

Bible Study # 6
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Introductory Material to the Survey Approach of Studying the Bible

We have been going through a series of the proof of the Bible. Where did we get the Bible? How did it come to be? Where did it derive its authority? The canonization of the Bible, how it came to be set apart?

Tonight we **are going to begin another series.** Have you ever wished that you could take part in an Ambassador College Bible class? Some of you have had that privilege. The approach we are going to take in the months immediately ahead is that we are going to go through the entire Bible in several different series: a Historical Survey of the Old Testament, a series on the Gospels, Acts, the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets, the Writings (the poetic books), the General Epistles, the Epistles of Paul and Revelation. We will go through the Bible in a set of different ways.

There are different ways to study the Bible. One way is to study the Bible in terms of subject matter. Many of our booklets and the Bible Study Course utilize that. It takes all the scriptures that pertain to a subject and is presented that way. We are going to take another approach in this series. We are going to take it from a standpoint of surveying the book and the subjects that book covers. We **are going to take a survey approach.**

I am going to go through some material this evening that is introductory. We are going to start with the Books of the Law, then Joshua, Judges, then a harmony of the events contained in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, ending with the material covered in Ezra and Nehemiah. Then we will cover the transition period and then the Gospels. Later we will come back with material such as the Major Prophets, etc.

Every Bible study you will be told what we are going to cover. You will have two weeks to study these chapters. You will have a standing assignment, and you can read that material. I will hand out questions, and I will go through the answers with you with each of those. You will have questions that will take you through every single book of the Bible. You will have two weeks to cover the material and get the answers. You may come up with questions yourself.

The material of this section of the Bible—the first five books of the Old Testament—are called “the Law” or “the Torah.” “Torah” is a Hebrew

word that means “Law.” They are sometimes called “the Books of Moses” or “the Law of Moses.” The Law didn’t originate with Moses, but he was the one God used to deliver the Law. God used Noah as the physical instrument to build the ark, and God used Moses as the physical instrument to deliver the Law—the first authoritative revelation set apart. Just prior to Moses’ death, he delivered the authoritative copy of the Law to the Levites.

Deuteronomy 31:24-26, “So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: ‘Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you.’”

That comprised the very first canonization of Scripture. It also served as a basis for the rest of the Bible because everything else goes back to and derives from those first five books. That is God’s most basic revelation. You can’t understand anything that comes after unless you first understand the beginning.

The other two divisions of the Old Testament, the Prophets and the Writings, are simply expansions of and commentary on the Law. The Prophets tell you what happens when you obey the Law and when you don’t obey—an amplification of the blessings and the curses. Hosea, Joel and other prophets are simply an expansion of the curses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 and the blessings that God’s people are ultimately going to have. Why are those good things going to happen? Why is the whole world going to enjoy a Feast of fat things (Isaiah 25:6)? —Because the whole world will be obeying the law. The Prophets tell you the effect; the Law tells you the cause. The Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings) show the extent to which the nation obeyed the Law. The Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) projected it on out into the future. Then we have the poetic amplification of the Law—the Psalms or Writings.

Christ came to fulfill the Law—to fill it to the full.

Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” He amplified and expanded the Law in the spiritual. The Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles continue to build upon the Law.

Moses wrote the first five books—the Pentateuch.

Exodus 17:14, “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua....’”

Exodus 24:4, “And Moses wrote all the Words of the Lord....” Moses wrote these things because God told him to.

Numbers 33:1-2, “These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the Lord....” Again, we are told that Moses wrote this account and by God’s instruction.

Deuteronomy 31:9, “So Moses wrote this Law and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel.”

The books of the Law themselves testify to Moses’ writings. Other Old Testament writers claim that Moses wrote it. Joshua testifies that Moses wrote it.

Joshua 1:7, “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded you....”

The testimony of later writings: King David testifies that Moses wrote it.

I Kings 2:3, “‘And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses....’”

In the latter part of Kings, it testifies that Moses wrote it.

II Kings 21:8, “‘and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.’”

Malachi 4:4, “‘Remember the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.’” In the Old Testament, all testify to Moses. The Pentateuch, or Torah, testifies that Moses wrote it and so do other Old Testament writings.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ Himself claimed that Moses wrote of Him.

Matthew 19:8, “And He said to them, ‘Moses because of the hardness of your hearts permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.’” He is quoting from Deuteronomy 24:1.

John 5:45-46, “‘Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you

believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me.’” Jesus said that if you didn’t believe what Moses wrote, then they were not going to believe Him either because what Moses wrote was the basis of the background that led to Him.

John 7:19, “‘Did Moses not give you the law, and yet none of you keep the law?’”

Luke 16:29, “‘Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’”

Verse 31, “‘But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets [referring to the Old Testament Scriptures], neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”

Luke 24:44, “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’” Jesus testified of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (or Writings).

There is also the external evidence of the books themselves. Some of the very things that the critics used (back in the early part of this century), trying to prove that Moses couldn’t have written the Law, trying to prove that someone wrote it centuries later, has served to enforce that Moses wrote the book of the Law. It has turned out that the more archaeology has uncovered, the more it has shown certain things that were customs and things that were practiced at an earlier time and since forgotten about. Things serve to authenticate the books of the Law and serve to show they were written at the time—not someone writing centuries later. There are details that were not uncovered until recent years about cities that have ceased to exist. No one who wrote later than Moses could have known because they would not have existed. There are details of migrations—details that could not have been invented by an imposter. These things have served to enforce that Moses is the one that wrote the book of the Law.

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. It gives the origin of the human family. It gives the origin of the family with whom God made His Covenant and with whom He chose to work.

Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” God introduces Himself. He did not start the Bible with the Ten Commandments. He started the Bible in the only logical place—in the beginning. He first introduces Himself. What right does He have to tell us what is right and wrong? He is the One who made everything. The God we read of is the Creator. He is the One who brought those things

into existence. He created the universe, this planet and human life on this planet. And He created that human life in His own image—setting apart that human life from animal life. Biologically, chemically and physically there is not that much difference between human life and animal life. He made human beings after His likeness. It gives the origin of the different nationalities that comprise the human race and then focuses in on one human family (Abraham) with whom He made a special agreement—a Covenant. Then, He brings his descendants all the way into the land of Egypt. Genesis is the introduction to the whole Bible.

The laws of God were known and understood. We are introduced to the Sabbath right in the beginning.

Genesis 2:2-3, “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

Joseph knew that it was wrong to commit adultery.

Genesis 39:9, “...‘How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’”

Romans 4:15, “...for where there is no Law, there is no transgression.”

It was a sin for Cain to murder Abel.

Genesis 4:7, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door....” You go on through and see that, time after time, the Laws of God were known and understood.

Then we follow with the book of Exodus. It begins with Israel, as the Covenant people, having entered Egypt with great prominence because of Joseph, but moved from this position of prominence to being slaves. Then we have God’s intervention in calling them out of Egypt, giving to them the first codification of God’s Law and establishing His Church—the Congregation of Israel. We have the story of God intervening to bring the people out of the enslavement of this world’s system. That journey was made possible through God’s intervention. God’s Law—the Law—is codified in the book of Exodus (Exodus 20).

Leviticus has as its emphasis to be holy. It was written to the priesthood. They were to teach the people the difference between the holy and the unholy. We are to become perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. We are told to become holy, as our God is holy. If we are to become like God,

we must be characterized as being holy. God will not dwell in uncleanness. God entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and then with Israel; they must be a holy people because God is a holy God. The emphasis in the book of Leviticus is to be holy in order that God’s presence might remain among them and that they might remain holy. We will see, as we go through the book of Leviticus, that there are basically seven sections on what it means to be holy.

The ceremonial things were lessons—a schoolmaster—to educate us about Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:24) and to recognize that, in order to come into the presence of God, they had to have sin paid for. Our sins must be paid for in order for us to come into the presence of God. The sacrificial offerings were a type. It showed their need for a Savior, their need for One whose life could pay the penalty. There are many principles in Leviticus all dealing with how to be holy. God will not dwell in the midst of uncleanness. If God would not dwell in the midst of physical uncleanness, how much less would He dwell in spiritual uncleanness? We cannot conduct our lives in such a manner and expect that God would dwell in us and be our God.

Numbers is the account of the wanderings in the wilderness. Let’s notice what the Apostle Paul said.

I Corinthians 10:1-2, “Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud [under water; water vapors], all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” They came through the water. In other words, they were surrounded by water. They had it all around them, both sides and on top. They were, in a figurative sense, baptized. They were immersed in water.

Verses 6-7, “Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’”

Verses 10-12, “Nor murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all things happened to them as examples, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” These things happened to them for examples. These things are primarily contained in the book of Numbers.

We are right now, in our position of coming out of Egypt, going into the Promised Land. We are going through, figuratively, our forty years in the wilderness. We are the heirs of the world to come. This is not our age, our world. We are in a transition period. Living in this world, we are coming through a wilderness. We have turned our back on Egypt and are going toward the Promised Land. We are not there yet.

Numbers is a very important book. It tells us the things that entangled and trapped the people to whom He had made great promises. Seeing these things, we are able to bypass these pitfalls.

Hebrews 3:7-12, “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, “they always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “they shall not enter My rest.”’ Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.”

Verses 17-19, “Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” We see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. The book of Numbers is the story of that.

To the extent that we can learn the lesson, these lessons set down for our benefit, we don’t have to repeat the same mistakes. The book of Numbers is a very profitable book that enables us to be a holy people unto our God and enables us to become like Him. It shows the pitfalls that we encounter along the way.

“Deuteronomy”—the name means “the second law.” It lays great emphasis on the responsibility of the individual to follow through with His covenant obligation. It serves as a completion of the Law by showing us the ultimate results of obedience and disobedience. Deuteronomy 27 and 28 are an outline of blessings and curses.

Deuteronomy 28:6, “Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out.”

Verses 8-13, “The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. The Lord will establish you as a holy people

to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow, and the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.”

‘You shall be the head and not the tail. You will set the example, and others will come to you to learn.’

Verses 14-15, “So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.”

Verses 21-22, “The Lord will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The Lord will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.”—All kinds of diseases.

Verse 37, “And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the Lord will drive you.”

Verse 41, “You shall beget sons and daughters. But they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity.”

Verse 43, “The aliens among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.” Israel would suffer curses and come to a point that, in the midst of their inheritance, they would be at the bottom and others at the top.

Verse 47, “Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.”

We have the basis for all of prophecy in the conclusion of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy

serves as a re-statement, a reminder, as it serves to put the Law into perspective. It is a book of reminders, just prior to inheritance, by stating that things are a matter of cause and effect.

We have, throughout these first five books, a tremendous amount of material. These things are examples. They serve to introduce to us the true God, to understand God's law, to have it codified for us, to have principles and to have a special relationship with God. They warn of the pitfalls that we are encountering in the Christian life and the basic things we need to understand as we prepare to enter in.

There is so much contained in these first five books. It sets the stage for everything else that comes after—especially Genesis, which is the book of origins. You can't understand science unless you understand the book of Genesis. It is the foundation for knowledge. You can't understand history.

God made of one blood all the nations on the face of the earth (Acts 17:26). All are simply a branch of the human family from one man and his wife; all human beings are derived from that. We are one family. God was ultimately looking forward to a Family that He was going to put together for all eternity.

God is a God of organization and harmony. God's Family, on out into eternity, is not going to be a mass of people getting into each other's way. God's Family will have a work to accomplish, expanding God's government and family on out into the universe. But it has to be done in a systematic way. That is why God programmed diversity into the family. Any organization has departments responsible for different aspects.

We are given the basic material of origins. The Bible is a foundation of knowledge. It contains a foundation on which all knowledge is to be built. Man has the ability to search out and discover, but if we do that apart from God's revelation, then we get off the track. God reveals the basic information.

We are going to spend a little more time in the book of Genesis. God summarizes such vast information in Genesis—one thousand six hundred fifty-six years of human history in simply a matter of a few chapters. The first five or six chapters tell you one thousand six hundred fifty-six years of human history. Then, in some places, God paints in with a broader brush.

For the next Bible study, I want you to read and study the first three chapters of Genesis. I will hand out questions, and I will go through the answers with you on our study of Genesis 1—3.

If you will utilize it, it will be something that will help you deepen your own knowledge of the Word of God and have some deeper insight into this Book by which we are to live as the people of God.