

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS

(Approximately 1450-1400 BC)

1st sacrifice at the tabernacle	Leviticus 9:1-24
Counting the people	Numbers 4:1-4, 17-19
The pillar of fire	Numbers 9:15-23
God provides quail	Numbers 11:4-34
Miriam and Aaron rebel	Numbers 12:1-16
Exploring Canaan	Numbers 13:1-33
Rebellion	Numbers 14:1-35
Water from a rock	Numbers 20:1-13
The bronze serpent	Numbers 21:1-9
Joshua to succeed Moses	Deuteronomy 31:1-13
Moses dies	Deuteronomy 32:48-52/34:1-12

WHY SO MUCH VIOLENCE? These three books record a great amount of violence – much of it caused or ordered by God Himself. This often makes people question the goodness of God. An account that was left out of the list because of its length shows why God felt such deaths were needed. In numbers 22-25 king Balak hired Balaam, a prophet, to curse Israel. Balaam, however, was only able to bless Israel instead. We learn from Revelation that Balaam told Balak that as long as Israel remained true to God, He would protect them. Balaam advised Balak to first entice Israel away from faithfulness to God. In chapter 25 the people of Midian did exactly that and Israel suffered.

Temptations from rebels among the people and unbelievers outside were a great danger to Israel. Allowing such temptations would not only lead to treason against God, their King. Sin could lead many to lose faith in God and, thus, their eternal life. God was often in the position of having to use harsh means to keep such temptations to a minimum.

We should also recall that violent incidents were relatively few over the space of 40 years and that God showed mercy daily in feeding the people, providing water, caring for them and blessing them with security and protection.

About this Pamphlet

Many Christians begin the task of reading the Bible with the best of intentions. They pick up the book with eager hands. At Genesis 5, however, they come to the listing of Generations. After reading an entire chapter of “begats,” they begin to realize this may be more daunting task than they had imagined. By the time they have struggled through the laws of Exodus and the listing of tribes in Numbers, most have put down the book in confusion.

The Bible was never meant to be read like a novel. It is, in fact, a collection of more than 60 books containing a wide variety of literary styles. It has narrative, poetry, and historical records all jumbled together. It is no wonder the modern reader, unused to this style of writing, has trouble making headway

The purpose of this little series of pamphlets is to give you a boost to get you going as you approach the daunting task of reading the Bible. Each will have a map, a picture or two, and a few comments to help you get started reading one or two books of the Bible. The heart of the pamphlet, however, is the list of Bible stories and timeline. The timeline will give you some idea of what was happening in the world during the events of the book you are reading. And the list of Bible stories will direct you to the meat of the book. These are all narrative portions of the Bible and by reading through them, instead of trying to take in the whole book, you will get a good skeleton outline. You will learn the major events and become familiar with the people to whom they occurred. In this way, you will have a foundation you can use to build upon later if you choose to go back and read the more complex portions of Scripture.

May God bless you as you read through the Bible and open your eyes to His message of mercy.

Leviticus - Numbers Deuteronomy Forming a Nation



God called Israel as a theocracy, a nation ruled directly by God. In these books, which record Israel’s 40 years of wandering in the desert, we see how God forms this new nation. Much of the materiel in these books is formed from the moral laws, the ritual regulations and the secular guidelines which will direct the life of Israel over the centuries.

Conflicts arise as Israel rebels against God’s plan, seeking their own short-term goals. In the forge of the desert heat, God turns them from 12 disjointed tribes into a nation, united under God and dedicated to His purpose.

In the barren and difficult deserts of our lives, God is often working to forge our faith also, to bring us to trust in Him and His plan for our lives.

The Location:

These three books trace the journey of Israel as through 40 years in the barren wilderness of Zin south of modern Israel. In order to avoid crossing the lands of Moab and Edom, relatives of Israel, God would lead them Eastward and then North. Their journey ended as they crossed the Jordan River at Jericho, just North of the Dead Sea.

Leviticus:

God was forming not only a religious community but a nation as well. The people would need civil laws as well as ceremonial customs. Regulations for these laws and customs, to be administered by the tribe of Israel known as the “Levites,” are given in the book of Leviticus. It is a mix of ceremonial laws dealing with sacrifice as well as civil laws governing penalties for crime, regulation of livestock, social aid and even civil engineering such as waste disposal and building codes. When read carefully, they are a very practical set of laws and, in many ways, are more respectful of human rights and dignity than are our modern laws.

Numbers:

As the name would imply, this is a book of numbers. Though it contains the accounts of a few incidents during their time in the desert, this is primarily a record of the census of the people of Israel. This census was important for two reasons. Firstly, it gave an idea of the size of army the nation could produce to defend itself. Secondly, it reminded the people that God was well on His way to keeping his promise to Abraham that his descendants would be a great nation.

**Deuteronomy:**

The name of this book means “the second law.” Because the people had initially refused to enter the promised land as God had commanded, they had wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Their children have now reached adult hood and are ready to cross into the land of Canaan. In preparation for this final stage of their journey, as reminder of the foundation of their society, and as a last act of leadership before his death, Moses rereads the laws to the gathered people.

