

**Lecture 8- Setting the Stage: Israel's Early History (II), Joshua: God's Conquest (I)**

*The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.' So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.*

*Genesis 12*

**Key Terms**

Promise, grace & law

**Lecture Objectives**

- Summarize and trace themes from the Pentateuch.
- Compare, contrast, and show relationships in the grace and law themes throughout the Pentateuch.
- Identify important mental exercises and reference tools for responsible reading.
- Consider the implications of the grace and law theme as presented in the Pentateuch for your Christian life today.

**Preliminary Questions**

- Most of us have read history books and/or historical novels. What are some important similarities between a history of your country and the history we find in scripture? What are some important differences? How should these similarities and differences affect how you read biblical history? How you speak about them (similarities and differences) to fellow believers? To unbelievers? How you respond to them in your life and ministry?

**Setting the Stage: Israel's Early History (II), Joshua: God's Conquest (I)**

Review of the kings (See appendix A)

20 rulers in Judah (3-5-5-5-2)

20 rulers in Israel (3-9-8-0-0)

## III. Israel's Beginnings: A Brief Look at the Pentateuch (cont.)

A. The broad structure of the Pentateuch

B. The grace principle

C. The great promise

D. The developmental theme of the Pentateuch (cont.)

1. Theme v. plot

2. Thematic progression

\* David Clines says that a good way to discover the theme of a book is to ask where it begins and where it ends.

\* "There can be little doubt that the answer of the theme of the Pentateuch must be the promise to the patriarchs with its various elements and its various formulations."

\* "The theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfillment which supplies also the partial non-fulfillment of the promise to or blessing of the Patriarchs. The promise or blessing is both the divine initiative in a world where human initiatives always lead to disaster and a reaffirmation of the primal divine intentions for man."

a. Promise

1) Posterity- Genesis 12-50

2) Blessing-(divine-human relationship) Exodus/Leviticus

- 3) Land-Numbers, Deuteronomy
  - a) Exodus-2 major events
    - \* Exodus event
    - \* Sinai revelation
- 4) Leviticus - God communicating to the community how they are to relate to him
- 5) Numbers-military census—to take the land
  - a) Layout of the camp implies movement
  - b) Num. 10:29-movement toward the Promised Land
- 6) Deuteronomy-progeny is now great
  - a) Possible for future of blessings of relationship
  - b) The land promise is not fulfilled yet
- 7) Some talk about Hexateuch—Gen.-Josh.
- 8) Some talk about Tetrateuch—Gen.-Numbers

Could you name the aspect of God's promise most prominent in each of the Pentateuchal books? Is this surprising to you? Why? Why not? How does this impact the way you understand and respond to the Pentateuch?

#### IV. Grace and Law in the "Primary History"

A. David Noel Freedman ("The Nine Commandments") suggests that the Primary History is structured so as to accent the justice of God's judgment on the people of Israel for their covenant breaking.

For example, Exodus 32, Golden Calf:

1. Apostasy
2. Idolatry  
(Leviticus 24:10-11, the man who "cursed the name and committed blasphemy")
3. Blasphemy  
(Numbers 15:32-36 man gathering wood on the Sabbath)
4. Sabbath observance  
(Deut 21:18-21)
5. Paternal respect  
(Joshua 7 Achan)
6. Stealing (order of these 3 as in Jer. 7:9)  
(Judg. 20:4 The "murdered woman" *ha-isha ha-nir-tsa-cha*, same word for murder in 6th com)
7. Murder  
(2 Samuel 11-12)
8. Adultery  
(1 Kings 21 Naboth's vineyard)
9. False testimony
10. Coveting (the attitude or motivation behind the last four).  
There are certain episodes which have caused some commentators to stumble.

What do you think of Freedman's idea? Is it too forced and imposed? Explain your answer. If it's a fair analysis, how does it impact your understanding of the Pentateuch?

#### **Joshua: God's Conquest (I)**

Literature:

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## A comment on reading method

- \* Martin Woudstra, "The task of the theologian - exegete is a humble yet a significant one; it begins with listening, it continues and ends with listening."
- \* Joshua 1:1-2 Think of as many questions as you possibly can:
  - How much time after the death of Moses?
    - When did Moses die?
    - How did he die?
    - Who is Moses?
    - What is the significance of his death?
    - What is the meaning of "servant of the Lord"?
    - Who is the Lord?
    - How did God speak?
    - Why Joshua?
    - Who is Nun?
    - How to cross the Jordan?
    - Who is Joshua?
    - What land?
    - Why is Joshua called Moses' aide? [LORD=Yahweh=personal covenant name] [Elohim=God] Who are the people?

## How would you search for answers to these questions?

- The Bible
- Concordance
- Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia