



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Part 1: The Pentateuch



WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

**BACKGROUND TO OLD TESTAMENT &
OVERVIEW OF THE PENTATEUCH**

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

- A collection of 66 books contained in two testaments (old and new) – also called the **canon** of Scripture.
- The word **canon** refers to a “reed” often used as a standard or measurement.
- The **canon of Scripture** refers to a standard for faith & practice.



WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

- Tests of **canonicity** focuses on the author & content:
 - Written or authorized by a prophet or other Spirit-led person
 - Written to all generations
 - Written in accord with previous revelation

From: Arnold & Beyer, [Encountering the Old Testament](#), p. 2-4



THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED

All Scripture is *breathed out by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV)

THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED

Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men **spoke from God** as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

(2 Peter 1:20-21)

DEFINITION: INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

The Inspiration of the Scripture is the belief that God, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, superintended the writing of Scripture through human authors to the end that what they wrote was actually the Word of God.

THE BIBLE IS: INFALLIBLE & TRUE

- **Infallible** means that the Bible is fully truthful and without error in all of its teachings (Jn. 17:17; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18).
- The Scripture asserts over and over that God cannot lie (Nu. 23:19; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18) and that **his words are true words** (Ps. 119:160; 2 Sam. 7:38).

OTHER ARGUMENTS FOR NATURE OF THE BIBLE

- Internally Consistent
- Historically Accurate
- Contains hundreds of specific prophecies that were fulfilled
- Changed the course of human history more than any other book

OTHER ARGUMENTS FOR NATURE OF THE BIBLE

- Continues to change the lives of millions
- Literary masterpiece, majestic beauty, profound depth
- Overwhelming manuscript support

WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

1. The OT was the Scripture Jesus read, and makes up 75.55% of the Bible
2. The OT substantially influences our understanding of key biblical teachings
3. We meet the same God in both testaments
4. The OT announces the good news we enjoy
5. We can learn a lot about love from the OT

WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

6. Jesus came not to destroy, but fulfill the Law (Mt. 5)
7. Jesus said all the OT pointed to Him (Lk. 24)
8. Failing to declare the “whole counsel of God,” can put us in danger before the Lord (Acts 20)
9. The NT authors stressed that God gave the OT for believers (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3)
10. Paul commands NT leaders to preach OT (2 Tim. 4)

OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

- The word, **testament**, is an old English word that means “*covenant*,” which is an agreement or oath between two or more parties.
- The OT is an **anthology**, or collection, of 39 “books,” or works of literature
- The OT was written over the course of about 1,000 years by approximately 30 authors

OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

- The OT was written primarily in the Hebrew language (and some Aramaic in a few sections)
- It consists of many genres: law, historical narrative, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, etc.
- Originally written on scrolls: copied & preserved over centuries
 - Masoretic Text (represented historic transmission process)
 - Dead Sea Scrolls (dated 200-100 BC)
 - Septuagint = Greek translation of OT (dated 300-200 BC)

PROTESTANT ENGLISH BIBLES

LAW	HISTORY	POETRY	PROPHETS	
			MAJOR	MINOR
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

ORGANIZATION OF HEBREW BIBLE

LAW

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

*Former
Prophets*

PROPHETS

Joshua
Judges
1-2 Samuel
1-2 Kings

*Latter
Prophets*

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
The Twelve

WRITINGS

Psalms

*Pre-
Exilic
Writings*

Job
Proverbs
Ruth
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes

*Post-
Exilic
Writings*

Lamentations
Esther
Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah
1-2 Chronicles

ORDER REFLECTED BY JESUS

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in ***the Law of Moses*** and ***the Prophets*** and ***the Psalms*** must be fulfilled.”

(Luke 24:44 ESV)

CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

1) **Primeval History** (Genesis 1-11)

- Creation, Fall, Flood, Babel

2) **Patriarchal History** (Genesis 12-50)

- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph

3) **Deliverance From Egypt** (Exodus-Deuteronomy)

- Bondage & Deliverance from Egypt with Passover

- Sinai Covenant of Law, Tabernacle Instructions & Construction

- Wilderness Wanderings (death of 1st generation); 2nd generation and Covenant Renewal before entering land on Plains of Moab; death of Moses

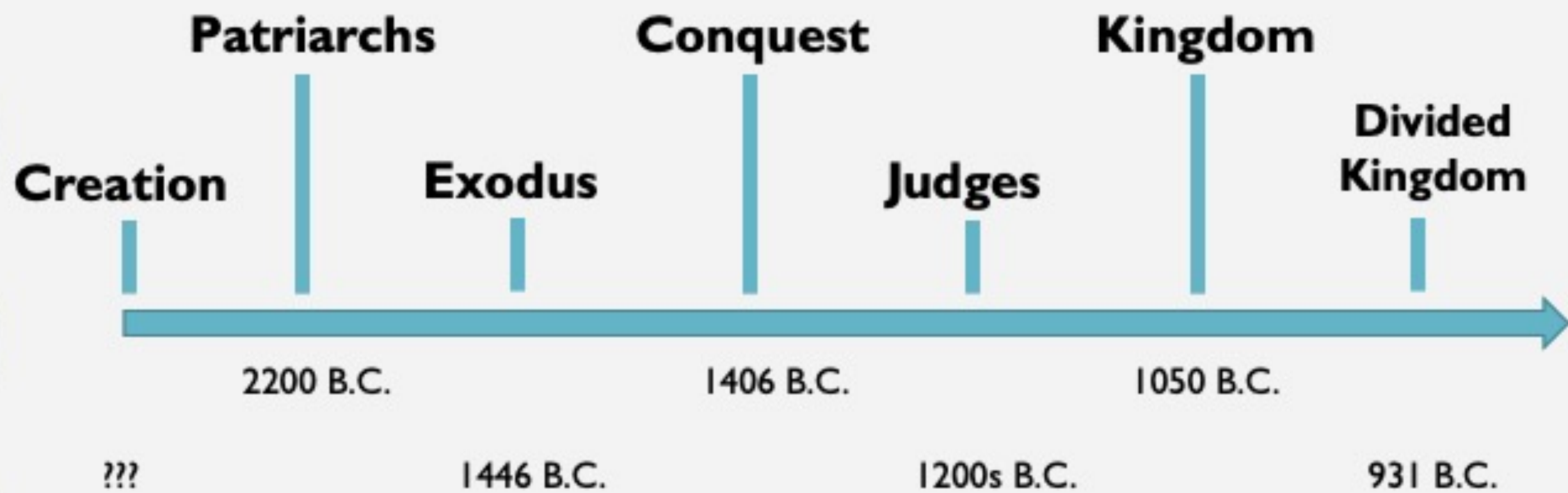
CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 4.) **Conquest & Division of the Land of Canaan** (Joshua)
- 5) Period of the **Judges** (Judges, Ruth, I Sam. 1-8)
- 6) The **Monarchy/Kingdom** (I Samuel 9 – II Chronicles)
 - United Monarchy (Saul, David, Solomon)
 - Divided Monarchy – North 10 tribes – fall to Assyria in 722 BC; South 2 tribes of Judah & Benjamin (Davidic Dynasty) and fall to Babylon in 586 BC. Rise of prophetic ministry.

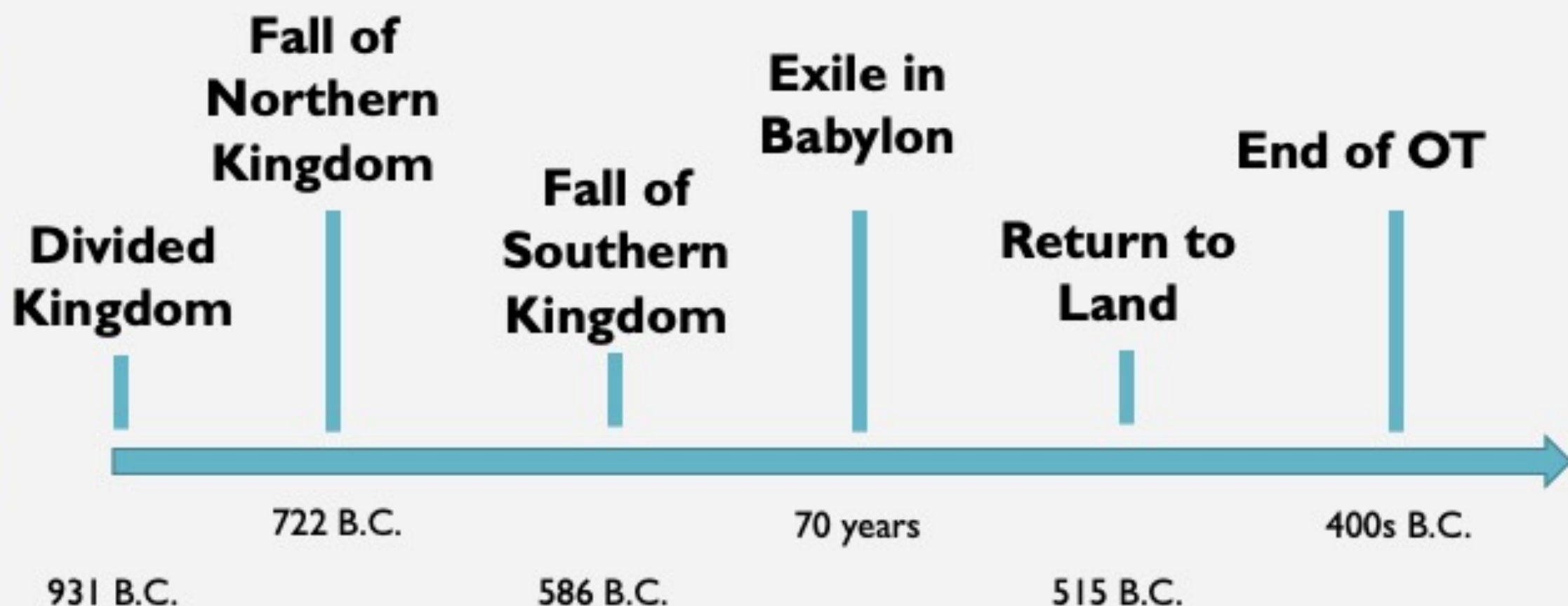
CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 7) **Exile** of Nation (Jer. 25:11)
- 8) **Return & Restoration** Period (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
 - Rebuilding of Temple
 - Rebuilding of Jerusalem
 - Rebuilding of People in the Law

Old Testament Timeline



Old Testament Timeline



HOW DO WE INTERPRET THE BIBLE?

- **Grammatical-Historical Method** ~ seeks to find the basic 'plain sense' meaning of a Bible passage by determining what the text means grammatically & historically.
- **Context** ~ meaning is directly related to the context of the surrounding words & statements and includes 3 types of context:
 - **Immediate context** – the closest words/phrases
 - **Remote context** – the material in surrounding chapters/book(s)
 - **Historical context** – the historical setting of the particular passage

* Source: Arnold & Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, p. 8-10

HOW DO WE INTERPRET THE BIBLE?

- **Determine Type of Literature** ~ the Bible comes to us in a wide variety of literary genres, each requiring slightly different interpretive principles
 - Example – Poetry & Prophetic genres often use metaphors, imagery, and figurative language.
- **Let Scripture Interpret Scripture** ~ if the meaning of a particular passage is unclear, we should go to other more clear teachings in Scripture to give insight about the intended meaning.
 - Example – James 2:24 in light of Romans 3:28 & Eph. 2:1-8

* Source: Arnold & Beyer, Encountering the Old Testament, p. 8-10


CHOOSING A CENTRAL THEME

“The theme pursued must be flexible enough to comprehend several different interlocking themes in Scripture so that it summarizes the fundamental message of the Bible.”

(Thomas Schreiner, *“What is the Dominant Theme of the Bible”*)

WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE BIBLE?

The story of our sovereign Creator who has revealed himself to humanity and to redeem his fallen creation through the person & work of Jesus Christ and salvation is by faith in Jesus



WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE BIBLE?

- Thematic framework is the *Kingdom of God*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“Jesus Christ shows us that biblical theology is about God bringing in his kingdom in which all relationships are restored to perfection.”

(Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, p. 76)

UNDERSTANDING THIS CONCEPT

“The Kingdom of God means His rule and reign. God’s Kingdom is His original plan as the Creator of the world and as the King who establishes what is good and right.”

(David Kim, *“The Main Message of the Bible”*)

UNDERSTANDING THIS CONCEPT

“The kingdom of God is the rule of God which finds its fulfillment on earth in the rule of the Messiah as the Man who achieves dominion over the earth, bringing it into subjection, and then presents it to the Father as complete.”

(Albert Bayliss, *From Creation to the Cross*)

DEFINITION: KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God can be defined as
God's dwelling, with God's people, in
God's place.

KINGDOM OF GOD: BOOKENDS


Kingdom Components	Beginning	End
God's Dwelling	"The Lord God walking in the garden..." (Gen. 3:8)	"The dwelling place of God is with man..." (Rev. 21:3)
God's People	"Let us make man in our own image..." (Gen. 1:26)	"...they will be his people..." (Rev. 21:3)
God's Place	"The Lord God planted a garden in Eden..." (Gen. 2:8)	"I saw a new heaven and a new earth..." (Rev. 21:1)

HOW DOES THIS THEME UNFOLD IN THE BIBLE?


- Act 1: Creation
- Act 2: Fall
- Act 3: Redemption
- Act 4: Consummation

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WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE BIBLE?

- Thematic framework is the *Kingdom of God*
 - The Old Testament points to fulfillment in the New Testament via promises, types, and shadows of institutions, events, and individuals.
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- Thematic framework is the *Kingdom of God*
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 - The Kingdom theme advances in Scripture through the development of major **covenants**
- 

UNDERSTANDING THIS CONCEPT

“Kingdom and covenants go hand in hand because covenants were the means by which God ruled over his kingdom. They were God's kingdom administrations, leading the kingdom of God toward its destiny of expanding to the ends of the earth.”

Source:

<https://btsfreeccm.org/local/lmp/lessons.php?lesson=KOT3text#:~:text=Kingdom%20and%20covenants%20go%20hand,the%20ends%20of%20the%20earth.>

DEFINITION OF A COVENANT

- A covenant is a binding relationship between two or more parties that has been formally established.
- There are often signs and promises involved within a covenant relationship.
 - Promissory Covenant (“Royal Grant Treaty” Abrahamic Covenant)
 - Suzerain-Vassal Covenant (i.e., Mosaic Covenant)
 - Aspects include: Preamble, Historical Prologue, Covenant Stipulations, Covenant Blessings and Curses, witness and Deposit Treaty. (Structure of Deuteronomy)

OT EXAMPLES OF COVENANTS BETWEEN PEOPLE

- Abraham and Abimelech over a well (Gen. 21:24-32)
- Isaac and residents of Canaan over wells for flock (Gen. 26:14-33)
- Jacob and Laban (Gen. 31:17-55)
- Joshua and the Gibeonites who deceived Israel (Joshua 9:3-27)
- Jonathan and David made a covenant (1 Sam. 18:3-4; 20:8, 16-17; 22:8; 23:18)

MAJOR COVENANTS IN THE BIBLE

1. **Noahic Covenant** (Genesis 6:17-18 and Genesis 8:2-9:17)
2. **Abrahamic Covenant** (Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 15; and Genesis 17)
3. **Mosaic/Sinai Covenant** (Exodus 19:1-6; Exodus 20; Exodus 24; Deuteronomy 5; and Deuteronomy 29)
4. **Davidic Covenant** (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17; and Psalm 89:1-4)
5. **New Covenant** (Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36-37)

CONTENT OF THE COVENANTS

Questions to ask when thinking through the biblical covenants:

- Who is God making the covenant with?
- How is the covenant established?
- What type of relationship is being established?
- Are there any promises within the covenant relationship?

CONTENT OF THE COVENANTS

Questions to ask when thinking through the biblical covenants:

- Are there any expectations or commands (stipulations) within the covenant relationship?
- Are there curses (sanctions) for breaking the covenant?
- Is there a covenant sign?
- Are there witnesses mentioned verifying the covenant?

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF THE OT

- History in the Bible is real people, places, events, and real time (not myth or legends)
- Three most important geographical areas: Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt

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- History in the Bible is real people, places, events, and real time (not myth or legends)
- Three most important geographical areas: Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt
- Setting of the land of the Ancient Near East (ANE): **The Fertile Crescent** (from Persian Gulf on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west)



**Fertile
Crescent**



4 GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS IN ISRAEL/ PALESTINE

- 1.) The Coastal Valley
- 2.) The Hill Country
- 3.) The Jordan Rift
- 4.) The Eastern (Transjordan) Range

4 GREAT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE (EAST TO WEST)

1) The Coastal Plain – subdivisions: Plain of Asher, Jezreel Valley (Plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo), Western Mountain Range (Mt. Carmel), Plain of Sharon, Plain of Philistia, and Shephelah

2) The Hill Country (“Central Mountain Range”) – north has more flat highlands, for easier to farm, settle, and travel. Contains dry riverbeds for most of the year called *wadis*, which run mostly east to west. Subdivisions: Galilee, hill country of Ephraim, hill country of Judah, and the wilderness of Judea

4 GREAT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE (EAST TO WEST)

3) The Jordan Rift – major fault line running north to south; it is from 2 to 15 miles wide, with barriers of cliffs rising steeply on either side.

- Sea of Galilee: 13 miles long and 7 miles at widest point, very deep, surface is 630 feet below sea level; known for sudden violent storms
- Jordan Valley: 65 miles from Sea of Galilee to Dead Sea, drops 590 feet in those 65 miles; covered with dense jungle of semi-tropical vegetation in Biblical times
- The Dead Sea (Salt Sea): no water flows out; 6 ½ million gallons flow into the sea every day; very high mineral content; very warm with 6-8 tons of water evaporate every day; 46 miles N-S; surface is 1200 feet below sea level, sea reaches depths of 1200 feet.

4 GREAT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE (EAST TO WEST)

4) The Eastern Range (Transjordan) – N-S about 150 miles from base of Mt. Hermon to southern tip of Dead Sea; elevated plateau, higher as it moves southward; mountains are higher and steeper than on the other side of the Jordan; climate is more temperate, rainfall ore abundant

- Subdivisions: Bashan, Gilead, Moab, and Edom (“King’s Highway” passes through this mountainous region)



3 MAIN SOURCES OF WATER IN PALESTINE

- **Spring** – (“living water”): a continuous supply of water from the side of a hill, caused by water which has seeped down to a layer of impenetrable rock, then flowed laterally to a place where it could escape the earth; the most blessed source of water; easy to get/retrieve the water, but hard to defend the spring (usually outside the city walls)
- **Well**: shaft dug through several layers of earth; great source of water and easy to defend (usually within the walls of the city), but harder to retrieve
- **Cistern**: artificial storage device, usually dug at bottom of a hill, lined with plaster, and filled by the natural run-off of rainwater from higher elevations; usually underground to avoid evaporation; not great source of water (not fresh and great work to maintain it)

HIGHWAYS IN PALESTINE

Two International Highways of the ANE:

- **The Way of the Sea (Via Maris)** Isaiah 9:1 “way of the sea”
 - From the southern coastal plain it moves northward and splits into two, the west route continues along the coast and the eastern route passing through the Jezreel Valley to Megiddo, then from there to Hazor and Damascus and into Mesopotamia.
- **King's Highway** (Numbers 20:17; 21:22)
 - From Gulf of Aqabah at Elath through the Transjordanian Highlands to Damascus



PENTATEUCH: AUDIENCE & PURPOSE

- Presented as direct revelation provided to the nation Israel to understand:
 - The nature & character of their God
 - The nature & character of their redemption
 - Where they came from as a people & nation
 - God's plan to fulfill his promises to their ancestors
 - How to live as the unique covenant people of God, in the presence of God, in their new home.

PENTATEUCH: AUTHORSHIP

- Traditional View: Moses is the primary author
 - Referred to as “Book of Moses,” or “Law of Moses” in Old & New Testaments
 - Direct statements that Moses authored specific parts of Pentateuch (Ex. 17:14; 34:27; Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:9-24)
 - Much of the material focuses on Moses & records his speeches to the Israelites

PENTATEUCH: MAJOR THEMES

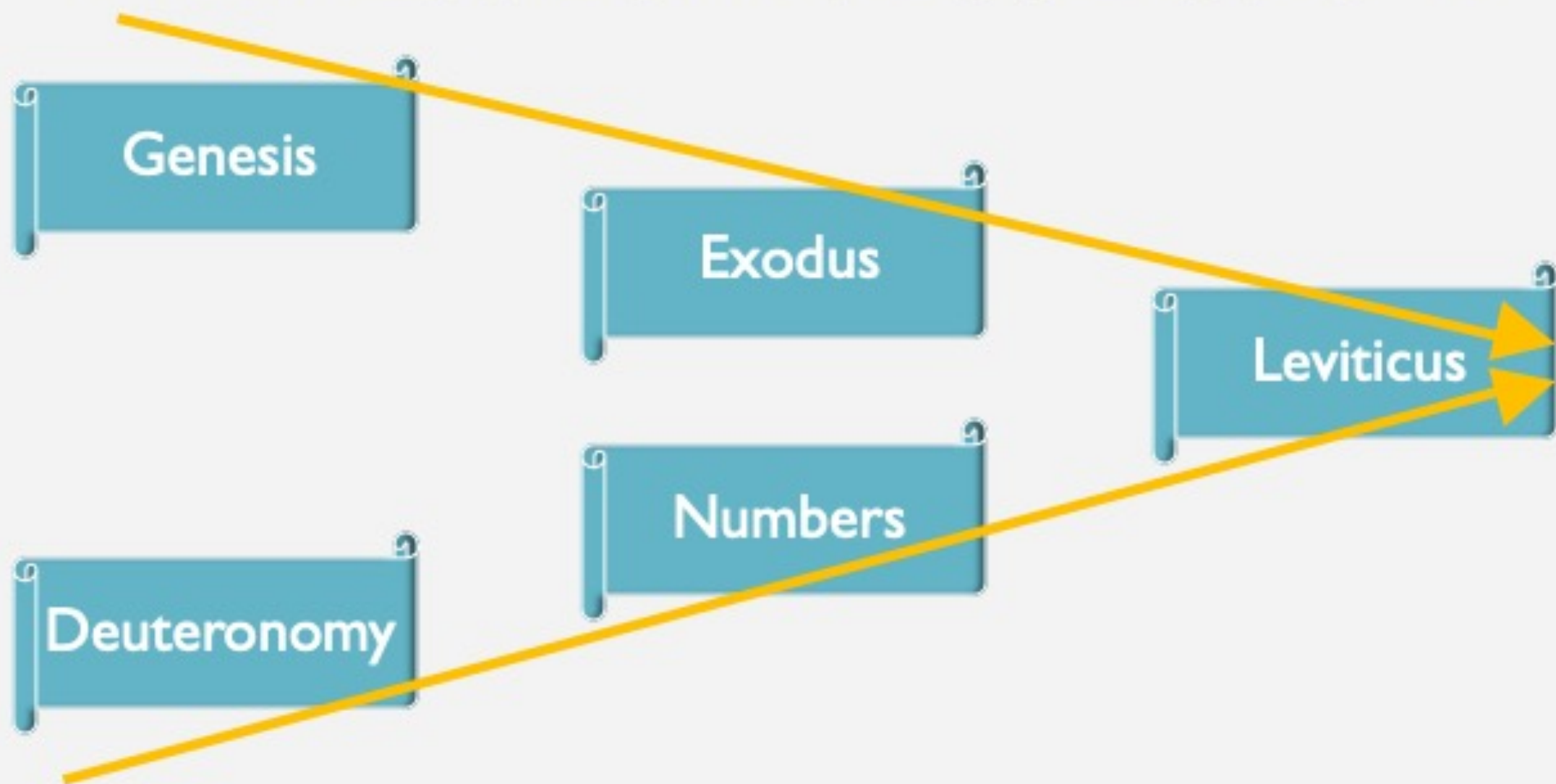
1. **Sovereignty of God** (creation, flood, babel, providence in lives of individuals, 10 plagues, etc.)
2. **History** (contrast w/ eastern mythology, various religious texts, Yahweh interacts in time/space)
3. **Fallen Condition of Humanity** (paradise & shalom broken by human sin, unable to fix themselves)
4. **Salvation** (redemption theme revealed in story form, initiated by God, by grace, etc.)
5. **Holiness** (how should people live in God's presence in response to his saving grace; purpose of the law, etc.)

From: Arnold & Beyer, Encountering the Old Testament, p. 41-43

PENTATEUCH OVERVIEW

	GENESIS	EXODUS	LEVITICUS	NUMBERS	DEUTERONOMY
Hebrew Title	"In the beginning"	"And these are the names"	"And He called"	"In the wilderness"	"And these are the words"
Theme	CREATION	REDEMPTION	WORSHIP	FAITH	OBEDIENCE
God's Nature	God of Promise	God of Power	God of Purity	God of Perseverance	God of Preparation
God's People	Formation of the Family of God	Deliverance out of Bondage & Slavery	The people shall treat God as Holy	Wilderness Wanderings	Revisit the Law before entering the Land

PENTATEUCH: CHIASTIC STRUCTURE



PENTATEUCH: CHIASTIC STRUCTURE

- Genesis ~ Blessings & Curses; Jacob dies & speaks to 12 sons
- Exodus ~ Deliverance, Wilderness, Sinai
- Leviticus ~ Life in proximity to the Holy One
- Numbers ~ Sinai, Wilderness, Deliverance
- Deuteronomy ~ Blessings & Curses, Moses dies & speaks to 12 tribes

PARALLELS BETWEEN GENESIS & DEUTERONOMY

- Both books have highest concentration of “blessings” and “curses” in the Torah.
- Both books begin by recounting failure to trust God (Adam in Garden, Israel in Wilderness)
- Both books end with Israel outside of the promised land (Egypt & Moab).
- Both books end with a leader (Jacob & Moses) prophesying & predicting God’s plan for the 12 tribes.

Parallels Between Exodus & Numbers

Ex. 18:1	Advice from Jethro	Advice from Jethro	Num. 10:29
Ex. 15:22	Three-day journey to Sinai	Three-day journey from Sinai	Num. 10:33
Ex. 15:22–26	Complaint about water	Unspecified complaint	Num. 11:1–3
Exodus 16	Manna and quail	Manna and quail	Num. 11:4–15, 31–35
Exodus 18	Leaders appointed to assist Moses	Leaders appointed to assist Moses	Num. 11:16–30
Ex. 15:20–21	Miriam's song of praise	Miriam and Aaron rebel	Numbers 12
Ex. 17:8–16	Israel defeats Amalek	Israel defeated by Amalek	Num. 14:39–45
Ex. 17:1–7	Water from rock	Water from rock	Num. 20:1–13
Ex. 32:6	People sacrifice to other gods	People sacrifice to other gods	Num. 25:2
Ex. 32:27	Killing of apostates demanded	Killing of apostates demanded	Num. 25:5
Ex. 32:28–29	Levites' status enhanced	Levites' (Phinehas's) status enhanced	Num. 25:6–13
Ex. 32:35	Plague on the people	Plague on the people	Num. 25:9



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Part 1: The Pentateuch