



MORE
THAN JUST A GOOD BOOK!

Today we will cover...

- Quick review
- The Pentateuch
 - Narrative Guidelines and principles
 - Genesis
 - Study examples
 - Law Guidelines and principles
 - Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
 - Study Examples

Why should we study the Bible?

- Know God
- Know God's mission
- Be the people of God

Themes of the Bible

Salvation

Holiness

Battle of kingdoms

Promises

....keeping our themes in mind, let's us start
at the very beginning!

Overview of Biblical History

<p><u>Creation</u> (Genesis, probably Job)</p>	<p>BEGINNINGS: Genesis records creation of world, humankind and their corruption by sin. The flood, Tower of Babel show humanity starting over, but sin remains. God sets his plan of redemption in motion with Abraham and his descendants – Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He leads them to worship God and create a new kind of people devoted to Him.</p>
<p><u>c. 1500BC</u> (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) (Joshua, Judges, Ruth)</p>	<p>DELIVERANCE: Exodus tells story of Abraham’s family enslaved by Egypt and God raising up Moses to deliver the Hebrew people from bondage. Israel fled Egypt and was given a law code at Mt. Sinai (10 commandments, rules for civic order, regulations for worship, sacrifices). Goal is to create a holy nation.</p> <p>After wandering in the desert 40 years, Joshua guides the people into the Promised Land. They conquered some of the inhabitants, but not all as instructed. They remained disorganized, and adopted Canaanite practices and foreign gods. Therefore, God raised up leaders, called judges, to restore order and correct the people.</p>

The Pentateuch (5 Books)

- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
- Genesis, which does not have any commandments, is still considered part of the Israelite legal system
- Substantially Narrative – tells the story of God's chosen people, Israel
- Includes Laws and Lists, as well
- Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are primarily Law, and contain the over 600 hundred commandments to Israel

Guidelines for reading OT Biblical Narrative

- Biblical Narratives are stories about God at work. God is ALWAYS the hero of the story – they glorify him, and reveal him to us.
- Three levels to each story
 - Top Level: God’s universal plan of salvation
 - Middle Level: Israel’s role in God’s plan – call of Abraham, the Exodus, God’s protection of Israel, Israel’s disobedience, Exile and restoration
 - Bottom Level: individual stories that make up the middle and top levels.
- Each bottom level story is part of a middle level story, which is part of the top level!
- OT Narratives are not allegories or stories filled with hidden messages; not meant to tell everything we may want to know – don’t read more into the story.

Source: How to Read the Bible for all its Worth, Stuart and Fee

Principles for Interpreting OT Narrative

1. Narratives record what happened, not what should have happened or what ought to happen every time.
2. What people do is not necessarily a good example. Often it is the opposite.
3. Most OT characters are far from perfect, and their actions are too.
4. We are not always told whether what happened was good or bad – we are expected to judge that based on what God has taught elsewhere. eg. David and Bathsheba/adultery 2Samuel 11/Ex 20:14

Source: How to Read the Bible for all its Worth, Stuart and Fee

Principles for Interpreting OT Narrative

5. All narratives are selective and incomplete. We are only given everything the author thought was important to know. Live with it!
6. Narratives are not written to answer theological questions. They have specific, limited purposes.
7. Narratives may teach explicitly or implicitly

Genesis

Content: creation, human disobedience and its consequences, God's call of Abraham and covenant with him, the beginning of the story of redemption

Genre: Primarily Narrative

Historical period: from creation to the death of Joseph (c. 1600BC)

Key themes: God as Creator, humans in image of God, nature of consequences of sin, beginning of divine covenants, God's choice of a people through whom he will bless the nations.

Genesis Ch. 1-3

Bible is a book

+

Bible is the revelation of God and his workings in and through human history to accomplish his mission of universal salvation

=

The opening chapters are the very important first impression of God!!!

Genesis Ch. 1-3

- Genesis given to Israelites at Mt. Sinai – they had been brought out of slavery, and were going to become the people of God. Needed to be clear who God was.
- Creation Myths of Ancient Near East
 - Creation story
 - Flood
- Creation story showed them the differences between YHWH and the gods the pagans worshipped
 - YHWH is unique – the one true God
 - YHWH is sovereign over all creation, including all gods
 - YHWH created man as the pinnacle of creation – cares for man
- Do we need to understand the Creation Account literally?

Genesis Ch. 1-3

- Poetic dimension to creational prologue (1:1-2:3) – create the element then fill it
- The Account of Human Beginnings (2:4-3)
 - Creation of Adam and placement in Eden
 - Centerpiece of Eden – 2 trees (of life, of knowledge of good and evil)
 - Warning not to eat from tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - Creation of Eve from Adam's side
- Disobedience and Fall
 - God's curse on serpent and judgment on man and woman and punishment (loss of God's presence)
- REMEMBER – Revelations 22:1-5 shows Eden restored!

Genesis Ch. 1-3

- What themes do we see?

Genesis Ch. 1-3

- What themes do we see?
 - Battle of kingdoms – 3:14-15: God “will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers”
 - Holiness – guarding of the holy place where God walks; requirement for being in the presence of God
 - Promise – “he will crush your head”
 - Salvation – makes clothes for them

Genesis Ch. 1-3

- What have we learned:
 - About God?
 - About his mission?
 - About being his people?

Genesis: The Story of Joseph

Chapters 37 and 39-50

- Joseph is the central human character, but he is NOT the hero!
 - Haughty, critical, superior attitude, lack of relational intelligence
- Why did Joseph succeed?
 - The Lord was with Joseph...the Lord caused all he did to prosper...The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessings of the Lord was upon all that he had..." (Gen 39:2-5)
- God is the hero
- Moral of the story: God was with Joseph

Genesis: The Story of Joseph

- If you see Joseph as the hero, then what do we learn?
 - Need good administrative skills to survive
 - Don't tell your dreams to others
 - Even from prison, if you work hard you can succeed....
- The small story is part of the larger story of God's plan to provide for Israel, and for other nations during a time of famine.

20 min. break

The Books of the Law

- Over 600 commandments given in 4 of the 5 books of the Law (Exodus-Deuteronomy)
- Remember the context in which the Israelites received the law – deliverance from slavery, at Mt. Sinai, wilderness, pagan/polytheistic culture.

The Books of the Law

- Sometimes, NT references make it clear that “the law” actually means the entire OT; the function of most of the OT books is to illustrate and apply the Law outlined in the Pentateuch (where Israel/leaders got it right, and where they got it wrong).

Understanding OT Law

- Law is a model – what it means to be loyal to God, not an exhaustive list
 - Apodictic – do/do not; comprehensive in spirit – what is the spirit of the law?
 - Casuistic – case-by-case: conditional laws; none explicitly renewed in the NT, however, again, we can still learn
- OT Law represents an advancement over its historical predecessors (Laws of Schunna – Akkadian law dated about 1800 BCE, Hammurabi law code – Babylonian law dated 1726 BCE)
 - OT Law reflects equality of worth of people, pay for own sins

Understanding OT Law

- OT Law is a covenant between a suzerain (overlord) and a weaker, dependant vassal (servant)
 - Vassal guaranteed benefits and protection
 - Vassal obligated to give loyalty solely to suzerain, by obeying the rules of behaviour set out by the covenant
 - 6 parts – preamble (identifies parties), prologue (history of parties), stipulations (laws), witnesses (God or heaven and earth), sanctions (blessings and curses) and document clause (provision of regular review so it is not forgotten)

Understanding OT Law

- OT Law benefits Israel – example of God’s mercy and grace- they are living in the wilderness!
 - Food Laws – serious protective purpose
 - Prohibits foods likely to carry disease
 - Uneconomical to raise as food in the Sinai context
 - Foods favored for religious sacrifice by other cultures the Israelites were NOT to copy
 - Shedding of Blood Laws – sets standard
 - Sin deserve punishment – sin against God deserves death
 - God provides a procedure by which they are saved from sin – substitutionary atonement (Heb 9:22 – without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins)
 - Sets precedent for the work of Christ on the cross
 - Unusual prohibitions – goat’s milk, clothing of 2 materials – designed to forbid Israelites from engaging in the fertility cult practices of Canaanites

Understanding OT Law

- Shows us how high (and impossible) God's standards of righteousness are:

Galatians 3:21

“For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.”

- Law is not given as a way of salvation; it is a proper response to salvation!
 - Expression of gratitude not a performance plan
- Law never supposes people will keep it perfectly; there is always provision for relational repair
 - Forgiveness is rooted in the character of God!

A Christian's Guide to OT Law: Tension between 2 truths!

- OT is not our testament – none of the conditions are binding upon us unless they are renewed in the NT
 - Loyalty is still expected of His people, but how that loyalty is shown has changed
 - Some conditions have clearly not been renewed – Israel civil laws and ritual laws (practice of worship, including sacrifice)
 - Some conditions are renewed in the NT – aspects of ethical law
 - Love the Lord your God....love your neighbor.....Mt 22:40
 - Ten Commandments
- All of the OT is still God's Word to us
 - still reveals God's character, His Mission and what it means to be His people.
 - Understand it first without the New Testament – good exegesis!

Exodus

Content – Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, her constitution as a people through covenant law, and instructions for and construction of the tabernacle – the place of God’s presence.

Genre: Narrative, law

Historical Coverage: from Joseph’s death (ca. 1600BC?) to Israel’s encampment at Sinai (either 1140 or 1260BC)

Emphases: God’s miraculous rescue of Israel from Egypt through Moses; covenant law given at Mt. Sinai, the tabernacle as the place of God’s presence and Israel’s proper worship, God’s revelation of himself and his character, Israel’s rebelliousness, God’s mercy toward his people when they rebel

Exodus Ch. 5:22-6:8

- Moses question: 5:22-6:1 –
God, what are you up to?
- God's Response:
 - Freedom from slavery
 - Redeem you
 - Take you as my people
 - Be your God
 - Give you to the land I swore to Abraham

Source: *God's Design*. Elmer Martens

Exodus Ch. 5:22-6:8

- What themes do we see?
 - Salvation
 - God's self-identification as YHWH - I am the LORD (vv. 2,6,8); differentiated name for God
 - In Hebrew – it is not a title, but a specific name
 - Same name given to Moses at his call at the burning bush (3:1-4:17)
 - In Hebrew, it plays on the verb “to be” – “I AM WHO I AM”
 - Because it was in the context of deliverance, YHWH understood as a salvation name
 - Appears 6,800 times in the OT – frequent reminder that God is a saving God

Source: *God's Design*. Elmer Martens

Exodus Ch. 5:22-6:8

- What themes do we see?
 - Promise
 - Moses confronts God with a breach of promise
 - People asked to rely on God's word – trust God's promises
 - Battle of kingdoms
 - God overcoming Pharaoh

Source: *God's Design*. Elmer Martens

Exodus Ch. 5:22-6:8

- Mission of God
 - Deliverance
 - Form the people of God
 - Ongoing relationship with God
 - Give people abundant life – land symbolizes life with YHWH in ideal conditions (foreshadows Kingdom of God in NT)

Source: *God's Design*. Elmer Martens

Exodus Ch. 5:22-6:8

- Application
 - What have we learned:
 - About God
 - About His mission
 - About what it means to be His people?
- How do we live in light of this?
 - Personal reflection – 2-3 minutes
 - Ideas?

Leviticus

Content: various laws having to do with holiness before God and with love of neighbor, including sacrifices, ritual cleanliness, and social obligations, as well as laws for the Levites regarding their priestly duties

Emphases: getting it right with regard to worship, for both people and priests, institution of the priesthood under Aaron, laws protecting ritual cleanliness, including atonement for sins, laws regarding sexual relations, family life, punishments for major crimes, festivals and special years (Sabbaths and Jubilees)

Guidance for Leviticus

- A covenant is about relationships.
- Leviticus is part of the larger narrative of the Pentateuch – these people grew up in slavery – for them to become the people of God in the wilderness, they need to get 2 sets of relationships right – relationship with God and relationships with each other!

Leviticus Commands

- Israel is to be God's holy priests to the world
- They must bear his likeness (be holy because I am holy)
- Need to maintain a sense of holy awe and obedience (I am Yahweh)

Leviticus Commands

- Laws regarding Sacrifices
 - Gift to God
 - Fellowship with God
 - Restoring a break; atonement
- Laws regarding purity
 - People must have a proper sense of what it means for God to be present among them
 - Holiness is both being clean and bearing God's likeness (compassion and loving-kindness)

Leviticus

- Lev 19 – defines “loving your neighbor”
 - Picked up by Jesus in NT

Leviticus Ch. 19

- Verses 9-19 – read and discuss:
 - What can we tell about how God feels about the poor?
 - How do we honour God?
 - How do we treat our neighbors?
 - How do we treat workers?
 - How do we treat the physically challenged?

Leviticus Chapter 19

- Application
 - What have we learned:
 - About God
 - About His mission
 - About what it means to be His people?
- How do we live in light of this?
 - Today, what does it mean to not plow your crops to the edges?
 - Eg Whitamore Farms – pumpkin sale!
 - Non-agricultural examples? Business? Family? Neighborhood?

Source: *God's Design*. Elmer Martens

Numbers

Content: the Israelites' long stay in the desert, with supplemental covenant laws

Genre: narrative, additional laws, census lists, oracles (pagan prophet), Aaron's blessing

Historical coverage: forty years, a period within which the generation that left Egypt died off

Emphases: preparation for military conquest of the promised land; God's covenant loyalty toward Israel with regard to the land; Israel's repeated failure to keep covenant with God; God's leadership of his people and affirmation of Moses' leadership; preparations for entering and worshipping in the promised land; conquest and settlement of the land east of the Jordan River

Guidance for Numbers

- Primary driving force: God's promise/covenant with Abraham that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan
 - God will bring about the fulfillment of the promise, even in face of Israel's reluctance and disobedience.
- This is the second stage of the Holy War
 - God delivered Israel miraculously from Pharaoh in Egypt – Stage 1
 - God now intends Israel to be involved

Guidance for Numbers

- Focus is on God's presence in the midst of his people
 - His guidance
 - Proper worship of God once they are settled in the land
- God's people don't look very good
 - Constant complaints, grumbling, against God, and their leaders (Num 11-12; then see Ps 78:14-39)
 - “Yet he was merciful and forgave their sins...”
 - “For He remembered that they were merely mortal...”
- **THIS IS STILL GOD'S STORY!! He is the Hero!**

Numbers Chapter 11

- Chapter 10 ends with Israel:
 - In battle formation
 - Blowing of trumpets
 - Calling on God as Divine Warrior to deliver
- Chapter 11
 - Complaints
 - Hardships
 - Manna
 - God's response – provision and discipline

Num. Ch 11 – Application

Group discussion

- How does reading this make you feel?
- Group discussion: What do we learn about God through His provision and discipline?
- How strongly does He feel about his Mission?
- How badly does He want us to be his people?

Numbers Chapter 11

Application

- How do we live in light of this? (Monday morning syndrome)
 - Where are we not trusting God?
 - Where do we grumble about His provision and ask for other things?
 - What is the right response?
- Group prayer of thanks Psalm 100

Source: *God's Design*. Elmer Martens

Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Deuteronomy

Content: rehearsal of the covenant for a new generation of Israelites just before the conquest

Historical Coverage: during the final weeks east of the Jordan

Emphases: the oneness and uniqueness of Yahweh; Yahweh's covenant love for Israel, Yahweh's universal sovereignty; Israel as Yahweh's model to the nations; the significance of the central sanctuary where Yahweh is to be worshipped; Yahweh's concern for justice – that his people reflect his character; the blessings of obedience and the dangers of disobedience

Guidance for Deuteronomy

- Has significant influence on the rest of the Biblical Story; rest of history written from its perspective.
 - Greatly influenced prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah, who then greatly influenced NT writers.
- Structurally, looks backwards (ch 1-3) and forwards (ch 31-34), with a restatement of the covenant in the middle.

Guidance for Deuteronomy

- Anchoring themes: uncompromising monotheism and Israel's uncompromising loyalty to Yahweh (Shema: Deut.6:4-5)

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Guidance for Deuteronomy

- Distinctive Features
 - Constant reminder that Israel is about to possess “the land”
 - God is fulfilling his promise to Abraham (Promise theme!)
 - Demand that Israel, upon entering the land, must avoid idolatry and resist pagan worship and practices
 - Why? Because if they are to bless the nations (Theme of God’s mission!), they must obliterate all forms of idolatry and walk in the ways of the God (Being God’s people!) who redeemed them (Salvation theme!)

Guidance for Deuteronomy

- Distinctive Features
 - Requirement of worship at one central sanctuary, “the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name.” (12:11)
 - Carries over from the tabernacle in the wilderness; promotes consistency when everything else is changing.
 - God’s love for his people, in giving them this land; also, watch for provisions for the poor and needy
 - Future focus – land is also for future generations.

Deuteronomy 5: 1-21

The Ten Commandments; the Ten Words

- Forms the foundation of the code that will be spelled out in Chapters 12-26.
- First 5 – about how to love God
- Last 5 – about how to love others

These are specifically renewed in the NT as commands for followers of Jesus Christ!

Deuteronomy 5: 1-21

- Application
 - What do the 10 Commandments/Words say:
 - About God
 - About His mission
 - About what it means to be His people?
- Personal reflection:
 - How do we live in light of this?
 - Which do I have the most trouble with?
 - How do I want to change in this area? How will I?

For December 10:

- Histories, Exile and the importance of Jesus' birth!
 - Read Luke Chapters 1-3:20.