

OT 501--Old Testament Introduction

Lecture Notes—Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus

Exodus

--Historical Background

--Date of the Exodus

--There is great debate concerning the date of the exodus. The two major proposals are in the table below.

Dating the exodus

1440 B.C. Exodus	1250 B.C. Exodus
1. 1 Kings 6:1—480 years from temple	1. Exodus 1:11—Pithom & Ramses
2. Judges 11:26—300 years of occupation	2. Some Archaeology—Hazor, Debir, Lachish
3. <i>Habiru</i> possibly included Hebrews in Amarna letters.	3. Archaeology—settlement patterns in hill country & new settlements in 13 th century.
4. Some archaeology	4. Merneptah—1 st mention of “Israel” in 1230 B.C.
5. Merneptah—Israel an established people	5. 430 yrs. (Ex. 12:40) puts patriarchs in Hyksos period.

--The major strength of the early date is that it allows a fairly literal reading of 1 Kings 6:1 & Judges 11:26. Most scholars today would recognize that *habiru* refers to a social class rather than a distinct ethnic or national group. The archeological data are debatable & somewhat contradictory.

--The major strength of the later date is that it accounts for the extant archeological record.

--Settlement patterns suggest that the hill country of Judah & Ephraim were virtually unsettled until at least the 13th century. This would make the early date difficult to account for, since the biblical picture is one of a very large group of people settling in the hill country.

--Merneptah’s mention of “Israel” is significant because it marks the 1st irrefutable mention of Israel in the ANE (although some deny either its historicity or accuracy). Of course, the importance of the reference is questionable because both early and late date proponents can use Merneptah as evidence. Yet the fact that the pharaoh places Israel in the land before 1200 BC is certainly important.

--Route of the Exodus

--“Red Sea”=“Sea of Reeds” (יַם־סוּף)—It could be anywhere in the region east of Egypt, from the literal Red Sea to the Mediterranean.

--The route taken was through the wilderness rather than the usual route along the sea, the "Way of the Philistines" or "Way of the Sea." The Egyptians controlled this route, so it would not have been the best route for the Hebrews to take. Instead, they went into the wilderness, going across either the central or southern Sinai Peninsula, following the command of God.

--Mt. Sinai—The traditional location is Jebel Musa, but several others in the Sinai Peninsula are suggested as well. Some momentum has grown in recent years for a site in southwestern Arabia, the traditional home of the Midianites.

--Structure of the Book of Exodus

I. Birth and Call of Moses (Exodus 1-3)

- a. Oppression of the Hebrews
- b. Moses' deliverance & upbringing in Pharaoh's household.
- c. Flight to Egypt
- d. Moses' call from God, including the revelation of Yahweh to Moses.

II. The Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 4-18)

- a. Plagues—Natural phenomena with supernatural origin, except for the last plague, which has no explanation.
- b. Passover—Passover became a defining celebration for Israel throughout their history & into the present.

III. Covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19-24)

- a. Historical Prologue--God's works—He called them & protected them.
- b. Stipulations—The expectations of the covenant. Israel is called upon to obey God's laws (which are given in Ex. 20-23).
 - The Ten commandments, or "words." These are basic laws for God's people—Apodictic Laws ("you shall not"!). They are fairly general & universal.
 - "The Covenant Code"—(20:22-23:19)—These are specific laws that would govern Israel in specific situations—casuistic law (=case law).
- c. Ratification—The covenant is accepted by the people, then in Ex. 24 a sacrifice & celebration marks the ratification of the covenant.

IV. Tabernacle (Exodus 25-30, 35-40)

--The Tabernacle is a portable shrine that represents God's presence among His people. It is designed & built with great care.

V. Broken & Renewed Covenant (Exodus 32-34)

--In rebellion, Israel builds a golden calf & altar & begins a pagan festival. God's answer is judgment, He will destroy them, but after Moses intercedes God relents & does not destroy them.

--The covenant is renewed after the death of many in judgment.

--Theological Themes

1. God's Choice—

- He chose them out of all the nations. The prophets would return to this theme when calling Israel back to God. He established His covenant with His people.
- God chooses leaders for His people. He called Moses & Aaron to be the leaders of His people. He desires to meet their needs.

2. God's Care—

- God heard their cry in Egypt. He saw their needs. He heard their grumbling in the wilderness. He delivered them and fed them. He brought them safely into His presence at Sinai.

3. Covenant & Law—

- The covenant is founded on grace. It is based upon God's gracious choice & care for His people. We cannot look at the covenant & law simply as a negative, legal matter. We can only enter into covenant with God because of His grace. This is still true for us in Christ under the New Covenant.
- The covenant carries a dire threat. Failure to follow the laws of the covenant will bring rejection & destruction. Once again, this is not God's ultimatum; rather it is an agreement that Israel gladly enters into because of God's grace. The same is true of us. There are expectations upon our lives because we are in Christ.
- The rewards of covenant are to be set apart as God's people, a Holy Nation & Kingdom of Priests. His people have access to Him in a way that others do not, even though His care may extend to others (since the whole world belongs to Him). Of course, access and reward also brings added accountability.

Leviticus/Numbers

Outline of Leviticus

I. The Offerings (Lev. 1-7)

- Whole Burnt Offering (1:3-17, 6:8-13) *'olah*—The entire animal is burned. This is a general sacrifice for forgiveness.
- Grain Offering (2:1-16, 6:14-23) *mincha*—An offering to maintain God's blessing, it often accompanied other offerings.
- Fellowship Offering (=Peace Offering) (3:1-17, 7:11-21) *zebach shelamim*—This is an offering of praise & communion between God, people, & priests.
- Sin Offering (4:1-5:13, 6:24-30) *chatta'th*—This is an offering for specific sins.
- Guilt Offering (5:14-6:7, 7:1-10) *'asham*—This offering is for sins that require restitution, or in some other way bring special guilt.

II. The Priests (Lev. 8-10)

- Aaron & his sons are set apart for service of the Tabernacle. They are responsible for the offerings & the holy things.
- Nadab & Abihu are killed for "unauthorized fire." They placed fire on the incense that was not from the sacrificial altar. Breaking the laws of holiness was a serious offense.

III. Ritual Purity (Lev. 11-15)

- Food laws, childbirth, skin diseases, & bodily discharges.

IV. The Day of Atonement (*yom kippur*) –Lev. 16

-- *****This is the only time of the year that the Most Holy Place is entered.** Aaron enters to make atonement for himself & for all Israel.

--Aaron takes 2 goats:

--He offers one as a sin offering for the people’s sins. He sprinkles this blood on the atonement cover like the bull & on the horns of the altar.

--He lays both hands on the head of the live goat, the *azazel* (“scapegoat”). He confesses and “places” the sins of Israel upon it. It is then taken into the desert and released to symbolize the removal of sin from the people.

V. The Holiness Code –Lev. 17-26

--The 2nd of three different “law codes” in the Pentateuch.

--The Holiness Code focuses on purity & ritual laws, including feasts & festivals.

Nisan (1 st month)	14—Passover
	15-22—Feast of Unleavened Bread (firstfruits?)
Sivan (3 rd month)	6—Weeks (<i>shavuot</i>)
	8—alternative Weeks
<i>Tishri</i> (7 th month)	1—Trumpets
	10— <i>yom kippur</i> (Day of Atonement)
	15-22— <i>sukkoth</i> (Tabernacles/Booths)

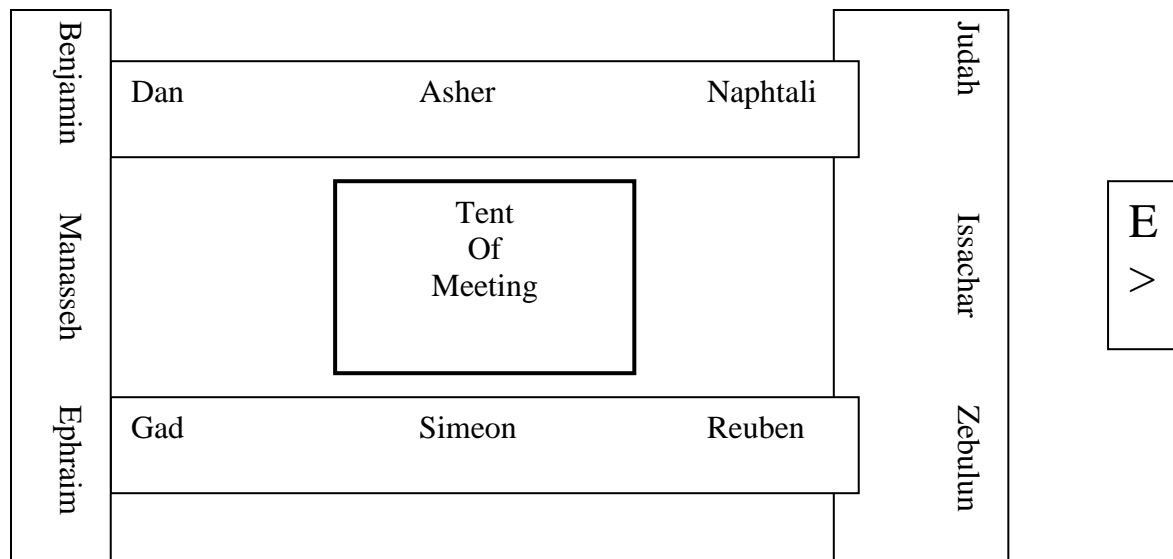
VI. Redeeming what belongs to the Lord—Offerings & Tithes (Lev. 27)

Outline of Numbers

I. Numbers and Arrangements (Numbers 1-4)

A. The Census of the 1st Generation—Numbers 1

B. The Arrangement of the Tribes—Numbers 2



C. The Levites—Numbers 3-4—The priestly role of the Levites is delineated.

II. Various Laws (Numbers 5-10)

A. The Nazirite (6:1-21)

--The Nazirite was set apart for a specific purpose, as a vow. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist are exceptions in that their vow is for life.

B. The Priestly Blessing (6:22-27)

III. Travel from Sinai to Kadesh (in the Desert of Paran)—(Numbers 11-12)

A. Fire from the Lord because of grumbling.

B. Quail from the Lord to give them meat.

IV. Events at Kadesh [or elsewhere in the wilderness] (Numbers 13:1-20:21)

A. Reconnaissance & Rebellion (Numbers 13-14)

--12 spies sent to spy out the land of Canaan. Remember that none of these people had ever seen Canaan.

--Their report was incredibly positive; the land was fruitful.

--But the inhabitants were too powerful, so they rebelled against God's plan, except for Joshua & Caleb. As we know, because of this rebellion & lack of faith this generation is cursed to 40 years (=one generation) in the wilderness & death before entering the land of promise.

B. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16)

--They rebelled against the leadership of Moses & Aaron & were "swallowed up." We continue to see that rebellion against God is a serious offense. Remember that they are breaking the covenant into which they had previously entered. They were breaking their own vow to God!

C. Moses' Sin (Numbers 20:6-13)

--He struck the rock rather than evoking God's name to bring forth water. The implication seems to be that he trusted in his action rather than the Name & word of God.

V. From Kadesh to the Plains of Moab (Numbers 20:22-21:20)

VI. Events in the Plains of Moab (Numbers 21:21-36:13)

A. Balak & Balaam (Numbers 22:1-24:25)

--Balak hired Balaam as a prophet to deliver a curse. This was a normal occurrence in the ANE. Kings used prophets during times of war to help ensure victory through divine intervention.

--God uses prophets, even those from foreign lands. Balaam apparently recognized Yahweh as God. Therefore, he blessed Israel rather than cursing them.

B. Census of the Second Generation (Numbers 26:1-65)—

--This is a bookend with the census in Numbers 1, where the generation coming out of Egypt was counted. Now the generation that will enter the Promised Land is counted.

C. Joshua Commissioned (Numbers 27:12-23) to follow Moses as leader of Israel.

D. Geographical/Political Matters (Numbers 32-36)

--The land is allotted & the Levitical cities & cities of refuge are assigned.

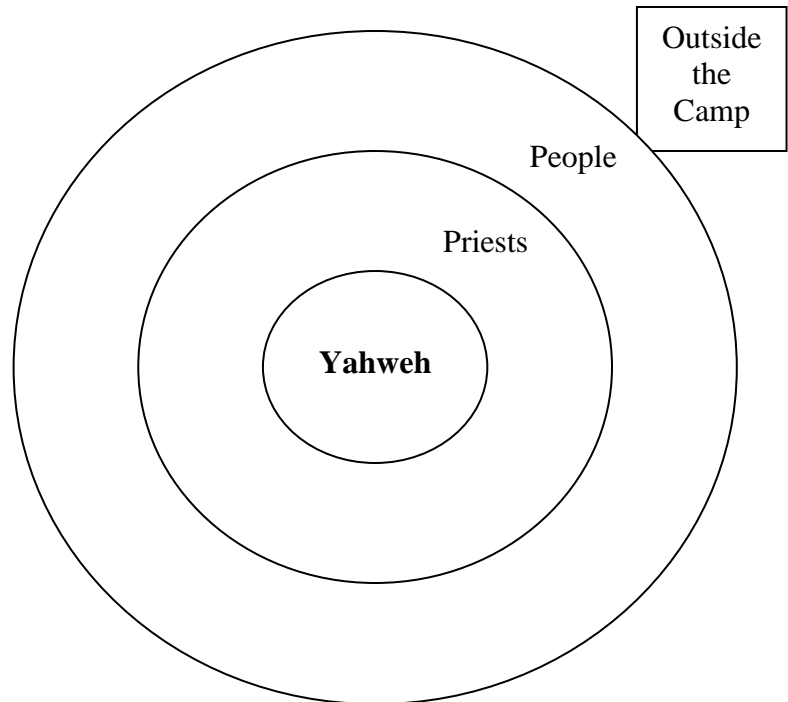
Themes in Leviticus & Numbers

A. Holiness (esp. of God)—“holy” is used 75 times in Leviticus.

1. God is holy, certain things are “holy” to the LORD (i.e. sacrifices), certain places are holy to the Lord (i.e. Most Holy Place), and certain people are holy to the LORD (i.e. priests & Nazirites). We understand that God is “set apart” from the rest of creation. He is above and over all of the creation. What is made holy is set apart by and for

Him. Thus certain are considered holy and are made holy through certain rituals/sacrifices.

2. “Holiness” does not necessarily have in mind sin, as unclean things make “holy” things unclean, even if sin is not involved.



B. Purity & Impurity—

Certain things are clean/holy & others unclean/common. This distinction has to do

with boundaries, i.e. that which is admissible to the presence of God. However, that which is impure can be made pure (i.e. through sacrifice/blood) and that which is pure can be made impure (i.e. a person coming into contact with blood).

C. Blood –

--The life of the animal is in the blood of the animal. This fact is significant for two reasons:

1. The animal gives up its life. The life of the sacrifice is the gift and the reason that sacrifice is effective in bringing forgiveness.

2. The blood is sacred because it is the life. Thus to touch blood is to be unclean. The loss of the blood is the giving up of life. The life, & the blood, is sacred before God. (This connection with life also shows itself in the impurity of dead bodies and semen.)

D. God’s Leadership—In the wilderness, in need, in leaders, with prophets, etc.