accurate through the centuries. God desires to reveal Himself through the Bible. The Bible is not a book man would write if he could, or could write if he would. It speaks of many things man knows nothing about: creation, one God, the Trinity, eternity, heaven, hell and the future. All the Bible says about science and history has been proven to be completely true. The hundreds and hundreds of fulfilled prophecies also show the Bible is supernatural. No one could possibly make so many and so accurate prophecies. None has ever been wrong or unfulfilled. There is no doubt the Bible is God's inspired revelation to us today.

God isn't explained in the Bible, but His glory is clearly revealed from the first verse. He simply spoke and all **creation** came into being (Genesis 1), the vast universe to the smallest smell. He added color and beauty, smells and tastes, music and laughter to make the world enjoyable for us. All this took place about 7,000 years ago. God created everything in six 24-hour days and then He rested on the 7th day (Genesis 1:1-2:3). No one was there to see God do this, but He later told Adam about it. Adam told Seth who passed it on as well until it came Moses, who probably is the one who wrote it down.

Below is an outline of the Book of Genesis, which teaches us about the beginning of all things.

OUTLINE OF GENESIS

I. FOUNDATION EVENTS (Human Race) 1-11

- A. Creation 1-2
- B. Fall 3-4
- C. Flood 5-9
- D. Babel 10-11

II. FOUNDATION PEOPLE (Jewish Race) 12-50

- A. Abraham 12-25:18
- B. Isaac 25:19-26
- C. Jacob 27-36
- D. Joseph 37-50

The next 2 pages will give you an overview of the book of Genesis. There will be a page like this for each book of the Bible so you can read a short summary of the book itself.

GENESIS: BEGINNINGS

TITLE: Greek for "Beginnings"

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: About 1440 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Desert wilderness

TIME COVERED: Creation to 1804 BC

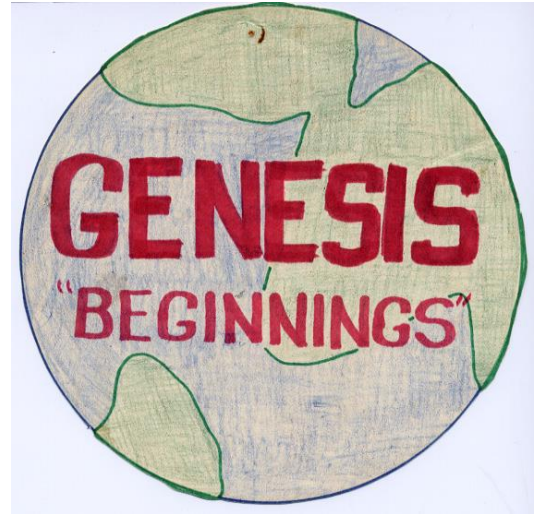
RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*" Genesis 3:15

KEY WORD: "Generations" (19 times)

PURPOSE: To show the beginnings of all things, especially Israel.

THEME: The origin of all things.



Several years ago a man named Alex Haley wrote a book called "Roots" which captured the attention of the entire nation. It was about his search for his background, where he came from. "Roots" was an appropriate title. We all need roots. Knowing where we came from can help us understand where we are and where we're going.

BEGINNINGS: Moses wrote a book that also could have been called "Roots." Instead it's called "Genesis." Genesis is the Greek title, taken from the first words of the book in Greek: "In the beginning." Genesis is a book of beginnings. In it we see the beginning of the universe, life, revelation of God and the Trinity, grace, man, Sabbath, marriage, home, sin, temptation, confession, forgiveness, pride, Satan, Christ, election, prophecy, faith, judgment, suffering, murder, family, worship, rewards, prayer, eternal security, witnessing, stewardship, capital punishment, love, sin nature, and so much more. Virtually everything has its beginning in Genesis. The only beginning that isn't told about is the beginning of God, for He has no beginning.

Because Genesis is so important, it is attacked quite heavily. Any book gets most wear and tear on its exposed sides: front and back. Those pages take the most abuse. That is true in the Bible, too. The first three chapters of Genesis (creation) and the last three of Revelation (Jesus' return and eternity) take the most abuse, too. That is where Satan attacks. If he can discredit either of those the truth of the rest of the book is undermined.

TWO BOOKS IN ONE Genesis is really two books in one. The first 11 chapters talk about the beginning of the universe and nations on earth. Chapters 12 - 50 deal with the nation Israel. In 11 short chapters 2,300 years of history are covered. Major events that have shaped our world are covered quickly: creation, fall, flood and Babel. The rest of the book covers only 300 years and focuses on four men: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. In the first 11 chapters God sets the stage for what He really wants to get to: Abraham and the start of Israel. It's like seeing a movie which starts with a panoramic view of the countryside with a village in the distance. The camera pans across it all, focusing in on the town until focusing on a man walking down the street. The camera then zooms in on him and follows him down the street and into a house. The story slows down and follows events in the man's life. That's how Genesis is. God isn't trying to give all the details we'd like to have about creation and the fall. He just records it's happening then moves on.

HISTORY & SCIENCE Genesis contains a lot about science, and all it includes is true. However, Genesis isn't a science book because it doesn't try to cover all areas of science or answer all questions that come up. The same is true of history. Genesis contains a lot about history, and all it includes is true. But it isn't a history book, because it leaves out so much history. God's purpose isn't to give a detailed account of science or history, but to set the background for Abraham and Israel. The focus of the book of Genesis, like the whole Bible, is redemption. Genesis 1 - 11 show man's need of redemption, but 12 - 50 show the beginning of God's provision of redemption through Israel in the person of Jesus the Messiah.

ORIGINAL CREATION *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* There are actually three books in the Bible that start "in the beginning." John 1:1 refers to Jesus being God from before anything else. Genesis 1:1 is the beginning of the created universe, and I John 1:1 the beginning of Jesus' life on earth. The Hebrew word "created" (bara) refers to God creating something out of nothing. In verse 2 a different word (asah) refers to forming something out of existing material.

IS THERE LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS? The earth is mentioned as separate from the rest of the heavens (see also Psalm 115:16). I believe earth is the only planet with life like us (who are in the image of God) on it, because any life created with personality (mind, emotions and will) would have a free will and would therefore exercise it to sin (as did man and the fallen angels). Satan has access through the whole universe and would tempt anything God created. God only left heaven once to die for sin, and that was on this earth. He took the sins of those of us who live on this earth. Therefore there is no redemption for anyone else in the universe. God created the vast universe to show us how great He is, not to have lots of life forms. If He had created other life, He wouldn't need us as He does.

WERE THE CREATION DAYS GEOLOGICAL AGES? Some have attempted to reconcile evolution and creation by saying God used evolutionary ages for the 'days' of creation. That couldn't be true for the Hebrew word translated 'day,' (yom) appears about 1300 times in the Bible, 99% of which obviously refer to a 24-hour day. The meaning of the few which refer to a longer period of time (like the "Day of the Lord") are obvious from the context. Plus the Bible describes the creation days as "morning and evening," and "day and night," normal ways of describing 24 hour days. In Exodus 20:8-11, 'yom' is used 6 times. Two refer to creation days and 4 to 24-hour days. The Sabbath is based on the creation rest 'day.' It seems clear that all the days mentioned here are of the same length instead of referring to two entirely different time periods.

You see, the creation days couldn't possibly be geological ages. Only 3 days had any impact on the earth (3, 5, 6) and there were more than 3 geological ages. Plus the order of the way God created things and how evolution says they progressed is often very different (we'll see examples in future articles). Romans 5:12 says there was no death before sin, so what would account for all the dead (and even extinct) animals for those millions of years before man?

THE TERRARIUM AFFECT Genesis 1:6-8 refers to an "expanse" four times. This is a canopy around the earth creating a terrarium-like effect on the whole earth. This protected the earth from the sun's radiation and produced a uniform climate everywhere. Thus, there was enough vegetation to support the dinosaur population. There was no rain, it wasn't necessary. Everything stayed the same. This canopy was removed when the great flood came and the water that formed it fell to the earth. Thus dinosaurs have been found frozen in Antarctica with tropical vegetation in their mouths.

ROOTS By the way, where are YOUR roots? I don't mean physically, I mean spiritually. Are you rooted and grounded in Jesus? That's the only foundation that will last, that won't wash away. Make sure your roots are firmly embedded in Jesus!

BIBLE OVERVIEW

2. ADAM & EVE

MAIN EVENT: Adam and Eve in Eden

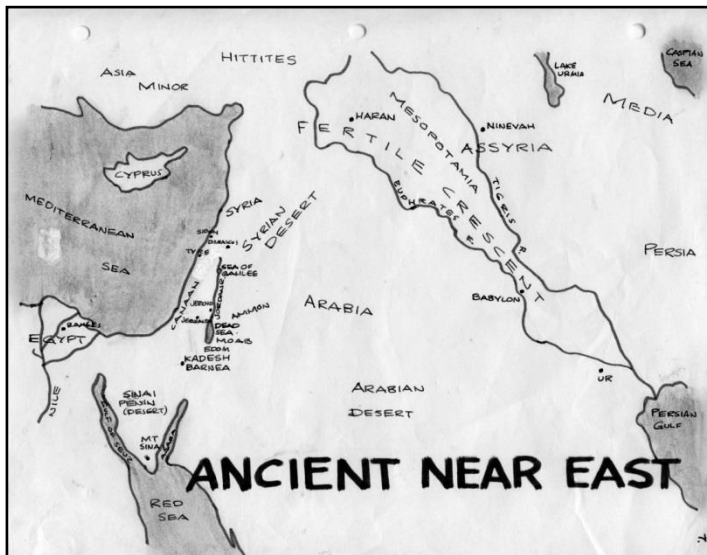
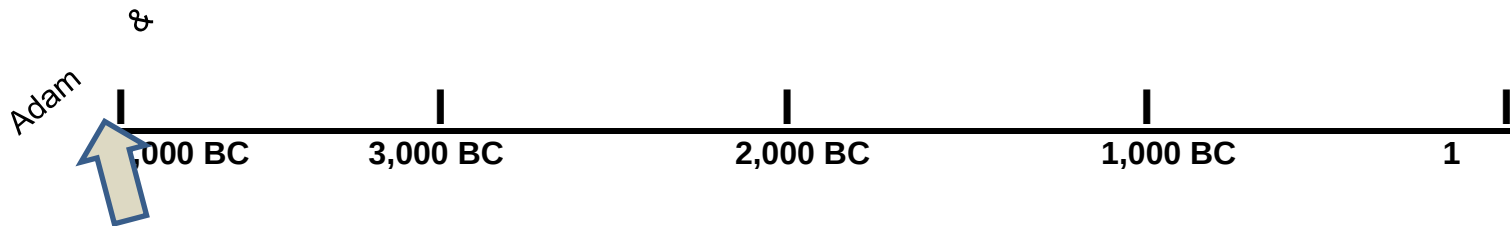
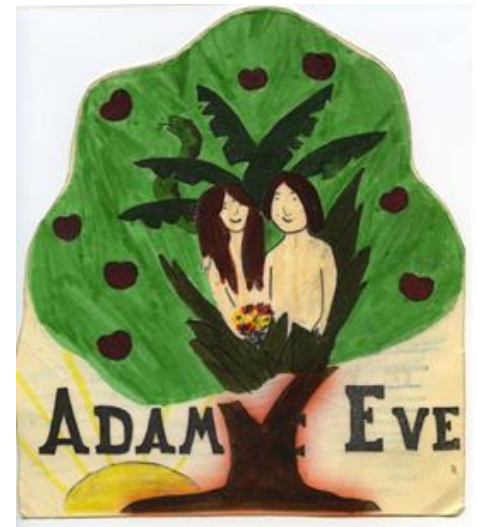
MAIN PEOPLE: Adam, Eve

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 2-4

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 2:7 The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

TIME: 4,700 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Eden, world



The second historical event we will cover in our overview of the Bible centers on **Adam and Eve**. God created Adam first, then Eve. He created them perfect and in His image. He gave them a mind, emotions and a free will. God gave them a **free will** because He wants man to choose voluntarily to love and obey Him (Genesis 4:6-7). Without a free will we would not have any choice. It's like the difference between having a real dog or one made out of wood. The wooden dog would be far less trouble, but it wouldn't bring the joy and pleasure a real dog brings. The same is true of us. God wants us to love Him because we choose to.

However, along with a free will came the option to sin and reject God. **Sin first started with Satan** who, because of his pride, rebelled against serving God in heaven (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Isaiah 14:12-16; Ezekiel 28:15-17; Luke 10:18). Very soon after they were created Satan attacked Adam and Eve, tempting them to doubt God's word, His goodness and His character. He used deception to make Eve think God was withholding something good from them. While Eve was misled, Adam was fully aware he was disobeying God (1 Timothy 2:13-15). Adam & Eve tried to cover their own sin but God provided skins to cover them. AN

innocent animal had to die to cover their sin, picturing what Jesus would one day do for us on the cross.

God knew that with a free will man would sin, so He planned to pay for it even before He created the world (Ephesians 1:4). He didn't want man to be separated from Him for all eternity, and that is what the penalty for sin would be. Instead, God the Son volunteered to **come to earth as a man** so He could take our place and pay the penalty for our sin and disobedience. Because He was a man, He could take our place. Since He was God, He could bear the sins of each person who ever lived. It was the perfect solution to the sin problem, the only way mankind could have a free will and still spend eternity with God.

Sin is more than doing something contrary to God's will. It can be a word, thought, something that should be done but isn't, or something good done with a wrong motive. God's plan was to pay the penalty for all sin (John 3:16). Satan and his forces did and continue to do all they can to oppose God's plan for man... God will eventually have victory over Satan. This was foretold to Adam and Eve in Eden: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15). This is the first prophecy of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14).

This second stage in our overview of the Bible, called Adam and Eve, ends with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden (Genesis 3:22-24). Guilt, shame and fear entered the human race. Now man must work the ground for a living and woman will have pain in childbirth as well as being under her husband's authority. Sin also brought a curse on the earth. Disease and sickness started to spread. God's grace is seen in that He removed Adam and Eve from Eden where they would have lived forever in sin and separation from Him.

When Adam disobeyed God **spiritual death** entered the human race and physical death as well. All humans born after Adam and Eve are born with a tendency to sin, a Sin Nature (Matthew 15:19). God withdrew His physical presence from man because sin placed a barrier between them. But God's grace is seen in His promise of a redeemer (Genesis 3:15), in making coats of animal skin to cover them, in allowing them to live physically awhile longer and not die immediately, in providing for their basic needs and in separating them from the tree of life. Living forever would no longer be a blessing, for it would mean man would be stuck in a sinful world and separated from God. God's grace is seen in sending death so man can again be reunited with Him for eternity.

There is a beautiful **picture of salvation** in this section of our Bible overview. It shows man is sinful (Genesis 3:6) and can't cover his own sin (Genesis 3: 7; Ephesians 2:8-9). In fact, man is helpless in sin and separated from God (Genesis 3:8-13). Sin brings punishment (Genesis 3:14-19; Romans 6:23). Man runs from God. It is God that seeks man (Genesis 3:8) to show love and mercy. He alone can conquer sin and Satan (Genesis 3:15). This victory is paid for by innocent blood shed (Genesis 3:31; 4:3-5). This is the first death or suffering, and is by an innocent animal to show what is necessary to cover man's sin. Actually it was the Second person of the Trinity (Jesus before His birth) that was with man in Eden. No one has seen God the father at any time (John 6:46) and the Holy Spirit never materializes but serves to bring attention of Jesus. Thus the first innocent blood shed was by the One who knew it foreshadowed His coming death on the cross for sin. What love and commitment this shows! He did it all (Romans 8:12-21), we must just accept this free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). We aren't to blame God or others for our sin (Genesis 3:12-13) but freely admit it (1 John 1:9). As Adam and Eve allowed Jesus to dress them in the animal skins He provided, we, too, must allow Him to cover us with His righteousness. Our dressing for sin is worse than fig leaves; it is filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). The same loving, forgiving God who came seeking Adam and Eve in their sin comes seeking us in ours (Revelation 3:20). Will you welcome Him and accept the covering for your sin which He and He alone provides? Don't put off His offer. Don't refuse His free gift. Accept Him now.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

3. NOAH & the FLOOD

MAIN EVENT: The Worldwide Flood

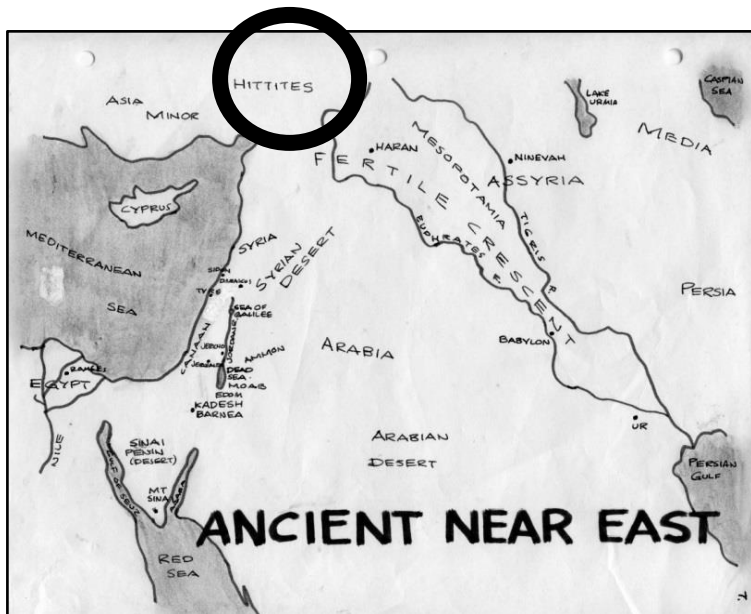
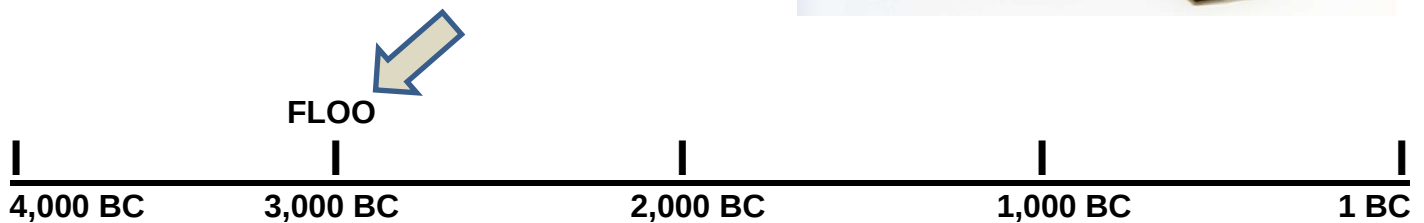
MAIN PEOPLE: Noah and His Family

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 5-10

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 6:8-10 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. ... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.*

TIME: 3,000 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: World, Mt. Ararat



This is the third time period in our overview of the Bible. It begins with Adam and Eve leaving Eden (Genesis 3:22-24) and concludes with the end of the flood (Genesis 8:14). During this time man is responsible to work the ground to live. Women have pain in childbirth and wives will be under subjection to their husband's authority.

From the fall in Eden to the flood in Noah's day almost 2,000 years passed. It was approximately 3000 BC when God's patience came to an end and it was time for judgment to come in the form of a flood.

Mankind had failed to obey God. The first person born, Cain, murdered his own brother, Abel. People continued to sin until God sent the great worldwide flood in Noah's day to judge the world. Still, His grace was seen in that He provided a way of salvation for any who would put their faith in Him. He also preserved Noah and his family in the ark during the flood. There was always a faithful minority, a remnant, who remained true to God.

MEET NOAH

Noah was preserved because he obeyed God and was righteous in His sight (Genesis 6:9; 7:1). God told him to build a large boat 520 feet (170 meters) long, 45 feet (15 meters) wide and 75 feet (25 meters) high. This large container could hold as much as 600 railroad cars. He spent about 75 years building the ark. Noah was 600 when it was completed. Noah, his wife, his three sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) and their wives all went into the boat. They took two of each unclean animal and seven pairs of each clean animal with them (Genesis 7:2). God then sent a world-wide flood to destroy sinful man but Noah and his family were safe and secure in the ark. God does not judge His people, we are safe from condemnation (Romans 8:1).

It rained for 40 days and the earth was covered with water for a whole year after that. The water was one mile deep. It was during this time that the earth was reformed into the continents as they are today. The canopy of moisture that was around the earth making it like a terrarium disappeared when all the water in it came to earth, so its protection on man and animal was gone. People then lived to be 950 years old, sometimes more. The north and south polar caps froze. Without there being a tropical climate everywhere vegetation did not grow as fast as before the flood. Therefore the large animals, like dinosaurs, didn't have enough to eat and soon became extinct.

After the flood God placed His rainbow in the sky as a promise to never again judge the whole world by a flood. Noah showed his thankfulness by offering blood sacrifices to God. He lived 350 years after the flood. This was the third distinct time period in the Old Testament.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

4. BABEL

MAIN EVENT: Tower of Babel

MAIN PEOPLE: Nimrod

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 11

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 11:4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."*

TIME: 2,600 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Indus Valley Kot Duini, then Mature Harappan

Dravidian Civilization begins in South India.

China empire forming

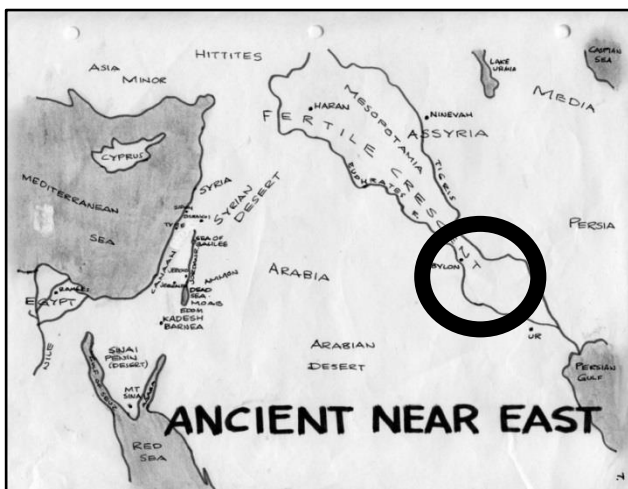
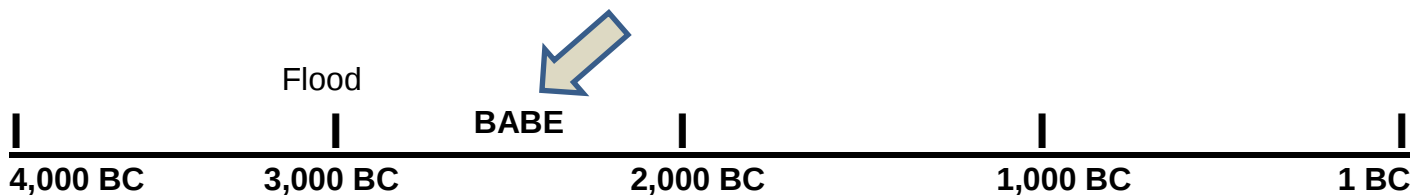
Cuneiform writing in Sumeria

Egypt Old Kingdom

Maya culture starting

Great Pyramid built in Egypt

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:



The fourth major event in the Old Testament focuses on the Tower of Babel. This period begins with Noah and his family leaving the ark (Genesis 8:15) and ends with God's call of Abram (Genesis 11:32; 12:1). Man was responsible to keep the covenant God made with Noah. He was to subdue the earth. God now said mankind could eat meat (but not with the blood in it) and exercise capital punishment. However, again man failed. His rebellion and disobedience culminated with the building of the Tower of Babel. God judged their disobedience by changing their languages and scattering the people, but He did make allowances for languages to be translated so people can still communicate with each other.

MEET NIMROD

Nimrod is the first person after the flood of whom more than just a name is given. His name means “to rebel.” God says he is “a mighty one on the earth” (Gen 10:8). Through his pride and self-will, he forced himself into a position of pre-eminence over others. He is also called “a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Genesis 10:9). “Before” means “in opposition to” and shows his rebellion against God. He took the lead in boldly defying God’s authority. He became a hunter of men, tracking down and killing men for sport! His lust for power make him more like a wild beast than a human being. He had people worship him, not God. He was inhumane, cruel, brutal and God-defying. He founded two great civilizations: Babylon and Nineveh (Genesis 10:10-12). These two ruled the then-known world for hundreds and hundreds of years. Nimrod’s purpose was to keep everyone from scattering so they could stay and worship him as their ruler.

Truly **Nimrod is a picture of the Antichrist** who will unite the world the same way. The meaning of both of their names is “the rebel, the lawless one” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Each was a murderer (Psalm 5:6), a world ruler (king - Daniel 11:36), started or headed Babylon (Isaiah 14:4; Revelation 17:3-5), was mighty (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and was motivated by pride (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Each attempt at usurping God’s authority will end with judgment. Revelation 17 and 18 even call this empire of the Antichrist’s ‘Babylon.’

Up to Nimrod’s time the world spoke one **language** (Genesis 11:1), which Adam instantly knew when he was created, as did Eve. Language specialists today say all languages can be traced to one original language. Nimrod took advantage of this to encourage all to stay together to build a great temple as the central focus of their civilization, so that together they could accomplish more than if they all went their separate directions as God had commanded (Genesis 1:28; 9:1). They were to depend on each other, and especially Nimrod, instead of God. The central place of worship was to be built with “a tower that reaches to the heavens.” The original Hebrew doesn’t say they were trying to make it tall enough to touch God, just that it’s top had to do with the heavens. A more plausible explanation is that they built a temple on top to worship the sun, moon and stars. Nimrod seemingly perverted God’s plan of salvation in the stars to focus it on himself instead of on Jesus. Archaeologists have found numerous temples of this type, called Ziggurats, all focusing on worshipping the heavens. It is the start of astrology. THIS is the reason God changed their languages and scattered them: not because they wanted to make a tall building but because they were perverting His good news of the gospel to form a united world with Satan at the head instead of God. This is why He judged it so severely (Genesis 11:5-9), and will again during the Tribulation.

At this time it seems that there were about 70 family units (about 800 to 1,000 people) on earth. These became the 70 **nations** listed in Genesis 10. Those who descended from Shem settled chiefly in Central Asia and became the Jews, Assyrians, Persians, Arabs, Chaldeans, Indians, Chinese and eventually American Indians. Those descended from Ham settled in Africa and Egypt and became the Negroes, Egyptians, Canaanites and Hittites. Japheth’s descendants settled mainly in Europe and became the Greeks, Romans, Teutons, Anglo-Saxons and Europeans.

Does this mean we shouldn’t have one world standard of measurement, money, even language? To the extent that these bring about a situation which Satan can use to bring attention to himself instead of God they are wrong. To the extent that they set things up for the Antichrist to be able to come and set up his one world empire they are wrong. To the extent that we trust in man and his solutions instead of God they are wrong. Anything that does now or potentially can take the attention from God is wrong. He is to be praised and worshipped above all else. He is to have first place. He is to be preeminent. Bless His holy name!

God doesn’t give up on man, though. He now tries to reach out to mankind through a man, Abraham, and the Jewish nation that will come from him.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

5. ABRAHAM

MAIN EVENT: Abraham, Ur to Palestine

MAIN PEOPLE: Abraham, Sarah (Job)

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 12-25 (Job)

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 15:6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

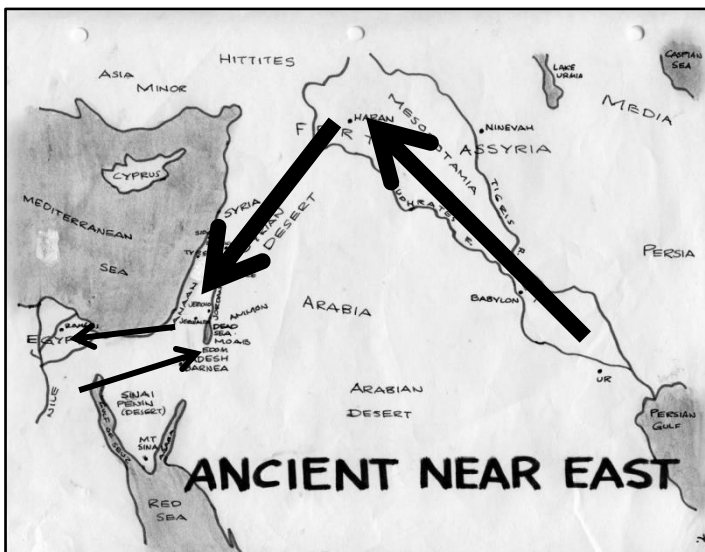
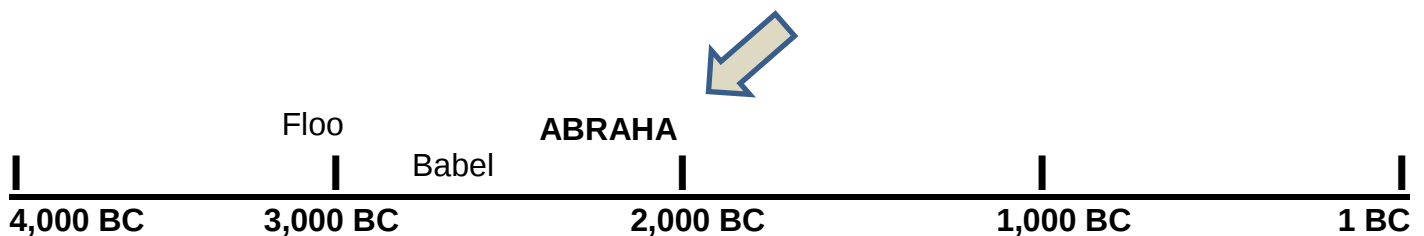
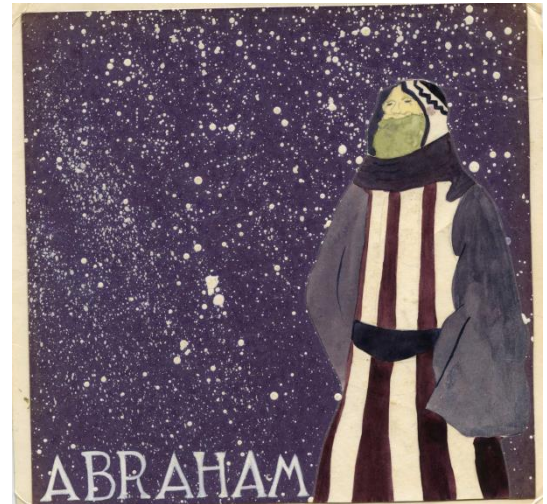
TIME: 2,200 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

China Xi Dynasty ruling

Indus Valley Civilization at its height

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Ur, Palestine



God's call of Abram (later to be called Abraham) begins a new phase of God's dealings with man (Genesis 12:1). Abram was born about 4500 years after Adam and about 2200 years before Jesus. He was born about 400 years after the tower of Babel. His story starts in Genesis 12. It is our fifth time period as we travel through the history of the Bible. Instead of God trying to reach all of mankind He now shifts His focus to one man through whom He will start a nation, the people of Israel. Through them He wants to reach the rest of the world by their example and by giving them His word, the Bible. He will also send His promised Messiah through this nation (Genesis 3:15). This is important to understand

in order to develop our foundation of the Old Testament. The Jews are still God's chosen people and will one day be restored to prominence again.

The first four events in our Bible overview covered 2,000 years. Only 11 chapters in Genesis tell us about them. Now the story slows down. The next four events, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, cover only 300 years but are recorded in 39 chapters in Genesis (12-50).

The first 11 chapters of Genesis are God's wide-angle lens of history, covering those 4500 years in brief outline form. When the account gets to Abram it slows down to a crawl and God switches to His close-up lens. God used him to start His chosen nation, the Jews. He could have used Job or Melchizedek, outstanding believers who were also alive at his time. He chose Abram, the weakest, so He would get all the honor and glory for what He did. That's why He often calls us to do things that seem impossible for us, so that He gets the credit for what is accomplished.

MEET ABRAHAM

Abram's life was a series of tests God used to help him grow spiritually. They were opportunities for Him to trust in God. Some he failed, others he passed.

1. LEAVE UR (Genesis 11:24 - 12:9) God told Abram to leave Ur, the most advanced city of its day where the moon was worshipped. He had been there 60 years and it was hard to leave. He passed that first test because he went straight to Haran 600 miles away. However he also failed in that he took his father and nephew, which was against God's orders and which caused him much trouble. He had to wait in Haran 15 years until his sick father died before he could (Acts 7:2-4). Then he went 400 miles to Palestine. By this time he was 75 years old.

2. FAMINE (Genesis 12:10-20) There was a famine in the land shortly after Abram arrived, and, instead of staying and trusting God he headed to Egypt (a picture of the world) to find food. He always had a problem with fear. He even said Sarai was his sister to protect his own life. If God hadn't saved them from Pharaoh that would have been the end of this new nation God was forming. God was faithful even when Abram wasn't.

3. WEALTH (Genesis 13:1-4) God had made him very wealthy in Egypt, a temptation to trust in the wealth instead of Him but Abram was faithful (Psalm 118:8-9; Proverbs 28:25).

4. CONFLICT WITH LOT (Genesis 13:5-18) Soon there wasn't enough land for Lot and Abram so Abram let Lot have first choice of the available land, even though it all belonged to Abraham. Lot chose the best for himself - Sodom.

5. LOT CAPTURED (Genesis 14:1-16) Lot lived in a very sinful city. When enemies defeated Sodom, Abram had to decide if he would risk his life to rescue Lot. He did so.

6. POWER & WEALTH (Genesis 14:17-24) Then the king of Sodom tried to give Abram riches for rescuing his people, but Abram knew God wanted him to depend only on Him, so he turned them down, with the encouragement and support of Melchizedek (Psalm 40:4).

7. SON PROMISED (Genesis 15:1-21) Even though physically Sarai, Abram's wife, was way too old, God said Abram would have an heir (son). It was hard to believe, especially when time passed and nothing happened. God was teaching Abram to trust Him totally (Psalm 27:14; 37:5).

8. HAGAR (Genesis 16:1-4) While waiting, Sarai came up with a plan that was culturally acceptable. It was for Abram to have a son by her servant and consider it hers. It seemed like a good way to solve the problem, so, instead of waiting for God to provide, unfortunately Abram did what she suggested.

9. ISHMAEL (Genesis 16:5-16) Having a son by Hagar just didn't work out. There was constant jealousy and turmoil in the family. Sarai told Abram to kick them out and he listened to her.

10. OBEY (CIRCUMCISION) (Genesis 17:1-27) By now Abram was 99, and still had no son. He was too old to father a child, and Sarai was way too old to conceive. Still, God told Abram to have all of his males circumcised as a sign of faith in His promise of a coming son. He even changed their names. Abram ("exalted father") became Abraham ("father of many nations"). Sarai ("contentious") became Sarah ("princess"). Abraham responded in faith and obeyed Him.

11. SON NEXT YEAR (Genesis 18:1-15) Now God's promises got even more specific. He said they'd have a son within the next year. Sarah was skeptical, but Abraham believed God and so passed this test.

12. INTERCESSION (Genesis 18:16-33) God showed Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah were going to be judged for their sins. Lot would have died, too, but Abraham interceded for him, believing God could spare him in His mercy if He chose. God promised He would.

13. LIE ABOUT SARAH (Genesis 20:1-17) This retest was the same as test # 2: protecting himself by saying Sarah was his sister (so when she was taken to Pharaoh's harem Abraham wouldn't be killed) or trust God by staying out of Egypt in the first place! Again he failed.

14. ISHMAEL SENT OUT (Genesis 21:1-21) Abraham didn't fail all his retests, though. When Sarah again wanted Hagar and Ishmael kicked out he went to God, willing to do whatever God said. He said it was time for them to go and He'd take care of them, which He did. Finally Abraham was able to put God above Sarah's pressure and his own fear and do what was right.

15. ISAAC SACRIFICED (Genesis 22:1-19) Abraham's faith in God was really tested when God told him to take Isaac and sacrifice him to God. This was a picture of God Himself sacrificing His only son, Jesus, in nearly the same location. For Abraham, though, a substitute ram was provided so he didn't have to kill his son. But when God's Son hung on the cross in that same area there was no substitute, for Jesus was the substitute for the rest of the world. Abraham didn't have to put his son to death, but God the Father did, so He could become our substitute.

16. SARAH DIES (Genesis 23:1-20) Abraham's wife, Sarah, died when she was 127 years old. For all God had promised him, he didn't even have land to bury her on! He had to trust that God knew best when He took his life's mate. Abraham also had to trust Him to help him be both mother and father to Isaac. God was with him, even providing him with another wife, Keturah.

17. ISAAC'S WIFE (Genesis 24:1-9) Trusting God for a wife for Isaac was hard, but Abraham followed His leading and sent Eleazar back to his home area to find a wife who was a believer in God. God provided Rebekah for Isaac.

18. DEATH (Genesis 25:1-11) Abraham lived to be 175. His last test was to trust God when he was facing death, to trust Him with his soul at death and for all eternity. He had faith in God and died in peace (Isaiah 26:4; Psalm 9:9-10).

19. WHOLE LIFE You could say Abraham's whole life was a test. He passed some and failed others. He did pass more than he failed and God was good and merciful to him. God included Abraham as an example of faith in His "Hall of Faith and Fame," Hebrews 11:8-19. The Jews still know him as the "Father of the Faithful."

What about you? How are you responding to the opportunities God gives you to trust Him? If God was keeping score in your life, how is your pass-fail ratio? How is it lately, any improvement? Remember, with HIS help you can do all things (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13; Ephesians 3:16).

During this time period named after Abraham, man is responsible to live in faith, trusting God's promises as made in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15). Again man continued to fail. Abraham didn't trust God's timing and had Ishmael by Hagar. God's grace is seen in His mercy to Abraham by restoring him and keeping his promises to His people.

Job lived during approximately the same time as Abraham so we will include Job in this time period as well. His life story is told in the book that bears his name, Job.

JOB: SUFFERING



TITLE: After the main character

AUTHOR: Job (19:23-34) or Moses

DATE: 2000 BC (time of Abraham)

DATE of WRITING: About 2000 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Uz (Middle East)

TIME COVERED: Later part of Job's life

RECIPIENTS: Unknown

KEY VERSE: 1:21 *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."*

KEY WORDS: "Affliction" (11 times); "righteous" (21 times); "Answered and said" (32 times)

PURPOSE: To come to grips with the question: "Why do the righteous suffer?"

THEME: Reasons for and purposes of suffering.

I grew up with a sister (no brothers) who grew into a very special woman. She was a woman of faith in Jesus and was very friendly and loving. She did much good for all she knew. She had two little boys and a fine husband who needed her. But she got cancer and died when she was 33. Everyone kept asking: "Why Judy?" They tried to come up with an answer to help them better understand what God was doing, but there is no answer to the "Why?" question. Only God knows that answer -- and He keeps silent. Even asking the question can be wrong when we ask with accusation or rebellion in our attitude, as if challenging God and thinking He is wrong in what He does. Why do bad things happen to people? That's a universal question, and an old one. It's no surprise that the oldest book in the Bible, the first one written, deals with this question. Why DO good people suffer?

CONFLICTS OF JOB The story of this "Magnificent Man of Misery" begins with a thumb-nail sketch of Job as a very rich, well-known, respected, and godly man. He is pictured as the outstanding man of his day (Job 1:1-5). However, Satan, who accuses God's people whenever he can, finds something to complain to God about. That is the root meaning of the name "Devil" -- accuser of believers (Revelation 12:10). He accuses Job of only serving God because God is giving him such a pleasant and prosperous life (1:6-11). For the sake of His honor and glory, God allows Satan to attack Job (1:12), to prove Job's love is sincere and not self-seeking. Note that Satan can't do anything to God's people without His approval. Every trial we face is "Father-filtered."

Anyway, Satan takes away all Job's riches and possessions (1:13-17) and even the lives of his children, whom he deeply loves and cares about (1:4-5, 18-19). Job realized that everything he had came from God and that God had the right to take it all back without any explanation to Job (1:20-22). This is a stirring testimony to true faith and right perspective in life. Remember, Job had no idea WHY this was happening. He trusted and loved God as much when He gave blessings as when He took them away. I think the key for us here is to remember that what we have isn't ours but is God's instead.

Still Satan wasn't done, and accused Job of not really caring about those things because 'as long as you have your health, you have everything' (2:1-5). Again God allowed Satan to test Job, this time causing physical pain in his life (2:6-7). Satan caused the most painful afflictions he could, so that poor Job just sat in ashes, scratching open his puss-pockets to gain some minor relief (2:7-8). Even his wife, who may have been left alive for just this purpose, encouraged him to curse God so God would kill him and put him out of his misery (2:9). Still, he stayed faithful in his love and devotion to God (2:10).

COUNSELORS OF JOB The majority of the book of Job, chapters 3-37, is poetical (which is why Job is placed with the other poetical books in the Bible). Three friends of Job have come to try to force him to admit that he wouldn't be suffering this way if he hadn't really sinned. Then a fourth comes and semi-defends him, but not entirely. This MUST be God's punishment of him, they insist. Imagine your home has just exploded, destroying every possession you have. Everyone in the family was killed but you and you are in the hospital, wracked with pain, tubes coming out of you everywhere. The pastor and a couple friends show up and stay for

several weeks trying to force you to admit God did this because you are such a rotten sinner. How much comfort would their visit bring you?

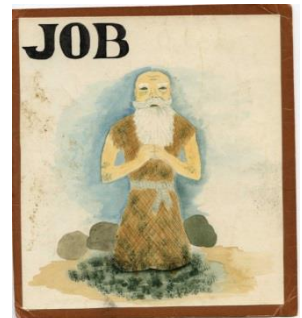
Job defends his innocence, knowing that God doesn't punish His people (Romans 8:1). Often today we, too, think that when we or someone we know is going through a hard time it is because God is punishing us. That is not true. God does discipline us when we won't turn from sin (Hebrews 12:5-11) but he also allows trials to come into our lives when we are faithful so that we will trust Him more and become even more faithful and so abide in Him (John 15). He doesn't tell us why these things happen now, but when we get to heaven we will see that He knew and did what was best and right (John 13:7). Now we must trust Him (Romans 8:28). As a young child doesn't know why a loving parent would allow a doctor to stick or cut him, so we don't know why God allows things to happen to us. Just because we don't know the reason doesn't mean there isn't one, though. We do know that God will abundantly bless and reward us for faithfully trusting Him through the valleys in life, though (2 Corinthians 4:16-17; Romans 8:18). That may or may not happen in this life, but certainly will in heaven.

CONFIDENCE OF JOB After spending many chapters trying to blame Job for his situation, God interrupts and, in a voice dripping with sarcasm, shows them they have no business trying to second-guess Him. Read Job 38-41 when you start wondering if God knows what He is doing! God tells Job's counselors they have to come to Job and ask him to pray for them or they will feel the full fury of God's wrath (42:7-9). This must have really humbled them! Then God returned all Job's possessions, doubled (42:10-16). He even replaced his children. He didn't have to double them, for his other children were still living in heaven. Thus in effect he did have double the number of children, too.

Job never does know WHY God did this, and neither do we today. Perhaps bad things happen to good people to show Satan they love God for the right reasons, perhaps it is to learn to trust God more or depend on His grace more completely (as was the case with Paul's thorn in the flesh -- 2 Corinthians 12:7), or for God's glory when we and others see His provision and deliverance, or maybe it's to make us more sensitive to others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-24). Whatever the reason might be, we know God is Sovereign and loves us deeply (Romans 8). All He does is for His glory and our benefit.

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? Ultimately all suffering is to be glory to God and growth to the one going through it. God uses it for other purposes as well, thought, such as showing the conflict between God and Satan (Job 1-2), to present God's message (Hosea), to teach obedience to God (Hebrews 5:8; Philippians 2:8), to learn to depend on God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:7-10), to draw us closer to Christ (1 Peter 1:7-8; Isaiah 49:2), demonstrates God's power (John 13:16; 16:33; 1 Peter 1:13) and helps us assist others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SUFFERING? When going through suffering make sure you are in God's will (1 Peter 4:19) and trust that God is doing it for our benefit (John 15:2; Romans 8:28). We won't know why these things happen until later (John 13:7). Use this as an opportunity to trust Him and draw closer to Him (Hebrews 13:5). His love has been proved by what He did for us on the cross, so there is no reason to doubt that.



OUTLINE OF JOB

I. CONFLICTS OF JOB (Afflictions) 1-2

- A. Job's Circumstances 1:1-5
- B. Job's Calamities 1:6 – 2:10
- C. Job's Comforters 2:11-13

II. COUNSELORS OF JOB (Answers) 3-42

- A. Job's Cry 3
- B. Job's Critics
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1. Cycle 1 4-

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C. Job's Comforter (Elihu) 32-37

D. Job's Creator 38-42

III. CONFIDENCE OF JOB 42

- A. Job's Confirmation 42:7
- B. Job's Consolation 42:10

BIBLE OVERVIEW

6. ISAAC

MAIN EVENTS: Birth, Sacrifice of Isaac

MAIN PEOPLE: Isaac, Rebekah

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 21-28,35

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 17:19* "Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

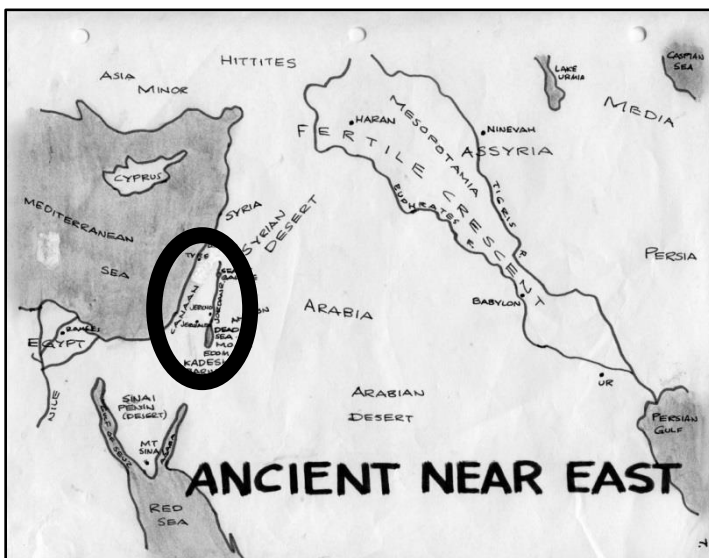
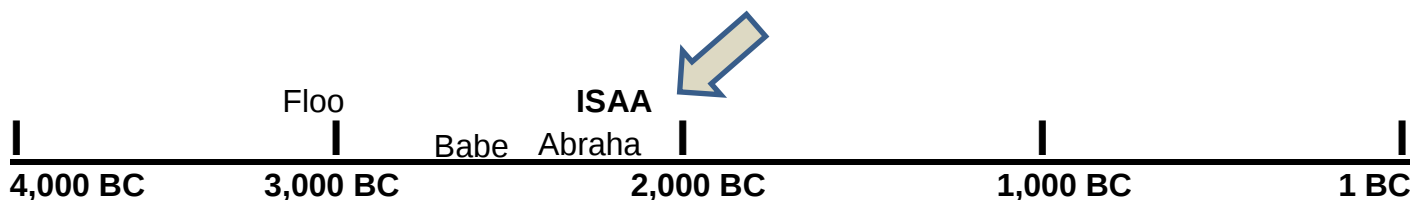
TIME: 2,100 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Egypt, Middle Kingdom replaces Old Kingdom

Hittite Civilization begins

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



God's promises to Abraham passed on to his son Isaac, the 6th time period in our study. God had promised Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son even though they were too old, and they did (Hebrews 11:17-19). Isaac showed times of great faith, as when he trusted his father Abraham to offer his life as a sacrifice (Genesis 22). He also had times of great disobedience in his life.

MEET ISAAC

Isaac was born to parents who were old enough to be his grandparents. His father, Abraham, was 100 years old when he was born. His mother, Sarah, was 90 (Genesis 21:5; 17:17).

Truly he was a miracle baby and they were very glad to have him. He was special to God as well for God chose his name. 'Isaac' means 'laughter' (Genesis 17:19).

Isaac was circumcised at eight days old, as was the custom. But by the time he was weaned at age two (Genesis 21:8) there were family problems. His father, Abraham, had gotten impatient

waiting for him to be conceived so he followed Sarah's suggestion that he have a son through her servant Hagar. This was an accepted practice in those days, especially when a wife didn't produce an heir. But by the time Isaac was weaned that boy, Ishmael, had been treating Isaac so cruelly because of his jealousy that Sarah demanded he and his mother be sent away (Genesis 21:9-14). God took care of them, though (Genesis 21:12-21).

Isaac's childhood was normal for an only child. He had lots of love and attention. His parents taught him about God and he learned to love and trust God at an early age. When he was a young man a test came into his life which challenged his faith in God and his father. Abraham asked Isaac to accompany him on a trip to go worship God (Genesis 22). That wasn't unusual, it happened quite often. What was different was that he noticed as they prepared for the offering that there was no animal to kill and sacrifice. When his father said Isaac was to be the sacrificed he could hardly believe it. Abraham didn't understand why God was doing this but he felt that God would somehow bring Isaac back to life after he killed him (Hebrews 11:17-19). It must have been very difficult for Isaac to allow his own father to take his life, but he had been raised to trust and obey his father as well as God. So he willingly lay on the altar – his father was too old to force him to do it against his will. As he awaited the knife to come down and end his life something very strange happened. God spoke and told Abraham he didn't have to kill Isaac because He had provided a substitute, a ram caught in the bushes nearby. They both praised God for His provision of a substitute.

The surrender and submission of Isaac to be sacrificed on Mt Moriah is a type of Christ Who was also obedient to death (Philippians 2:5-8). Abraham was a picture of God the Father who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all (John 3:16; Romans 8:32). The ram miraculously caught in the thicket and sacrificed instead of Isaac is a picture of Jesus who was offered as a sacrifice in the place of all mankind (Hebrews 10:5-10). Abraham's assurance that they would go worship and together return (Genesis 22:5) pictures resurrection from death (Hebrews 11:17-19). Throughout the Bible God shows His love and power, and has many pictures of what Jesus will do when He comes to earth. The whole Old Testament points to Jesus. It is the foundation of the building, and so understanding these things helps us understand Jesus and what He will do to remove sin and provide salvation.

The next major event in Isaac's life was his marriage to Rebekah, soon after his mother died. He was thirty-seven when she died. Abraham sent a trusted servant to Mesopotamia to seek God's will for a wife for Isaac from among his own kin. Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah (Genesis 24). She brought him great comfort from the loss of his mother.

Several years later his father Abraham distributed his property, giving Isaac his possessions while his sons by Hagar and Keturah were sent away with presents. Ishmael and Isaac buried Abraham in the cave of Machpelah and Isaac moved to Beer-lahai-roi (Genesis 25:5-11).

Rebekah and Isaac wanted to have children, but it wasn't until after about twenty years of marriage, in direct answer to prayer, they were given two sons, Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:21-26). Rebekah and Isaac seem to have grown apart over the years, and perhaps they turned to their sons to make up for what was missing in their marriage. Isaac took great delight in Esau because of his manly, outdoor character. Jacob, a quieter type, was drawn closer to Rebekah. Unfortunately the faith of Isaac's childhood doesn't seem as strong in his later years as when he was young. There is always that danger, of drifting from God as we age. God wants His children to stay faithful to the end, to finish strong and to always keep growing in their faith. If you, like Isaac, find your faith and obedience were stronger when you were younger than they are now, confess that sin and ask God to restore you to your former relationship with Him. Then spend time reading His Bible and praying each day, and live a life of holiness in obedience to Him.

Isaac's lack of faith was also seen when a famine hit the land and, instead of trusting God for provision, he took his family out of the Promised Land to find food. He knew God's promises to his father and himself, but he did not fully trust in God's protection. He followed his fears and moved to Gerar, then called Rebekah his sister, afraid the people might try to kill him if they knew she was his wife. His father had done the same thing – twice. Unfortunately he was following his example. When Abimelech, the Philistine king where they had moved, found out the truth he strongly rebuked Isaac but allowed them to remain in the land (Genesis 26:1-11).

Eventually his flocks and herds grew so large there wasn't room for Isaac and the others living in that land. God was clearly blessing him. He eventually moved back to Beersheba where God again appeared to him and spoke again all the blessings of the covenant. What a wonderful blessing from God!

When he was 100 and Esau 40, Esau married Judith and Basemath, daughters of Canaan, but they brought grief to Rebekah and Isaac (Genesis 26:34-35).

As Isaac got older his eyesight started to fade. Thinking his death would be near, he requested Esau to make a special meal he enjoyed so he could eat it and then bless him before he died. Isaac knew God's blessing was not to be bought or sold, and he also knew it was supposed to go to Jacob (Genesis 25:23). He wasn't living by faith as he had in his youth. Rebekah found out about this plan to bypass Jacob and bless Esau instead. She tricked Isaac so he would unknowingly bless Jacob instead. This so angered Esau he threatened to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died. Therefore Jacob was sent to Mesopotamia to get a wife from their family there (Genesis 27:41-28:6).

Many years later, when Jacob returned home with two wives and thirteen children, he found Isaac living at Hebron. It was here Isaac died at the age of 180 and was buried by his sons (Genesis 35:27-29).

Isaac's life is an example of someone who starts off strong in their faith when young but then gradually drifts from God. God, in His faithfulness, did give him years of blindness at the end of his life where he had nothing to do but sit and talk to God. He used that to bring Isaac back to Him, but how much better it would have been had he never drifted from Him in the first place. Perhaps you are facing a difficulty in life. Could it be God is trying to use that to get your attention and bring you closer to Him?

BIBLE OVERVIEW

7. JACOB

MAIN EVENTS: Jacob born, conflict with Esau, Leban

MAIN PEOPLE: Jacob, Esau, Rachel, Laban

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 25-37, 46-50

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 32:28 Then the Man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."*

TIME: 2,000 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

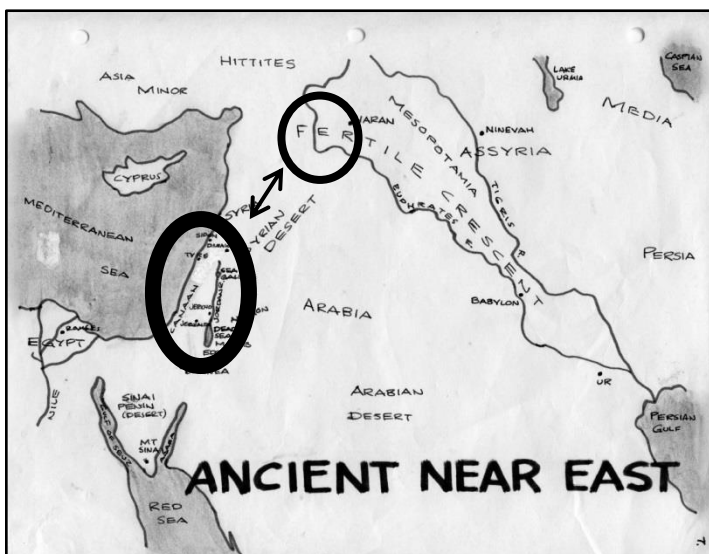
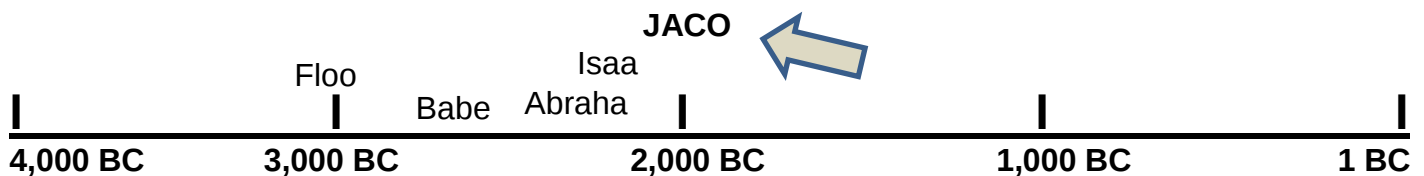
Stonehenge built in England

Hittite Civilization expands in Turkey

Indus Valley civilization collapses

Minoan Civilization grows on Crete

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine, Paddan Aram



The promises God made to the nation Israel through Abraham and Isaac passed on to Jacob, the seventh time period in our overview of the Bible. Jacob was later called Israel, which eventually became the name of the whole nation.

MEET JACOB

Jacob was the answer to his father's prayer (Genesis 25:21) but became the favorite son of his mother (Genesis 25:28). Actually, Jacob is his nickname, because when his brother was born he was holding onto his heel (Genesis 25:26) as if trying to take hold of what was his brother's and make it his own instead. He did that after birth with

their birthright (Genesis 25:29-34) and also with his father's blessing (Genesis 27:1-29). Later God changed his name to Israel, though (Genesis 32:28).

Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob traveled around a lot. He went from Beersheba to Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22), then to Shechem (Genesis 33:18-20), back to Bethel (Genesis 35:6-7) and to Hebron (Genesis 35:27). Also like Abraham, he built altars where he lived as he continued to worship and serve the God of Abraham and Isaac. Eventually he ended up moving to Egypt with his son Joseph. He died there at a very advanced age (Genesis 46-49).

Jacob's life was, for the most part, quiet and uneventful. There were some times of great excitement and activity, though, like when he went to Haran in Mesopotamia. He was escaping the wrath of his brother Esau for stealing the blessing his father wanted to give to Esau. He went to his uncle Laban's home (Genesis 28:10). On the way, at Bethel, he had a dream of a staircase reaching from earth to heaven with angels going up and down on it. God reiterated to him the promises He had given to Abraham, his grandfather, and Isaac, his father.

While in Haran he married sisters: Rachel and Leah. He had four sons from Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel was jealous and wasn't having children so she gave him her servant Bilhah to have children for her. With her Jacob had Dan and Naphtali. Leah then did the same thing, giving Jacob her servant Zilpah, with whom he had Gad and Asher. Then Leah herself had Issachar and Zebulun. Finally Rachel was able to have children and had Joseph and Benjamin. He also had one daughter, Dinah. From these twelve sons came the twelve tribes of Israel. Levi became the priestly tribe so wasn't counted among the tribes. To fill his place the two sons of Joseph, his grandsons, Ephraim and Manassah, each became a tribe. There was no tribe of 'Joseph,' but one from each of his sons.

Returning from his long stay in Haran, at the ford of the River Jabbok, he had another strong encounter with God Himself. He was fearful of his upcoming reunion with Esau (Genesis 32:7). He found himself suddenly engaged in a physical wrestling match with God which mirrored the inner wrestling going on in his soul with Him. For the first time in his life he could not conquer something in his own strength. Submitting to God's greater power, he found the peace he had been seeking. Because of this God changed his name to Israel which means "Prince of God." Jacob called the place Peniel – because he saw God face to face and lived (Genesis 32:30).

The impact of these experiences stayed with Jacob and molded him into a man of God. At the end of his life, when he was quite old (Genesis 47:28), he called his twelve sons around his bed to tell them what should befall them in the last days (Genesis 49:1). He talked to them in the order of their birth. His strongest words were spoken to Reuben, the firstborn, whom he admonished because of his sin (Genesis 49:3-4), and Simeon and Levi, whom he cursed for their anger and cruelty (Genesis 49:5-7). His greatest blessing from God was bestowed on Judah, who would be praised by his brothers and whose tribe would be the source of royalty (Genesis 49:8-12).

Following this scene, Jacob died and was embalmed (Genesis 49:33; 50:2). By his own request his body was carried back to the land of Canaan and was buried in the family burial ground in the cave of the field of Machpelah (Genesis 49:29-32; 50:13). We can learn from his life the importance of letting God break our self-sufficiency so we learn to depend only on Him. It's hard but very necessary.

Unlike his father Isaac, who started out strong in faith but wasn't as obedient to God in his later years, Jacob started off poorly using deception to manipulate and get his own way. But in the end of his life his faith and devotion grew and he became a strong man of faith.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

8. JOSEPH



MAIN EVENTS: Joseph, all the Jews into Egypt

MAIN PEOPLE: Joseph, brothers, Pharaoh

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 37-50

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

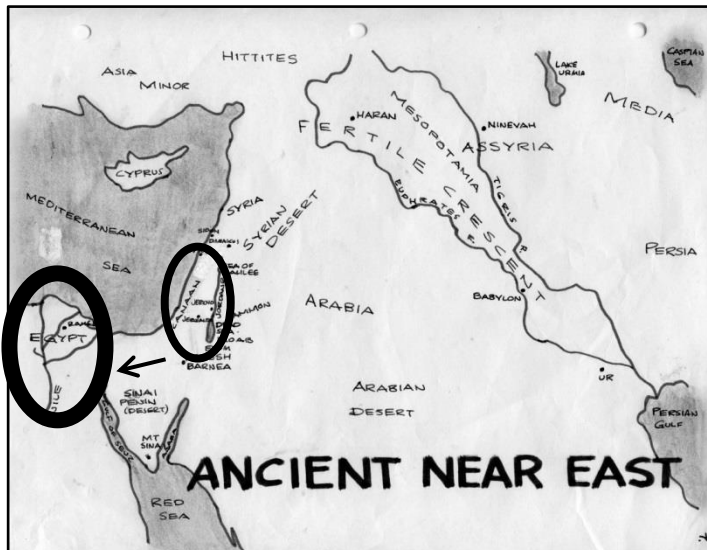
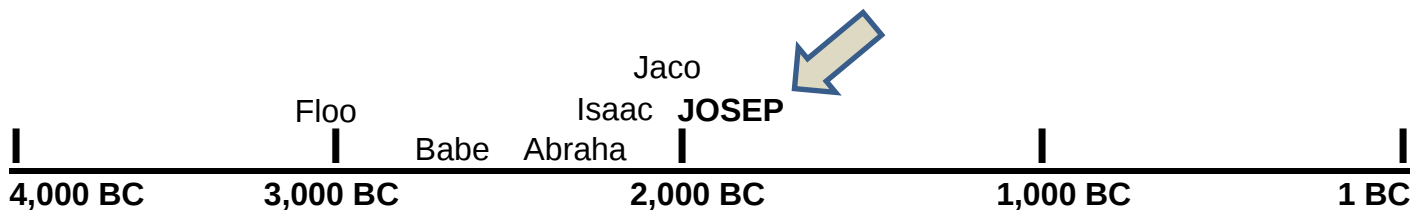
TIME: 1,900 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Hammurabi establishes Babylonian Empire

Assyria grows in power

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine, Egypt



Joseph was the second youngest but favorite son of Jacob. The story line of the Old Testament focuses on him as he was sold into slavery in Egypt during this 8th period in our Bible overview. This prepared the way for the whole nation to find refuge in Egypt during a famine. The line of the Messiah went through his brother Judah, but we name this time period after Joseph because the emphasis of this time is on him.

MEET JOSEPH

Everyone wants to be loved and accepted by the others in their family, but what do you do when your brothers don't like you? That is not an enviable situation to be in, but one in which

Joseph found himself. He was the eleventh son of Jacob, but the first of his favorite wife Rachael (Genesis 33:2, 7). Therefore he became his father's favorite child. Joseph was born in Haran while Jacob was still serving Laban (Genesis 30:22-25).

Because he was Rachael's first child, and because God had gifted him in many special ways, his father liked him more than his brothers. He even gave him a special coat to show his favoritism (Genesis 37:2-4). His brothers' jealousy caused them to dislike Joseph. His reporting their evil conduct to his father caused them to dislike him even more. But what really made them upset was telling them about his dreams which foretold his leadership over the whole family (Genesis 37:5-11).

Because of this his brothers found an opportunity to sell Joseph as a slave to a caravan heading to Egypt. To cover up their deception, the brothers concealed the truth by convincing their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. In Egypt he was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and became a slave.

God was with him and blessed him even in slavery. He became a very trusted servant and directed all his master's affairs. However, when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph and he refused, she lied and blamed him for attacking her. To save face, the master had to have Joseph put in prison. But even there God blessed him and gave him great wisdom so that soon the head of the prison put its daily affairs into his hands (Genesis 39:1-23).

While in prison he correctly interpreted the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners, but it took two years until he was remembered and brought into the palace to interpret Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 40). God revealed to him the meaning of the dreams. There would be seven years of plenty when the fields produced great harvests. Following this would be seven years of severe famine and starvation. Joseph advised Pharaoh to store the extra food from the good years to help carry the country through the bad years. Because of Joseph's insight and wisdom, Pharaoh made him head over everyone, second only to Pharaoh himself, so he could implement and carry out this ambitious plan. Pharaoh gave him a daughter of an Egyptian priest as his wife.

Things turned out exactly as Joseph had predicted. Each year the famine got worse and worse and people from many nations came and bought food from Pharaoh, as did the Egyptians themselves. As a result, Pharaoh became even more rich and powerful. It was during these years that Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 41:47-52).

God was behind all this, using this to set up things so Joseph's brothers would need food and be forced to go to Egypt to get it. God used this to humble his brothers, to reunite them with Joseph, and to save the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God also had to move them from Canaan where they were intermarrying and soon would no longer be a nation set apart to Him. In Egypt they were rejected and had to live alone, marrying only other Jews as God intended, until they became a large, strong nation of two and a half million when Moses led them out of Egypt to freedom.

God used Joseph in a special way for His work, but it was a painful life he lived. He had to remain faithful despite extreme suffering. God used all of it, even the rejection by his brothers, to bring about the good He had planned (Romans 8:28). "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish ... the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). That truth still applies to your lives today.

In many ways **Joseph was a picture of Jesus**. Both were specially loved by their fathers (Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17; 12:18), prophesied to be rulers (Genesis 37:5-11; Daniel 7:13-14; Micah 4:7; 5:2), and were rejected by their brothers (Genesis 37:4-5, 11; John 7:3-5; 15:18-19) whom they forgave (Genesis 45:5, 10-15; Luke 23:34). Each was sent on a special mission by their father (Genesis 37:13, 18-20; Matthew 21:37-38; Mark 12:6-7), then rejected and plots were made against them (Genesis 37:18-28; John 11:47-53; Acts 2:22-23). Both went to Egypt (Genesis 37:28; Matthew 2:13-15), were made slaves (Genesis 39:1; Philippians 2:7) and were indwelt by God's Spirit (Genesis 41:38; Luke 4:1; Acts 10:38). Each was appointed to bring life to the people around them (Genesis 41:55-57; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11-12). God used the evil done to them for His good (Genesis 45:5-8; 50:20; Acts 3:12-18) and both were saviors (Genesis 47:25; Acts 13:23). Jesus was

sinless and perfect (1 Peter 2:22) and Joseph is one of the very, very few people in the Bible of whom no sin is mentioned.

THE JEWS IN EGYPT AFTER JOSEPH

The Jews remained in Egypt for about 400 years, until Moses came to deliver them. God put them there to keep them pure (from intermarrying with Gentiles in the land) and to make them into a nation that would serve Him. Unfortunately that was a painful process for them, as it often is for us.

A visitor to Israel saw a shepherd bringing flocks into their fold. All walked on their own but one, which he carried because it had a broken leg. When asked how the leg got broken, the shepherd said he had broken it himself because the sheep was stubborn and kept wandering away from the shepherd. With its leg broken, the sheep was dependent on the shepherd for everything: food, water and transportation. The shepherd said that by the time the leg healed the sheep will have learned to trust the shepherd and obey him, not wandering off on its own any more. God does that same thing to His people – only we don't learn so quickly! He's been doing that throughout history, up to today. A clear example of it is with the Jews in Egypt.

INTO EGYPT No nation on earth is so mixed up with the history of Israel as Egypt. From patriarchal times through today, Egypt and Israel have been closely connected. When God formed a nation from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, He told them to stay pure, to not marry unbelievers. This was necessary for Him to grow a nation of His people. Instead they intermarried with the Gentiles around them and their faith in God faded as they brought idols and other gods into their families. Thus God had to intervene to save them from themselves.

Through Joseph and the famine, He had all 70 of them move into Egypt (Exodus 1:1-5). There they had to stay pure and marry only among themselves, for the Egyptians were very prejudiced towards them and would not intermarry among them. This was God's loving way of teaching them to obey and depend on their Shepherd (Hebrews 12:5-10; Revelation 3:19). It was, in effect, a "time out" for the nation of Israel. The prodigal son had to go into the world to learn his lesson the hard way. Often we must, too.

IN EGYPT Eventually Joseph and his contemporaries died (Exodus 1:6) and the nation of Israel grew (Exodus 1:7) from 70 to 2 ½ million over 400 years. God had said He would make a great nation of them, and God always keeps His promises. However, Egypt wasn't a vacation spot but a furnace to refine and mature them. They were there to grow spiritually. When they didn't, God kept gradually turning up the heat higher and higher.

PLAN 1: LABOR CAMPS When a new dynasty arose in Egypt which was antagonistic to outsiders, the Jews felt the brunt of his persecution (Exodus 1:8). In the Bible, Egypt is a type, a picture of the world system under Satan's (Pharaoh's) control. It is the place of material wealth and power (Hebrews 11:26) and fleshly wisdom and false religion (Exodus 8:7; 1 Kings 4:30). It appeals to the flesh with its leeks, garlic and onions. God's manna is not found there. It persecutes God's people (Deuteronomy 4:20) and is eventually overthrown by God's judgment (Exodus 12:29; 15:4-7).

Pharaoh took out his hatred of foreigners by oppressing the Jews. Of course Satan is always behind anti-Semitism just as he is behind persecution of Christians. If he can't get at God directly, he attacks those He loves – His children.

To keep them from growing larger (and joining with enemies of Egypt to overthrow the government) Pharaoh put them to hard slave labor (Exodus 1:9-14). This would weaken them, discourage and disorganize them, and also help his economy. God allowed it to happen to the Jews so they would turn to Him for help. He did it for their benefit, because He loved them (Psalm 119:67, 95).

God was behind all this. He even foretold that they would be slaves in Egypt (Genesis 15:13). In order to cut loose the bonds that bound them to Egypt, the sharp knife of affliction must be used. Pharaoh was God's instrument in weaning them from the Egyptian world and helping them take up their own place as God's people.

A little girl was traveling on a train, romping up and down the aisles, free from care and worry. Suddenly the train entered a long, dark tunnel. She was terrified and immediately fled to her father's lap as fast as she could.

All of us sometimes need a tunnel to send us back to God's lap. Slavery in Egypt was such an event, only they didn't run back to God. Even so, God kept His promises and they continued to grow stronger (Exodus 1:12), so Pharaoh came up with another plan.

PLAN 2: SUBTLE GENOCIDE Pharaoh turns up the heat by ordering the midwives to kill all male babies (Exodus 1:15-16). It was a simple matter of shutting off their breath while being born and having them born dead. By killing the males there would still be women as slaves to work for Pharaoh, but no soldiers to fight against them. Obviously Satan was behind it all – trying to destroy the line of Christ (the same as he had babies killed in Bethlehem).

The plan didn't work, though, for the midwives put God before Pharaoh and didn't kill the male babies (Exodus 1:17-19). God limits Satan's opposition, and uses it for His purposes (Romans 8:28). God controls and limits Satan's efforts against His people, using it for His purposes. Here it was to cause the Jews to turn back to God.

The people continued to increase, as He had promised, and the midwives were rewarded by God for their obedience to Him (Exodus 1:20-21). But Pharaoh/Satan isn't done yet!

PLAN 3: OVERT GENOCIDE Then Pharaoh turned up the heat, ordering that every male born be cast into the Nile River. Gradually the pressure gets worse, all to get the Jews to turn back to God. God allows painful experiences to come into the lives of His children when they drift from Him so they will turn back to Him.

One day a workman was stuck on a high ledge of a building. He needed to get the attention of someone below so they could send for help for him. He called and no one heard. He dropped a little pebble but it fell unnoticed. A larger one wasn't felt by the person it hit, either. He kept dropping larger and larger objects until finally someone felt the hit and looked up. That's what God was doing to the Jews. He was dropping larger and larger objects on them so they would look up and He'd get their attention. He does that today, to us, as well. How big an object does He have to drop to get your attention? Could He be trying to get your attention about something now?

Unfortunately it's going to take another 80 years before the Jews finally look up. Then they will be ready to obey God and follow Moses out of Egypt.

Please understand that not all suffering is discipline from God. You should know in your heart if things are right between you and God or if there is something there that needs attending to. His Spirit will convict you of anything wrong. Make sure you don't rationalize, justify or explain away what His Spirit may be convicting you of. If He isn't showing you anything then there is nothing to confess, but if there is something between you and God please confess it now. Remember, "All things DO work together for the good of those who love the Lord" (Romans 8:28).

BIBLE OVERVIEW

9. MOSES

MAIN EVENTS: Moses, Deliverance from Egypt

MAIN PEOPLE: Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Exodus-Deuteronomy

BIBLE VERSE: *Exodus 33:11 The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*

TIME: 1,500 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Brahma worship starts in India

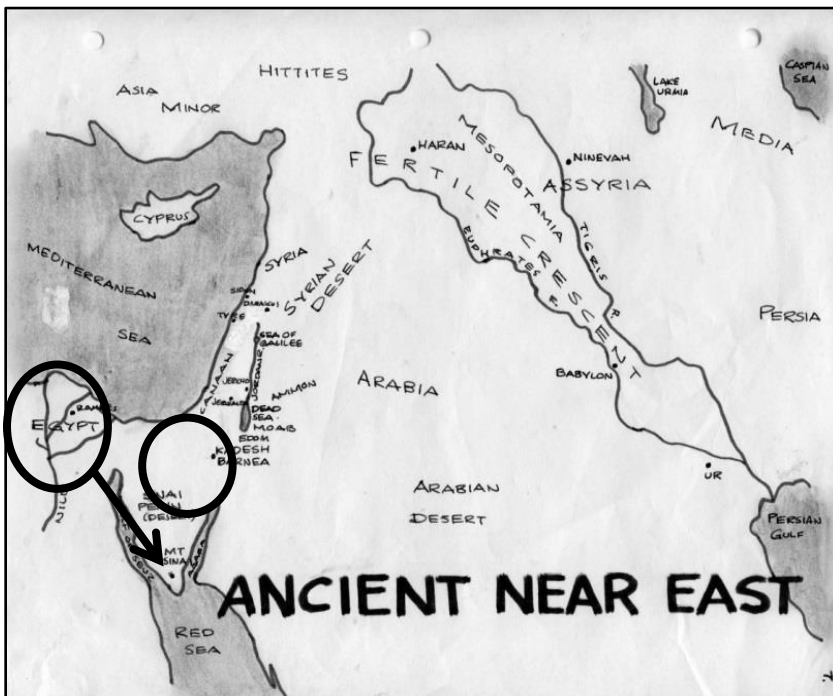
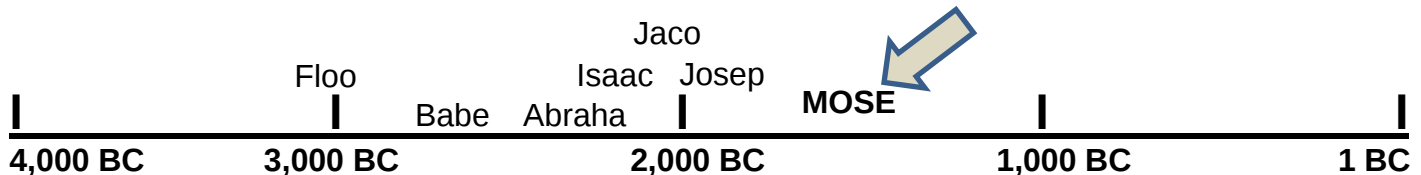
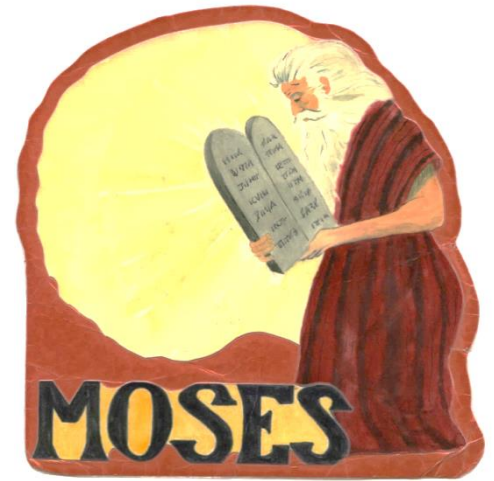
Mycenaean Civilization in Greece

Shang dynasty in China

Sun Pyramid built in Mexico

Egypt reunited, expands

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Egypt, Mt Sinai, wilderness



Much happened during this ninth period in Bible history which is named after Moses. There are many important foundational truths to learn in order to understand the rest of the structure of the Bible. During this time the Jews left Egypt and became an independent nation. God delivered them and became their King but they often rejected Him and disobeyed him. As a result they ended up wandering for 40 years in the desert (the smaller circle on the map).

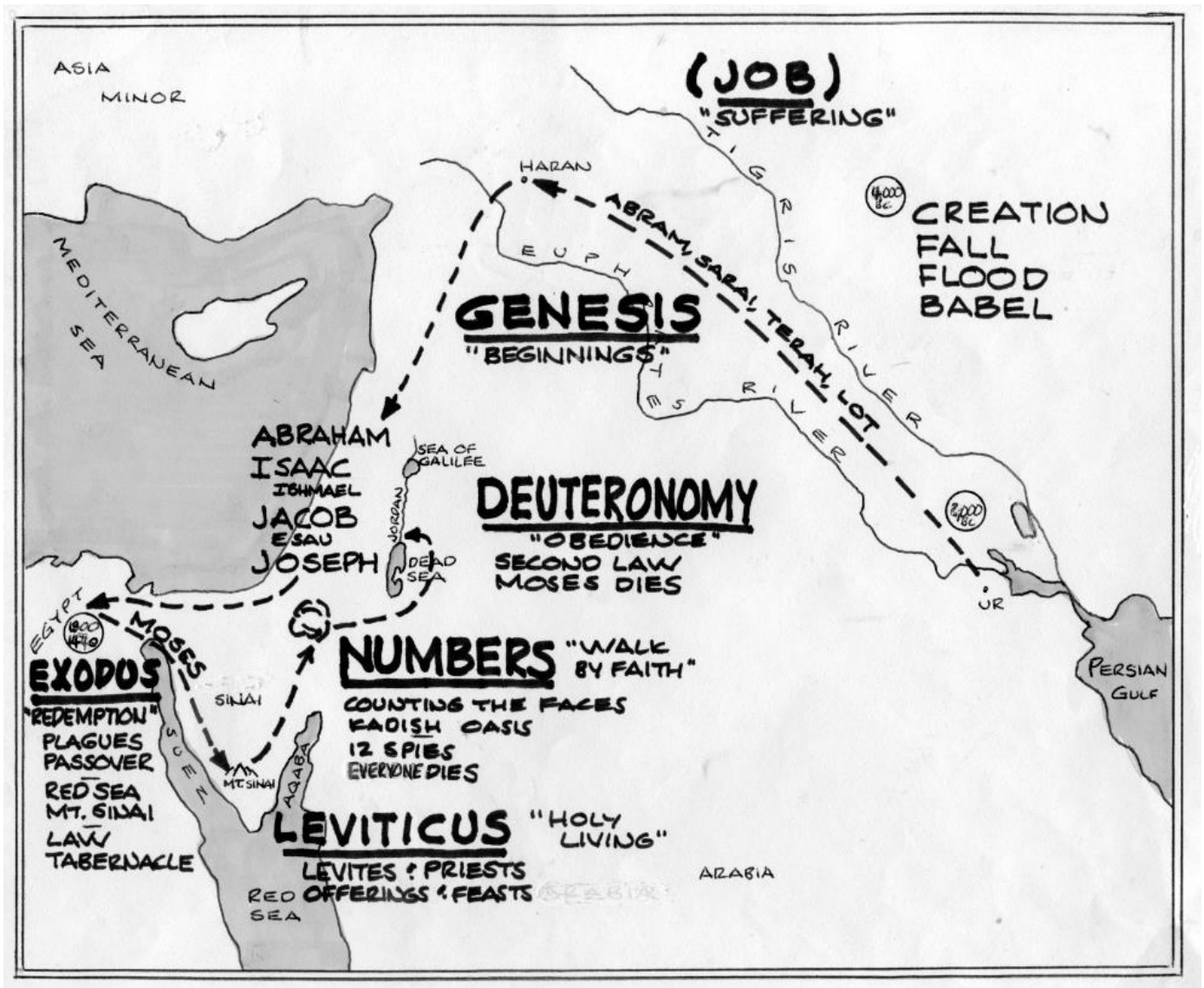
Of special interest during this time is the institution of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They teach about Jesus and His work for us and set the foundation for the Lord's Supper which we still partake of

today.

The Law was given during this time as well, along with the Tabernacle, priesthood, offerings and feasts.

With the giving of the Law, God's dealings with the Jews changed. Now they are under the Law (Exodus 19:1), which will continue until Jesus fulfills the Law on the cross 1,500 years from Moses' time (Romans 10:4; Deuteronomy 18:18; Matthew 5:17). Man is now responsible to keep the Law but fails over and over. Ultimately they will be judged by going into captivity. The northern ten tribes, Israel, will be taken to Assyria. A few years later the southern two tribes, Judah, will be taken to Babylon.

Still God's grace was seen during this time. Forgiveness was available for those who repented. The sacrificial system showed that the blood of an innocent substitute paid for our sins. God's long patience showed grace, as did His protection and preservation of the nation, even though they didn't deserve it. Through the prophets God gave many prophecies of the coming of the Messiah and, eventually, His eternal reign on earth.



MEET MOSES

The main person in this time period, Moses, is one of the most outstanding men in the Bible. He is a man well worth studying for many lessons can be learned from him.

THE FIRST FORTY YEARS Moses' father, Amran (Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59) and his mother, Jocabed (Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59), were both very godly followers of Jehovah. He had a sister, Miriam, who was 12 when he was born (Exodus 2:4) and a brother, Aaron, 3 years older than he was (Exodus 2:7-10; 7:7). Moses was born in about 1525 (Exodus 2:2), in slavery in Egypt.

His parents hid him for 3 months (Exodus 2:2; Acts 7:20; Hebrews 11:23) but then had to trust his care to God almighty. God provided wonderfully, having him raised in Thebes by Pharaoh's daughter Hatshepsut (Acts 7:20-22). His birth mother was with him for the first several years of his life (Luke 22:25-26). As an Egyptian prince and heir to the throne, he had the best education possible. He became very skillful in leadership and scholarly skills. He had everything one could ask for -- everything but self-control! Some might say he was indulged and spoiled. Moses saw his mother use her anger to get what she wanted. During his childhood, when he should have been learning self-control (Lamentations 3:26-27), he was just learning to do what I wanted instead.

Then came the time when he had to decide: stay with Egypt and become the next Pharaoh or leave it all to go with the Jews, his people (Hebrews 11:24-26). It was very hard to say "no" to his strong-willed Egyptian mother. She was grooming him to be the next Pharaoh, which would also make him the head of the religious system in Egypt. Unfortunately he tried to do it in his own strength, as he was used to doing everything in life. His anger flared when he saw an Egyptian beating a Jew and he reacted with violence (Acts 7:23-29). While God created anger to be a positive motivator to action (Ephesians 4:26), it is a secondary emotion, a wrong response to a more basic emotion like pain, hurt, frustration or fear.

Moses was frustrated by not getting his own way, so he used anger to try to control the situation. That was sin. As a result he ended up committing murder and fleeing (Acts 7:25-29; Exodus 2:15). He was 40 years old and found himself with nothing, away from home, having lost everything -- all because of his anger.

THE SECOND FORTY YEARS When he got to Midian he found young women being taken advantage of and abused (Exodus 2:15-21). This time his response was righteous indignation, not self-centered anger, and he drove the abusers off and protected the women. This led to God placing him in that family with the oldest daughter, Zipporah, as his wife (Exodus 2:21-22). They had two sons (Exodus 18:3-4). He spent much time alone in the wilderness, watching sheep. God was using this time to teach him discipline, to humble him and have him learn patience and contentment. During the times alone with God Moses learned much about Him, and was led to write down things that had been passed down from generation to generation. He probably wrote the books of Genesis and Job at this time. God was lovingly and patiently working on him and through him.

Eventually the Pharaoh who wanted him dead died and another took his place (Exodus 2:23-25). The Jews were groaning in bondage, pleading with God to send them a deliverer. One day God called Moses to be the one to lead them out of Egypt, but he didn't want to do it. He came up with 5 excuses, objections to God's plan, but finally gave in when God Himself got angry at Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:18)!

It seems that God got even angrier when he started back, for he hadn't obeyed Him totally in the matter of circumcising his second son (Exodus 4:20-26). Because of this God physically afflicted Moses so he thought he was dying. Before Moses could lead the nation in obedience to God he had to lead his own family in that way (1 Timothy 3:4-5). God requires those who serve Him to be holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). To save her husband's life Zipporah had to circumcise the boy. After doing this she

left to go back to her home. Later her father brought her to see Moses but scholars disagree on if a reconciliation ever took place or not (Exodus 18:1-5). At this point, though, he went on alone. At 80 years of age he was headed back to Egypt!

THE THIRD FORTY YEARS God Himself was with Moses, and He sent his brother Aaron to help him (Exodus 6:28-30), but Pharaoh certainly didn't cooperate (Exodus 7:1-13). Soon the Jews were angry with him, too (Acts 7:39-43). He was caught right in the middle! God sent a series of 10 plagues, ending with the death of the firstborn of all those who didn't submit to following God, and the Jews were allowed to leave Egypt (Exodus 7:14-12:42). God used a trap at the Red Sea to destroy the Egyptians and the Jews were free (Exodus 13:17-15:21)! You'd think those people would be grateful and glad, but they weren't! They continued complaining about everything (Exodus 14:22-16:12).

When the Jews arrived at Mt. Sinai, Moses went up the mountain to get God's law. When he came down the Jews had built a golden calf to worship Baal with terrible, immoral worship. God was angry at them, and so was Moses. He prayed for God to have mercy and spare them, and God did. He took his anger out on them, though -- first he broke the tablets God had carved (He gave them to Moses again, but this time he had to carve them himself). Moses ground up the idol and poured the powder in water which they had to drink.

Eventually the Jews moved on from there, to Kadesh Barnea, where they were afraid to trust God and enter the land, so they had to wander for 40 years. God still was with them and provided, but fellowship was broken by the nation's sin of unbelief. When Korah rebelled, God quickly opened the earth to swallow up him and his whole family. Good things were going on during this time, too. Moses wrote the books of Exodus and Numbers during this time. Still, it was wasted time because Israel was carnal, out of fellowship with God.

Then it happened. Again. The Jews complained about not having enough water. They were always complaining about something. Moses had had enough and again lost his temper at them (Numbers 20). As a result he wasn't allowed to enter the promised land. God did let him see it, though. Moses died at 120 years of age, not able to enter God's perfect place for him because of his anger. Watch your anger -- it will keep you from God's perfect will, too (Ephesians 4:1-2, 26, 31; Colossians 3:12-13).

EXODUS: REDEMPTION

TITLE: Greek for “Depart, Exit, Way Out”

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: About 1440 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Desert wilderness

TIME COVERED: 1875 BC to 1444 BC

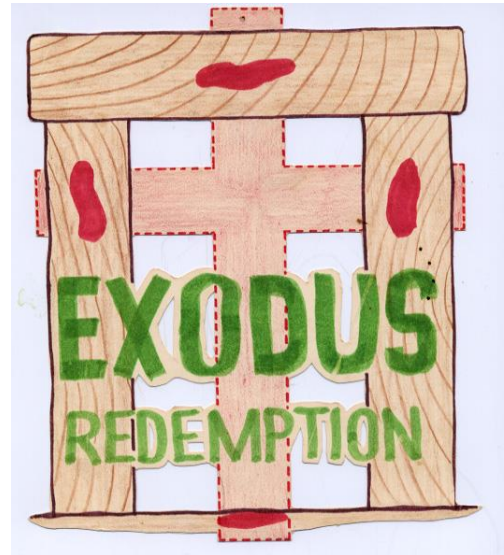
RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey-- the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.* Exodus 3:8

KEY WORD: “Redeem, Deliver” (10 times)

PURPOSE: To show how Israel got out of Egypt (fulfill Gen 15:12-16) and received God’s law

THEME: Redemption of the believer pictured by the exodus



A few years ago a boy made a model sailboat out of wood. He worked hard at carving, sanding and painting it. He loved to sail it on a stream near his home. One day it got away from him, though, and was carried downstream. He tried to retrieve it but wasn’t able. He went home very sad over the loss. Several days later, while walking through town, he saw his sailboat in a toy store window with a price attached to it. He quickly got some odd jobs and worked hard until he was able to save enough money to buy back his own boat. What that boy did is what the Bible word “redeem” refers to. It means to “buy back” something that was originally yours. The word was originally used of a slave owner who had to buy back his runaway slave . That is a perfect picture of what God has done for us. We are his by creation but rebelled and ran away in sin, so He had to pay the price (Jesus on the cross) to buy us back (“redeem” us).

GENESIS & EXODUS Genesis shows man’s failure. Genesis starts with man walking and talking with God, but sin enters, and by the end of the book man is in bondage to Pharaoh (a picture of Satan) in Egypt (a picture of the world system without God). In Exodus we see God coming to man’s rescue, to bring him out of bondage, to “redeem” him. It is done by blood (Passover lamb) and power (Red Sea deliverance).

THE PASSOVER LAMB Just as Genesis 12 is the key chapter in the book of Genesis (telling about Abraham being chosen, leaving all to follow God, and listing God’s eternal promises to him and his descendants), so Exodus 12 is the key chapter in the book of Exodus. It explains about the Passover lamb, the innocent blood shed to bring redemption. This is a beautiful picture of Jesus, the fulfillment of this picture (1 Peter 1:18-19; John 1:29, 36; 1 Corinthians 5:7). The lamb had to be perfect and unblemished, a male in the prime of life. It died as a substitute for the people on the 14th of Nisan, about 3 in the afternoon (the exact day and time Jesus died on the cross). The blood was then applied to the doorpost of the homes of those who believed. The lamb’s death didn’t deliver unless it was personally accepted and applied. Those who were inside were safe from judgment. The blood on the doorposts, top of the frame, and sill (where the lamb was killed) was in the shape of a cross. Inside they ate the meat of the lamb (nourishment from Christ).

When the angel of death saw the blood he passed over, for it was a picture that death had already come. The substitute died in the place of the guilty people. Thus they were “redeemed” by the blood of the lamb. God bought back with a price of infinite value that which was originally His by creation. In the early days of this country the pioneers were often destroyed by great prairie fires that would sweep across the plains miles across and destroy everything and everyone in its path. From the Indians they learned that when they realized such a fire was approaching they should set fire to all the grass around their homestead. Thus when the main fire came roaring through they were safe because, as the Indians said, “Where the fire has been the fire cannot come.” That is true of God’s judgment. When we accept Jesus as our Savior we are eternally safe from any judgment by God (Romans 8:1).

LEAVEN Because there wasn’t time to let bread rise, they quickly cooked bread without leaven and ate it. Leaven is used as a picture of sin in the Bible (Matthew 16:6, 11-12; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9). For centuries the Jews have celebrated this deliverance from Egypt by drinking the juice of the grape (a picture of the blood of the lamb) and eating matzo (unleavened bread). This was a reminder of God’s great deliverance of them, the key miracle in the Old Testament. Genesis 1 to Exodus 11 point to this and from Exodus 13 to the end of Malachi the Old Testament looks back to this event as the highlight of God’s work for His people.

In the New Testament Jesus takes this juice from the grape and unleavened blood and says that it no longer stands for physical deliverance but for spiritual deliverance from sin and Satan. Jesus teaches that the real fulfillment of these was in His very own body and blood, and that we are to now celebrate this as the Lord’s Supper, a reminder of God’s greatest of all deliverances (Mark 14:22-24).

THE TABERNACLE The other great teaching tool in the book of Exodus is the Tabernacle. It, too, shows all about Jesus.

OUTLINE OF EXODUS

I. THE NEED: SLAVERY (God’s People Enduring Bondage) 1-6

- A. Bondage in Egypt 1
- B. Birth of the Deliverer (Moses) 2
- C. Call of the Deliverer (Moses) 3-6

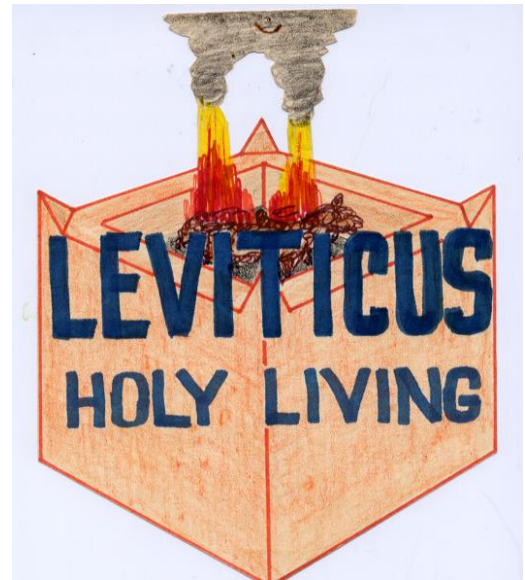
II. THE PROVISION: SALVATION (God’s Grace Revealing Redemption) 7-18

- A. Judgment on Unbelief (10 Plagues) 7-10
- B. Price of Redemption (Passover) 11-12
- C. Deliverance of the Redeemed (Through Red Sea) 13-15
- D. Journey of the Redeemed (to Mt. Sinai) 16-18

III. THE RESULT: SANCTIFICATION (God’s Glory Manifested in Worship) 19-40

- A. Life of the Redeemed (Law & Ceremonies) 19-24
- B. Worship of the Redeemed (Tabernacle) 25-31, 35-40
- D. Failure of the Redeemed (Golden Calf) 32-34

LEVITICUS: HOLY LIVING



TITLE: Greek "Pertaining to the Levites"

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: 1444 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Mt. Sinai

TIME COVERED: A few weeks in 1444 BC

RECIPIENTS: Jews, especially the Levites

KEY VERSE: *You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.* Lev. 20:26

KEY WORDS: Holy/Sanctify (131x); Sacrifice (300x); Clean/unclean (200x); Atonement (36x)

PURPOSE: To instruct Israel in how to live a holy life, but teaching the Levites how to serve.

THEME: A holy people worshipping a holy God in the spirit of holiness.

No one likes to read a book of laws and rules. Unless one has a special reason, it is very uninteresting reading. That can be the case in reading Leviticus as well. Reading it is like reading the ordinances, building code, and laws of your local city. Sound exciting? Genesis is good reading, and Exodus starts off exciting, but by the time we get to Leviticus we often bog down and never finish reading the Bible. What a shame. Laws aren't exciting reading, but where would we be without them?

GENESIS, EXODUS AND LEVITICUS Genesis shows the problem: man is sinful and that separates him from God. Exodus shows the solution: God provides redemption by innocent blood being shed on his behalf. Then what? If the Bible ended after Exodus 12 we would assume, and correctly so, that salvation was the end of things. We accept Jesus as our Savior and that is all there is. However the Bible doesn't end there. There is MUCH more, and that is living a holy life for God. After man sees his need (Genesis) and accepts God's provision (Exodus) then he is to live a holy life for God (Leviticus). We are to worship and serve God in everything we do. The rest of the Bible gives instructions in how to do that. Leviticus taught the redeemed Jews how to live holy lives of godly service.

SACRIFICE The Old Testament sacrificial system was God's reminder that sin had to be paid for by innocent blood being shed. This is true of the once-for-all acceptance of salvation (applying the blood of the Lamb) and then the daily need for cleansing from acts of sin after salvation (sacrifices). These sacrifices also pictured Jesus in that they were innocent and perfect. One important truth to note: there was no provision of forgiveness for intentional, knowing, willful sin. The sacrifices were for sins of ignorance only. God would forgive other sin, but only by his mercy. Today we are guaranteed forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

PRIESTHOOD The priest was a go-between for God and man (another picture of Jesus). All his garments and colors taught about Jesus, as did the Tabernacle. The duties and functions of the priests are detailed in Leviticus.

DAY OF ATONEMENT The Day of Atonement, Exodus 16, is the key chapter in the book. "Atonement" means to cover, take away, remove. On this day the sins of the nation were forgiven by God. Two goats were taken, one was killed and its blood collected. Some of the blood was taken

into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, with a rope around his ankle so they could pull him out if God didn't accept the sacrifice and struck him dead. When we enter God's presence we enter with assurance He will hear and accept us because of what Jesus did on the cross (Hebrews 10:19). The rest of the blood was sprinkled on the second goat, which was sent away into the wilderness. This 'scape goat' pictured sins being carried away.

LAWS, LAWS AND MORE LAWS The book of Leviticus is full of all kinds of laws to govern the people's relationships with each other and with God. Sexual regulations, capital punishment, cleanliness (sanitation and health concerns), and other laws are all for the benefit of the people themselves. Laws are for their protection and pleasure, not to make life harder and take away 'fun.'

Weekly and yearly feasts were also part of God's way of teaching His truths to His people. They all show how important it is to live holy, committed lives in obedience to God. We today live under grace, not the law, but God still requires holiness and obedience from His people.

OUTLINE OF LEVITICUS

I. WAY TO GOD: HOLY SACRIFICE (Priests) 1-10

- A. Voluntary Sacrifices (Burnt, Grain, Peace) 1-3
- B. Compulsory Sacrifices (Sin, Trespass) 4-7
- C. The Priesthood 8-10

II. WORK WITH GOD: HOLY SERVICE (Feasts) 11-27

- A. Personal Holiness (Laws of Purity) 11-15
- B. National Holiness 16-20
- C. Priestly Holiness 21-23
- D. Future Holiness 24-27

NUMBERS: WALK BY FAITH

TITLE: From the Census (start & end of bk.)

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: About 1405 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Moab

TIME COVERED: 39 years (1440-1405)

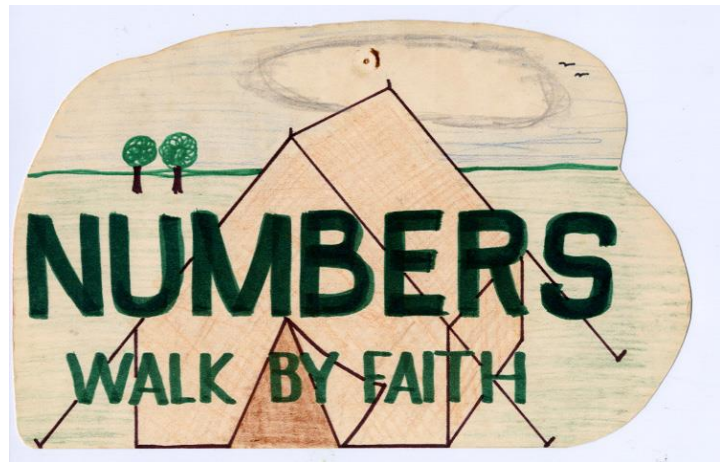
RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *Numbers 10:29* Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place about which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

KEY WORD: "Wilderness" (45 times)

PURPOSE: To record what happened when the Jews left Mt Sinai and how they died in the desert because of their unbelief.

THEME: God's faithfulness despite man's faithlessness. Man is to walk by faith.



Too often the Old Testament is viewed as just history -- a bunch of old stories that have no relevancy for today. That's not true. God kept the Old Testament as part of our Bible today because it is invaluable in many ways. For one thing, all the historical stories do relate to today and teach lessons to us. Paul himself said that the events in Exodus and Numbers were recorded as examples for us today to learn from (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). If we miss the lesson we are bound to make the same mistake ourselves.

I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD (Numbers 1-12) Numbers starts with a census of the people. The purpose is to raise an army of fighting men, for warfare is coming. Genesis shows man's sin and helplessness (he can't fight sin). Exodus reveals God fighting for man to provide redemption (we can't attain our own salvation). Leviticus teaches how to live a holy life (preparation for the fight). Numbers shows the battle has begun. We are in a battle with sin. We are to go on as in "Onward Christian Soldiers."

God assigned responsibility to the people (Numbers 2-4). God is organized. Each one of God's people is given an assignment, and if they don't do their duty others suffer, too.

Then the people are cleansed (Numbers 5) and consecrated (Numbers 6 - 10), ready to leave. However on the way to the Promised Land they start complaining again (Numbers 11-12). God hated it (Psalm 95:10-11). How could anyone complain when rescued from slavery and given health, food and a promised home? We have it even better, how God must hate it when we complain! That just shows lack of appreciation, selfishness, self-centeredness and sin!

II. FAILURE OF MAN (Numbers 13-20:13) Now comes the big test - trust God to give them the land He has promised. Their fear of the giants (who certainly aren't bigger than God) keep them from trusting God and entering the land. What 'giants' in your life keep you from trusting and obeying God? Are they bigger than God?

The Jews feared, disobeyed, rebelled, tried to kill Moses & Aaron, and chose new leaders to take them back into the land. In his disgust, God said they'd not be able to enter the land. Actually, it was only God's mercy at Moses' pleading that kept Him from destroying the whole nation. They had

to wonder aimlessly until all the adults (those over 40) who came out of Egypt died off and the children grew up. God would then give them a chance to decide for themselves. It was a waste of 40 years and millions of lives, all because of disobedience!

Moses himself didn't fare much better. A life-long problem with anger culminated with him again acting in anger (chap 20) and not being able to enter the Promised Land, either. Anger that isn't controlled brings terrible consequences, as the life of Moses shows.

III. GOD'S PROVISION FOR MAN'S FAILURE (Numbers 20:14-36) Despite man's continual failure, God remained faithful. He defended the Jews from Edom, Arad, Shion and Og (Numbers 20-21). He protected them from unknown danger (Balaam - Numbers 22-26). After another census preparing the new generation for their turn at warfare (Numbers 26) and instructions in how to divide the land (Numbers 26, 31-34) Joshua is promoted to leadership, replacing Moses (Numbers 27). Moses will have some final sermons to this new generation, reviewing what has happened to the first and challenging them to not make the same mistakes. That is the book of Deuteronomy.

OUTLINE OF NUMBERS

I. FAITHFULNESS OF GOD (Old Generation) 1-12

- A. Waiting at Sinai 1-10:10
 - 1. People Counted 1
 - 2. People Camped 2-4
 - 3. People Cleansed 5
 - 4. People Consecrated 6-10:10
- B. Walking to Kadesh-Barnea 10:11-12
 - 1. People Caravanned 10:11-11
 - 2. People Complained 11-12

II. FAILURE OF MAN (Death) 13-20:13

- Wandering at Kadesh-Barnea
- A. Defiance of God (12 Spies) 13-14
- B. Discipline from God (Korah, Moses sin) 15-20:13

III. GOD'S PROVISION FOR MAN'S FAILURE (New Generation) 20:14-36

- A. Walking to Moab (Aaron, Jews Die) 20:14-21
- B. Waiting at Moab 22-36
 - 1. Balaam Apostatizes 22-24
 - 2. Israel Apostatizes 25
 - 3. Israel Counted, Instructed 26-30
 - 4. East of Jordan 31-33
 - 5. West of Jordan 34-36

DEUTERONOMY

OBEDIENCE

TITLE: "Second Law" (Greek)

AUTHOR: Moses (1:1-6)

DATE of WRITING: About 1405 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Moab

TIME COVERED: 2 months in 1405 BC (Reviews last)

RECIPIENTS: Israel

KEY VERSE: *Deuteronomy 10:12-13 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?*

KEY WORDS: "Hear" (50 times); "Do, Keep, Observe" (177 times); "Love" (21 times)

PURPOSE: The old generation is gone. Moses will soon die. He instructs the new generation to remember God's faithfulness and learn from past failures so they will obey God in love.

THEME: Obey God motivated by love because of His faithfulness in the past.



Which is your favorite book in the Bible? Usually we choose Psalms, Proverbs, John, Ephesians, Revelation or some such book. If you'd have asked Jesus, though, you might have gotten an entirely different answer. He may have said "Deuteronomy!" After all, He knew large portions of it by heart. When tempted by Satan He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy -- three times! When was the last time you quoted Deuteronomy to have victory over temptation?

MOSES' LAST WORDS Because of his sins of anger and disobedience, Moses cannot enter the promised land with the other Jews. Before he dies and they enter the land under Joshua, God gives Moses the opportunity to give a series of addresses to the people. Basically he tells them that, because God has always been faithful to them (even when they weren't faithful to Him), the Jews should obey Him in love. History can be a great teacher, with much wisdom to share, if we but listen and learn. That is what Moses wanted this generation to do. He encouraged them to learn from the mistakes of their parents and obey God. God's laws are for our own good. They are like signs pointing out mines in a mine-field. God knows what can damage and destroy, and warns His people to avoid these things.

While obedience is for our own benefit and brings blessing instead of calamity, Moses wants the people to obey because of love for God (Deuteronomy 6:5). For a child to say he loves his parents is one thing, to show it by obedience is quite another. The same is true with God's children.

Moses reviews the law God gave on Mt. Sinai, for this generation has been living in disobedience to God for the last 39 years. The people agree to keep the law and obey God in love. They want to learn from the past and not make the same mistakes themselves.

Moses also gives some new laws covering situations and circumstances that have come up, which aren't addressed by other laws. He not only tells them what to do but why to do it. Then God takes Moses home to heaven with him. Satan tried to get his body (Jude 9) but Michael hid it. Perhaps Satan would let the Jews find it and worship Moses' body instead of Moses' God. Moses appears to Jesus at the Transfiguration in his resurrection body, and that's how we'll see him when we join him in heaven.

What about your obedience to God? Do you learn from past mistakes of your own and others? Do you obey in love? Adam and Eve didn't always obey. Abel did. Cain didn't. Noah did. Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob did and didn't. Joseph did. The Jews didn't. Aaron didn't. Miriam didn't. Joshua and Caleb did. What will God say about your life? It's up to you now. Make obedience based on love the main goal of you live and you can't go wrong!

OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY

I. LOOKING BACK (Recall Wanderings in Past) 1-4

- A. Review of the Journey 1-3
- B. Spiritual Application 4

II. LOOKING IN (Rehearse Law in Present) 5-26

- A. A Fresh Look at an Old Law 5-7
- B. The Importance of Obedience 8-11
- C. Ceremonial Laws 12-16
- D. Civil Laws 17-20
- E. Social Laws 21-26

III. LOOKING UP (ratify Covenant in Future) 27-34

- A. Ratification of the Covenant 27-30
- B. Farewell & Death of Moses 31-34

THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF THE LAW

We talk about the "Law" a lot, but what exactly do we mean by it? When God became King of the Jews by freeing them from Egyptian bondage and making them His own, He then set up a covenant with them concerning His responsibility to them and theirs to Him. This is the way every king in every country ran their government. God made His unconditional promises to care for the people, and He set up a system of works for them to serve Him (Exodus 19:5-6). The Jews were responsible to obey the law as they followed God (Exodus 19:1). It was not a way of earning salvation, but showed them their need of salvation because they couldn't keep God's high standards (Galatians 3:24). They were never able to keep their part in this covenant and it has been superseded by a new covenant of grace (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13). The code of laws given to Moses included the commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), the ordinances stipulating the Israelites' social life (Exodus 21-23), and those directing Israel's worship (Exodus 25-31). This included the Tabernacle, God's great teaching tool to show His people about the coming Messiah. The priesthood, sacrificial system and the feasts and holy days were also to point to the One who would come and fulfill all this system required. Forgiveness by innocent blood being shed was the heart of the system, pointing to the coming Messiah (Genesis 3:15). Civil and governmental regulations and health and sanitary principles were also included.

This Mosaic system, including the Ten Commandments as a way of life, came to an end with the death of Christ (John 1:17; Romans 10:4). God's people were to preserve and study the Lord's law (Deuteronomy 4:2; 6:6-7), revere His name (Deuteronomy 8:6; 10:12), be grateful and thankful (Deuteronomy 8:10), and obey, love, and serve their redeemer God (Deuteronomy 10:14-16; 6:4-5; 11:1, 13-14).

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Sheep are mentioned more frequently than any other animal in the bible - about 750 times. This is natural since the Jews were wandering herdsman, an occupation well suited for Palestine's dry plains. The sheep were used for food (milk, cheese, butter and mutton) and clothing (wool, skins). By nature sheep are helpless and depend on the shepherd for water, pasture, guidance and defense. They are often used as an example of how God takes care of us (John 10:1-18; Psalm 23).

'LAMB OF GOD' It is no coincidence, then, that the first descriptive name used of Jesus was LAMB. It happened when He first went public in His ministry. He wasn't seen as King, Lord or even God, although He was all these things. He was seen as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). That's what John called Him when Jesus came to where John was baptizing. Why 'lamb'? Because that describes Him and why He came. Sure, He was called Jesus, Savior and Christ/Messiah, but all of these refer to what He did as the Lamb of God. Jesus means 'saves,' Savior means 'deliverer,' and Christ/Messiah refers to His being 'anointed' for death. By calling Him the 'Lamb of God' the people would all understand that He was the One come to pay for the sins of all. How would they know this? Because they knew all about the Passover Lamb.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES When Adam and Eve sinned, innocent blood had to be shed to cover their sin. It was God Himself (God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, is the One who appears to man in both Old and New Testament). This picture of covering sin by innocent blood continued through Able, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

This is clearly seen when Abraham took Isaac to offer him to God as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:7-8). God provided a ram to die in Isaac's place, as a substitute. This very rock became the spot where the temple was built, and the blood poured each year on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) to cover the nations sins. It was on this same mountain that Jesus was crucified and died. Ultimately Jesus was Abraham's substitute for Isaac, so he didn't have to kill his son. God, however, had no other Substitute, for Jesus was the only One who could pay for our sins, so Jesus Himself died there as our substitute. The analogy is beautiful and striking.

THE PASSOVER LAMB The most complete and detailed picture of this, though, is given in Exodus 12. The Jews were in slavery and bondage in Egypt and, after a year of plagues, God is about to redeem them by killing the firstborn in all of Egypt. The problem, though, was that the Jewish firstborn was as deserving of death as the Egyptian firstborn, maybe more so because he was more accountable to God. How could God just overlook their sin? As a just and holy God, He couldn't. What He could do, though, was provide a substitute. The Passover lamb was the substitute, a picture of the ultimate Substitute which would one day die for all of our sins.

The blood of animals only 'covered' sin. Only Jesus' blood removed it. It would be like having a grape juice stain on a nice white rug. Without any way of cleaning the rug, all you could do was put a throw rug over it and 'cover' it up. Then one day someone shows up with a stain remover that will get the stain out. The throw rug is no longer needed. Animal sacrifices are like that throw rug. The blood of Jesus is the only cleanser for sin.

THE LAMB CHOSEN (Exodus 12:3, 5b) Lambs were innocent, gentle, meek, helpless animals, a picture of Jesus as a man. The lamb had to be unblemished (perfect, spotless Jesus) and a male (the strength and energy of Jesus). It had to be 1 year old (in the prime of life).

THE LAMB KILLED (Exodus 12:6a) The lamb alive did no good, though. It had to die. It's blood had to be shed. Jesus' perfect life only condemns us, showing that a perfect life can be lived. It is only His death that saves us.

The person owning the lamb would place his hands on the animal's head and confess his sins, thus making the lamb accountable for the sin. Thus the animal had to die, for sin brings death. It was killed by having its throat slit and the blood caught in a bowl.

The lamb to be the Passover substitute was chosen and set aside on 10 Nisan to make sure it was spotless and unblemished. Four days later, on 14 Nisan, it would die. For almost 4 years Jesus ministered in public, under the careful eye of all who watched, showing He was perfect and without sin. Then He died on 14 Nisan. Both died at 3 PM – same time on the same day. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Passover lamb.

Killing a lamb you had raised from birth was a good picture of the wastefulness and death that sin brings. Innocent blood must be shed to cover the guilty. The whole sacrificial system was built on this premise. Within the next year the Jews would be putting the finishing touches on the Tabernacle, where sacrifices would continue until the time of Jesus. The tabernacle, then the temple, were designed by God to show that innocent blood must be shed to cover sin.

THE LAMB'S BLOOD APPLIED (Exodus 12:7) The living lamb couldn't save, neither could the lamb killed. It was only as the blood was applied personally that sin was covered. If the blood was on the door, the family was safe. If there was no blood then death entered. Nationality didn't matter, or how well educated, or how rich – only the blood mattered.

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Our good works are like "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) or a "dung heap" (Philippians 3:8). Only the blood counts, because it stands for Jesus' life.

The blood had to be applied in such a way that it was publicly visible. It was applied to the front door by the person responsible for the house. Hyssop was used. It was used in rituals of purification and cleansing. The lamb was slain on the door stoop and the blood painted on the top and sides of the door. Actually this formed a cross, with the blood being at the same places where Jesus bled on the cross: head, hands and feet.

After the blood was applied, the people had to enter into the house, 'through the blood' as it were. When they entered there was blood above, below and on both sides of them. Then they had to stay inside all night to be safe. Outside was death, inside was life. When the angel of death saw the blood he would "Pass over" and not stop to bring death to that home. The blood was sufficient. "When I see the blood I will pass over." It was a 'sign' – to the angel of death, to neighbors (believers and unbelievers alike), to angels and to Satan and his forces. It was a 'brand' of security. Jesus' blood is our security, our 'sign' of eternal life (Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:12; Revelation 1:5; Romans 5:8-9).

THE LAMB'S BODY EATEN (Exodus 12:8-10, 46) After the lamb died the blood was applied, and the body had to be used in its way, too. The body was eaten. The lamb didn't die just to be looked at but to be personally identified with by eating it. This would give them nourishment and sustenance for the coming journey. Jesus died for our sins, but He also provides the nourishment and strength we need to go on after salvation (John 6:53-57). The Jews had to feed on the lamb that same night, we can't put off partaking. There was nothing to be left over so it didn't decay (Jesus' body didn't decay). It was to be eaten roasted, not raw or boiled. This was to be a picture of Jesus facing not just death but also fire – hell judgment on the cross. It couldn't be eaten raw, it had to go through the fire. Jesus had to go through our hell to redeem us. It couldn't be boiled in water, for there was no water to slacken Jesus' thirst. No bone was to be broken, a common practice to eat the marrow within. This was prophesied of Jesus.

Thus the lamb had to be chosen (Exodus 12:5) as Christ volunteered to die for our sins in eternity past (1 Peter 1:20). It has to be kept (Exodus 12:5), a picture of Christ in life (Matthew 3:17;

17:5). Then it was slain (Exodus 12:6), Christ sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7). Then it was roasted (Exodus 12:8), a picture of Christ's sufferings (Psalm 88:7; 89:46). Then it had to be fed on (Exodus 12:5, 8) as we feed on Christ, pictured in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 5:8).

INSIDE The Jews were to eat standing up, dressed, with outdoor traveling clothing on, sandals on their feet and walking staff in one hand. This was a reminder that Egypt was not their home, they weren't to settle there, they were there temporarily and just passing through. That must be our approach to life in this world as well.

UNLEAVENED BREAD Along these same lines, they were to not take time to let their bread rise. There was to be no leaven in it. Leaven is a picture of sin. It is a yeast (fungus) which grows and decays. It will destroy the whole batch unless stopped (by cooking). Sin is like that (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). For 7 days they were to eat unleavened bread. This pictures Jesus' sinless life and body, and why we are to make sure there is no sin in our lives when we partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

DEATH OUTSIDE While those with blood on their door were inside, safe, feeding on the lamb, the others were facing God's judgment of death. They were not safe. In the early days of this country those crossing a prairie were in danger of fires out of control traveling rapidly to where they are and beyond. The Indians showed them a way to be safe. When they saw a fire coming they would start a fire near where they were, then when it burned itself out move into that area with their possessions. Thus when the main fire came roaring through they were safe. As the Indians said, "Where the fire has been, the fire cannot come." When we enter through the blood, and place ourselves at the foot of the cross, we are in God's 'burnt-over' area. Jesus took our judgment so we have no danger of ever being under judgment (Romans 8:1).

SACRIFICES THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT When the Jews left Egypt they went to Mt. Sinai. There God gave them many regulations about offering sacrifices: who, when, why, where and how. Much of Exodus and most of Leviticus cover this. All this was to cover sin until God's stain-remover came. For 1400 years this picture continued, then came the Lamb of God.

JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD It was prophesied that the Messiah would be the Lamb of God (Isaiah 53:7-8). John recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of this (John 1:29, 36), as did Paul (1 Corinthians 5:7), Peter (1 Peter 1:19) and Philip (Acts 8:32).

LORD'S SUPPER REPLACES PASSOVER When Jesus had the Last Supper with His disciples, He took the matzo that represented the Jews leaving Egypt and said that it now applied to His body. "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). The cup of grape juice that they drank was a picture of the lamb's blood. When the Jews left Egypt and were living in tents they didn't have door posts to paint with blood, so they used the blood of the grape as the same picture. By drinking it they were identifying with the lamb's blood, applying it to their lives. Jesus said this was now to picture His blood. "This is My blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:28). Thus Jesus was saying that the Passover no longer applied to the lamb of Exodus 12 and the physical deliverance from Egypt, it now pictured the Lamb of God and the deliverance from sin and death.

The number one miracle in the Old Testament was the Passover and Red Sea deliverance. This was a picture of what would be done by Jesus and was the focal point of the Old Testament and Jewish history. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was, of course, the number one New Testament event. In fact, it was the number one event of history of all time.

THE LAMB AROSE In the Old Testament, when the Passover lamb died it stayed dead. However when the Lamb of God died, He came back to life!!! Imagine a dead lamb, blood applied and body eaten, come back to live and run and jump around – not with a physical body but with a new, eternal

body! It's amazing, but it's true! The Lamb still lives today, that's why we worship and praise Him. Dying paid for our sins, coming back to life assures us of eternal life.

THE LAMB TODAY The Lamb continues to live today, in heaven. In fact, "The Lamb" is the title given to Jesus throughout Revelation. Thirty three times He is called the 'Lamb'! As the lamb, He is in the position of sovereign glory and honor (Revelation 7:17). He shares glory and grace equally with the Father (Revelation 22:1, 3). He is the leader and shepherd of His saints (Revelation 7:17; 14:4). Angels and believers are worshipping the Lamb (Revelation 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 15:3) singing "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise." 'Lamb' is more than a title, it is the description of Him. When we see Him we will see gentleness and purity which was slain for us. The marks of crucifixion will be on Him. We will worship Him, not because of His sovereign power, but because of His work for us as the Lamb of God, which took away the sins of the world.

THE LAMB IN THE FUTURE One day soon the Lamb will return for His bride – us. Then we will together share in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7, 9) while the Tribulation rages on earth. Many of those who come to salvation during this time will be martyred and will gather around the throne praising the Lamb in heaven (Revelation 7:7-14; 13:8; 15:3).

Then the Lamb, to whom all judgment is committed (Revelation 6:1, 16; 13:8), will come and do war against the dragon (Satan - Revelation 17:14; 12:11). This return will end the Tribulation (Revelation 14:1) with a marvelous victory (Revelation 19:11-16). No one will escape the wrath of the lamb (Revelation 6:16). The Lamb will return as a lion. When Satan and sin are gone, the Lamb will reign on the throne forever, with all worshipping Him forever. Truly, "worthy is the Lamb!"

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

There is a true story about how a stolen bucket started a war and ended a career. One day long ago a soldier took an attractive bucket from a public well, just for the fun of it. The bucket got passed on from one person to another until it was given to Prince Henry of Sardinia. A great fuss was made over it, ending in a war to get it back. Prince Henry himself was captured and put in prison. His father, the king, offered a golden chain 7 miles long to get him back. The offer was refused in anger. The prince lay in prison for 20 years until he died. The war continued until most of the governments of Europe were involved. Thousands of lives and much property was lost, and all because of such a 'little thing' like taking a bucket! It was just a little thing, but look at the consequences.

Now think for a moment. Is there such a thing as a 'little' sin? Maybe in our sight some sin has more serious consequences and brings greater guilt, and other sin seems to be beneficial and pleasurable – but is there really any difference in God's sight? "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point is guilty of breaking the whole law" (James 2:10). It doesn't sound like God thinks ANY sin is small, does He?

SIN IS SIN 'Sin' means 'to miss the mark.' "For all have sinned (missed the mark) and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our target is to be like Jesus, as holy as God. It doesn't matter if we miss by 1 inch or 1,000 miles, we still miss. A pass is incomplete in football if it is off the fingertips, or 20 yards over the receiver's head. All sin is sin. In fact, 'little' sin can be said to be worse than other sin because it is more subtle and dangerous. We are more apt to commit 'little' sins, as our enemy knows. That's why we are tempted in that way more often. Often we get so used to them we don't realize they are really sins. Actually, victory in the Christian life doesn't come so much from winning the big battles as the little battles, for if the little battles over sin would be won, there wouldn't be any big battles. Big battles mean sin has been allowed to grow and was not

defeated when 'little.' The only way to win big battles is to start winning some of the 'little' ones related to that area of life, then the big battles will be won. Thus avoiding 'little' sin is a very key truth for God's people. It is an important lesson to learn.

In fact, it is so important, it is the very first lesson God teaches His people after salvation (Passover blood on the door). The first truth He teaches them is not prayer, knowing God's will, or spiritual gifts. It is about the deadliness of 'little' sin. God uses leaven as an illustration of this point, making His point clear.

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD During the time of darkness God had told Moses all about eating bread without leaven (Exodus 12:15-20). Moses passed this on to the people (Exodus 13:3-10) and the people obeyed God's instructions (Exodus 12:34, 39). On the 10th day of the new month, Nisan, they were to set aside an unblemished male lamb one year old and then on the 14th kill it and eat it after applying the blood to the door posts. They were to eat the meal standing and ready to leave Egypt, so there was no time to let dough rise and then bake it. They were to mix dough and take it with them to cook along the way, but to not put any leaven in it. For 7 days they were to eat bread with no leaven, Nisan 14 to 21. This came to be called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

LEAVEN Everything focused on the leaven – or lack of it. Yeast is a microscopic plant invisible to the naked eye which is placed in a substance called leaven. It is actually a fungus which can be dried for long periods of time which springs to life when it comes in contact with moisture and warmth. The cells will multiply with tremendous rapidity. Starch and sugar turns into carbon dioxide gas and alcohol. This causes the dough to 'rise' as the air bubbles in it expand. This process would continue and turn the dough sour if the yeast wasn't killed by high temperatures at the right time. This is where the baking comes in. The heat kills the growing cells and stops the fermentation (decomposition). Thus unleavened bread is flat, more solid, lacking in air bubbles. For this reason leaven is a picture of sin.

LEAVEN = SIN Nothing in the world spoils like sin. It ruins whatever it touches unless stopped by confession and cleansing by the blood of Christ. Leaven must be destroyed before bread can be eaten. Sin must be destroyed before a Christian can become like Jesus. Paul, in I Corinthians 5:6-8, uses leaven as a picture of sin. He says it is little and hidden, but grows and spreads to destroy everything unless stopped.

Recently a huge tree in Colorado fell to the ground with a resounding crash. It was over 400 years and had just started growing when Columbus came to America. It had been struck by lightning 14 times, stood through winds, earthquakes, fires and storms. Yet it was killed by a little beetle which bored under the bark and chewed away the mighty fibers of the tree, one tiny bite at a time. That's how sin works. That's what leaven pictures.

Paul takes this leaven analogy a step further. He equates leaven to Christ, referring to Christ's sinlessness in order to be our sin sacrifice. Just as the unleavened bread was 'sinless' (no leaven), so Christ Himself was sinless. The unblemished Lamb of God was also the unleavened Bread of God. Thus when Jesus said 'this is My Body' about the bread, it truly applied for it was a picture of His sinless body.

PASSOVER TO LORD'S SUPPER Every year since He was 12, Jesus went to Jerusalem for the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. The events of His final days and hours on earth center around these feasts. In fact, Jesus changed the meaning of the juice as the blood of the Passover lamb to His blood. He also changed the meaning of the unleavened bread from being a reminder of their quick flight from Egypt to being a reminder of His sinless Body broken for us (Luke 22:14-22).

Paul passed this significance on in I Corinthians (11:23-32). He enlarged the analogy to show that we, too, must be sinless when we partake of the Lord's Supper. Like unleavened bread, we must

not have sin we hold onto in our lives. We must remove all leaven/sin from our lives. If not, God will discipline us to remove it. It is a serious contradiction to partake of that which symbolizes Jesus' work for us on the cross while still having sin in our own lives.

In Mexico and tropical zones of South America a so-called 'Strangler' fig grows everywhere. It is a tree-killer. This fig can only be eaten by cattle and birds. It is so sticky a bird must clean its beak on a nearby tree after eating it. Small seeds can stick to bark and germinate in rainy season. Tiny roots make their way down into the heart of the tree. In a few years it covers the once beautiful tree and kills it.

That is exactly the way sin is. It starts small and grows until all is destroyed. That's what leaven is a picture of. Why not take a moment now to search your heart and life, asking God to help you find and root out the 'little' sins that lead to big defeats in your life? Confess each one and ask for His victory over them. Become like unleavened bread for the Lord.

THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is the most important structure ever built by man: past, present or future. For one thousand years in the past, and another thousand in the future, God's very presence dwelt in it (and the Temple which is really just a permanent tabernacle). More space is given to it and its function than any other single subject in the Bible - 50 long chapters (the creation of the whole universe and earth is given just 2 chapters). In order to understand the Jewish sacrificial system, feasts, priesthood, etc., one must understand the tabernacle. The best part about the tabernacle, though, is the most complete, detailed, beautiful picture/type of salvation and the Christian life in Scripture. All of it speaks of and glorifies Jesus in a way children as well as adults can understand. Learning the tabernacle makes it much easier for children to understand and apply Bible truths like salvation, Jesus' work on the cross, confession of sin, obedience, fellowship, praise and worship.

When the resurrected Jesus appeared on the road to Damascus and talked with the disciples there (and later with all the disciples in the upper room) He showed them what the Old Testament said about Him, starting with Moses' writings (Luke 24:27, 44). He had earlier said Moses wrote about Him (John 5:39-40, 46). Much of what He said were what we now call 'types.' A type is an Old Testament event foreshadowing a New Testament event, person or truth. It's sort of like seeing a shadow before you see the real object. Jonah is a type of Jesus (resurrection after 3 days - Matthew 12:39-40; Luke 11:29-30). The Passover Lamb is a picture of Jesus (John 1:29-30; 1 Corinthians 5:7). The bronze serpent being lifted up foreshadows Jesus on the cross (John 3:14-15). There are many examples. The Old Testament is full of examples and pictures of that which is more fully developed in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11; Romans 15:4; Colossians 2:17). In fact, you can't really understand the spiritual truths (theology) of the New Testament without understanding the physical truths (historical happenings) of the Old Testament. This is especially true of the tabernacle. It is God's photograph album of His Son -- hundreds of pictures of Jesus. Some are close-ups, other group pictures. These pictures walk and talk, so really they are more like videos of Jesus before His birth. Understanding the tabernacle brings Jesus' life and work alive in a new and special way, especially for children. The gate through the fence is a perfect example of this.

Around the outside of the tabernacle was a **fence** of white linen 7'-6" high. The fence kept people away from God. White stood for purity and it was a reminder of God's holiness which man couldn't enter. God did provide a way in, however. There was one gate by which man could enter. It was always open, picturing Jesus, the way to God for us. The gate was the only way, as Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). The curtain over the top of the gate was red (picturing Jesus' blood because He was a man), blue (picturing heaven because Jesus was also God), purple (a

combination of blue and red, the kingly color, because Jesus was the Messiah King) and white because Jesus was perfect and sinless. We can only come to God through Jesus (John 3:15-16; 6:51; 7:37; 10:9; Romans 10:13)

The first of 7 pieces of furniture stood right within the gate. It was a large **altar of bronze**, 7'-6" by 7'-6" by 4'-6" high (Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7). It was made of wood which came from the earth and pictures Jesus' humanity. Bronze covered it, and bronze was always a picture of judgment (Revelation 1:15, John 3:14-15; Daniel, etc.). As a man Jesus took our judgment (John 3:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). The purpose of the altar was to hold a fire (also judgment) which consumed offerings and sacrifices given to God. Innocent blood had to be shed

A holy God must judge sin, and when a person placed his hands on an innocent animal, thus identifying that animal with his sin, the animal had to die. Its throat was slit by the altar and after bleeding, the animal was burnt on the fire. Sin causes death and eternity in hell. This is what Jesus went through on the cross for us. That's why He said "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Because He took our death and eternal hell fire we don't have to (Romans 8:1). Our sins are forever paid for and gone!

But what about the innocent animals that died? God's teaching from the Garden of Eden on is that innocent animals must die to cover sin as a picture of Jesus' death on the cross for our sin. It was Jesus Himself, before His birth in Eden, that killed those animals to cover Adam and Eve, knowing they were a picture of what He would do on the cross. Millions of innocent animals died in the Old Testament, showing the awfulness of sin. They didn't remove sin, but foreshadowed Jesus' blood shed on the cross which does remove sin (Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 3:18; 2:24; Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew 26:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 1:7). Have you come to God by way of the altar of sacrifice, the cross of Jesus? There's no other way to enter but with an innocent blood offering - Jesus' blood shed for you. The tabernacle vividly showed the importance of coming by innocent blood. Upon entering the tabernacle one would see animals, smoke, hear the screams of the dying animals, smell the smoke and burning flesh & hair, feel the mud between their barefooted toes (made from all the blood spilled on the ground) and even taste the burnt meat in the air. Don't forget we come to God the same way today!

The only piece of furniture in the outer court besides the bronze altar was the **laver**. The altar was the once-for-all cleansing of salvation by the blood of Jesus (John 3:16). The laver stands for the moment by moment cleansing needed of sins after salvation (1 John 1:9). Both are necessary to serve God (1 John 5:6; Titus 3:5). "Rock of Ages," the well-known hymn, refers to this: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water (laver) and the blood (altar), from Thy wounded side which flowed (crucifixion, where cleansing provided for). Be of sin the double cure (sins past - salvation/bronze altar; sins present: confession/laver). Save from wrath (judgment [bronze] not on us but on Jesus at bronze altar) and make me pure (daily cleansing in the laver as we become more Christ like)."

"Laver" is the same as "lavatory" and refers to a place to wash. The laver was for cleansing, because the priests had to be clean in order to serve God. God is a clean (holy) God and those who serve Him must be clean, too (Psalm 24:3-4). Note that the laver is only for the priests. All Christians today are priests (1 Peter 2:5-9). Although they were once washed at the start of their service (salvation) they continually got dirty in their service to God. The ground was muddy, the fire dirty, blood was everywhere.

The **tabernacle building itself** was formed of boards of wood (humanity of Jesus) covered with a layer of gold (deity of Jesus). The boards were 15' by 2'-6" and about 4" thick. Jesus was a man in the full sense of the word (John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 2:17, 14; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Peter 2:22; John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Acacia wood was hard-grained, wouldn't rot or decay, very sturdy, and had

no defects or failures in it. It pictures Jesus, also of the ground (as was wood), with no defects or failures (Hebrews 4:15; 7:25; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). Bases of silver held up the boards. The silver pictured the cost of redemption, the price paid for salvation.

Four **curtains** were draped over the Tabernacle. The first was made of white linen (Jesus' perfection) and had cherubim embroidered on it in red, blue and purple, the same colors as over the gate. These showed Jesus as the God (red) man (blue) in one, the Messiah King (purple). The Cherubim were angels who protected and proclaimed God's holiness. As the priests looked up they saw this tremendous manifestation of the glory of God, wings and power everywhere! That's why so many Psalms refer to the safety of being under God's wings (Psalm 61:4, 7; 17:8; 57:1; 91:4; 36:7; etc.).

Next was a goat's hair curtain. Goats were used for sin offerings (Leviticus 4:23, 27-28; 9:2-3; Numbers 7:16; 15:24,27; 28:11, 15). On the Day of Atonement a goat was offered as a scape-goat (Leviticus 16; Numbers. 28:11-15). Jesus was our scape-goat, our sin offering to God (Isaiah 53:6, 10; Hebrews 9:14, 26, 28; 10:10, 14; 2 Corinthians. 5:21; Ephesians 5:2). On top of it was a covering of ram's skin dyed red. The ram was used as a substitute. It pictures Christ as our substitute (1 Peter 3:18; 2:21; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 4:25; 5:8; John. 3:16). They were dyed red as a picture of Jesus' blood (Isaiah 1:18). Christ, our substitute, shed his blood in our place (ram's skin) as a sin offering for us (goats hair). This is why we glorify Him (linen with cherubim).

On top of these 3 curtains was one of animal skin. Scholars agree it was a manatee-type animal (seal, porpoise, dugong). It was a thick, tough covering (sandals were made of this). This offered protection to that within (as Jesus does for us). From the outside the tabernacle was unattractive, no different than the other tents around it. As a man Jesus looked like everyone else (Isaiah. 53:2-3). He couldn't be distinguished from the other disciples, which is why Judas was paid to point Him out. From the outside, in appearance, Jesus looks the same as everyone else. His great beauty can't be seen or appreciated from the outside, only by those who enter in (John 1:10-13).

The curtains over this door are the same as the curtains over the first gate. It is only half the size, though. Many come to Jesus for salvation (bronze altar) but few of those go on to serve Jesus with their lives and live in His presence day by day. Many more came into the Tabernacle than went into the inner building to God's presence.

Inside the building were 5 pieces of furniture in the shape of a cross. On the left was a **lampstand** giving light, for there was no natural light inside the building. It was made of gold, showing Jesus as God who was the light of the world. . Light is contrasted with darkness, which stands for sin and evil (Proverbs 4:19; John 3:19). The world today is in darkness (Romans 1:22, 25). Man, like bugs under a rock, tries to hide from the light (Revelation 6:15-17). Light is greater than darkness, though. Light can remove darkness, but darkness cannot remove light (John 11:9).

Across from the lampstand was a **table that had showbread** on it . The table was of wood and gold (Jesus as man and God) and held bread for the priests to be nourished. The purpose of the bread was for the priests to eat, nourishing themselves in God's presence (1 Samuel 21:6; Leviticus 24:5-9). That is what fellowship is -- nourishing on Jesus in His presence, along with other believer/priests (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Individually we do this in private worship and devotions.

The inside of the Tabernacle building was, in essence, three cubes. This stands for the three-fold Trinity of God. The Holy Place was the size of two cubes and then a curtain separated it from the Holy of Holies which was a perfect cube. In front of the curtain, in the Holy Place, was a **gold altar** on which incense was burnt. One day an old priest named Zacharias was taking his turn serving in the temple in Jerusalem. He was chosen by lot to offer the incense on the golden altar, a once-in-a-

lifetime (if you got to do it at all) privilege! It was the first week of October, 748 A.U.C. (6 BC). His life completely changed because of what happened there. You can read about his encounter with Gabriel in Luke 1.

Incense in the Bible is used to symbolize prayer and communion with God (Psalm 142:2; 141:2; Luke 1:10; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4; Ezra 9:5; Daniel 9:21). This is what Zacharias was doing when Gabriel came to tell him his prayers had been answered (Luke 1). The gold altar with fire from Jesus' work on the cross shows the altar is a picture of Jesus and the prayers He prays ascending to God. What is Jesus doing for us now in heaven? He intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25; 8:1; Romans 8:34). He prayed for His disciples while He was on earth, and He still prays for His disciples today (Luke 22:31-32). John 17 is an example of how He prays for us.

Before we sin, Jesus intercedes on our behalf. If we sin anyway, He then becomes our advocate (lawyer) and represents our case before God (1 John 2:1). He comes to our defense when Satan wants God to enact the death penalty against us after we sin. His defense: our sins were paid for on the bronze altar.

Behind the altar of incense is a curtain. This is the third of three entrance ways. They show Jesus as the way, truth and life (John 14:6). The gate (#1) shows Jesus as the WAY to God (not by works, family, etc. Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16). The door (#2) shows Jesus as the TRUTH of God (only Jesus' wisdom suffices, He is our light & nourishment, John 4:25). The veil (#3) shows Jesus as the LIFE of God (1 John 1:1-2; John 3). The veil stands for Jesus' life, His body.

The 15' by 15' square curtain or veil was of fine linen (the purity and righteousness of Jesus). It was embroidered with red, blue and scarlet thread in the design of a cherubim. The significance is the same as with the curtain above - showing God's majesty and power, His greatness and sovereignty. This third opening is the same size as the second opening, but while that was open this is closed, keeping everyone out.

The purpose of this veil is to protect God's holiness by keeping sinful man out of His presence, lest man be instantly destroyed. The veil was to show separation of man and God -- but it wasn't a wall (promising that the way would one day be open).

Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, past the veil, and then just once a year, the Day of Atonement. Then he had to come with innocent blood (Leviticus 16:2; Hebrews 9:6-8), access to God is only by blood. Still, he would have a rope tied around his ankle. If the sacrifice was unacceptable to God he was struck dead and would lie there and decay. The rope was used to pull him out. God wasn't being mean, just holy. No sin was allowed in His presence, like no germs are allowed in an operating room. What does the veil stand for? That's easy, because Hebrews 10:19-20 tells us precisely that it pictures Jesus' body.

The temple Solomon built, and Herod rebuilt, was the same as the tabernacle just larger. The veil in Jesus' day was 30' square and 4" thick. It was a beautiful work of art, gorgeous in design, artistic in color, superb in the minutest detail, and rich in adornment. It was one of the greatest tapestries of the world. It was replaced regularly so as to not weaken. It was tested by oxen pulling on all four corners at once to make sure it was strong. They would take no chance on the barrier protecting man from God's judgment to be broken down.

The very instant Jesus died several things were happening in the temple. For one, the Passover lamb for the whole nation was being killed. Also, a priest was at the altar of incense offering prayers to God. Right in front of his eyes the large veil tore from top to bottom, born by the hands of God (Matthew 27:46-52; Mark 15:34-38; Luke 23:44-46). Jesus had just said "It is finished," referring to the work of reconciling God and man. Tearing the veil was God's way of saying, "Now we don't need this anymore." As Jesus body was torn, so was the veil in the temple. In the Lord's

Supper we 'break' bread, memorializing this very event. The veil was torn from top to bottom, showing God considered Jesus' sacrifice sufficient payment for the sins of the world. It was torn in the middle so it would be obvious to all, as Jesus was crucified publicly before all. It was torn completely; the barrier was removed, not just part way or allowing a peek inside.

This event ended the old way, the law, and instituted the new -- grace (Hebrews 10:19-22). Now we can come into God's presence any time we want. We don't have to wait for one man to represent us, once a year, with a rope around his leg. Every time we pray we come into God's presence as that priest did. Our access is because of what Jesus did on the cross. That's what we say when we pray "in Jesus' name." Our privilege of access is through Jesus. We don't appreciate what a privilege prayer is, or what praying "in Jesus' name" really means. Again we see that all we have comes from Jesus' death. His life condemns us, for it shows our sin & failure since we don't live a perfect life as He did. His death opens the way into God for all of us. Thank Him for that each time you enter His presence in prayer!

Inside the Holy of Holies was a wooden chest called the **Ark of the Covenant** with the Mercy Seat on top. It speaks of Jesus as God and man (John 1:1, 14). It was made of wood (humanity of Jesus, Isaiah 53:2); covered with gold (deity of Jesus, Colossians 2:9). As a box for safety and security, what it carried was of the most importance. Hebrews 9:1-5 gives the record of its contents: tablets of the law, golden bowl full of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. One of the names is the "Ark of the Testimony" because each of these bear testimony to God's holiness and grace and man's sinfulness and disobedience. They testify to man's failure and God's faithfulness.

The **Mercy Seat** was made of solid gold beaten into the shape of two cherubim looking down on the lid which held them. The space between these cherubim was the most important place in the tabernacle, actually the most important place on earth, for that is where God's presence was (1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel. 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 80:1; 99:1). It was His throne (Revelation 11:19). Called the 'Shekinah' glory (meaning God's 'Presence'), this is where God was and from where He spoke to man (Numbers 7:89; Exodus 25:22).

In New Testament times God's presence was in Christ, who was God. He 'tabernacled' on earth (John 1:1-14). Jesus was called 'Immanuel' meaning 'God with us' (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

When the blood was poured there on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, Leviticus 17). Aaron offered one goat on the burnt altar, catching his blood in a gold basin. Some was sprinkled on a second goat (the 'scape goat') and the rest brought into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, with a rope tied around his ankle. If the offering was rejected by God the priest was struck dead. The blood was then sprinkled on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14). This was done seven times (sacred perfection). There is no way man could enter God's presence without the innocent blood (Hebrews 9:22). The writer of Hebrews says Christ (symbolically) took His blood to God to offer as the final sacrifice for all sin (9:24-28). Christ's sacrifice on Calvary was what the Day of Atonement pointed to. He fulfilled, it was never needed again. That's why the veil was torn by God, it wasn't needed any more.

Everything in the tabernacle is a picture of Jesus' sacrifice for us (Hebrews. 9:11-14). The tabernacle, especially the mercy seat, was where God met man. The lid on top of the ark of the covenant was called the "mercy seat" because that is what it did. It is used 26 times in the Old Testament and 4 in the New Testament. The New Testament uses are especially significant: 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Hebrews 9:5; Romans 3:21-25. The word translated "mercy seat" in the Old Testament is here translated "atonement" or "propitiation." Literally this means "to cover," for Jesus' blood covers our sins, pictured by the blood covering the mercy seat in the tabernacle. It means He satisfied God's demands on sin. He paid the price of judgment on sin so we can approach God free and clear. This is what makes Christ our mercy seat (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Everything depends on the blood. That is why the Cherubim are pictured looking down at the blood. They are interested in the unfolding of God's redemptive purpose. They never experienced grace and redemption themselves, they only see it in us. Because of what it shows about God, they are deeply intrigued (1 Peter 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians. 3:10). They are amazed at God showing us mercy - and that's what the "mercy" seat is all about! It shows God's goodness bestowed on the unworthy and undeserving sinner.

The only way to approach God is through Jesus' blood. Trying to come into His presence without the innocent blood brought immediate death and destruction (50,070 men died because of this, 1 Samuel 6:19-21). Apart from the blood there is no mercy, only judgment.

God Himself directed the movement of the Tabernacle from within a cloud which gave protection from the sun during the day and which shone with God's presence at night. When the cloud moved the whole Jewish nation, which was camped around the Tabernacle, followed as well.

Following the exact pattern of the tabernacle, which God gave to Moses, the Jews built a permanent tabernacle, called a **temple, in Jerusalem**. David planned it and Solomon built it. It was one of the wonders of the ancient world! After 300 years, though, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians destroyed it. Seventy years later Ezra returned from Babylon and led a temple rebuilding program. For 400 years the Jews used this, then Herod enlarged and beautified it until it was once again one of the wonders of the world. After less than 100 years it was destroyed when Jerusalem was conquered by Rome in 70 AD. During the coming tribulation period there will be a temple on the same spot used by the Jews until the Antichrist takes it over and sets himself up to be worshipped in it. It will be destroyed during the battle of Armageddon. A Millennial temple there will become God's throne on earth for 1,000 years (Ezekiel 40-48).

When Jesus came to earth He was the place where God and man met, where God dwelt among man. John 1:14 says Jesus "became flesh and made His dwelling among us." Literally the Bible says He became flesh and "tabernacled" among us. Jesus was the tabernacle while on earth. It all pointed to Him and spoke of Him, and He fulfilled it while on earth. Like the tabernacle, Jesus's life on earth was temporary, humble, simple in appearance, God's dwelling place, and the place of sacrifice.

Today God doesn't dwell in a man-made building on earth. His dwelling is in the hearts of those who love Him and have accepted Jesus as Savior. WE are His tabernacle ("dwelling") today (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). Thus the tabernacle speaks of us, too! We are His tabernacle, and we are His royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10). What a privilege we have in serving God in our lives!

Think of how God prepared and cared for the tabernacle, how He used it to reveal His glory, how it was where He dwelt on earth among men. God prepares and cares for us even more. He uses us today to reveal His glory to others. It is in us that He dwells on earth. What a special blessing that is for us today!

THE PRIESTHOOD

When you hear the word "priest" what do you think of? Someone who wears special clothes and acts as a go-between of God and man in a religious group? If so, you are pretty accurate. While most religions have a priesthood, the one we are concerned about is the one God instituted in the Bible for Israel. The others are all Satan's counterfeits.

God chose the tribe of Levi to be the priestly tribe because of their faithfulness to God when the others were sinning after Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the law from God. Levi was a

son of Jacob and Leah. His descendants are the Levites by birth. Levites assisted the priests in carrying the ark and caring for the things of the Tabernacle and later the Temple. They were the doorkeepers, provided the music, prepared the sacrifices, cleaned and repaired as necessary, and kept the fires on the altar going. Healthy males between the ages of 25 and 50 served. They began their service with a ritual of consecration and cleansing, and then needed continual, regular cleansing at the laver to stay clean so they could serve.

Levites owned no land but were given four cities in every tribe's area so they could live among and minister to the people. They were paid by the tithes of the people and by keeping parts of the sacrifices as ordained by God. They copied, taught and enforced the law and helped priests in any way necessary.

The priests were one small portion of the tribe of Levi. They were descendants of the family of Aaron, who was a Levite. His sons were priests. The oldest son of the oldest son was the high priest. Aaron was the first High Priest. Actually Moses was God's first choice but turned it down when he wouldn't speak to Pharaoh for God. However Aaron did so poorly that Moses took over anyway while still in Egypt.

Aaron's sons were priests while he was high priest. Nadab and Abihu disobeyed and didn't follow God's directions, using 'strange' fire on the altar. As a result, God took their lives. Their brothers Eleazar and Ithamar took over for them. From there on it was the firstborn of the firstborn on down. If a son was crippled or infirm in any way he was not to serve as a priest.

The priests served from age 30 to 50. Younger than 30 was considered not mature enough for the responsibility that came with the privilege. They, too, lived in the same cities the Levites lived in so they could be among the people to minister to them. They lived on the tithes of money and food provided by the people.

When they first began to serve the priests were washed at the door of the Tabernacle or Temple. Hands were laid on a bull which was then slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the horns of the altar. The priest was dressed in white for purity and anointed with oil. Blood from the bull was applied to their right ear, hand and foot as a picture of total consecration to the Lord.

While the dress of the priests was all in white, the High Priest had red, blue and purple woven in as well. He wore a special robe and an ephod which was used in his role as mediator between God and man. In it were placed the Urim and Thummim. The high priest was a mediator, a go-between representing God to man and man to God.

Priests would carry out this responsibility by burning incense on the golden altar, as Zacharias was doing when the angel told him he would have John the Baptist born to his wife. They cleaned and trimmed the lamps on the lamp stands, kept fresh bread on the Table of Showbread, fed the fire and cleaned away the ashes on the Bronze Altar. In addition they inspected the unclean, especially lepers, and declared them clean if God had healed them. They taught the people the law and acted as a high court of appeals if there were issues the Levites couldn't handle.

As was true of everything in the Tabernacle and Temple, the priesthood, too, was there to teach about Jesus. He is our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14). While the Jewish High Priest put the blood of the sacrifice on the Mercy Seat, Jesus paid for our sins with His own blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus is our Mediator, our go-between, representing God to us and us to God (1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 4:14-16).

We can thank God for giving us such a wonderful, merciful High Priest who Himself became our sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood.

So the priesthood in the Old Testament speaks of Jesus as the High Priest. Then who are the priests who serve under Him? We are! All believers are priests (1 Peter 2:4-5). Starting with Adam every man was his own priest and presented sacrifices to God. Afterwards that office went to the head of each family: Noah, Abraham, etc. After Mt. Sinai only men from the Tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron could serve as priests. Now, in the church age, every born-again believer is a priest in the sight of God. What a great honor and privilege we have in representing God to man by our life and witness and in representing man to God by our prayers and intercession.

We, too, become priests by birth – new birth into the family of God. We are cleansed and consecrated, set apart to serve as priests, at salvation. We keep clean by washing when dirty by confessing our sins (1 John 1:9). After this we, too, are dressed in white showing our purity in His sight. We are also anointed with oil – the Holy Spirit. Instead of blood on our right ear, hand and foot, we are covered by the blood of Jesus.

We are available to serve Him as He needs. We serve Him by serving each other. God asks us to carry each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2), by encouraging them emotionally (Numbers 6:22-27), by interceding regularly for each other (Colossians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11), by lovingly confronting those who are in sin (Exodus 32:25-29; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Galatians 6:1).

You are a priest. I am a priest. What a great privilege. We don't need to approach God through another person; we can go directly ourselves, any time we want. We can talk to others about Him or talk to Him about others any time we choose. We can come into His presence any time we want. In the Old Testament only the High Priest could come into God's presence, and then only once a year and in fear and trembling. We can come into His presence any time we want because Jesus tore the separating veil by His work on the cross. Priests of Jesus – what an honor and privilege!

SALVATION BEFORE JESUS CAME

The question often comes up about those who were born before Jesus or those today who never heard of Him. Is salvation available for them? If so, how? First let's be sure that salvation is only to be found through Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5). There is no other way, person, religion, etc. to get us to heaven. Only Jesus. But what about those who never heard of Him?

Every person is accountable to God, if they have heard the name Jesus or not (Romans 1:18-32; 3:23). All deserve eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23). He paid for their sins, if they heard about Him or not (John 4:42; 1 John 2:2). Those who reject His payment for sin will eternally endure God's wrath on sin in hell (John 3:16, 36; Revelation 20:15).

Salvation only comes from hearing God's good news of forgiveness (Romans 10:13-14). We know God is just and would never do anything that was not just (Genesis 18:25; Romans 2:11). All deserve hell; no one deserves heaven, or even a chance at heaven through Jesus (Ephesians 2:1-9). But how can God hold someone accountable for rejecting Jesus if they never heard about Him?

THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE OLD TESTAMENT

First, let's talk about those who do not know about God through His written Word in the Old Testament. They may not have heard about the creator God of Israel, but they do know there is a God for their conscience within makes that plain to them (Romans 1:19, 32; 2:15; Ecclesiastes 3:11). Everyone has something within that tells them there is a God. If they respond to that or deny it is up to their free will choice.

In addition, God has revealed His eternal power and divine nature through nature and what He has created (Romans 1:20). So man is responsible for what he does about this basic awareness of the existence of God. Suppose you were lost in a dark cave and then found a little lighted arrow

pointing in a certain direction. Whose fault would it be if you failed to follow the arrow? Just yours. God has His own little arrows in our heart and in nature. Man must just follow them.

So what is the bottom line of what needs to happen for salvation? A person must give all of himself that he has to all of God that he understands. I repeat. A person must give all of himself that he has to all of God that he understands. That is true for a child, a mentally handicapped person, or someone who only knows there is a God through his heart and through nature. The more mature we get the more of ourselves we have to give, but even a child can give his heart to God. And a person doesn't need to know more than that there is a God to accept that truth and seek to know more about and follow that God. Anyone can do that, no matter if they have never heard the name of Jesus or read any of the Old Testament.

God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). He welcomes those who acknowledge their spiritual need and seek Him (Ezekiel 34:11; Luke 19:10). When a person does accept the reality of this creator God and seeks to better know Him then he is accepting all of God that He understands. Sometimes God will reveal more of Himself to that person through a messenger (Acts 16:6-10), through inner revelation in the form of a supernatural dream, or through other means such as the names and meanings of the stars as He created them. God's promise is still true. "If from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

Those who do not turn to Him do not do so out of ignorance, for all are accountable and fully responsible (Romans 1:19-20). However if they do not respond to Him they are guilty of rejecting Him (Romans 1:21-23). Man can reject the truth (Romans 1:18) and refuse to honor God (Romans 1:21), turning to idols instead (Romans 1:23). They can ignore God's standard of righteousness, but they are still accountable for doing so (Romans 1:24-32). The serious part is that when someone rejects God, He rejects them (Romans 1:24-32).

Never let it be said that God is unfair in doing so, though (Romans 2:1-16). God is more than fair. He reveals Himself to man within (heart/conscience) without (nature) and all man has to do is accept that truth and in His heart acknowledge the God that created him. God may or may not reveal more to him, but if he has given everything he has in himself to all of God that he understands, God will forgive his sins and give him salvation. It couldn't be any simpler or fairer than that.

THOSE WHO DO HAVE THE OLD TESTAMENT

But then, what about those who also have the more clear revelation of God in the Old Testament, but lived before Jesus and only had vague prophecies about his future coming? What would be their standard for salvation? It would be no different than what we already mentioned, giving all of themselves that they had to all of God that they understood. It's just that they would understand God much more clearly from His revelation of Himself in the Old Testament.

You see, the basis of salvation is always the death of Christ. That is the only way God can forgive sin of anyone, because Jesus paid for it on the cross. There is no other way. And the requirement for that pardon to be applied is always faith in God from the heart of the individual requesting forgiveness. What changes through Bible history is the content of that faith, what God has revealed to man. For those who don't have the written revelation of God the content of their faith is in a creator God who is sovereign over all. For those who knew more about Him the content increases. Adam, for example, understood that innocent blood had to be shed to cover his shame and guilt. He and his descendants offered sacrifices as a way of showing their faith in God who would remove their sins.

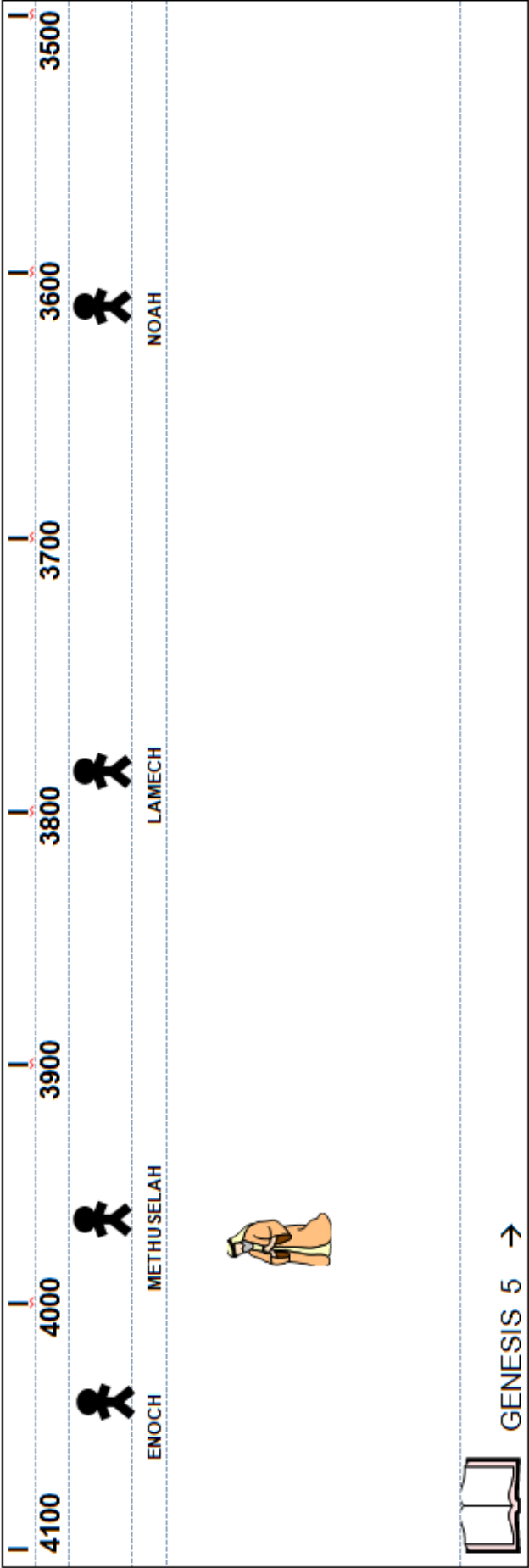
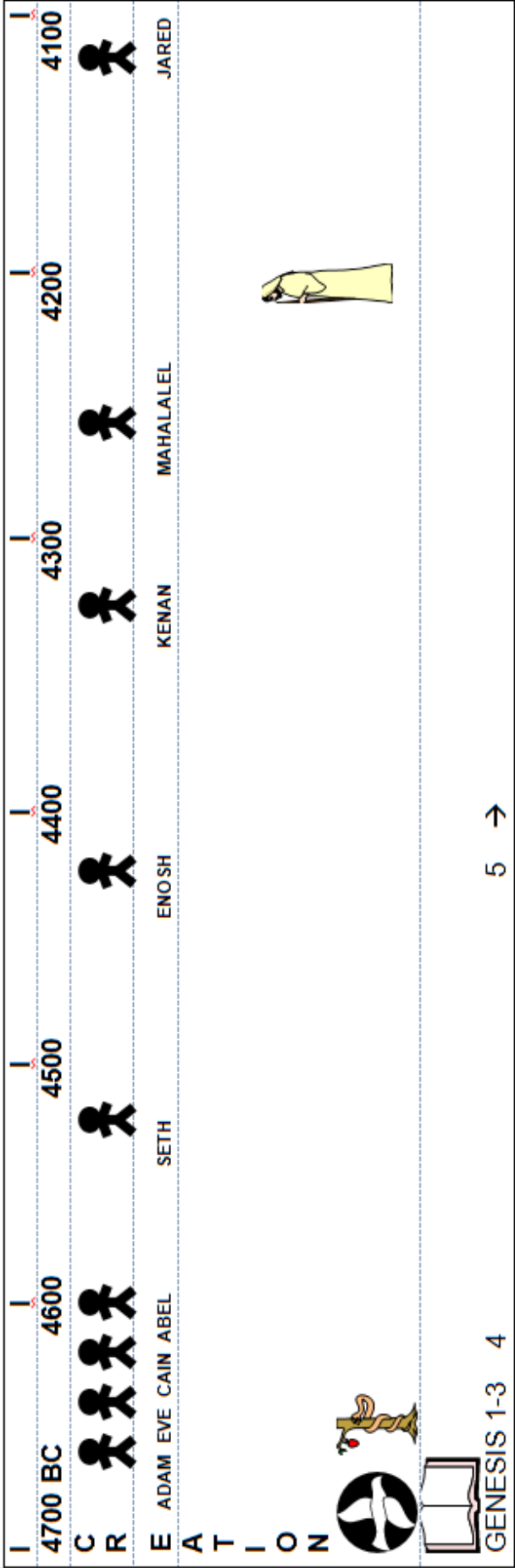
Now when God revealed the Law to Moses and the Jews on Mt. Sinai they got a much deeper, clearer revelation of Who God was and what He expected. Their faith in God was shown by living by the rules and regulations in Exodus and Leviticus. It wasn't that doing these things earned their salvation, for salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), but that inner faith shows itself outwardly by wanting to follow God – James' "faith without works is dead" (James 2:14-20). Salvation didn't come by their putting faith in what they did, but in putting faith in the God who told them to do it. Actually the law could not bring salvation, no matter how well it was kept. Its purpose wasn't to be a way to earn salvation but to show man his sin and the impossibility of being perfect in God's sight (Galatians 3:14-24). Today our faith isn't shown by our trust in God as seen in His Law, today we are under grace and our trust in our gracious God to provide free salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

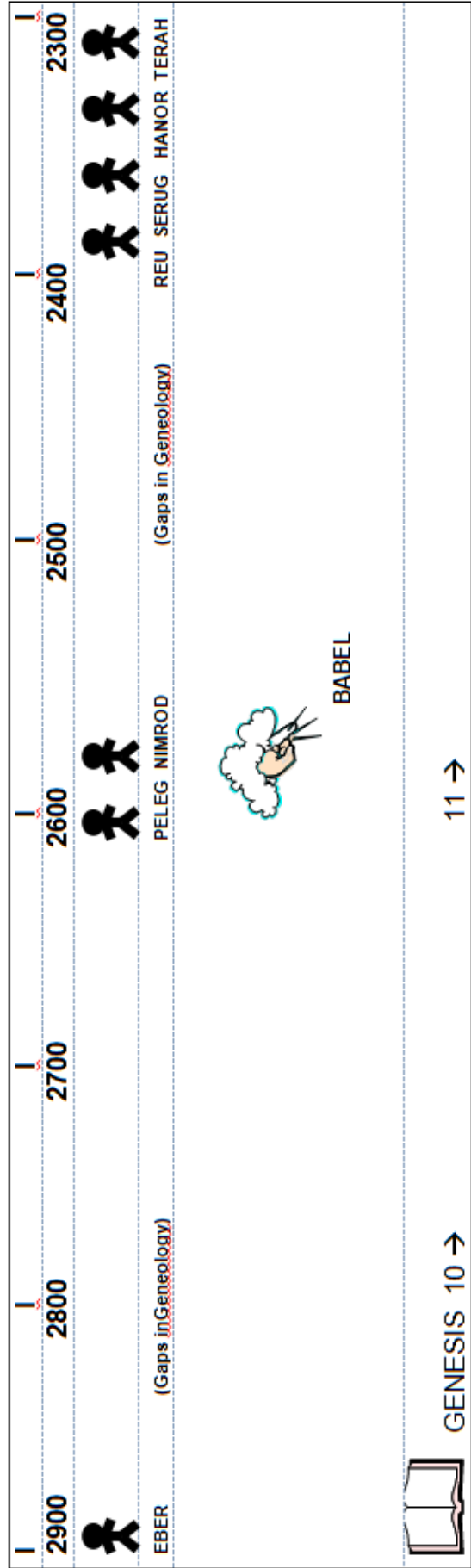
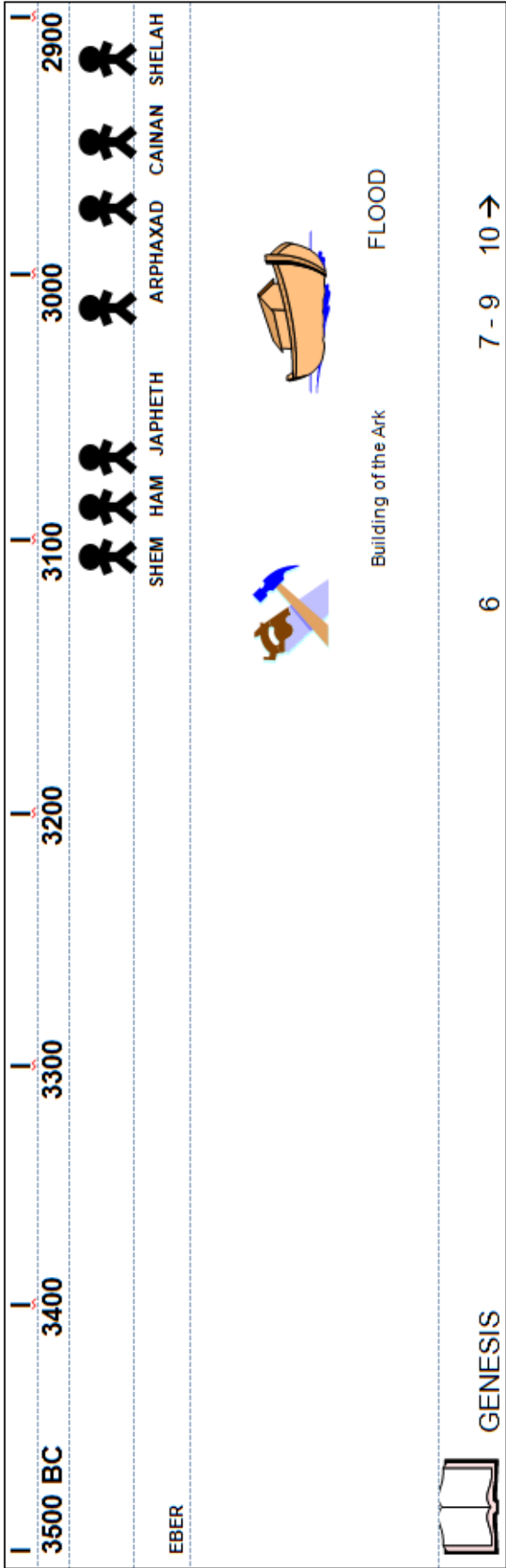
Those with the Old Testament had the same truth revealed to them as we have in the New Testament. Man's heart is wicked and corrupt (Jeremiah 17:9) and even our righteous acts are dirty in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). Because God is holy He must separate from sinful man. Man cannot reach up to God, only God can initiate the contact by reaching down to man (Isaiah 59:1-2). He reaches down to reveal that the way between God and man can only be open by the shedding of innocent blood (Leviticus 17:11). The blood of animals can't pay for sin, but the sacrifice of the sinless God-man Messiah can pay for it (Isaiah 53:1-12).

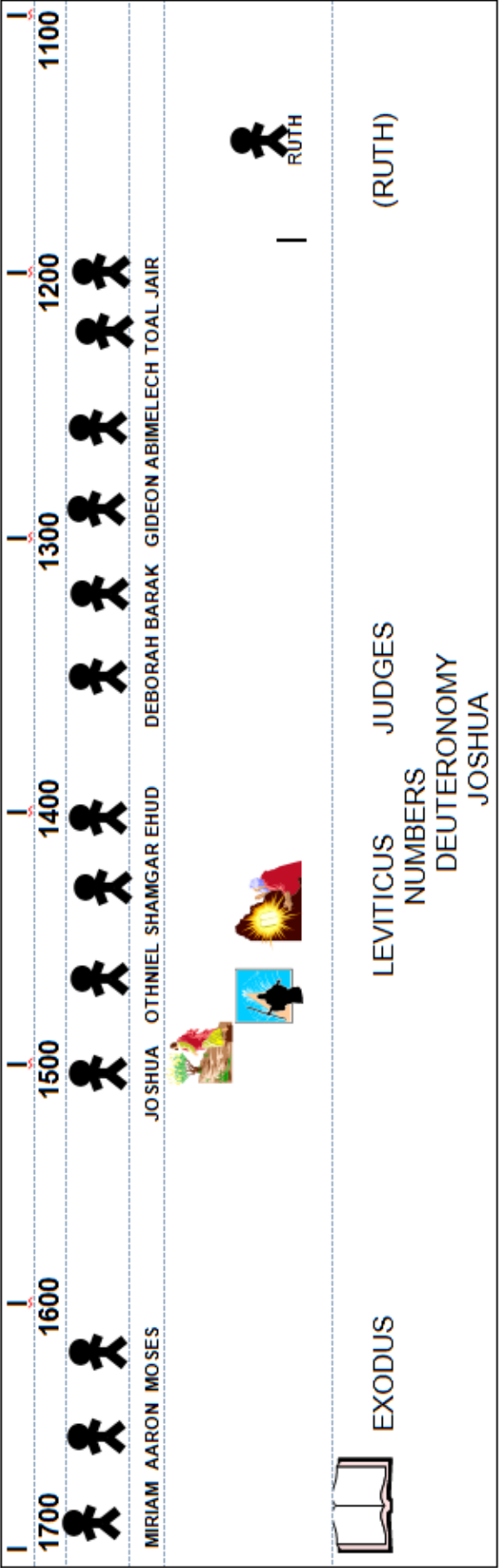
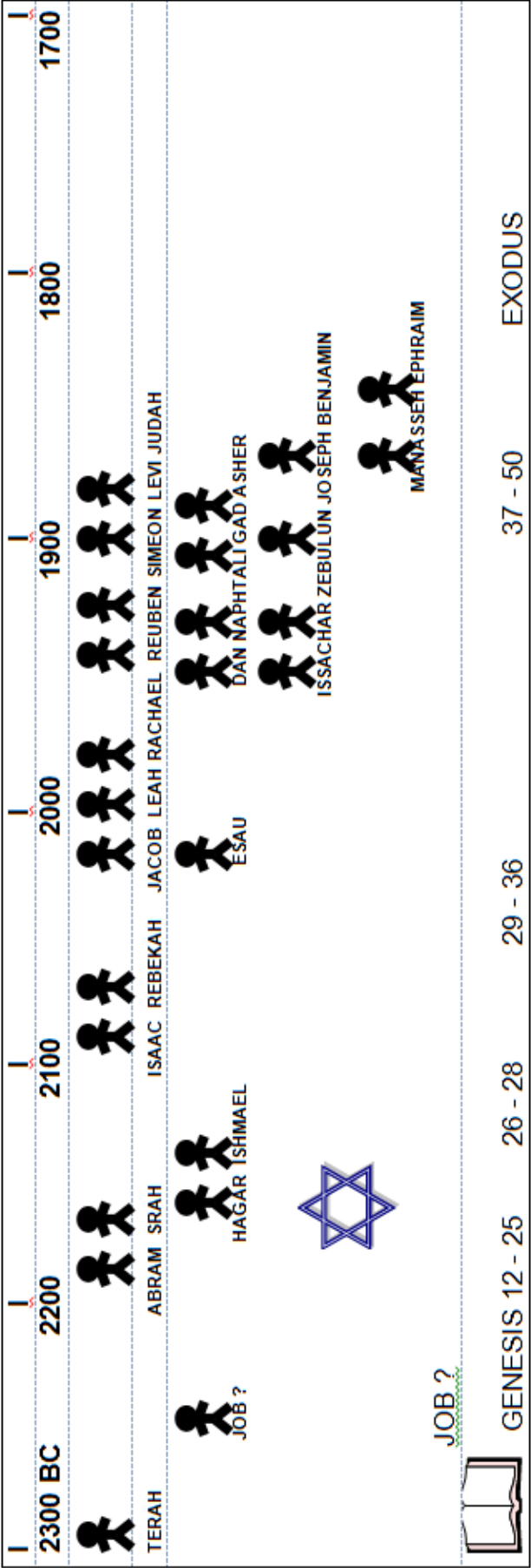
So faith in the provision by the coming Messiah was a key ingredient in the faith content for those who had the Old Testament. They didn't know His earthly name would be 'Jesus,' but that wasn't the issue. Putting faith in this coming Messiah was the critical point. God would provide for their sins for they could not. In order for this to happen the Messiah would have to be "cut off" (crucified, Daniel 9:26). This would be a painful time of suffering for Him (Psalm 22:1-31). This is what God revealed and in what those with the Old Testament had to put their faith (Genesis 15:6).

CONTINUED FAILURE OF THE PEOPLE

Despite all God did to reach His people and teach them about Himself and His plan for them, the people continued to disobey and fail to follow God. They sinned, while Moses was on Mt Sinai getting the law by building a golden calf (Exodus 32). They complained, grumbled and criticized God and Moses (Exodus 15:24; 16:2, 7-9, 12; 17:3; Numbers 14:2, 27-29, 36; 16:11, 41; 17:5, 10). They failed to enter the land because of their fear of the giants (Numbers 13-14). They had to wander for 40 years because of their sin (Numbers 32:13). Even Moses himself failed to enter the land because of his sin of anger (Numbers 20; Deuteronomy 32:48-52).







END OF BOOK REFLECTION QUESTIONS

To help you get more out of this book, think about the following questions and how you would answer them. You can write down your answers if you want, or just meditate on them. The answers don't get turned in; they are for your benefit.

(If you aren't doing so, start reading through the entire Bible. If you read 2 ½ chapters in the Old Testament and 1 in the New Testament each day you can finish in a year. You can read it slower if needed. Read some every day.)

Why did God make the world so beautiful with all the wonderful colors, sounds, smells and tastes?

What lessons about pain and suffering can you learn from Job?

What lessons was God trying to teach Abraham?

What lessons about obedience can you learn from the life of Moses?