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# BOOK OVERVIEW

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## Genesis

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** about 1440 B.C.

**Recipients:** the nation of Israel

**Key word:** generations (19 times)

**Summary:** an account of the beginnings of things

**Key verses:** Genesis 1:1; 12:1-3

**Notes:**

The Greek word “Genesis” means “origin” or “beginning.” The Hebrew name for the book means “in the beginning.”

Genesis is the first of five books that are referred to as the Pentateuch, a Greek word which means “five volumes.” These books were often referred to by Jews as “the Law.”

This is a book of beginnings. The beginning of... 1) the universe, 2) man, 3) sin and death, 4) God’s plan to redeem mankind, 5) the nation of Israel.

The book describes three events which dramatically effect the world we live in today: 1) the universal flood, 2) the multiplication of languages and the dispersion of people at the tower of Babel, and 3) the hostility between Isaac and Ishmael—the origin of the conflict between Arabs and Jews.

God’s promise of a Savior originates in Genesis 3:15.

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## Exodus

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** about 1440–1400 B.C.

**Recipients:** the nation of Israel

**Key word:** redeem (10 times)

**Summary:** the deliverance of the Israelites under the leadership of Moses, who was empowered by God.

**Key verses:** Exodus 3:8, 19:4–6

**Notes:**

Exodus in Greek means “a going out.” The Hebrews called the book “and these are the names”; the first words of the book.

This book was written while Israel was in the wilderness and covers about 215 years—from the time Israel entered Egypt to the time they camped at Mt. Sinai.

Three of the most significant events recorded in the book include the origin of the Passover, the giving of the Law, and the construction of the Tabernacle.

The book includes several miracles: 1) the ten plagues, 2) the opening of the Red Sea and destruction of the Egyptian army, 3) leading by the pillar of cloud and fire, 4) water from a rock (on two occasions), and 5) manna from heaven.

Although the date is not certain, many Bible scholars believe that the Exodus took place about 1440 B.C.

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## Leviticus

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** about 1439 B.C.

**Recipients:** the nation of Israel, especially Aaron and his descendants

**Key word:** holy (in various forms) (131 times), sacrifice (300 times), clean and unclean (200 times), atonement (36 times)

**Summary:** God's standard for proper worship and holy living

**Key verse:** Leviticus 19:2

**Notes:**

Holy means "set apart." Sanctify, sanctified, sanctuary, hallow, and hallowed are from the same root word.

The book focuses upon the service and responsibilities of the Levitical priests. While all Levites, descendants of Levi, were set apart to serve God on behalf of the nation of Israel, only those who were descendants of Aaron served as priests in the Tabernacle, and later in the Temple.

After Israel entered the Promised Land, the Levites were not given a separate section of land as a tribe but they were allotted 48 cities that were dispersed throughout the nation. They were supported primarily through the tithes of the other tribes. That allowed them to devote full-time to God's service.

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## Numbers

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** about 1401 B.C.

**Recipients:** the nation of Israel, especially Aaron and his descendants

**Key word:** wilderness (45 times)

**Summary:** the price Israel paid for not trusting in God

**Key verses:** Numbers 14:28–30

**Notes:**

While Leviticus covers about a month of Israel's time in the wilderness, this book reviews almost the entire 40 years.

The book tells of two "numberings." The first was taken at Mt. Sinai and the second just before entering Canaan.

Along with Jacob, 60 people entered Egypt. The first census indicates that 600,000 men, not including their wives and children, left Egypt in the Exodus. The second census indicates that 601,000 men, not including their wives and children, prepared to enter the Promised Land. All of this in spite of the thousands who died during the 40 years in the wilderness.

The key to understanding the book is the sending of twelve men to spy out the Promised Land and their subsequent report. Had most of the spies trusted God, the book would have been very short.

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## Deuteronomy

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** about 1400 B.C.

**Recipients:** the nation of Israel

**Summary:** a repeat of the laws given at Mt. Sinai.

**Key words:** hear (50 times), do/keep/observe (177 times), love (21 times)

**Key verses:** Deuteronomy 10:12–13

**Notes:**

This book covers about two months of time just prior to the entry into Canaan.

Moses repeats God’s laws partly because most of the Israelites had been born **after** the laws were originally given at Mt. Sinai.

Deuteronomy is quoted in fourteen of the New Testament books. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, he quoted from this book exclusively.

Chapter 32 is sometimes referred to as Moses’ “swan song,” his last words to the Israelites.

Obviously, Moses did not write the last chapter of this book, which describes his death. Many scholars believe that Joshua, to whom Moses passed the mantle of leadership, wrote the first eight verses and Ezra wrote the last four verses; but this is uncertain.

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