

ROAD TRIP 1



The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible

RON JONES



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Road Trip Through
the Bible

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The Books of the Law

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ROUTE 66: THE ULTIMATE ROAD TRIP THROUGH THE BIBLE

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Ron Jones Ministries

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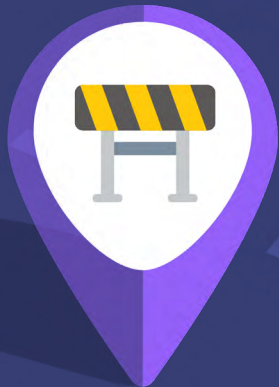
The Books of the Law

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Introduction

Welcome to the ultimate road trip through the Bible. Whether you are a seasoned student of the Holy Scriptures or picking up the best-selling book of all time for the first time, get ready for the ride of your life. As your driver along the biblical Route 66, I promise to watch my speed and obey most traffic laws. However, on this first road trip, be prepared. We will certainly encounter some road construction along the ancient paths.

The Bible is a collection of holy writ and divine books—sixty-six of them! There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament. However, the Book of books is one story with one main character, the Christ who was to come in the Old Testament and the Christ who came, Jesus, in the New Testament. Therefore, along Route 66, I will point you to the Christ connection in each Old Testament book and to the Jesus juncture in each New Testament book. The Bible is all about Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son and our redeemer.

For a book that was written over the span of sixteen hundred years by forty different authors on three continents and in three different languages, the Bible possesses an amazing continuity. It is one of the arguments made for the Bible's divine inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21). The human authors God chose to pen the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments vary significantly in their background, culture, education, occupation, social status, and ability. They were farmers, fishermen, priests, physicians, politicians, kings, and shepherds. God even used a tax collector to write a biography of his Son, Jesus.

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If you enjoy literature, you will love the Bible. Holy Scripture contains every form of literature known in academia, including poetry, proverb, history, narrative, law, biography, parable, prophetic, apocalyptic, gospel, and letter. Many colleges and universities offer a literature course on the Bible. What other book on the planet inspires people to study it for its literary genius alone?

God used visions and dreams, clay tablets, burning bushes, face-to-face encounters, the spoken and written word, even the jawbone of a donkey to communicate with those He created in His image. He did so because He loves us and desires a relationship with us.

How does one explain how so many people over a long period of time could write about God, history, religious life, and more, and yet do so in perfect editorial harmony, each adding to the overall story? There is only one plausible explanation. The superintending mind of God inspired the writing of these books across many centuries and pieced them together like a jigsaw puzzle.

A well-respected Bible scholar named Norman Geisler writes, “Note the amazing unity. These sixty-six books unfold one continuous drama of redemption, paradise lost to paradise regained, creation to the consummation of all things. There is one central theme, the person of Jesus Christ. . . . There is one message: Humankind’s problem is sin, and the solution is salvation through Christ.”¹

Our first road trip along the biblical Route 66 focuses on the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch, the books of the law. They include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers,

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and Deuteronomy. Jews refer to them as the written Torah. The best scholarship says Moses penned this robust library under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nearly thirty-five hundred years ago. These ancient writings have stood the test of time because they are God's holy word.

As useful as this travel guide might be, my words are no replacement for reading the Bible itself. My prayer is that you will fall in love with the Bible as much as I have. More so, I pray that you will deeply desire a relationship with its Author. He wrote you a love letter with more than six hundred thousand words because He loves you more than you can imagine.

Are you ready to begin traveling on Route 66? Climb in, buckle up, and enjoy the ride on the ultimate road trip through the Bible.

DR. RON JONES

Virginia Beach, Virginia

February 2021

Genesis

THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS

“On your mark. Get set. Go.”

“Drivers, start your engines.”

Words and phrases like the ones above create moments of excitement whenever a spectacular sporting event begins. Today, for example, “drivers, start your engines” is part of the prerace lore leading up to the roar of the 2.2-liter twin-turbocharged, direct-injected V6 engines found at the Indianapolis 500, the most iconic auto racing event on planet earth.² According to Indy history, the famous start command happened almost as an afterthought when it first sounded in the late 1940s.

However, the true beginning of all things was no afterthought, nor was it the result of an accident in the cosmos.

“Let there be light.”

According to the book of Genesis, those four words set in motion the loving, thoughtful, and purposeful intent of a Creator God who made us in His image, male and female, as the crowning achievement of His divine work.

The English word *genesis* comes from the Greek title of the book, which is derived from a Latin word meaning “origin.” In



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Hebrew, the first word of the first book in the Bible is translated “in the beginning.” Thus, “Genesis” is the appropriate title for the book, which goes on to say, “God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1).

The Bible assumes not only the existence of God but also His preexistence in eternity before time began. “From everlasting to everlasting, you are God” (Psalm 90:2). The Bible never tries to prove God exists. Rather, it reminds us, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1). God reveals Himself to us in at least four ways: In creation, our conscience, through the written word, and through the living word, Jesus Christ. That is enough to hold all humans accountable on the day of judgment for their theistic or atheistic beliefs (Romans 1).

Of course, Genesis is not without controversy or debate. The first ten words of the Bible set the framework for a particular worldview that not everyone accepts. Instead, some people place their faith in Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution, which suggests that humans and everything else in the material world evolved randomly over eons of time from a simple form of protoplasmic material into complex organisms and natural systems. Thus, many believe that the Bible’s creation story and science are at odds. Others try to blend the two beliefs into something called theistic evolution, the idea that God used evolutionary processes over millions of years to create the universe and us. Though interesting and thought-provoking, such attempts at bipartisan belief elevate the fallible theories of man above the

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman and the heel that crushes the serpent’s head.

BIG IDEA

God created man in His image to rule the earth and glorify Him.

MEMORY VERSE

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.”

GENESIS 1:27

AUTHOR AND DATE

Moses
1450-1410 BC



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infallible word of God; it also compromises the plain-spoken sense of Genesis regarding a six-day creation.

However, the Bible and science are not at odds as much as some might think. They actually harmonize in the first ten words of Genesis. Allow me to explain with a brief lesson from your grade school science class. Are you smarter than a fifth-grader?

Scientists tell us that to understand how anything in the material world forms, we must consider the following: Time force, action, space, and matter. Is this beginning to sound familiar? Now go back and read the first ten words in Genesis. “In the beginning (time), God (force) created (action) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter).” The first ten words sound simple and profoundly complex at the same time. The next time you think science and the Bible do not mix, consider this: It often takes time for science to catch up to what God already knows.

Genesis does more than shed light on the origin of the universe and human life. It is also critical to our understanding of fundamental Christian doctrines, including the nature of God, the nature of man, plus the nature and consequences of sin. In Genesis, we discover the origin and meaning of marriage and that marriage between one man and one woman for one lifetime is a construct of divine creation, not culture. Work also matters to God in Genesis, as does our relationship to the environment. A weekly day of rest establishes a rhythm of life that is both healthy and a picture of the Sabbath rest Jesus Christ offers in salvation (Matthew 11:28-29).

Furthermore, the first book of the Bible explains how death, disease, suffering, and bloodshed came into the world. It sheds light on our dark side and unmasks the origin of evil. The book of Genesis also establishes the unifying theme of the Bible, which is our need for a Savior to redeem us from the penalty and power of sin.

As the story of God unfolds in Scripture, the many theological



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tributaries in Genesis expand into larger rivers. Illustrated another way, the robust theological oak trees that are foundational to the Christian faith began as acorns of belief in Genesis. All in all, it is no exaggeration to suggest that if we stumble in our understanding of Genesis, we will veer off-road in a hundred theological directions.

Broadly, Genesis 1-11 focuses on four major events: Creation, the fall of humans into sin, a worldwide flood that God sent to judge the inhabitants of the earth, and the formation of nations. Likewise, Genesis 12-50 shines a spotlight on four main characters known as the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The timeline of Genesis spans the earliest culture in Mesopotamia (6500 B.C.) to the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (1804 B.C.). The best and most conservative scholarship says the entire Pentateuch³ was written by Moses, who was guided by divine inspiration and given holy revelation from 1450 to 1410 B.C.

Geographically, the book flows through Eden, Haran, Canaan, and Egypt. Two cities also emerge and take center stage in the flow of God's story. In many ways, the Bible is the tale of these two cities. Long before Charles Dickens wrote about London and Paris, Genesis introduced us to Salem, which later becomes Jerusalem, and Babylon.

Chapter 11 records the story of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel. Then, in chapter 12, the divine narrative suddenly narrows to the story of one man named Abraham, his wife Sarah, and their descendants. After a victorious war against neighboring kings, Abraham meets with Salem's king, a mysterious figure named Melchizedek, who is an Old Testament type of Christ according to the writer of Hebrews. In time, Salem becomes Jerusalem, the glorious city of God. Out of Babel rises Babylon, the pagan nation that ruled the earth from 605 to 539 B.C. and that reemerges at the end of the age (Revelation 18). In the last book of the Bible, the



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apostle John completes the story and paints a breathtaking picture of all things new, including the new heavenly city. “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

Melchizedek is not the only type of Christ in Genesis.⁴ Primarily, Christ is the seed of the woman and His heel crushes the head of the serpent (3:15). Adam also points to Christ as a “type of the one who was to come” (Romans 5:14). Some say Joseph is like Jesus because he was the special object of his father’s love, despised and rejected by his brothers, punished for a crime he did not commit, and ultimately raised from humiliation to rule over others by the hand of God. From the earliest expressions of holy writ, Christ is the focus.

Truly, Genesis sets forth the beginning of all things. Let’s not forget the chosen people of God who formed the Jewish nation of Israel. Their story begins in Genesis 12. God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants that included a land grant.⁵ Today, the conflict over this beautiful real estate nestled against the Mediterranean Sea largely explains the ongoing rift in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians. Land for peace negotiations abound. However, God’s promises are yes and amen.⁶ He promised to be faithful to His imperfect people even when they broke covenant with Him. For example, He changed Jacob’s name to Israel—from Jacob, the cheater, to “one who has prevailed with God” (32:22-32).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Genesis answers the big questions of life relating to identity, origin, purpose, and destiny. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? In short, we are created in the image of God, male and female, to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.⁷ God is preparing an eternal home for those whom He has redeemed by His grace and



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through faith in His Son Jesus, who is the Christ. Like Abraham, by faith, we are “looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1968, astronauts Bill Anders, Jim Lovell, and Frank Borman did something that is hard to imagine scientists doing today. As they orbited the moon for the first time in human history, they read from the book of Genesis.

“We are now approaching lunar sunrise,” began Anders, “and for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you: ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’” Anders read Genesis 1:1-4. Lovell read verses 5-8 and Borman read verses 9-10. Their message was included in the mission flight plan and printed on fire-proof paper. Today, it is on display at the Alder Planetarium in Chicago for the public to read.

Better yet, you can pick up a copy of the holy Scriptures and read the entire book of Genesis for yourself.

OUTLINE	1-5	6-11	12-25	25-27	28-36	37-50
FOCUS	Creation and Fall	Flood and Babel	Abraham's Story	Isaac's Story	Jacob's Story	Joseph's Story
KEY VERSE	1:27	6:5	12:1	26:3-4	28:13-15	50:20



Exodus

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

The Ten Commandments is one of the most epic Hollywood movies of all time. Produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille in 1956, the film was one of the first to appear in Technicolor and the most expensive production of its era. It was also DeMille's last and most successful movie. Actors Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner contributed their star power by playing the leading roles, Moses and Pharaoh Rameses.

The word “epic” appropriately describes the movie version of the Hebrew Exodus because the book of Exodus plays an enormously significant role in the Bible. J. Sidlow Baxter says of Exodus,

Is there in all history a more animated spectacle than the Exodus?—a more august and solemn revelation of God than of Sinai?—a more significant piece of architecture than the Israelite Tabernacle?—a greater human figure than that of Moses?—a more influential national epoch than the founding of the Israel theocracy? All these are found in this second book of Scripture. It is the *fons et origo*—the very fount and origin of the national life, law, and organized religion of Israel. ⁸



Exodus

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

Furthermore, because the Messiah would come from the Jewish people, all of what Baxter mentions and more makes the study of Exodus exceedingly worthwhile.

In the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was written, “now” is the first word of the second book of the Bible, signifying the continuation of a story. However, much time has passed between Genesis and Exodus. It has been approximately 400 years since Jacob relocated the seventy members of his family to Egypt and reunited with his favorite son, Joseph, who was then serving as Prime Minister. The chosen people of God grew in population, some estimate to more than two million. They became a threat to Pharaoh, who enslaved them.

Life was hard for the Hebrew people in Egypt and they cried out. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob heard their misery and responded mercifully. If Genesis begins with a bang of creative brilliance (“Let there be light”), the book of Exodus starts with a whimper of pain and suffering (“Let my people go”).

Structurally, Exodus falls into three sections: Liberty (1-18), Law (19-24), and Tabernacle (25-40). We could also describe the larger theological flow in Exodus this way: Freedom from slavery (1-18), freedom to live right (19-24), and freedom to worship God (25-40).

Regarding liberty, we, as Americans, love emancipation stories and make heroes out of those who fight for freedom. Harriett Tubman risking her

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb who shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

BIG IDEA

God delivers us from the bondage of sin.

MEMORY VERSE

“And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

EXODUS 20:1-2

AUTHOR AND DATE

Moses
1450-1410 BC



Exodus

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

life to save many via the Underground Railroad is one example. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation changed American history and forever placed him on the list of great American Presidents. More recently, Nelson Mandela served humanity well when he led the charge against apartheid in South Africa.

More than three thousand years ago, slavery had sucked the life out of the Hebrew people. The only answer to their painful plight was freedom from Pharaoh's bondage. Their only hope was a redeemer. Enter Moses, a Hebrew son rescued from the Nile and raised in Pharaoh's household as a prince of Egypt.

Moses was educated in the best Egyptian schools and, according to some, groomed to become the next Pharaoh. However, at age forty, Moses made a big mistake. He struck down an Egyptian who was physically mistreating a Hebrew. Moses tried but failed to bury his mistake in the desert sand. But when news of the murder spread the next day, Moses fled. He spent the next forty years of his life in self-exile while herding sheep for his father-in-law on the backside of the Midian desert. At eighty years old, Moses heard the voice of God calling out to him from a burning bush (3:7-10).

Almighty God made His redemption intention clear to Moses. He also made it clear that Moses was His choice to lead the people out by the mighty hand of God. After expressing his reluctance multiple times, Moses returned to Egypt and confronted Pharaoh with four words, "Let my people go!" As expected, the Egyptian king stubbornly refused. Simultaneously, the Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, introducing a centuries-old theological debate between God's sovereignty and the free will of man, which I do not have time to resolve. Then God pummeled Egypt with a series of plagues that included water turned into blood, frogs, lice, gnats, diseased livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness for three days, and the killing of firstborn sons. The ten plagues fell upon Egypt as



Exodus

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a reminder that the God of Israel is greater than any of their phony gods.

D.L. Moody famously said that Moses, who lived to the age of 120, spent forty years thinking he was somebody, forty years learning he was nobody, and forty years discovering what God can do with a nobody. The writer of Hebrews puts Moses's life of faith in perspective for us in Hebrews 11:23-29.

What more can be said about the actions taken by the Lord on behalf of the enslaved Hebrews whom He chose as His special people? After turning the Red Sea into an escape route from the angry Egyptians (14:1-31), the God of Israel made bitter water into a sweet drink (15:22-27), fed the Israelites with bread from heaven (16:1-36), made water flow from a rock in the desert (17:1-7), and defeated the Amalekites (17:8-16). Following the military victory powered by prayer, Moses built an altar and named it, "The Lord is My Banner."

Three months after the Israelites departed Egypt, they came to the wilderness of Sinai. Freedom from slavery now meant they could enjoy the freedom to live right. As Valley Forge is linked to George Washington and the American Revolution, Mount Sinai is forever tied to Moses and the giving of the Law, starting with the Ten Commandments. Dramatically, God descends upon the Sinai mountain in great power and glory with claps of thunder, flashes of lightning, fire, and smoke (19).

The Lord instructed Moses to keep the people away from the mountain, warning that they will die if they touch it. He also told His deliverer to consecrate the people. Get them ready, for in three days "the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people" (v. 11). Exodus 19:20 says, "The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."



Exodus

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

The Old Testament Law established the responsibilities laid upon Israel by God's covenant with her. The chosen people of God were to keep His commandments, all ten of them, plus the detailed civil ordinances that follow in chapters 21-24. The Old Testament Law always raises questions about our relationship to it as New Testament believers. For example, Romans 6:14 says, "You are not under law but under grace." John 1:17 says, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Are Moses and Jesus a contradiction? On the contrary, even Moses pointed the children of Israel to a prophet who would come after him. Affirmed by the apostles, Jesus is that prophet who is greater than Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 3:1-6).

Some Christians have taken the phrase "not under the law" as permission to live and let live, to become, in effect, a law unto themselves. However, in his letter to the Romans, Paul argues that such people are lawless and have become abusers of God's grace (Romans 6).

Part of the confusion concerning the Christian and God's law lies in the several aspects of the law itself. When reading about God's law in the New Testament, it is essential to differentiate between the civil, ceremonial, and moral. Allow me to explain.

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel operated as a theocracy. God was their king, and He governed them by His laws. Some of those laws found in the Pentateuch sound strange to us today, although they made perfect sense to the people who lived at that time and in that culture. As New Testament believers, we are not under the civil law of God that governed Israel because the church is not a state. We do have a king named Jesus, but His kingdom is spiritual. Israel's civil law may contain principles that help govern nations today, but followers of Jesus are not bound by them. Nor are we still bound by the ceremonial law of God.



Exodus

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

The ceremonial law that God gave to Israel governed her religious life, but it is no longer necessary. The many ceremonies, sacrifices, and festivals we read about in the Old Testament pointed forward to the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ. Reflecting upon the Passover and more, John the Baptist said of Jesus, “Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Phillip Ryken writes, “Now that Christ has offered himself as the once-and-for-all atonement for sin, no further sacrifice is needed. To continue to follow the old ceremonies would be to deny the sufficiency of his work on the cross.”⁹

Now let’s address the moral aspects of the law, which God expressed in the Ten Commandments. They reflect the character of God. Because God’s moral character is as eternal as He is, it should not surprise us to find nine of the Ten Commandments repeated in the New Testament for believers today. Regarding the fourth commandment, Jesus declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath and introduced a new relationship to that special day of the week for believers. The keeping of the Ten Commandments was never meant to make us right with God. Rather, through the Law, we became aware of our sin and our need for a Savior (Romans 7).

Exodus ends with a detailed description of a traveling worship facility God told Moses to build called the tent of meeting or the Tabernacle (25-40). Freedom from slavery also meant they were free to worship God. The Tabernacle is among the great Old Testament object lessons that point us to the person, nature, and work of Jesus Christ. The Tabernacle’s architecture and furnishings tell a story and diagnose the human condition. It shows us how God makes a way for sinners to commune with a holy God. The tent where God met with Moses face to face also reminds us of His deep desire to have a relationship with us.

How else does Exodus connect us to Christ? Although the



Exodus

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

second book of the Bible contains no direct Messianic prophecies, it is chock-full of types and pictures of Him who is to come. The Christ connections in Exodus include Moses who, like Jesus, is a prophet, priest, and king.¹⁰ The manna that came down from heaven points to Jesus, who declared, “I am the bread of life” (John 6). The apostle Paul links Jesus to those in the wilderness who “drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4). Of course, the entire Hebrew exodus from slavery to freedom pictures our redemption in Jesus Christ, who said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ... He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives ... to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18-19).

Without a doubt, the most robust picture of Christ in Exodus is the Lord’s Passover found in chapter 12. Following nine terrible plagues, each increasingly hardening Pharaoh’s heart, God sent a death angel to kill the firstborn of Egypt, including Pharaoh’s son. The Lord told Moses how the Hebrews could escape death by killing and eating the paschal lamb and then sprinkling its blood on the doorposts of their house. “And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt” (12:13). With this in mind, the apostle Paul writes, “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7). By faith, have you applied the blood of Jesus Christ to your life?

OUTLINE	1-18	19-24	25-40
FOCUS	Liberty Freedom from Slavery	Law Freedom to live right	Tabernacle Freedom to worship God
KEY VERSE	3:7	20:2	40:34



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

The Old Testament book of Leviticus is probably the least-read book among the 66 books found in the best-selling book of all time. Many people of faith desire to read Leviticus about as much as I hunger for green peas and cooked carrots, which is not at all. When I was a child, my mother tried and failed to persuade me to eat peas. To this day, with apologies to all of the pea growers across America, I gag at the sight of green peas! However, the spiritual value of Leviticus far exceeds the nutritional value of any vegetable medley.

“Leviti-Yuck!” said one person I know, and she loves the Bible. But, understandably, she finds Leviticus much more difficult to swallow than Psalms or the Gospels. However, my goal as a Bible teacher is to hear people say, “I love Leviticus!” Let’s try that. Say it aloud so the person in the next room can hear you. Say it like you mean it, even if you must say it by faith.

In Psalm 119, King David expressed his love for Leviticus. “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (v. 97). Think about it. The only Bible David held in his possession was the Pentateuch—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. He loved all of God’s word, including Leviticus, and



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

so should we. How do we get there? I believe a better understanding of Leviticus and its many foreshadows of the future Christ will help us fall deeper in love with the book and, more importantly, the Author.

For starters, Leviticus is an ancient handbook on holiness that the priests used in their Tabernacle duties. What health is to the body, holiness is to the soul. The word “holy,” which means “separate, set apart, or consecrated,” appears 80 times in Leviticus, on average nearly three times per chapter. God’s holiness speaks of His separateness from anything impure or defiled. In Leviticus, not only are certain rituals and observations considered holy, but the Lord also calls His special people holy, requiring them to live separate and free from worldly defilements. “For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (11:45).

Yahweh was Israel’s God, and they were His chosen people. He rescued them from slavery, and then at Mount Sinai, He advanced the covenant relationship He had formed with Abraham centuries before. With that relationship came certain expectations about living a holy life. Leviticus casts a long shadow of holiness into the New Testament. The apostle Peter, for example, has Leviticus in mind when he writes, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:14-16).

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus Christ is our High Priest who atones for our sin by His own death on the cross.

BIG IDEA

God forgives sin and makes sinful people holy through substitutionary atonement.

MEMORY VERSE

“For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”

LEVITICUS 11:45

AUTHOR AND DATE

Moses
1450-1410 BC



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

Because the Bible is one continuous story about one main character, Jesus Christ, let us consider where we are on Route 66 in light of where we have been. In Genesis, Christ is the seed of the woman and God's remedy for humanity's sinful ruin. In Exodus, Christ is our Passover lamb who, by His blood, sets the captives free from the bondage of sin. In Leviticus, Christ is our great High Priest who atones for our sin and shows us how to walk with God in holiness. Are you with me so far? Here's another way to state the big idea in Leviticus: God forgives sin and, by His mercy, makes sinful people holy through substitutionary atonement.

Though some say the book of Leviticus lacks an apparent structure and is difficult to outline, the flow of it falls into two broad categories. The focus of chapters 1-17 is sacrifice, and the aim of chapters 18-27 is sanctification. The first part of the book teaches how to worship a holy God and the second half offers instruction in how to walk with God in personal holiness.

Five holy offerings and seven celebratory festivals are among the sometimes-tedious instructions given first to the priests and Levites and then to Israel's larger congregation. The many purification and sanitation laws might seem irrelevant to us today, but Leviticus strongly encourages the consecration of both body and spirit to the Lord. A description of the annual Day of Atonement is a high point in Leviticus and worthy of deeper reflection. All of this and more pointed to the Christ who was to come. Let us return to Mount Sinai¹¹ and take a closer look at the holy offerings, the sacred feasts, and the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus introduces five sacrificial offerings in chapters 1-7, including the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. The first three offerings were voluntary and said, in effect, "Thank you, Lord!" The last two offerings were mandatory and said, essentially, "Lord, I'm sorry for



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

my sin.” Let us take a closer look at each offering.

The burnt offering (1:1-17) was a sacrifice that consumed the bull, sheep, goat, or bird and was acceptable to God as a general, substitutionary atonement for sin. This sacrifice typifies how Jesus offered His body on the cross in total submission to the Father’s will for the payment of our sin.

The grain offering (2:1-16) came from one’s food supply. Unlike a blood sacrifice required for the remission of sin, this offering was an acknowledgment of God’s provision. Because grain was in short supply in the wilderness, this could be a costly offering.

Worshippers could use an animal or grain to make the peace offering (3:1-17), sometimes called a fellowship offering, which had one of three purposes—to thank God for His generous provision, to fulfill a vow, or to give thanks to God for delivering the worshipper from a difficult situation.

A sin offering (4:1-5:13) was an animal sacrifice required by the Mosaic Law to atone for unintentional sins. God gave Moses specific instructions about the animal’s blood, body, fat, and more. The sinner was required to lay his hands on the animal’s head, a male or female goat without blemish, signifying the transfer of one’s sins to the substitute. The sin offering was a striking picture of the sacrifice Jesus, the “unblemished lamb,” made on the cross for our sins.

Finally, the trespass or guilt offering (5:14-7:38), not to be confused with the sin offering, is primarily about two things. First, this offering was required when a person unintentionally violated some of the Lord’s holy things. It was also required for making reparations when a violation had been committed against another person. Thus, this offering made atonement for sin before a holy God and brought about reconciliation in human relationships.

Together, the five Levitical offerings picture how Christ’s ultimate



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

sacrifice on the cross atones for sin and reconciles relationships both divine and human (Hebrews 9:15; Ephesians 2:11-22). The Israelites made these sacrifices continually. The blood nearly never stopped flowing. Thankfully, Jesus's once for all sacrifice on the cross fulfilled the sacrificial system and put an end to it.¹²

Seven feasts or “appointed times” on the Jewish calendar also played an important role in Israel's religious life. Leviticus 23 begins with the Lord saying to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the Lord that you shall proclaim as holy convocations, they are my appointed feasts.” These solemn celebrations reminded Israel of God's faithful activity on behalf of His chosen people. Four of them took place in the spring and three in the fall. Observant Jews still celebrate the feasts today.

Passover began the appointed feasts in the spring and reminded the Israelites of their freedom from Egyptian slavery. The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed immediately after Passover and lasted for seven days, during which time the Israelites ate bread with no yeast in remembrance of the time they fled Egypt in haste. The Feast of Firstfruits began the harvest celebration and provided a way for Israel to express her gratitude to God for His generous provision. At the end of the harvest, fifty days after Firstfruits, they celebrated Pentecost, again offering thanksgiving to God for His bountiful provision.

Jesus fulfilled the first four feasts at his first coming. As the Lamb of God, He died on the cross for our sins during the Passover observance in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 5:7). Three days later, He rose from the dead as the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Fifty days later, the Holy Spirit arrived on the day of Pentecost and gave birth to the Church (Acts 2). Finally, Jesus lived a sinless life, pictured in the Feast of Unleavened Bread.¹³



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

The last three feasts happened in the fall season, starting with the Feast of Trumpets, which signified the end of the agricultural and festival year. The trumpet blast alerted the Israelites that they were entering a sacred season. The Day of Atonement followed ten days later, which is the annual day when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to make an offering for the sins of Israel. Five days later, the Israelites celebrated the seventh and final appointed time called the Feast of Tabernacles. Living in booths for seven days memorialized the sojourn made by the Israelites through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

Jesus will fulfill the last three feasts during His second advent, beginning with His two-stage return separated by seven years of tribulation on planet earth. During both the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ, the trumpet sounds fulfilling the Feast of Trumpets (1 Thessalonians 4; Revelation 19). The trumpet blast announces both the coming of the Lord and the awesome Day of the Lord that ensues on earth. The Day of Atonement also prophetically pictures the Second Coming of Jesus Christ when Israel will recognize her Messiah. Finally, the Feast of Tabernacles prophetically points to the time when Jesus will dwell with His people by setting up His earthly kingdom for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-6). At that time, Israel will possess all of the land God promised to them.

Are you falling in love with Leviticus? The best is yet to come. Read on.

How the Day of Atonement points to the person and work of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, cannot be overestimated. Among the priest's duties on the annual Day of Atonement was the presentation of two goats to the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting (16). One goat would be sacrificed as a sin offering while the other would serve as the scapegoat.



Leviticus

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

What is a scapegoat? A scapegoat is any group or individual that innocently bears the blame for others' wrongdoings. In Leviticus, the scapegoat was originally a picture of the Christ to come who would innocently bear the blame and the shame for our sin (16:21-22).

After the high priest placed his hands on the goat's head, symbolically transferring the sins of the people to the innocent goat, he cast the goat outside the camp for it never to return. Got the picture? In the same way, Jesus, our scapegoat, bore the blame and shame for our sin, and then He cast our sin far away from us (Psalm 103:12).

This is why I love Leviticus, and I hope you do, too. More so, I hope you love the Author of the book—your Savior, sin substitute, and willing scapegoat named Jesus.

OUTLINE	1-17	18-27
FOCUS	Sacrifice Worshipping a Holy God	Sanctification Walking in Holiness with God
KEY VERSE	11:45	23:2



Numbers

WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

“Are we there yet?”

How many parents have heard their kids voice this complaint from the backseat of a car? Sympathetic parents understand their child’s impatience. They, too, are eager to arrive at the vacation destination. Creative parents prepare for the long journey with games like I Spy, Car Bingo, and Spot the Object First. Others sing songs and tell stories. If none of that works to quell munchkin’s murmuring, mom pulls out the Quiet Game. It might work for the next ten miles, and then comes, “I’m thirsty” or “I need to go potty!” Sound familiar?

But what happens when God’s people start grumbling about life’s journey? “Lord, are we there yet?” “Lord, when will you get me out of this mess?”

Welcome to the Old Testament book of Numbers, the fourth book in the Pentateuch, which is sometimes called the *book of murmurings* or the *book of forty years*. Numbers advances God’s redemption story while telling the sad tale of the generation of Hebrews who died in the wilderness having never reached the Promised Land. Poised to enter Canaan, the children of Israel fell



into unbelief soon after they came out of Egypt.

An eighteenth-century hymn writer named Robert Briscoe summed up the children of Israel, perhaps our experience too, when he wrote these words: “Prone to wander, Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.” Someone noted that it took about forty hours to get Israel out of Egypt and forty years to get Egypt out of Israel.

Whereas in Leviticus, the children of Israel remain at Sinai, in Numbers, they are on the move for nearly four decades. The old generation traveled from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea and then wandered aimlessly in the wilderness until they died. That is when God called forth the next generation of Israelites. They returned to Kadesh Barnea and journeyed to Moab before entering the Promised Land under Joshua’s leadership.

According to Hebrews 3, the generation that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness because they hardened their hearts and fell into unbelief. When reading the Bible, it is important to remember that Canaan, a real place on earth, is not a picture of heaven; rather, it symbolizes the abundant Christian life Jesus spoke about in John 15. Those who died in the wilderness did not lose their salvation. On the contrary, they all came out of Egypt and “passed through the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1). However, from that generation, only Joshua and Caleb made it to the Promised Land. In fact, neither Moses nor Aaron entered Canaan. Sadly, they also died in the wilderness because they acted in unbelief.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus Christ is the bronze serpent to which we look by faith and find healing when He is lifted up on the cross.

BIG IDEA

God’s best and most abundant life for us comes by faith.

MEMORY VERSE

“So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”

NUMBERS 21:9

AUTHOR AND DATE

Moses
1450-1410 BC



Let us remember the words of Jesus, who said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). As you read the book of Numbers, consider the abundant life God desires for you. He wants to give you exceedingly more than you could ever imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Is it possible to possess eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ and completely miss the abundant life? Absolutely. Just ask the generation of Israelites who died in the wilderness. Does our unbelief ultimately thwart God’s purposes or negate His promises? Absolutely not. Consider Joshua, Caleb, and the new generation of Hebrews who joyously crossed the Jordan River and triumphantly took possession of the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God’s ways are best for us. But we acquire His richest blessings the same way we receive eternal life: by grace and through faith.

Thus, the big theological idea in Numbers is this: God’s best and most abundant life for us comes by faith. Conversely, unbelief always hinders us from experiencing the blessings of the Promised Land.

Let’s dig deeper. The book of Numbers gets its name from two censuses taken during the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness. The first census numbered the generation that came out of Egypt (1-4). Most estimate that number to have been between two and three million people. The second census numbered the next generation that eventually enters Canaan (26-27). Besides for the purpose of military readiness, why did God instruct Moses to count the people? At the risk of sounding like a cliché, God counts people because people count. The numbering of the Israelites is just one example of how God cares enough to keep meticulous records. Every person matters in His sight, including you.



Consider the words of Jesus: “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6-7).¹⁴

In addition to numbering the people, God ordered their encampment into a quadrangular formation, demonstrating that He is a God of order, not chaos. The Lord took more than two million people and divided them into twelve tribes of Israel plus the Levites. With the Tabernacle at the center of the formation, He instructed Moses to position three tribes to the north, south, east, and west of the worship facility.

Picture a military formation in the desert that was twelve miles square! No wonder Israel’s enemies grew concerned. God also directed their movements with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night that hovered over the Tabernacle (13:21-22). Day or night, if the pillar moved, the people moved. If the pillar remained in place, the people stayed put. God blessed His chosen people with His presence and gave order and direction to their lives.

Also, God carefully positioned the children of Israel at the edge of the Promised Land. They had never been closer to seizing their destiny. Two years earlier, they were slaves in Egypt. Now, they had every reason to count their blessings and rejoice in what God had done for them. But then, everything fell apart. After God numbered, ordered, and instructed the children of Israel, the people started grumbling. An unholy complaint arose in their spirits against God and Moses. I call it “The Grumble in the Jungle.”

On October 20, 1974, a boxing match took place in Kinshasa, Zaire, between George Foreman, the undefeated world heavyweight champion, and challenger Muhammad Ali. Sixty thousand people attended the historical event, dubbed “The Rumble in the Jungle.” Many centuries earlier, “The Grumble in the Jungle” took place



before an audience of one, the God of Israel, starting in a place called Taberah, which means “burning” (11:1-3).

Not only did the Lord’s anger burn because Israel complained, but God literally lit their camp on fire. Do you blame Him? There is nothing worse than the nagging complaint of ungrateful people. Like Jesus, who prays for us, Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord mercifully quelled His anger. But the grumbling continued. This time a lusty, disorderly mob rose up and complained about the bland food in the wilderness (11:4-10).

Numbers 11:4 reads, “Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, ‘Oh that we had meat to eat!’” The mob full of rabble-rousers grew tired of eating manna burgers every day. They lusted loudly for their former life in Egypt. *The Message*, a paraphrase of the Bible by Eugene Peterson, reads, “Moses heard the whining, all those families whining in front of their tents. God’s anger blazed up. Moses saw that things were in a bad way” (11:10).

The mob became too much for Moses. Their constant complaining crushed his spirit so much that he began complaining to the Lord about the complainers. Moses cried to the Lord, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ... I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me” (11:11-14). Moses had given up and was ready to quit! He even asked God to take his life. That’s when the Lord told Moses to appoint seventy men from the elders of Israel to assist him, and he did. But even the elders could not silence the mob.

Eventually, the Lord gave the rabble what they demanded. He appointed a wind to bring quail from the sea. The birds fell to the ground in plenty for the people to eat. Like ravenous wolves, they stuffed themselves full of meat until it came out of their nostrils,



just as the Lord said it would (11:19-20). They ate until they loathed what they lusted. Then the Lord sent a great plague to strike the people down. Many from that old generation died in the wilderness with quail meat between their teeth. God named the place Kibroth-hattaavah, which means “graves of craving” because the people lusted after their former life in Egypt and died.

Moses’s terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day got worse. Next, he faced an uprising from his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam (12:1-16). Thirsty for power, they challenged his leadership. “Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” they asked presumptuously. The Lord heard them and unleashed His anger. God protected Moses, His divinely chosen leader, by taking Aaron and Miriam out to the woodshed. Miriam’s skin turned leprous, and Aaron quickly got the message: Don’t mess with Moses! When you mess with Moses, you mess with Me.

Tragically, there is more to The Grumble in the Jungle. What happened next sealed an entire generation’s fate. Numbers 13 begins, “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel.’” One spy from each of the twelve tribes of Israel joined the reconnaissance mission. For forty days, they traveled deep into the region and brought back evidence of a land flowing with milk and honey. It was everything God told them it would be. When they returned, they told Moses, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large” (13:27-28).

Everything was going in the right direction until they dropped the word “however” into the intelligence report. Then came the negativity. Ten of the spies spoke with fear in their hearts as they emphasized the strong people and the fortified cities. Caleb tried



to spin the report in a positive direction, but he and Joshua were eventually overcome by the majority voices, who said, “And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them” (11:33).

How could they see themselves as small, like grasshoppers, when they served such a big God? How quickly they had forgotten the big things God had already done for them, like parting the Red Sea and feeding them daily bread from heaven. One word describes their point of view: unbelief. Conversely, faith in God always reaches forward to what lies ahead, no matter the obstacles.¹⁵

Mark it down in your memory bank. Write it on the tablets of your heart. Israel was neither a mobocracy (mob rule) nor a democracy (majority rule); it was a theocracy with God alone as their ruler and king, and Moses was His representative.

Overall, what can we learn from Numbers? Fortunately, the New Testament reflects upon this part of God’s story frequently and yields the following lessons: Do not harden your heart (Hebrews 3:7-19), avoid presumption (1 Corinthians 10:1-12), and look in faith to the lifted-up Jesus (Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-15).

OUTLINE	1-14	15-20	21-36
FOCUS	Numbering Old Generation	Wandering Waning Generation	Re-Numbering New Generation
LOCATION	Sinai to Kadesh	Wilderness	Kadesh to Moab
KEY VERSE	14:22-23	20:13	21:9



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

After years of faithful service, great leaders often give farewell addresses. For example, none is more memorable in American history than President George Washington's farewell address. Since February 22, 1862, members of the United States Senate have participated in the annual reading of Washington's 1796 Farewell Address. It is one of the most time-honored traditions in the Senate.

Long before General Washington served as America's first president, leading the embryonic nation in a "we the people" experiment, God appointed someone to lead more than two million Hebrew slaves out of Egypt and to a land that He promised to give them. That leader's name was Moses, an epic hero on history's stage and the man of God's own choosing to forward the Israeli Exodus. The book of Deuteronomy contains a series of farewell addresses delivered by Moses on the plains of Moab to the children of Israel prior to his death on Mount Nebo at one hundred and twenty years old.

If we picture Moses as so advanced in years that he can barely move or string two thoughts together, we are wrong. The last chapter of Deuteronomy, probably written by Joshua after Moses



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

died, says of him, “His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated” (34:7). To his last breath, Moses was a man of great vision and strength.

The word “Deuteronomy” is the title given to the book by the translators of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. It means “second law” and comes from the Greek words *deuteros* (second) and *nomos* (law). In that sense, Deuteronomy is a book of remembrance as the Lord instructed Moses to teach the Law of God to the second generation of Israelites before they entered Canaan and took possession of the Promised Land.

Whereas Numbers editorially spans forty years, Deuteronomy covers only two months, the last month of Moses’s life plus thirty days of mourning that followed his death. Structurally, the book presents three verbal addresses by Moses. The first address he made is historical and looks back over the forty years of wilderness wanderings (1:1-4:43). The second speech by Moses, the largest section of the book, is introspective and encourages the new generation of Israelites to look within by applying God’s law to their own lives through self-examination (4:44-26). The third sermon by Moses is prospective, looking ahead to the time when the Israelites will physically dwell in the Promised Land, having taken it by conquest (27-34).

Deuteronomy repeats many of the same laws and ordinances found in Leviticus and then expands the law. What is the difference between the two books? Whereas Leviticus was written to the priests and

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus Christ is the prophet like Moses but with greater glory.

BIG IDEA

The obedience of faith yields God’s best and most abundant blessings.

MEMORY VERSE

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?”

DEUTERONOMY
10:12-13

AUTHOR AND DATE

Moses
1450-1410 BC



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

Levites as a handbook on holiness to assist them in their Tabernacle duties, Deuteronomy was written to the laity. As such, Deuteronomy soars rhetorically in ways not found elsewhere in the Pentateuch. For example, Deuteronomy records the Shema, a confession of faith that devout Jews still use in their evening prayers: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (6:4-5).

The significance of the Jewish Shema cannot be overestimated. As one of three monotheistic religions, Judaism declares that God is a plurality in unity, also known as the holy trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One God expresses Himself in three distinct persons and personalities. The plural form of God’s name appears in Scripture as early as the creation story and hints at the holy trinity. In the Shema, the Hebrew word translated “our God” is the plural *Elohim* (gods), which also appears in Genesis 1. An even deeper dive into the Hebrew language of the Shema reveals that the word translated “one” speaks of a collective or compound unity. Think of “one” as in one cluster of grapes.¹⁶

By reciting the entire Shema,¹⁷ devoted Jews profess their monotheistic faith, declare their loving allegiance to the Lord, and commit themselves to the study of the Torah. As an ancient liturgy, the Shema also provides timeless instruction for parents in how to raise children who love God (6:6-9).

If Leviticus is worthy of our fondest affection (“I love Leviticus”), Deuteronomy is delicious! Feasting on this holy writ is delightful. Even Jesus consumed large portions and memorized it. The Son of God spoke more from Deuteronomy than from any other book in the Old Testament. For example, when the devil attacked Jesus in the wilderness after forty days of prayer and fasting, Jesus defended Himself by picking up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

God (Ephesians 6:17), and said, “It is written,” not once but three times in response to three diabolical attacks (Matthew 4:1-11). All three times, Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy.

Say it with me: Deuteronomy is delicious! In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses reminded the Israelites of God’s provision for them in the wilderness. “And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” The word of God is spiritual food that should be consumed as daily bread for your soul, because it is.

There is another reason Deuteronomy is delicious. The fifth and final book of the Pentateuch reveals God’s love for the first time in the Bible. While Genesis through Numbers reveals many other aspects of God’s character, they remain silent about the love of God. Not so in the book of Deuteronomy. Read these delicious words in 7:7-8:

“It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

Deuteronomy may not soar to the heights of John 3:16 when it comes to the love of God, but it sure comes close.¹⁸ In an interview with *Life* magazine, Oprah Winfrey said, “No one ever told me I was loved. Ever, ever, ever. Reading and being able to be a smart girl was my only sense of value, and it was the only time I felt loved.” Deuteronomy has good news for Oprah and us: God loves you.

Like the fourteeners in Colorado, at least four key principles rise from the plains of Moab, where Moses delivered his farewell



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

addresses. The first cannot be missed. I call it *the principle of obedience*. Take a moment to read Deuteronomy 4:1, 5, and 14, and then the verses below. Pay attention to the words “walk in all his ways” and “keep the commandments.”

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?” (10:12-13).

Repeatedly, Moses instructed the children of Israel to do what the Lord told them to do. In that way, he reminds me of James in the New Testament, who says, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

John Sammis was a Presbyterian minister from Indiana who wrote more than one hundred hymns of the Christian faith. One of them is called “Trust and Obey.” The chorus says, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” The sentiment of the hymn is what Moses was trying to convey to the generation of Israelites about to enter the Promised Land. The obedience of faith was something their parents and grandparents failed to exercise, which is why the Lord let them die in the wilderness.

Moses could not have been clearer with his countrymen. God’s blessings in the Promised Land were for those who obeyed Him, and curses or consequences would fall upon the disobedient (11:26-28).

Obedience to the Lord’s commands is a hallmark of the Christian faith, and not just for Old Testament Israel. In the Great Commission, for example, Jesus placed obedience at the heart of discipleship. After His resurrection, Jesus summoned His disciples to a mountaintop in Galilee and said to them, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the



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Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:19-20, italics added).

Elsewhere, Jesus made sure His disciples understood the connection between love, obedience, and closeness with the Father and Him. In the Upper Room, Jesus said, “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him” (John 14:21). In other words, trust and obey, for there is no other way to remain in close fellowship with Jesus than to trust and obey.

I also see the *principle of generational transfer* looming large in Deuteronomy. Picture in your mind a gray and weathered-looking Moses standing before the next generation with vim and vigor. He knows that he does not have much time to say what the Lord has commanded him to say. In less than a month, Moses will scale Mount Nebo, catch a glimpse of the Promised Land, and die. There is no time to waste.

Can you hear the urgency in Moses’s voice throughout Deuteronomy? Hopefully, you possess the same importunateness about your own children’s future. Lately, I have been thinking a lot about Proverbs 13:22, which says, “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.” That verse encourages leaving an inheritance, financial and otherwise, that impacts at least three generations.¹⁹

The principle of generational transfer found in Deuteronomy is less about the passing of money and valuable assets to the next generation as it is the conveying of godly values, although both should be taken into consideration. Transferring your wealth without also transferring the wisdom to manage life God’s way sets the next generation up for failure. What are you doing to transfer biblical values to your kids and grandkids? When you are gone, will



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

they still be talking about the impact of your faith in Jesus on them?

Next is the *principle of faithfulness*. Discovering Deuteronomy 29:5 is like finding a nugget of pure gold. The Lord said through Moses, “I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet.”

This verse makes me want to start singing one of my favorite hymns of the faith called “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” Truly, in summer and winter and springtime and harvest, God is faithful to His word and promises, and He always takes care of His kids. This golden verse also reminds us of the goodness and severity of God (Romans 11:22). In the wilderness, the severity of God fell upon those who fell into unbelief; it was also the place where that same generation experienced the goodness of God through His faithful provision.

Finally, I see the *principle of greatness* related to Moses’s life and leadership, plus a Christ connection. The last chapter of the book reads,

And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel. Deuteronomy 34:10-12

Nobody comes close to matching the majesty and greatness of Moses. He defines what it means to be larger-than-life. However, the principle of greatness is not only about Moses; it also points to Jesus. Earlier in Deuteronomy, Moses shared an important prophecy with the children of Israel. “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen” (18:15).

Who is the prophet like Moses? Three New Testament figures agree it is Jesus—John the Baptist (John 1:21), the apostle Peter (Acts



Deuteronomy

REMEMBERING GOD'S LAW

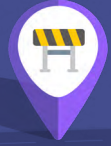
3:32), and Stephen (Acts 7:37). The writer of Hebrews goes one step further. Jesus is the prophet like Moses but with greater glory (Hebrews 3:1-6).

Moses foreshadows the ministry of Jesus as prophet, priest, and king. No wonder he said, "It is to him you shall listen."

OUTLINE	1-4:43	4:44-26	27-34
FOCUS	First Speech Look Back	Second Speech Look Within	Third Speech Look Ahead
KEY VERSE	4:1	10:12-13	30:19-20



Small Group Discussion Questions



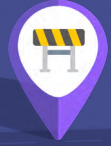
Genesis

1. What does Genesis reveal to us about the beginning of all things?
 2. How does Genesis address the big questions of life? Is your sense of identity, origin, purpose, or destiny most significant to you, and why?
 3. In what way does the flood narrative in Genesis 6-8 point us to the cross of Christ?
 4. Who are the faith heroes of Genesis 12-50 and why?
 5. In what way is Joseph a picture (type) of Christ?
-

EXODUS

1. How does Exodus continue God's story after the book of Genesis?
2. In what way does the Hebrew exodus from Egyptian slavery picture our salvation in Jesus Christ?
3. How is the Passover a picture of the person and work of Jesus Christ?
4. What other types or pictures of Christ appear in Exodus?
5. How does the Tabernacle show us how to approach a holy God?

Small Group Discussion Questions



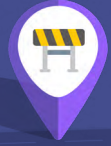
LEVITICUS

1. What is the big idea of the book of Leviticus? How does it impact our daily walk with Jesus?
 2. How does Leviticus point us to Jesus Christ?
 3. Read Leviticus 11:45 and 1 Peter 1:14-16. What does the word “holy” mean? How can we be holy as God is holy?
 4. Reflect on the duties of the high priest in Leviticus. How is Jesus our great high priest?
 5. Read Leviticus 16:21-22. How is Jesus our scapegoat?
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NUMBERS

1. Why did God instruct Moses to number the children of Israel?
2. Read Luke 12:6-7, Psalm 56:8 and Psalm 139:16. How does God keep records of our life? How does that make you feel?
3. Read John 10:10. Why did an entire generation of Israelites die in the wilderness? What does their experience tell us about the abundant life?
4. Read Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-16. What does the bronze serpent Moses erected on a pole have to do with Jesus?
5. What is your biggest takeaway from the book of Numbers?

Small Group Discussion Questions



DEUTERONOMY

1. What is the big idea in Deuteronomy? How does it impact your walk with Jesus?
2. Read the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15. Then read John 1:21, Acts 3:32, Acts 7:37, and Hebrews 3:1-6. Who is the prophet like Moses?
3. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What is this called in Judaism? How does it encourage parents to raise their children?
4. Reflect upon the principle of generational transfer in Deuteronomy. Discuss the urgency it places in you?
5. Read Deuteronomy 4:36-37, 7:7-8, 10:15, and 23:5. Reflect upon the love of God.

- ¹ Norman Geisler, *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, pg. 94.

- ² My apologies to all NASCAR fans. Since I was born and raised in the great Hoosier state, I am biased about racing.

- ³ The word Pentateuch” comes from the Greek words *pente* meaning “five” and *teuch* meaning “book”.

- ⁴ A “type” is person or thing in the Old Testament that symbolizes a person or thing in the New Testament. Biblical types are prophetic because they point to something in the future.

- ⁵ See Genesis 12:1-3, 15:17-20, 26:1-6, 28:10-22

- ⁶ Israel has never completely occupied the land God promised to them. However, they will when Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom on earth for 1000 years (Revelation 20).

- ⁷ This thought is taken from the Westminster Catechism.

- ⁸ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book: A Survey and Study of Each Book from Genesis Through Revelation*, p. 75.

- ⁹ Phillip Ryken, *Written in Stone*, p. 21.

- ¹⁰ Although Moses never served as king, he functioned as the ruler of Israel.

- ¹¹ It took two months for the Hebrews to get from Egypt to Mount Sinai. They encamped at Mount Sinai for about one year, from Exodus 19 to Numbers 10.

- ¹² As New Testament believers, we are not required to make sacrifices for God to atone for our sins. Rather, we place our faith in the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross. He is the substitutionary Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

- ¹³ In the Bible, leaven is a picture of sin. Unleavened bread is a picture of the pure, spotless, sinless life that Jesus, the Son of God, lived on this earth.

- ¹⁴ See also Psalm 56:8, Psalm 139:16, John 10:14, Matthew 12:36, Revelation 20:15, Luke 10:20 and Philippians 4:3 for other ways God shows that He cares by keeping careful records of our lives.

- ¹⁵ Time and space do not permit a full discussion of Korah's rebellion (16:1-10) and what happened at the Waters of Meribah (20:2-13). But those tragic stories are worth reading carefully because they also contribute to The Grumble in the Jungle.
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- ¹⁶ The three monotheistic religions are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Islam denies the holy trinity and says that Christians worship three gods. Unitarians point to the Jewish Shema as evidence that God is one but not three in one (trinity). However, a deep dive into the Hebrew language of the Shema reveals how Unitarianism mischaracterizes Judaism as much as Islam does Christianity.
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- ¹⁷ Three Scriptural texts make up the Jewish Shema: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41.
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- ¹⁸ Other places in Deuteronomy that reveal how much God loves His chosen people include 4:36-37, 10:15, and 23:5.
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- ¹⁹ Managing the resources God has entrusted to you in a way that you can positively impact generations to come in your family, and perhaps outside of your family, requires financial discipline, a well-conceived financial plan, and a generous spirit.

About the Author



RON JONES is a pastor, author, discipleship coach, and radio Bible teacher. For more than two decades, he has devoted his life to leading and preaching in the local church. He currently serves as lead pastor of Atlantic Shores Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he delivers his Bible teaching for everyday life.

Ron's ministry extends beyond the local church he serves through a daily radio broadcast heard around the world called Something Good with Dr. Ron Jones. Something Good Radio and Television exists to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, make disciples, and strengthen the body of Christ through life-changing Bible teaching.

A lifelong learner, Dr. Jones earned degrees from Purdue University, Dallas Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Mysteries of the Afterlife: Exploring Its Amazing Secrets* (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR) and multiple eBooks.

Through Something Good Travel, Ron and his wife Cathryn lead spiritual tours to biblical sites in Israel, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan. They have been married for 26 years and live five minutes from their happy place, the beach. They have two adult children.

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Road Trip 6: The Gospels and the Early Church

Road Trip 7: The Pauline Epistles

Road Trip 8: The General Epistles and Revelation

RON JONES is the lead pastor of Atlantic Shores Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia and Bible teacher on Something Good Radio and Television. A lifelong learner, Dr. Jones earned degrees from Purdue University, Dallas Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He lives in Virginia Beach with his wife Cathryn. They have two adult children.

