

What is the Bible? - Genesis to Deuteronomy

Introduction

The Law of Moses ("Torah"), aka the Pentateuch, "the five books"

Written by Moses around 1450 to 1400 B.C.

Genesis

Theme: "The beginnings of God's saving plan"

- I. The beginning of history (Gen. 1-11:9)
Creation, Adam & Eve, the Fall, Noah, the Flood, the tower of Babel
- II. The beginning of God's chosen people (Gen. 11:10 - 50)
 1. Abraham (Gen. 11:10 - 25:18) (dies about 2000 B.C.)
 2. Isaac (Gen. 21 - 36)
 3. Jacob (Gen. 25:19 - 50)
 - a) Joseph (Gen. 37-50)

Time: Creation to the death of Joseph (1800 B.C.)

A sample of Messianic Prophecies: Genesis 3:15; 12:2, 3; 49:10-12

Summary: God created all things, and after Adam and Eve sinned, he promised the Savior. Despite mankind's wickedness the Lord kept his promise alive through the Flood. Later he chose Abram (Abraham) to carry the promise and trained his faith. The promise was passed to Isaac and then Jacob, also called Israel. The Lord kept the family line of the Savior safe by bringing them into Egypt where Jacob's son, Joseph, was in charge.

1. Some church bodies claim that Adam and Eve and the fall into sin are pious myths. They teach us spiritual truths, but did not actually happen. How does such an opinion destroy the purpose for Jesus' mission and the Bible's purpose for being written?

Exodus

Theme: "The Lord makes the Savior's family into a nation"

- I. The Lord brings his people out of Egypt (Exodus 1-18)
(Birth of Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, the Passover, the Red Sea)
- II. The Lord establishes the religious and civil life of his people (Exodus 19-40)
(Mt. Sinai, the Ten Commandments, civil and ceremonial laws, plans for the Tabernacle, the golden calf, the building of the Tabernacle)

Time: about 1450 B.C.

Key Passages: Exodus 20:2; 34: 6, 7

A sample of Messianic Prophecy: The Passover, the Tabernacle (Hebrews 8:5, 6); the Sabbath (Hebrews 4:9, 10)

Summary: After the family of the Savior had grown into a great nation in Egypt, the Lord delivers them from Savior and establishes them as his people.

2. Diagram and discuss some of the symbolism in the Tabernacle.

Leviticus

Theme: "Shadows of the Savior in Israel's religious ceremonies"

The Great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16)

Regulations for clean & unclean (11-15)	Laws regarding blood, sex, daily life (17-20)
Service of the priests (8-10)	Rules re. priests & religious festivals (21-25)
Various Sacrifices (1-7)	Blessings and Curses (26-27)

Time: about 1450 B.C.

A sample of Messianic Prophecy: the sacrifices, the Great Day of Atonement

Summary: Israel's religious ceremonies and life held before them their need for the Savior to reconcile them to God through his sacrifice that alone would redeem them from all their uncleanness.

3. Respond: Since we are no longer bound to observe these ceremonial laws (Colossians 2:16, 17), Leviticus is the least important book in the Bible.

Numbers

Theme: "Faithful to his promise, the Lord preserves his people despite their failures"

- I. Preparation to leave Sinai (Num. 1-10)
(Census, marching, various laws)
- II. Failures and punishment (Num. 11-19)
(Fire, quail, Miriam and Aaron, 12 spies, forty years, Korah, Aaron's staff)
- III. The end of the forty years (Num. 20-36)
(Bronze snake, Sihon & Og, Balak & Balaam, census, transjordan tribes)

Time: about 1450-1410 B.C.

A sample of Messianic Prophecy: Numbers 24:17

Summary: Despite the people's complaints and rebellions after leaving Sinai, the Lord watches over them for forty years and begins to fulfill his promise to give them the land of Canaan. The promise of the Savior does not fail.

4. How does the history recorded in Numbers bring out the patience of the Lord, our God? How does this history warn and encourage us?

Deuteronomy

Theme: "Stay faithful to the Lord, for his promise does not fail"

- I. Moses' farewell addresses to Israel (Deut. 1-26)
(Historical introduction, moral law, ceremonial law, civil law)
- II. Ratification of the covenant and Moses' death (Deut. 27-34)
(Blessings, curses, Joshua to succeed, Mt. Nebo)

Time: about 1410 B.C.

Key Passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-8, especially verse 4.

A sample of Messianic Prophecy: Deuteronomy 18:15-18

Summary: As the nation of Israel prepares to enter Canaan after forty years, Moses speaks his final words directing the people to the Lord and his will.

5. How does learning about Israel's civil laws benefit our faith and life today?

The Bible is the only authority for our faith and life (and therefore applies to our day-to-day living in the most practical ways). The Berean Christians *received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.* (Acts 17:11 NIV) 

Therefore, the Bible is the only rule and norm for our faith and life. It's the *canon*.

- a) Although many other churches say that the Bible is the authority they let reason, tradition, church hierarchy, communal or personal experience have equal or greater authority. Which of these do you see as the greatest danger in our times and why? 