

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson One

READ: Galatians 3:1-29; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21

THINK: There are thirty nine books in the Old Testament. An easy way to remember this is that there are three letters in OLD and nine letters in TESTAMENT. Put the three next to the nine, and you have thirty nine.

The writing of the Old Testament covers an historical period of about four thousand years, from the creation of the world (c. 4000 BC), to a period approximately four hundred years before the birth of Jesus.

Jewish scholars recognize three main divisions in the Old Testament. The first is the Torah, which means *Law*. This portion of the Old Testament is often called the Pentateuch by Christian scholars. Pentateuch means five books, which refers to the fact that the Torah is made up of the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The second division recognized by Jewish scholars is the N'vi'im, which means *prophets*. The third division is the K'tuvim, meaning *writings*.

Christian scholars generally recognize five divisions in the Old Testament. The first is the Pentateuch or Torah, the second is History, the third is Poetry, the fourth and fifth are the Major Prophets and Minor Prophets, respectively.

The books of History include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The books of Poetry include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes.

The Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. The Minor Prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The Torah was written by Moses. The books of History were generally

anonymous. The Poetry books include the works of King David (Psalms) and his son, King Solomon (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon), as well as an anonymous work, the book of Job.

The Major Prophets are so designated not because they contain information more important than that contained in the Minor Prophets, but rather because their works are much longer. For example, Isaiah, a Major Prophet, contains sixty-six chapters, while Obadiah, a Minor Prophet, has only one chapter.

The Torah contains the history of the world from the creation until the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites (c. 1210 BC). The historical books continue the history until about 420 BC. The Major Prophets lived and ministered from approximately 750 BC to about 530 BC, while the Minor Prophets covered a wider span, from about 780 BC to about 400 BC.

There are other ancient writings that some consider to be part of the Old Testament. These writings are known as the Apocrypha (Greek: Hidden). The question we would like to ask is: How do we know which writings belong in the Old Testament, and which do not?

This question brings us to the canonicity of the scriptures. The word canon comes from the Hebrew word *kaneh*, which was the name of the long, straight reeds that grew beside marshy waters. Because of the length and straightness of the reeds, they were used as measuring tools. In time, the name *kaneh* came to be applied to any tool or standard for measuring or judging. As our word canon, the standard is used to measure whether or not particular writings are scripture.

The Jewish scholars declared a book to be canonical if it adhered to certain well-defined principles. By themselves, these principles may appear arbitrary, but together, form a valid test of canonicity. Jewish scholars agreed that in order to be canonical, a document had to be written prior to 400 BC, or approximately that date. It also had to be written by a prophet or an individual who at least possessed a prophetic gift. A writing also had to be extant. What this means is that even if a prophet had written a book other than one included in scripture, but that other book was lost, and not discovered until after 400 BC, it could not be considered canonical. So if a writing by the prophet Jeremiah were to be discovered tomorrow, and proven to be the genuine work of Jeremiah, it could not be added to the Old Testament. The reasoning behind this is that if God felt it important enough to speak to a prophet, and to cause the words to be written down, it was unthinkable that He would allow such an important writing to be lost.

Scripture, once written, was believed to be for the benefit of every subsequent age, and not just for the age in which it was written. If it could meet only the immediate needs of the generation in which it was written, it could not be scripture. It would have lacked the timelessness that is characteristic of true scripture.

The most important criterion for canonicity, however, was inspiration. Any writing which was not done under the influence of the Spirit of God was automatically excluded from consideration as canonical, even if it met all the other qualifications. Although we don't know today how the Jewish leaders determined whether a work was inspired by God or not, there was a very early and almost unanimous agreement among the scholars on which works were inspired.

The books we mentioned earlier, the Apocrypha, are not considered canonical by Jewish scholars, and therefore, we reject them today as not being canonical. While they may be useful for historical research, they cannot be considered scripture.

What do we mean when we say that scripture is inspired? Certainly there are many works written today, such as plays, novels, music, etc., which are inspiring. But when we speak of scripture as being inspired, what do we mean?

The word inspire comes from the same root as our word respiration. It has to do with breathing. The verse we read in II Timothy says that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. A more accurate translation would be to say that all scripture is breathed by God. This tells us that every part of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, originated first with God, before any human being perceived the message or wrote the words. This means that God is the ultimate author of the Old Testament. Peter explains to us that the prophecy, or scripture, given in old time, was not the product of human ingenuity, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved (or carried along - Greek *feromenee*) by the Holy Ghost. This means that, although they spoke, what they said was not their own message, but the message of God.

WRITE: List the criteria by which a book of the Old Testament would have been judged for canonicity.

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Two

READ:

THINK: The majority of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. Hebrew is the ancient language of the Jewish people. It belongs to the Semitic family of languages. The Semitic languages are characterized by vowel-less alphabets, and words based on three letter roots.

A few small sections of the Old Testament, most notably in the books of Ezra and Daniel, were written in Aramaic, which is a Semitic tongue, closely related to Hebrew. Following the Jewish people's captivity in Babylon (605 to 538 BC), Hebrew ceased to be their spoken language, and was replaced by Aramaic. It is Aramaic which was the spoken language of Jesus and His disciples. Following the completion of the Hebrew canon, the Old Testament was translated into other languages, such as Greek (the Septuagint, c. 250 BC), Aramaic and Latin.

Through the centuries, there have been scholars who have challenged the authenticity of the Old Testament, and who have challenged the authorship of certain books. It is not uncommon today to find scholars who claim that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, or who claim that the book of Isaiah was written by two different people. It is important for us, as Apostolic Christians, to avoid liberal interpretation of the Bible. If we choose to disbelieve any portion of scripture, or to challenge the authenticity of any part of it, then we stand in danger of undermining our entire faith. The Bible stands as one Book, although containing many parts. If any portion of that one Book be undermined, then the whole thing is undermined, and we have no foundation left upon which to believe the rest of it.

How do we know that what the Old Testament says today is the same thing it said 2400 years ago, when the canon period closed? With modern English translations, they should be diligently compared with the Hebrew text. Unfortunately, most English translations are found seriously deficient in accuracy. But what about

today's Hebrew text? Is it accurate? Absolutely! Our guarantee of this is found in the Jewish people's reverence for the Hebrew language. Hebrew is referred to as *l'shon hakodesh*, the holy tongue. Here are a few examples of the lengths the Jewish people have gone to in order to preserve the integrity of the Hebrew language and the scriptures written in it:

The Old Testament was not written by Hebrew scholars, but by men who heard the voice of God and were willing to answer. Like many of us today, they did not always use proper grammar. And again, like many of us today, they wrote just the way they spoke. The result is that there are minor grammatical errors in the Old Testament. (For example, using a masculine pronoun to refer to a feminine noun. It doesn't alter the meaning, but it is grammatically incorrect.) It has been 3200 years since Moses wrote the Torah. In that amount of time, it would have been no problem at all for Hebrew scholars to go through the Old Testament and polish up the grammar a little bit. But they never did. Why? Because the Hebrew language and the scriptures written in it are so holy, that even grammatical errors have become holy, and may not be corrected. The best the scholars could do was note the errors without changing them, and even that was not done until the Middle Ages.

As was mentioned earlier, Hebrew, like most Semitic languages, has no vowels in its alphabet. The language is written entirely with consonants, from right to left, and the reader was supposed to be able to know which vowel sounds were needed from context. This, however, was not an easy task. Imagine, if you will, what it would be like trying to read English with no vowels. Does the word *mn* mean *amen*, *man*, *men*, *omen*, or *mein*? Was it *mean* or *moan*? How about the sentence: *cnt fgr t hw m sppsd t rd nglsh wtht vwls*. Did you know what the sentence said? (I can't figure out how I'm supposed to read English without vowels.) It wasn't easy, was it? Can you imagine reading an entire book that way?

In the Middle Ages, the Jewish scholars wanted to make it easier to read Hebrew. The lack of vowels, as well as their superstition against pronouncing God's Name, had already caused them to forever lose the proper pronunciation of that Name. Would they forget how to speak their language altogether? (To a certain extent, that happened. There are today two major pronunciations of Hebrew, the Sefardic and the Ashkenazi. There are also minor dialects, such as the Yemenite.) To prevent further disintegration of the spoken Hebrew, as well as to facilitate reading, the scholars decided that written Hebrew needed vowels. But this wouldn't be as easy a task as it seems. They agreed that the language was holy. But they also believed that the alphabet was holy. They could not add new letters to it. The spelling of words was also holy. They could not change spellings. (Modern Hebrew has relaxed this

and Israel adopted a new style of spelling to make it even easier to read Hebrew, but some orthodox Jews reject the new spellings.) How can you add vowels to a language when you can't alter spelling or create new letters?

The answer came in the form of dots and dashes. By arranging dots and dashes in specific patterns, each pattern representing a specific vowel sound, the written Hebrew could now be readily pronounced. But remember, the letters of the alphabet are considered holy. No vowel was permitted to touch a letter of the alphabet. The new vowels could be placed above, below, beside or inside a letter, but could not touch the letter in any way. With such fanatical respect for even the letters of the alphabet, we can be absolutely assured that today's copies of the Hebrew Old Testament (which the Jews still copy over by hand) are accurate.

Just as a point of information, it was the new vowels that enabled the Jewish scholars to deal with the grammatical errors that they would not correct. When they came to an incorrect word (for example, the masculine pronoun mentioned above), they did not put the vowels of the masculine pronoun, but the vowels of the feminine pronoun that should have been used. The resulting word is unpronounceable, but serves as a notice to the reader that a grammatical error is present. The reader may choose to read the text with the correct word, represented by the vowels, or the original word, represented by the consonants. Hebrew text which contains the vowels is called *pointed text*. In modern Hebrew, only scripture, prayer books, poetry books, song books, children's books, and books to teach Hebrew are pointed. Newspapers, novels, etc., only use the vowels when they are essential to differentiating between two words with identical consonants if the context of the sentence does not make the choice clear.

WRITE: Name two books of the Old Testament which were not written entirely in Hebrew.

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Three

READ: Genesis 1:1

THINK: In the English Bible, the first three words of scripture are *In the beginning*. In Hebrew, this is one word, *B'reshit*, and that word is the Hebrew name for the book of Genesis. Our word *Genesis* comes from a Greek word meaning *beginnings*.

The Bible says *In the beginning*. . . This refers to the time before anything, including time itself, was created. All there was, was God. Notice that the Bible never attempts to *prove* the existence of God, but right from the very first verse, *assumes* the existence of God. In the beginning, God. . . created the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew word for created is *bara*. The word *bara* does not simply mean to make something or to form something, but actually to create *out of nothing*. (*creatio ex nihilo*) This verb *bara* is used in Hebrew only in connection with the actions of God, since only God has the ability to create from nothing.

Verse 2 indicates that the earth was without form and void. The Hebrew says *tohu vavohu*. A close English equivalent would be *topsy turvy* or *helter skelter*. In other words, the earth was in a state of complete chaos and disorder.

The next action of God was the creation of light. Notice that it does not say that God created light from some pre-existing substance, but rather, He spoke light into existence. It is interesting to note the form of the verb *to be* used in Hebrew. In both God's command for light to be, and the statement that light came into existence, Hebrew uses an imperative form. We might translate this as *And God said, "Light, be!" and the light be!* or perhaps, *And God said, "Light, exist!" and light exists!* It is difficult to get an exact translation, because, in English, an imperative form can only be used as a command, and not as an exclamation of something that has happened. However we choose to interpret it, the statement is definitely more powerful than the usual translation *and there was light*. Notice also that the Hebrew use of the

imperative (light be), rather than the past tense (and there was light), totally disregards the concept of time, for indeed, time had not yet begun. It is not until we come to verse 5 that time begins to exist and be measured.

Verse 5 tells us that the evening and the morning were the first day. Time has begun. But, unlike the modern reckoning of the day, God said that the day began with the evening, not with the morning. According to the Jewish concept of time, the day does indeed begin at sundown.

There are liberal scholars today who do not believe that the six days of creation were literal 24 hour days. Some point to II Peter 3:8, and claim that the days of creation were each a thousand years long, or longer. This school of thought includes creationary evolutionists, that is, people who believe in the theory of evolution, but believe that God caused evolution. Notice again, however, that the Bible says that the evening and the morning were the first day. This is strong evidence that the days of creation were actual 24 hour days. If they were longer, and if evolution were fact rather than fiction, science would have no problem producing fossils of evolving species, creatures that were not like the species of today, but were in between. This, however, has always been a problem for evolutionists. Such fossils, missing links, are noticeably missing. Every few years they turn up a minute body part, and attempt to reconstruct an entire body and history for it. Some years ago, a tooth was found. It didn't take the evolutionists long to decide that the tooth belonged to a "pre-human" woman, somewhere between man and ape. They constructed an entire skeleton based on this theory, and then produced drawings and sculptures of what this anthropoid looked like, what she ate, where she lived, etc. After careful study by other scientists, however, it became known that their amazing missing link was a fraud: The tooth belonged to a pig!

Also to be regarded with skepticism are the evolutionists' claims regarding the age of the earth. In the Bible, we can trace the genealogy of mankind back, arriving at an approximate date for the creation of man: 4000 BC. Science insists that we've been around for millions of years, and that the earth is billions of years old. They have specific tests they use to date rock samples, fossils, etc. One such test, still routinely used, is Carbon 14. According to Carbon 14 testing, many of their prize fossils are hundreds of thousands of years old. Some date back more than a million years. However, not too many years ago, Carbon 14 dating was "tested" by trying it on a living animal. According to Carbon 14, this living animal was 10,000 years old. So much for the accuracy of their tests!

The Bible tells us that on the second day, God created the *firmament*. This word

does not have the same meaning today that it had in 1611 when the King James Version was translated. While today the word firmament gives the idea of something solid, in Elizabethan English, the exact opposite meaning was implied. There was no suggestion of solidity at all. The actual meaning is space, or expanse, or even atmosphere. The purpose of this firmament, or atmosphere, according to verse 7, was to divide the waters. It divided the waters above from the waters beneath. In order to understand what this means, we must realize that the world as we understand it today is different from the world God created. Today, above the atmosphere, there is nothing, just empty space. Originally, however, there was a band of water that encircled the earth, just above the atmosphere. From a scientific perspective, such a band of water would filter out a significant portion of the ultraviolet radiation from the sun, thereby greatly slowing down the aging process. This band of water was poured onto the earth during the flood, which we will be studying later. The loss of the waters above would explain why man's lifespan was greatly shortened after the flood, whereas before the flood, people lived seven hundred years or longer.

WRITE: Why is it unlikely that the days of the creation were longer than 24 hours?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Four

READ: Genesis chapters 1, 2, and 3

THINK: The Bible tells us that God created man in His own image. The Hebrew word for man used here was *adam*, and is related to the word for *red*, no doubt referring to the color of the dust or clay that man was made out of. It means *man* in the sense of *human being*. When woman was created, she, too, was called *adam* or human (Gen. 1:27). Adam called her *inshah* (woman; in modern Hebrew, this word has become *ishah*), for she was taken out of *enosh* (man - *enosh* was the man's name that he gave himself. In modern Hebrew, it has become *ish*. Both *ish* and *adam* mean man in modern Hebrew, but *adam* means man as mankind, that is, both male and female). The woman referred to her husband by the same name that God called him, that is, *Adam*, and it took on the quality of a proper name. After the fall and the expulsion from the garden, Adam called his wife *Chavah* (Eve), meaning *living*, because she would be the mother of the entire human race.

God had planted a garden in Eden (Hebrew - *pleasure* or *paradise*). There were four rivers in Eden. Two of these were the Tigris and Euphrates. If these are the same Tigris and Euphrates found in modern day Iraq, then it indicates that the garden was located there. Indeed, this area is known as the fertile crescent, being one of the most fertile places on earth. God put the man and woman in this garden to care for it. They were given permission to eat from any tree in the garden except the tree in the center of the garden, known as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Please note that the Bible never says it was an apple tree or that Adam and Eve ate an apple. One "scholar," attempting to disprove the Bible, spent a small fortune to prove that apples don't grow in Mesopotamia. He succeeded in proving this, but failed to disprove the Bible. He had never read the Bible, and simply assumed that the "myth" about the fruit being an apple was what the Bible actually said. He ultimately proved only that he was a fool. [Ps. 14:1])

Conditions in the garden were quite different from the world as we know it today.

Adam and Eve had been given dominion (authority) over all the animals. The animals and the humans were vegetarians; no species ate another. The man and his wife were naked and were not ashamed.

Satan, whom we studied in a previous class, spoke to Eve through the serpent. A serpent was not simply a snake. The creature we know as a snake did not yet exist. The serpent was the forerunner of the snake. The serpent, however, had legs. (A Chinese dragon is a good approximation of what the serpent looked like.) Satan began to question Eve. He was jealous of the man and woman, and, being an enemy of God, was determined to ruin whatever plans God had for them. He began by twisting what God said. He asked Eve, "Has God forbidden you to eat from all the trees in the garden?" His implication was that God was being mean to Adam and Eve. He knew full well that God had not forbidden them to eat from all the trees.

In Eve's reply to Satan, she committed the first sin ever committed by a human being: She changed God's word. She said, "God said we could eat from all the trees except the tree in the center of the garden. He said that we must not eat from it or even touch it, or we would surely die." Now, God never said they were not to *touch* the tree. Eve added that. Changing God's word is sin. Satan continued his plan. Note that whenever Satan tells a lie, there is always a thread of truth, shining like gold, running through the lie. It is that thread of truth that snared Eve, and still snares people today. He said, "You will not surely die. (lie) God knows that the day you eat from that tree, you will be like gods, (lie) knowing good from evil (truth)." It was at this point, that Eve committed the second sin: She doubted God's word. Satan implied that God was holding out on her, and she bought it. Doubting God's word is sin.

Eve looked at the fruit, and saw that it was good for food (lust of the flesh), pleasant to look at (lust of the eyes), and was to be desired to make one wise (pride of life). (Read I John 2:15-17 and James 1:14-15 in connection with this.) Finally, Eve committed the third sin: She took the fruit and ate it. She gave some to Adam, and he, knowing full well what it was, ate it too. Immediately, their eyes were opened. They knew they were naked, and made themselves aprons from fig leaves.

That evening, God came walking in the garden, looking for Adam and Eve. When they heard His voice, however, they tried to hide from Him. They told Him they were ashamed because they were naked. He asked them who told them they were naked. He already knew the answer. There was only one way they could have known. They had eaten from the tree.

Adam tried to blame Eve, Eve tried to blame the serpent. As a result of the sin, God pronounced three curses. The first curse was placed on the serpent. He lost his legs, and was forced to crawl on his belly. He was told that from that time on, he would eat dust (that is, other animals). God placed hatred between the woman and the serpent, and between the descendants of the woman and the descendants of the serpent (now a snake). But at that point, God also offered some hope: The first prophecy of a Messiah who would come to save mankind from sin and would destroy the power of Satan forever. God said that a descendant of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (a fatal wound), and the serpent would bruise His heel (not a fatal wound).

The next curse was placed on the woman, because it was she who changed God's word, doubted God's word, and finally disobeyed God's word before her husband did. Eve lost her position of equality to her husband, and was placed in subjection to him. He would rule over her all the days of her life. God told her she would have to bear children, and increased the pain she would feel in childbearing.

The last curse was placed on the ground because of Adam's sin. It would no longer yield full increase. Adam would be forced to go out and work the earth, whereas before, fruit grew abundantly without being sown and tended by man. And despite the man working hard all the days of his life, the ground would yield more thorns and thistles (weeds) than edible food. Note that the curse was placed on the ground because of man, and not on the man himself. This was important. The female descendents of Eve all bore her curse. If Adam had been cursed directly, all male descendents would also have been born under that curse, and thus, Jesus, too, would have been born under it, and would be unqualified to be redeemer. Therefore, man's curse was placed on the ground instead of directly on him.

At that point, God told Adam and Eve the most terrible part of the curse: They would die and return to dust. They were so sure of themselves as the absolute rulers of the garden, that they never realized they were simply dust. The fear of death was born that day.

There was another tree in the garden, known as the Tree of Life. Eating the fruit of that tree granted eternal life. Adam and Eve had lost their right to eat from that tree. So that they would not find it and eat from it, God drove them out of the garden. He placed cherubim with a flaming sword at the east of the garden to guard against anyone returning to eat from the tree of life. The sword turned every which way, and no one could pass it.

WRITE: What were the curses pronounced by God, and upon whom or what was each curse placed?

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Five

(Note: This lesson contains the text of a message by Bishop G. T. Haywood, one of the Oneness Pentecostal pioneers of the twentieth century. It is entitled "The Victim of The Flaming Sword." This lesson does not contain the usual divisions of READ, THINK, and WRITE.)

The fall of man was tragedy that has been keenly felt by all humanity from Eden to Calvary, and from Calvary till now. We have read of the fatal calamity, and have been made to mourn and weep over our lamentable downfall. But in spite of all this, the fact still remains the same, that the sin of our forefather Adam thrust us out from the Paradise of God.

Although coats of skin were brought forth to cover the nakedness of the transgressor, and the blood of an innocent creature had been shed, temporarily staying the hand of Justice, yet the words "The day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," stood steadfast, still unchanged.

The enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman, the bruising of his heel, the multiplying of her sorrows and conception, the cursing of the ground, the sorrow of eating the products of the earth all the days of his life, the thorns, the thistles, and the eating of bread by the seat of his face until he should return to the ground, were severe inflictions of punishment upon the first violators of God's unalterable law. There is no doubt but that they felt the keenest remorse and shame, but to be sent forth from out of the Garden, lest he should partake of the tree of life and live forever, was doubtless received with surprise.

Apparently the anger and indignation of God was increased, for it further stated, "So He DROVE out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a FLAMING SWORD, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." Man by his wisdom was never to lay hold on the tree of life. The sentence of death was passed upon all, and the rights to the tree of life had been forfeited. Whoever attempted to regain it must come against the Flaming Sword.

From the time of the expulsion from Eden until the Exodus from the land of Egypt, the way of the tree of life had been kept from Adam's posterity. No man had been able to pass the flaming sword. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Hope had almost vanished. The old patriarch declared that there was hope for a tree, but a man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? And again, if a man dies, shall he live again? No man could by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; that he should still live forever and not see corruption (Job 14:7-14; Psalm 49:7-9). No man could approach the tree of life.

There was a temporary restraint through the offering of the sacrifices of bullocks, goats, lambs, doves and pigeons. It appears that in order to redeem his forfeited position, mankind sought the aid of these innocent creatures, and as they approached the tree of life, these sacrifices fell victim to the flaming sword. One after another fell bleeding upon the altar, breathing its final breath, and died. None of them were revived from the dead to prove that they had succeeded in passing the sword and regained the way of the tree of life.

So great was the slaughter of the bulls, goats and lambs, that God Himself grew weary of its continuance, and said: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? I am full of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats." (Isaiah 1:11) "For my Sword shall be bathed (Revised Version: hath drunk its fill) in heaven: Behold it shall come down upon Idumea (Edom), and upon the people of my curse to judgment. The Sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea." Is. 34:5-6

From the foregoing scriptures we see that the Sword was filled with the blood of the sacrifices. To God it was "enough." He had a better sacrifice "in Bozrah," and it was to be "a great slaughter in the land of Edom" (Idumea). Edom was the name given to the descendants of Esau. Esau and Jacob were two great types. In Esau we see the type of God's people after the flesh (Israel), while in Jacob we see the type of the Church, who are God's people after the Spirit. And as Jacob supplanted Esau, even so has the Church supplanted the Israelites. It is for this reason that God said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Romans 9:13; Genesis 25:21-26)

When He said that He had a sacrifice in Bozrah, and that His Sword would come down upon the land of Edom, it was then that He pointed out where His Flaming Sword would mete out justice. The prophet, foreseeing, cried out later, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" The Spirit of Christ within him (I Peter 1:10-11) answered, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Isaiah 63:1 The word Bozrah signifies sheepfold. It was in the midst of Israel that his garments were to be dyed in blood. See John 10.

David in his day, foreseeing the sufferings of Christ as the sacrifice, records in the 22nd Psalm, verse 1, the very words of Jesus upon His cross. In verse 20, he says, "Deliver my soul from the Sword; my darling from the power of the dog (the Gentiles)." Through this we can see that the Sword was connected with Calvary. For a long time the Sword seemed to have been in silence, but because there was One coming to redeem the forfeited possession, we hear Justice crying through the prophet Zechariah, "Awake O Sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Zechariah 13:7 See Matthew 26:31.

After many weary years of waiting, One came who was to be a commander and a leader of the people (Isaiah 55:4). He came to show the way to the tree of life. His words "I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly," cast a ray of hope across the path of the people who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. He came to restore the way to the tree of life.

To accomplish this, He must pass the Flaming Sword in the hand of the cherubim that was placed at the east of the Garden of Eden. When His hour arrived, He was not discouraged. He faced it like a man of war. The conflict was terrific. The Sword pierced His brow, and blood came streaming down His face. His body was lacerated. His hands were torn and bleeding, the Sword wounds entered His feet and His side, but onward yet He pressed.

In the midst of His suffering, He gave the thief an assurance that he would regain the entrance into Paradise. He, too, was paying the penalty "Thou shalt surely die." And to him He said, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The tree of life was in the midst of Paradise.

In the heat of the struggle, He cried, "I thirst," and as darkness settled upon Him, the lamentable cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" brought the terrible conflict to an end. And when He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished," He gave up the ghost and entered into Paradise. Thus He braved the Flaming Sword and gained for us a right to the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7; 22:14). Whether we live or die that life is for us, and He shall raise us up in the last day. (John 6:54; Rev. 2:1)

(Instructor's note: How do we know that Jesus succeeded in passing the Flaming Sword? We can be assured by the most important difference between the sacrifice of Jesus and the animal sacrifices which preceded His death: Unlike the animals, He came back! It was reaching the tree of life and eating from it that raised the man Jesus from the dead. It was not until after His resurrection that the flesh was reunited with the Spirit of God [John 20:17]. His resurrection from the dead was incontrovertible proof that He had indeed passed the Sword and eaten from the tree of life.)

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Six

READ: Hebrews 9:22

THINK: One of the first things God did after Adam and Eve sinned was to kill animals and make coats of their skins for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve, upon realizing their nakedness, had made for themselves aprons by sewing together fig leaves. Why did God make them coats of animal skin? Was it because the fig leaves didn't cover them sufficiently? No, the reason was far more important, and far more horrible: The price of sin was death. They had sinned and something had to die. The blood of the innocent animals provided a temporary payment for the sin of Adam and Eve. And lest they forget that innocent creatures were killed to pay for their sin, Adam and Eve were made to wear the skins of the slain victims, a constant reminder of their guilt.

WRITE: Offer two verses of scripture to prove that blood is necessary for the forgiveness of sin.

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Seven

READ: Genesis chapters 4 & 5; Genesis 6:13-22

THINK: As we read through the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis, we can trace two distinct genealogies. One, the descendants of Cain, did not follow the ways of God. The other, the descendants of Seth, did follow the ways of God. As long as these two bloodlines were kept separate and distinct, the knowledge of the true God could continue. We find, however, in Genesis 6:1-2, that an intermarriage took place, which resulted in the absorption of the descendants of Seth into the lineage of the descendants of Cain, with the sole exception of Noah and his family, who remained faithful to the true God.

There are those who would suggest that the phrase "sons of God" in verse 2 refers to angels, and that the intermarriage that took place was between angels and humans. At first glance, this viewpoint does appear to have some support, especially if we compare Job 1:6; II Peter 2:4, and Jude 6-7. However, after closer inspection, there is more evidence against this view. In Mark 12:25, Jesus told us that angels do not marry. In addition, if the "sons of God" in Gen. 6:2 does not refer to the descendants of Seth, then there is no explanation for what happened to those descendants or for how they lost the knowledge of God. It seems fairly clear that an intermarriage between the two bloodlines was the cause of the loss of the knowledge of God, and therefore the cause of the flood.

In only the first six chapters of scripture, we have reached a point where only one family on earth, the family of Noah, is following the ways of God. The rest of mankind has become so immersed in sin, that God actually regretted having created man. (Gen. 6:6) God determined that the only way to remove the sin was to destroy mankind and start over. There was, however, a man named Noah (Hebrew: rest) who found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Through the years, there have been from various quarters many objections to the

story of the flood. Let's look at some of these:

Since it was God's intention to destroy mankind from the earth, but not the animals, those species of animals which could not survive the flood needed to be taken into the ark along with Noah and his family. Following the directions of God, Noah began to build a huge boat which would need to be large enough to accomplish the task of preserving at least two of every species that could not survive outside the ark. If we use 18 inches as the length of the cubit, the dimensions of the ark were 450' by 75' by 45'. The boat had three decks, each of which had an area of about 33,750 square feet. The entire capacity was roughly one and a half million cubic feet. This is an important fact, because one of the most prevalent arguments against the flood is that the ark could not possibly have held so many animals, as well as sufficient food. Science today estimates that there are about one million different species. However, over 95% of these species could have survived the flood outside of the ark. This means that there were no more than 50,000 animals in all on board the ark, although some believe the figure should be no higher than 35,000. The average size of the animals would be about equivalent to the size of a sheep. Simple calculation leads us then to the conclusion that all of the animals could easily have been accommodated on only one deck of the ark, leaving the other two decks for food storage and other purposes. And of course, there was no problem with storing water, since it is quite likely that rain fell throughout the greater part of the flood time.

During the time that the ark was being built, Noah served as a preacher of righteousness, and he urged the people to repent. God instructed him to enter the ark with two of every unclean animal, and seven of every clean. The seventh of each clean animal was probably for the purpose of sacrifice after the flood. God shut the door of the ark. This is an important point. Once the rain began to fall, the people of earth no doubt began to knock on the door of the ark. Noah could not open the door for them, for God had shut it. (Rev. 3:7) An important parallel for us is the soon coming of Jesus for His church. Right now, most people simply don't want to enter the church. They don't believe the message we preach. But like Noah who preached right up till the moment God shut the door, we must repeat our message till the last minute. One day soon, a trumpet will blow and a voice will call that only the church will hear. We'll be caught away; the door will once again have been shut by God, and no one will have the power to open it again. Rest assured, moments after the church is taken out of the world, people by the hundreds will want to enter in, but it will be too late. The door will have been shut. Let's do our utmost to get the message out so as many as are willing can come in now while there's still time.

The Bible tells us the floodgates of the heavens were opened, and for forty days rain fell. Apparently, rain had never fallen before. Prior to this time, plants were watered by a dewy mist which appeared each morning (Gen. 2:5-6). The fact that rain had never fallen from the sky is no doubt part of the reason that nobody believed Noah. The story of water falling out of the sky was more than they could believe. At the time of the flood, the band of water above the atmosphere came down onto the earth. This alone would have put hundreds of feet of water on the earth. In addition, the Bible tells us that the fountains of the great deep were broken open, indicating that water from underground sources poured forth. This could have added thousands of feet of water to the flood.

The loss of so much underground water would have caused major changes in the face of the land. It could very possibly have caused the continents to drop lower, thereby increasing the depth of the water on the surface. By the 150th day, water covered even the highest mountain. Afterward, the water began to recede, most of it probably retreating under the earth. It may have been at this time that the continents separated, creating great oceans between them. The return of the water to its subterranean reservoirs would have caused the continents to rise again, thrusting up great mountain peaks in the wake of phenomenal tectonic pressures. (See Psalm 104:6-9)

The Bible teaches that the flood was universal, that is, that it covered the entire earth. Some have argued that this is not possible, insisting that the flood was local in scope, covering only the area of Mesopotamia. Let's look at some of the arguments against the theory of a local flood:

The first argument is the depth of the flood, as described in Genesis 7:19-20. If the flood was restricted only to a certain area, it is difficult to understand how it could cover the highest mountains in that area without overflowing into other areas. The fact that water seeks its own level argues against a local flood.

Another argument against a local flood is the duration of the flood. It appears that it was more than a year from the time that Noah entered the ark until he left it, with water covering the earth for most of that time. No local flood in history ever lasted that long. Any flood which endured for such a period would have to be universal.

Another argument is the size of the ark. Why would Noah build a vessel big enough to accommodate all the land species on earth, when it would have sufficed to build a boat big enough to contain the species indigenous to Mesopotamia, of which

there were very few? Or why build an ark at all? Noah and his family, with 120 years advance warning of the impending flood, could easily have rounded up any animals in danger of drowning, and could have simply walked away from the area to be flooded. Why would he spend 120 years building a boat he didn't really need?

A final argument is the testimony of Peter. II Peter 3:3-7 tells us that at the end of this age, God will destroy the world with fire. He bases his argument for the extensiveness of this judgment on a comparison with the destruction by water in Noah's time. Peter is predicting a universal devastation by fire, comparing it with a universal devastation by water.

WRITE: Give two reasons why it is unlikely that the flood was only a local flood.

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Eight

READ: Genesis 11:1

THINK: Noah had three sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth. Following the flood, their families began to grow. We are able to trace the various races of people on earth back through the centuries to determine from which of Noah's sons they developed. Arabs and Jews are known as Semites, or Semitic. This means that they are descendants of Shem. The dark skinned peoples who live in or trace their ancestry to Africa are known as Hamitic. They are descendants of Ham. The lighter skinned people, originating in Europe and Asia are descendants of Japheth. Strong similarities noted between Native Americans and Asians indicates that they, too, are descendants of Japheth.

One of the things which God told Noah after the flood was that he and his family should be fruitful and multiply, and bring forth abundantly in the earth. It was evidently God's will that mankind spread out over the face of the earth and fill it. And while Noah and his family fulfilled the part about being fruitful and multiplying, for a time they seemed to congregate around Mesopotamia. This resulted in quite a lot of people living in a relatively small part of the world. Out of this was to grow not only the world's first empire, but also the oldest religion still practiced today.

Gen. 10:8-10 tells us of Nimrod, the son of Cush, and the beginning of his kingdom, Babel (Hebrew: Bav El - Gate of God). It was in the early days of Babel that the people decided to build a tower to reach to heaven. Now, obviously, they could not have built a tower that could take them to heaven. Therefore, we have to look deeper for the reason why God confounded the work. First of all, they were not spreading out over the earth as God had intended. Second, by trying to reach heaven, they were, in effect, trying to make themselves as powerful as God. (In fact, the rulers of Babel founded a religion in which they claimed to be the one God in three persons.) Third, since the people were united in language, nationality and purpose

(and that purpose was not God's purpose), it seemed evident that they would always be opposed to the will of God. God determined to put a halt not only to their tower which couldn't have reached to heaven anyway, but also to their unity of purpose.

At Babel, God caused the one language of the Babylonians to instantly divide into many languages. The people found they could no longer communicate with each other. The tower was abandoned, and people congregated in groups, each according to the language he now spoke. These various language groups finally fulfilled the will of God by spreading out over the earth. The words *Bav El* lost their original meaning. Today, the Hebrew word *bavel* means confusion. Our English word *babble* comes from the Hebrew word. The kingdom of Babel, meanwhile, grew into the mighty Babylonian Empire, spreading from the Mediterranean Sea as far east as India. The evil Babylonian religion infiltrated nearly every religion the world has ever known, and continues to be practiced today in a slightly altered form. Although it most strongly influenced Christianity, elements of the Babylonian religion can be found in Judaism, Hinduism and ancient Buddhism. It also affected strongly the religions of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome.

WRITE: From which of Noah's sons is each of the following nationalities descended: Russians, Japanese, Saudi Arabians, Nigerians, Apaches, Danes, Jews, Kenyans. (Examples: Italians are descended from Japheth, Lebanese are descended from Shem.)

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Nine

READ: Genesis 11:27-32; 12:1-5; Acts 7:2-4; Hebrews 11:8-12

THINK: Following the dispersion of the nations from the Tower of Babel, the knowledge of the true God seems to have vanished from the earth. The evil religion of Babylon held sway over most of the world's inhabitants. Lesser religions, involving deities of nature, were also in existence.

There was a man in the land of Ur, an area inhabited by the Chaldeans, close to the center of the Babylonian empire (in present day Iraq). This man's name was Abram (Hebrew - Av-Ram - Great Father). His wife's name was Sarai (Hebrew - My Princes). Abram was not originally a worshiper of the true God. In fact, prior to his call from the Lord, there is no evidence that he had any knowledge of God.

God spoke to Abram and told him to leave Ur and to travel to a land he had never before seen. We don't know exactly how God manifested Himself to Abram, but it must have been impressive, for Abram packed up his belongings and left his home to follow the One who called Himself El Shaddai (Almighty God). Abram was accompanied by his wife and his nephew, Lot, the same one who would later live in the ill-fated city of Sodom.

After settling in Canaan, Abram encountered a man identified as Melchizedek (Hebrew - *Malki Tzedek* - My King is Righteous), King of Salem (later called Jerusalem), who greeted him with bread and wine. Melchizedek was identified further as a priest of the Most High God (Hebrew - *El Elyon*), and Abram paid him tithes. The fact that Melchizedek was both a king and a priest is significant - those offices were always separate. For a king to perform the office of a priest was not permissible. We read later in the history of Israel that Saul, the king, offered a burnt sacrifice in the place of the prophet Samuel, who was a priest. The action displeased God and was counted as sin. (I Samuel 13:8-14) King David was more careful: He wanted to dance before the Ark of the Covenant when it was brought up to

Jerusalem, but only the priests could precede the Ark in a procession. David, therefore, pulled aside one of the priests and switched clothes (and symbolically, roles) with him. David wore the ephod of a priest as he danced before the Lord. (II Samuel 6:14) The fact that he publicly changed clothes is the reason his wife Michal sarcastically berated him when he returned home: "How glorious was the king of Israel today when he shamelessly undressed before the handmaidens of his servants like a fool!" (II Samuel 6:20, paraphrased)

Melchizedek was both king and priest - King of Salem (Hebrew - *Shalem* - Peace) and a priest of the Most High God. But he was much more than that. Hebrews chapter seven tells us that Melchizedek had neither father nor mother, neither beginning nor end. It's clear, then, that Melchizedek was no ordinary man. He could only have been God, in human form. Temporary manifestations of God in human (or angelic) form are called theophanies. Melchizedek was a theophany. Hebrews chapter seven makes some fascinating comparisons between Melchizedek and Jesus.

WRITE: A priest may offer sacrifice, but a king may not. Like Melchizedek, Jesus was both King and (High) Priest. As our High Priest, Jesus offered just one sacrifice. What sacrifice did He offer?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Ten

READ: Genesis 15:1-6, 13-16, 18

THINK: God had promised Abram that his seed would be a great nation. Abram, though, had no children. Sarai was barren, and she was now old, past the age of childbearing. Abram's only heir was his Syrian servant, Eliezer of Damascus.

Sarai had a maid, an Egyptian woman named Hagar. She gave this maid to Abram so that he might father a child to be their heir and the fulfillment of God's promise. A son was born, and named Ishmael (Hebrew - *Yishma'el* - God Will Hear, or God Heard). According to ancient law and tradition, the actions of Sarai and Abram in relation to Hagar were quite legitimate. But this was not how God intended to fulfill His promise. Ishmael did indeed become a great nation (the Arabs - Gen. 16:10-16), but he was not to be the fulfillment of the promise.

Thirteen years later, God appeared again to Abram and renewed His promise. To seal the promise, He changed Abram's name to Abraham (Hebrew - *Av-Raham* - Father of a Great Multitude), and changed Sarai's name to Sarah (Princess). He also instituted the rite of circumcision. Each male born into the household of Abraham was to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. God went on to say that Sarah would bear a son, whom they were to name Isaac (Hebrew - *Yitzhak* - He Will Laugh). It was a fitting name, since Sarah laughed when she heard the prophecy. (Gen. 18:11-15; 21:1-7)

WRITE: Abraham and Sarah, the first Jews, tried to fulfill the promise of God their own way, through the birth of Ishmael. Ishmael was the first Arab, and there has long been contention between Jews and Arabs. What does this suggest to us about trying to do God's will our way instead of His?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Eleven

READ: Genesis 18:17-33; 19:1-28

THINK: Genesis 13:13 tells us that the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. But what was their sin? Tradition would tell us that their city was destroyed because of homosexuality, and in fact, some modern English translations of the Bible have rendered Genesis 19 in such a way as to support that teaching. There are a few facts the student should be aware of before accepting such a teaching:

1. The Hebrew Old Testament never connects Sodom and Gomorrah with homosexuality, nor does any ancient Hebrew Bible commentary.
2. The Hebrew Old Testament does not contain such a word as “sodomite.”
3. There is absolutely no condemnation of homosexuality in the Hebrew Old Testament.
4. The translators of every English version have been fully aware of the above facts, but chose not to reflect that awareness in their translations.

The student may draw his/her own conclusions from this.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 tells us the sins of Sodom. The word abomination, at the period of time when Sodom was destroyed (i.e., prior to the Law of Moses), refers to practices associated with idolatry: Human sacrifice, temple prostitution, consumption of blood and consumption of food offered to idols.

Abraham tried unsuccessfully to talk God out of destroying Sodom. God would have spared the city if there had been even ten righteous people there. Unfortunately, there were not. Of the four people who escaped the city, not even all of those were righteous. Lot's wife disobeyed the angels by looking back at the city. She was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot's two daughters, after the death of their mother, made their father drunk and slept with him. The elder daughter bore a son, whom she

named Moab. He was the father of the Moabites. The younger daughter also bore a son, and called him Ben-Ammi. He was the father of the Ammonites.

WRITE: Lot didn't want to leave Sodom and delayed and stalled as long as possible, until the angels were obliged to take him and his family by the hand and literally pull them out of the city. Why do you think Lot didn't want to leave?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Twelve

READ: Genesis 22:1-18

THINK: What do you do when God asks you to do the unthinkable? At times, we get to feeling sorry for ourselves, sure that we've sacrificed so much for God. Perhaps we've given up lucrative careers in order to preach the Gospel. Maybe we've left home and loved ones to move to a far-off place to bring the word to those who've never heard. But we so often balk at these sacrifices. "Lord," we argue, "how can You ask me to go there (or do that)?" In the end, we obey, but we make certain that all are aware of our supreme sacrifice. But was it so great a sacrifice?

God spoke to Abraham and told him to take his son Isaac, the one through whom the promise was to be fulfilled, and to offer him as a burnt sacrifice. From which of us has God ever asked so great a sacrifice?

We need to be realistic about this: Abraham did not like what God asked him to do. All sorts of things must have gone through his mind. He'd left his home in Ur to follow the God who had called him. He had dedicated his whole life to serving that God. God had promised him that Isaac would be the fulfillment of a promise: That Abraham would be the father of a great nation, that his descendants would be as innumerable as the stars in the sky, and that through his seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed. Now, in a complete turnaround, God is asking Abraham to kill his son. What could it all mean?

His own confusion, frustration, anger, disappointment and betrayal notwithstanding, Abraham was prepared to obey God. By taking his son to Mount Moriah and preparing to slay him, Abraham had passed the test. The test was obedience. The sacrifice was not required, only the willingness to offer it. God provided another sacrifice, a ram. Because of God's provision of another sacrifice, Abraham named the place Jehovah-Jireh (Hebrew - YHVH yireh - *The LORD will see* [to it]). Because of Abraham's willingness to obey God, in spite of his own feelings, God

repeated His promise to him.

WRITE: According to scripture (I Samuel 13), which does God more highly value: Obedience, or sacrifice?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Thirteen

READ: Genesis 25:5-11, 20-34; 27:1-40

THINK: Isaac had twin sons, Esau (Hebrew - *Esav* - Rough?) and Jacob (Hebrew - *Ya'akov* - He Will Follow or He Will Take the Place Of). Esau was the eldest, but he despised his birthright, and sold it for a bowl of soup. Don't miss the significance of this story: The church also has a birthright, a heritage. The early church sold that birthright between the years AD 100 and 325. In the early part of the 20th century, God restored that birthright to us. The things other churches have may look impressive: Ceremonies, liturgies, traditions, etc., but they are no substitute for the Apostolic heritage that is ours.

WRITE: When the early church "sold their birthright," what were some of the things they gave away? With what did they replace those things? (Example: They gave away the leading of the Spirit in their church services and replaced it with rituals.) You may wish to refer back to the class Christianity Revisited to help you answer this.

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Fourteen

READ: Genesis 28:10-22; 29:16-35; 30:1-24; 32:24-32; 35:16-20

THINK: Jacob had a dream of a ladder, and angels climbing up and down the ladder between heaven and earth. In the dream, God spoke to him and renewed the promise given to Abraham and Isaac. Upon awakening, Jacob called the place Bethel (Hebrew - *Beyt El* - House of God).

Jacob had twelve sons: His wife, Leah, bore Reuben (Heb.- *Re'u-ven* - See! A Son!), Simeon (Heb. - *Shim'on* - Hearing), Levi (Heb. - *L'vi* - Attached), and Judah (Heb. - *Yehudah* - He Will Be Praised).

His wife, Rachel, was barren. She therefore gave her maid, Bilhah, to Jacob, and Bilhah bore a son, whom Rachel named Dan (Heb. - Judge). Bilhah bore another son, and Rachel called him Naphtali (Heb. - *Naftali* - My Wrestling).

Leah gave her maid, Zilpah, to Jacob, and Zilpah bore a son, Gad (Heb. - *Gahd* - Troop). She bore another son, Asher, (Heb. - Happy) Leah then conceived again, and bore Issachar (Heb. - *Yisaschar* - He Will Bring A Reward). Leah conceived again and bore Zebulun (Heb. - *Z'vulun* - Habitation). Afterward, she bore a daughter, Dinah.

Rachel, up until then barren, conceived and bore Joseph (Heb. - *Yosef* - He Will Add or He Will Increase). Rachel bore one more son, but died immediately after the birth. She called her son Benoni (Heb. - Son Of My Sorrow), but Jacob named the child Benjamin (Heb. - *Ben Yamin* - Son Of The Right Hand).

Jacob had a most unusual experience one night. He was alone, and a man came and wrestled with him all night long. When the stranger was unable to defeat Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, dislocating his hip. (Jacob limped the rest of his

life as a result.) As dawn came, the mysterious wrestler asked to be released. Jacob, realizing the divine nature of the wrestler, refused to let him go unless the man would bless him first.

The stranger asked Jacob his name, and then changed it to Israel (Heb. - *Yisra'el* - He Will Be A Prince Of God). Jacob then asked the stranger his name. But the man wouldn't tell him, but asked Jacob why he was asking. He then blessed Jacob and disappeared.

Who was the wrestler, and why would he not reveal his name? The stranger was God (a theophany), and He would not reveal His Name because it was not yet time. Even though Jacob asked, he received no answer. Centuries later, Moses also asked, and he received the answer. (Exodus 3:13-14; Exodus 6:2-4)

Jacob named the place of his wrestling Peniel (or Penuel) (Heb. - *Pnei El* - Face of God), for he had seen God face to face and lived.

WRITE: Name the twelve sons of Jacob from the oldest to the youngest. Next to each son's name, write the name of his mother.

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Fifteen

READ: Genesis 37:1-11, 17-36; 39:1-23; 41:38-45; 45:1-8,25-28

THINK: Joseph was a dreamer. God often speaks through dreams. (Joel 2:28) Joseph's dreams angered his brothers and disturbed his father. In anger and jealousy, his brothers sold him into slavery and told Jacob his son was dead.

After initially becoming a trusted servant, Joseph spent years in prison, the victim of the lies of his master's wife, whose advances he had rejected. From prison, Joseph found himself in the court of Pharaoh. God had sent Pharaoh a dream that troubled him. Joseph, guided by the Spirit of God, revealed the meaning of the dream to him: Seven years of plenty, to be followed by seven years of famine. With this advance warning, Egypt was able to prepare for the famine, to be protected from it, and even had extra food to sell to others. For his wisdom, Joseph was elevated to a position of great importance, second only to Pharaoh.

Among those who journeyed to Egypt to buy food during the famine were Joseph's brothers. At first, he tried to hide his identity from them, but in the end, his emotions won out, and he wept openly before them. Word spread throughout Egypt that Joseph's brothers had come. Pharaoh, who thought very highly of Joseph, told the brothers to return to Canaan and to bring their father and their families to Egypt, where they would have abundance of food, and the best of the land would be theirs. The land of Goshen, in northern Egypt, was given to them.

Jacob, overjoyed to learn that Joseph was alive, moved with all his family to Egypt.

WRITE: Jacob moved to Egypt to escape famine in Canaan, thus saving his life. In the New Testament, someone else was taken to Egypt to save his life. Who was it?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Sixteen

READ: Genesis 48:1-22, 49:1-33; 50:22-26

THINK: Before he died, Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, and declared them to be as his own sons. Indeed, those two were numbered as among the twelve tribes of Israel. (Joseph is not listed as a tribe, since his two sons are included. Levi, although a tribe, is not counted because he received no portion when the promised land was divided among the tribes. The tribe of Levi was told that the LORD was their portion. [Josh. 13:33] Thus, the number of tribes remained at twelve.)

After blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob blessed his own sons, saying something unique about each of them. Note particularly his words to Judah (Gen. 49:8-12). It was from the tribe of Judah that the Messiah came. The symbol of Judah was the lion (vs. 9), and Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). The reference to Shiloh in Gen. 49:10 is significant: Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle would be erected in Israel centuries later. It was where God's Presence was before the Temple was built in Jerusalem. Here, it signifies the Presence of God - in this case, in the person of the Messiah.

Jacob died and was buried with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and his wife Leah, in Canaan. (Rachel had died just outside of Bethlehem, so she was buried there.) All of Egypt mourned for Jacob.

Joseph, before his own death, exacted from his family the promise that when they left Egypt, they would bring his bones with them.

WRITE: Mid-Term Exam follows this lesson.

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE
Old Testament History
Mid-Term Exam

1. How many books are there in the Old Testament?
2. What is the Torah?
3. Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament?
4. Why are some prophets called Major Prophets, and some Minor Prophets?
5. Most of the Old Testament was written in what language?
6. What was the difference between the appearance of a serpent and the appearance of a snake?
7. What proof was there that Jesus had reached the Tree of Life?
8. Who shut the door of the Ark?
9. What were the names of Noah's sons?
10. What is a theophany?

11. Who was Melchizedek?
12. Ishmael was the father of which race of people?
13. How many sons did Jacob have?
14. Who was the stranger who wrestled with Jacob?
15. What did this stranger change Jacob's name to?
16. How did Joseph wind up in Egypt?
17. How was it that Joseph rose to political importance in Egypt?
18. What part of Egypt did Pharaoh give Joseph and his brothers to live in?
19. Who were Ephraim and Manasseh?
20. From which tribe would Messiah come? What animal was the symbol of that tribe?

Name

Date

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Seventeen

READ: Exodus 1:8-22

THINK: There is a gap of many years between the death of Joseph and the statement in Ex. 1:8 that a new king arose who did not know Joseph. Since Joseph was long dead, the verse implies that the new Pharaoh did not have the same respect and esteem for the Hebrews that previous Pharaohs did. The new Pharaoh was anti-semitic, that is, an enemy of the Jews and other Semites.

Today, Egypt is an Arab nation, and is therefore Semitic, since the Arabs are descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael. In the time of the Pharaohs, however, Semites were in the minority in Egypt, and were divided into two main groups: The Hebrews and the Hyksos. The Hyksos were Semitic invaders who troubled the Egyptians for many generations. Since the Hebrews were also Semitic, they eventually came to be associated with the Hyksos in the minds of the Egyptians, and were therefore despised. According to history, it was the Pharaoh Ahmose, at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, who finally drove the Hyksos out of Egypt. History is divided on which Pharaoh Ex. 1:8 referred to. Some feel this was also Ahmose, although others feel that it could not have been Ahmose because of the years in which he lived.

WRITE: Joseph rose to power in Egypt by interpreting a dream for Pharaoh. Which later prophet also rose to great political power by interpreting a dream for a king? (Hint: The king was Nebuchadnezzar.)

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE

Old Testament History

Lesson Eighteen

READ: Exodus 2:1-25

THINK: The Bible tells us that the infant Moses was rescued from the Nile River by the daughter of Pharaoh. Historians have speculated that it was perhaps Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I, who did this. However, the time in which she lived may not be the right time for her to have known Moses. (Since the Torah did not come with a dating system equivalent to our own, determining exact years for Biblical events is often difficult, and scholars do not always agree.) Arguments of time aside, Hatshepsut certainly demonstrated the type of personality which would have made her a good candidate for the rescuer of Moses: She married her own half-brother, Thutmose II, in order that she would have a legitimate claim to the throne. He later died under mysterious circumstances, although it could not be proven that she had anything to do with it. Upon his death, she ascended to the throne and reigned until her death. Before her death, she married her daughter to her stepson, Thutmose III. She would not, however, allow her stepson to reign while she was still alive. Her boldness and political maneuverings suggest that it would have been no problem at all for her to defy the word of Pharaoh by adopting a Hebrew baby. Perhaps further archaeological discoveries will shed new light on exactly who the woman was who saved Moses.

The sister of Moses mentioned in verses 7 and 8 is, of course, Miriam, later to be a prophet. Even at this early age, Miriam showed great courage in following the basket that carried her brother down the Nile, and in approaching Pharaoh's daughter so boldly.

Although Moses was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was nevertheless aware that he was a Hebrew. No doubt his mother and sister had some influence in this. It was this knowledge that he was a Hebrew that led to the incident in which he killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. When Pharaoh learned of the incident, he sought to kill Moses. Fearing for his life, Moses fled to Midian, 200

miles east of Egypt, in the Arabian desert. There he married and had two sons. Moses was in Midian for forty years.

WRITE: To which tribe did Moses belong? How long did his mother hide him before she put him in the basket and set him adrift on the Nile?

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Old Testament History

Lesson Nineteen

READ: Exodus 3:1-22; 4:1-17

THINK: When Israel took the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt a few decades ago, the Israeli army found themselves standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Mt. Horeb) where God had first called Moses from a burning bush, and where He later gave them the Torah. As the soldiers faced the side of the mountain, a songwriter began to write down these words (translated from Hebrew):

"This is no fantasy, my friends.
This is no fable,
nor is it a fleeting dream:
We're facing Mt. Sinai,
and the bush, the bush is still burning!"

Obviously, the bush is not still burning. What the writer meant is that the hand of God is still upon Israel, and that He is as much a part of their lives now as He was back in the time of Moses.

The fire that burns but does not consume has appeared other times. Tongues of fire appeared on the day of Pentecost, but nothing was burned. When Pentecost first came to Indonesia in the 20th century, the Holy Ghost fell in a denominational church. As the Spirit fell on those inside, and they began to speak in tongues, the outside of the church was engulfed in flames. The fire department was called, but did not attempt to douse the flames, because the building was not being burned! In one year's time, that church duplicated every miracle in the Bible.

Moses asked God His Name. The student will remember that Jacob had also asked, centuries earlier, but received no answer. God answered Moses with three Hebrew words:

"Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh."

In English, this is usually rendered "I Am that I Am." However, it could also be translated "I Will Be what I Will Be," or "I Am what I Am." Verb tenses in old Hebrew were changeable, and the same word could be past, present or future, depending on context. In modern Hebrew, verb tenses are fixed, and the word *Ehyeh* can only mean *I Will Be*. Although this may cause confusion as to exactly what God was telling Moses, it actually can help our understanding of God. God's existence goes beyond our understanding of time. He always was, is, and always will be. Thus it is fitting that His Name should defy the concepts of time and tense.

The Name of God is later rendered as one word, written in English as Yahweh or Jehovah. (Neither pronunciation is correct, since the Hebrew alphabet has neither a J nor a W.) The Name is spelled *YHVH* in Hebrew. The correct vowels, and therefore the correct pronunciation, have been lost. This Name is a fascinating word tied in to several forms of the Hebrew verb "To Be." The past tense of the verb, equivalent to *he was* is *HYH*. The future, *he will be*, is *YHYH*. The present tense, equivalent to *am* and *is*, is *HVH*. God's Name contains the two H's of the past tense, the V of the present tense, and the Y of the future. Again, the meaning is clear: God was, is, and always will be. The Name *YHVH* is usually represented by the word LORD (all caps) in the King James Version of the Bible.

Jesus also defied tense and time when He told the Jewish people that He existed before Abraham: "Before Abraham was, ***I AM***." (See John 8:54-59) In this verse, Abraham is locked in to time and tense (he *was*). Jesus is not locked in to time and tense. By using a present tense (*am*) in speaking of the past, He is clearly saying that time and tense don't apply to Him. Once again, we see that God always was, is, and always will be. It is quite likely that Jesus used the word *Ehyeh* at this time. In this context, using the word *Ehyeh* was a clear reference to Exodus 3 (*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*). The Jews responded by trying to stone Him, evidence that the significance of His word choice was not lost to them.

WRITE: When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, He asked them for whom they were looking. When they responded, "Jesus of Nazareth," something fascinating happened: Jesus spoke the Name of God again. (John 18:5) Although the King James Version records His answer as "*I am he*," the *he* is in italics, which means it wasn't in the original text, but was added by the translators for "clarity." Had the translators understood that Jesus was Jehovah, they would not have added the word *he*, but would have left His original response: *I Am*. When Jesus spoke the Name this time, He did so with power, perhaps even more powerfully than at Mt. Sinai when

the Name was first given. So powerful was His utterance, that something happened to the soldiers. Read the account in John 18:1-6, and tell what happened to the soldiers when Jesus spoke the Name of God.

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Old Testament History

Lesson Twenty

READ: Exodus 4:27-31; 5:1-9; 6:1-13; 7:1-25; 8:1-30; 9:1-35; 10:1-29; 11:1-10

THINK: Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and asked him to release the Hebrews to go and sacrifice to the LORD in the wilderness. Pharaoh, of course, refused, as God had said he would. Thus ensued a battle of the wills: God's versus Pharaoh's. After God would send a plague, Pharaoh would relent. When the plague had been lifted, Pharaoh would harden his heart and refuse to let the Hebrews leave.

There were ten plagues on Egypt. They were, in order:

1. Turning the waters of the Nile to blood
2. Frogs
3. Lice
4. Flies
5. The cattle became ill
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locusts
9. Darkness
10. Death of firstborn

On the night of the tenth plague, when the angel of death slew the firstborn of every Egyptian family, both man and beast, the Jews were safe in their homes, observing a new and unusual ritual, the first Passover. There were many things involved in the Passover. Two of the more important elements were:

1. Unleavened Bread - The Passover is frequently referred to as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Because the first Passover was prepared and eaten in great haste, there was no time to allow the bread to rise. In commemoration of this, the Jews cleanse their homes of all leavening agents during the Passover, and eat only

unleavened bread, known as Matzoh. It was Matzoh that Jesus broke and distributed at the Last Supper, which was a Passover meal.

2. The Lamb's Blood - The Jews were told to roast a lamb for the Passover meal. In addition, they were told to take the blood from the lamb and to sprinkle it on the doorposts of their houses. As they ate the Passover, the angel of death passed through the land, slaying the firstborn. The blood on the doorposts of the Jews was a sign to the angel of death that they were to be spared, and so the firstborn of the Jews were not killed. Just as the blood of the Passover lamb saved the Jews from death back then, so too, the blood of Jesus, who was also killed at Passover, saves us from spiritual death.

WRITE: Read John 1:26-36, and explain what John the Baptist meant when he referred to Jesus as the "Lamb of God." What is the connection between the death of Jesus and the Passover lamb?

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Old Testament History

Lesson Twenty One

READ: Exodus 12:29-42; 13:17-22; 14:1-31; 15:1-21

THINK: The LORD led the Hebrews out of Egypt, appearing to them as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The shortest route from Goshen to the Promised Land would have been along the Mediterranean Sea. However, the coast of the Promised Land was inhabited by the Philistines, the ancestors of today's Palestinians. The Philistines were a mighty sea-faring people, worshippers of the fish god, Dagon. God knew that His people were not prepared to meet such an enemy, and would have turned back to Egypt in despair. Therefore, God led them by a southerly route, toward the Red Sea.

The Egyptians, meanwhile, had a change of heart, and began to pursue their former slaves to bring them back to Egypt. They cornered the Israelites at the sea, and would have prevailed against them, had the LORD not come to their rescue.

What sea were the Israelites facing? The English Bibles speak of the Red Sea, a rather large body of water. But the Hebrew says "*Yam Suf*" which means "Reed Sea," not Red Sea. The term Reed Sea refers to the northern portions of the Red Sea, that is, the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba. Acknowledging the fact that it was the Reed Sea that Israel crossed, and not the main body of the Red Sea, in no way detracts from the miracle that took place there, for the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba are deep enough that only a miracle could allow Israel to cross them.

The Egyptians reached the Hebrews at nightfall. As they arrived, the pillar of fire moved from in front of the people of Israel to a position between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. To the Egyptians, the cloud was a thick darkness, so that they could not see the Jews. To the children of Israel, however, the pillar gave light. When God opened the sea before them, the Jewish people had light to cross over.

In the morning, the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the dry sea-bed. God slowed them down by sabotaging their chariots. As the last of the Israelites reached the other side, the waters of the sea returned and drowned the Egyptians.

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, led the women of Israel in a dance of celebration, and the Israelites sang a song of praise.

WRITE: According to Exodus chapter 12, did the Israelites leave Egypt empty-handed? If not, what kinds of things did they bring with them?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Twenty Two

READ: Exodus 16:1; 19:3-8; 20:1-20; 31:18; 32:1-6; 40:34-38

THINK: When the Israelites complained of thirst, God gave them water. When they were hungry, He sent Manna (Old Hebrew - *Man hu* - What is it?). All their needs were met, yet they murmured and complained anyway.

The LORD called Moses up into Mt. Sinai (Horeb), and there He dictated to him the Torah, or Law, that is, the first five books of the Bible. While Moses was on the mountain, the people of Israel grew tired of waiting for him, and demanded that Aaron make for them a visible representation of their God. Aaron made them a golden calf.

It is important to understand what Israel meant by the calf. They were not turning away from the LORD or trying to invent a new god. Rather, they were simply trying to give God a visible image. Having just come out of Egypt, where gods and goddesses were represented by cats, jackals, etc., they chose to represent their God as an animal as well. They were the only people on earth who had no visible image of their God, and, up until Moses asked, they didn't even know their God's Name! But God cannot be likened to any creature on earth, and had expressly forbidden His people to make any type of carved image or statue to use to represent Him in worship.

Israel was led through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. When it moved, they followed. When it stopped, they camped there. If they did not move when the pillar did, they would have been left behind. This was a shadow of the way God leads us today. God is continually revealing truth to His people. If His people do not accept the truth, they will be "left behind," as the next revelation of truth is given to others. We must always be alert to the move of the Spirit, and be prepared to follow His lead at any moment.

WRITE: According to Exodus 32:19-28, what did Moses command the Levites to do in order to punish Israel? How many people died?

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Lesson Twenty Three

READ: Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:1-12; Joshua 2:1-24; 6:6-25

THINK: Of the Israelites who originally left Egypt, all died in the wilderness except two. Because of their murmuring and complaining, and their lack of faith, the LORD had declared that all of that first generation would die. But Joshua and Caleb were faithful, and they alone of the first generation were allowed to enter the Promised Land. Even Moses himself was not to enter the land, because of his own sin, but he was permitted to see the land from far off. When he died, God buried him, and the place of his grave is unknown.

Israel entered the Promised Land from the east, and crossed the Jordan River. As the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant entered the River, the waters opened before them. The priests stopped in the middle of the riverbed and stood there with the Ark while Israel crossed over on dry ground.

Rahab was a prostitute in the city of Jericho. The people of Jericho had heard of what happened everywhere Israel went, that the LORD had given them victory over the Egyptians, etc. All of Jericho was afraid. Rahab knew that if Israel came against Jericho, her city would fall. She believed that the God of Israel was all-powerful. Knowing this, she hid and protected two Israelite spies who had come to Jericho to determine the city's strength. In return for this, she asked only to be spared when the city was taken.

God honors faithfulness. For her service, Rahab received far more than the simple favor she asked. She was indeed spared, with her family, when the walls of Jericho fell. But she was also adopted into Israel. Even more wonderful is that this former prostitute was an ancestor not only of King David, but also of the Messiah! Her name is included in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew chapter 1. When declaring the ancestry of the Messiah, evidently God was concerned only with the faithfulness of Rahab, and was not at all concerned with the fact that she once earned her living

sleeping with strange men. God looks at the heart. If only we could learn to do that, too. So many churches today would turn Rahab away. Let us never judge one another in that manner.

WRITE: Describe the manner in which Israel took Jericho: How many days did it take? What did Israel do on each of those days? What happened to the city?

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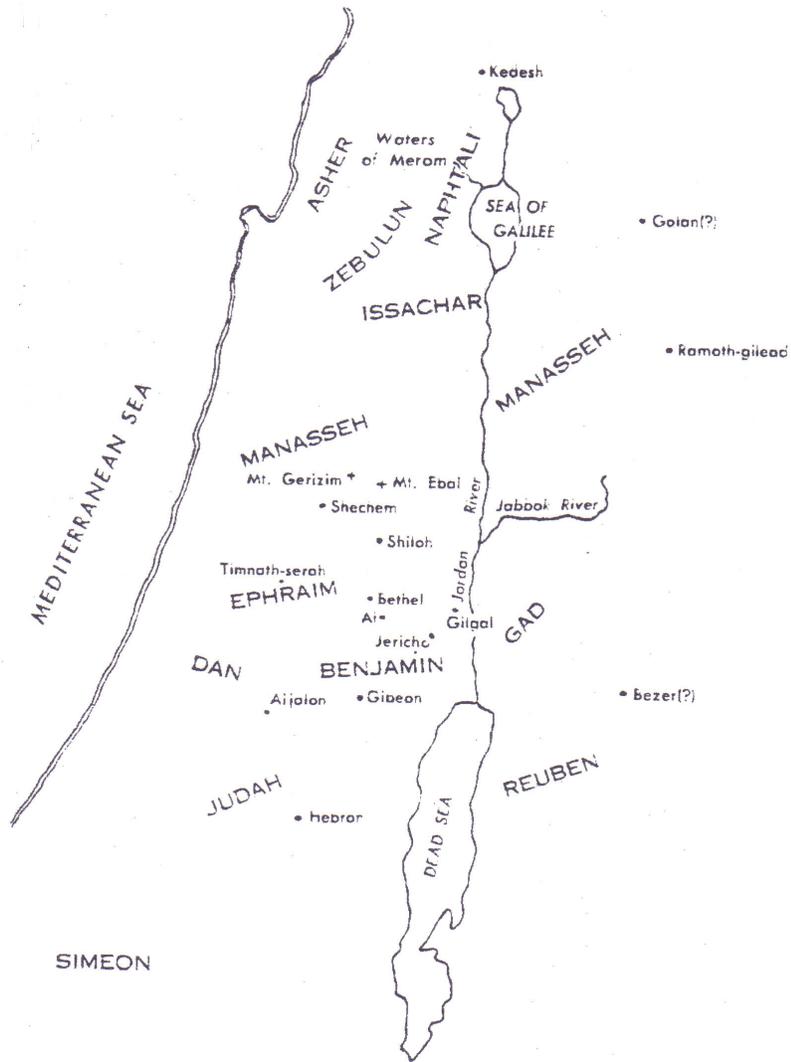
Lesson Twenty Four

READ: Joshua 12:6; 13:1-33; map (immediately following this lesson)

THINK: The attached map shows the division of the Promised Land. The first portion to be assigned was the land east of the Jordan River. Moses, before his death, had assigned this land to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and to one half of the tribe of Manasseh. The half-tribe of Manasseh had the northernmost part of this land, from the Jabbok River in present day Jordan, north to the Golan Heights, including part of what is now Syria. Gad had the portion just south of the Jabbok, extending southward to the Dead Sea. Reuben's territory was the land east of the Dead Sea. The portions of Reuben and Gad are both located in present day Jordan.

Joshua divided the land west of the Jordan. Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun and Issachar shared the land west of the Sea of Galilee, including what is today northern Israel and southern Lebanon. The second half of the tribe of Manasseh was across the Jordan from the first half, and possessed all the land from Jordan westward to the Mediterranean Sea. South of Manasseh was Ephraim, also extending from Jordan westward to the Sea. Further south, Dan was on the west, and Benjamin was on the east, including the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. South of Dan and Benjamin, Judah stretched from the western shore of the Dead Sea west to the Mediterranean, and south, to include part of the Negev Desert. The remainder of the Negev, south to the Gulf of Aqaba, belonged to Simeon.

WRITE: Levi received no portion of land, but did receive cities scattered throughout the land of the other tribes. Moses had declared that Levi would receive no portion. Why?



THE TRIBAL TERRITORIES

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Lesson Twenty Five

READ: Joshua 24:1-33

THINK: Following the death of Joshua, Israel was ruled by Judges. These were men and women of God who spoke on behalf of God to the people. God, in effect, ruled Israel through the Judges. Therefore, Israel's form of government was a theocracy, which means "ruled by God."

The student may already be familiar with some of the Judges. Some were righteous; others were careless with the things of God. For example, when Deborah was Judge, she did the will of God. However, when the High Priest Eli was Judge, he failed to stop the sins of his own household, and allowed the Ark of the Covenant to be taken into battle against the Philistines. The last words Eli heard before he died were the worst words he'd ever heard: "Your two sons are dead, there has been a great slaughter among the people, and the Ark of God has been captured." Obviously, his ministry was a failure.

It would be helpful for the student to be familiar with some of the Judges and their ministries:

(Note: This lesson has two *READ*: sections.)

READ: Judges 4:1-24; 5:1-31; 6:11-40; 7:1-25; 13:1-25; 14:1-20; 15:1-20; 16:1-31; I Samuel 2:22,27-36; 4:1-22; 8:1-6

WRITE: According to the above verses, of what sin were Eli's sons guilty? What did the man of God tell Eli would happen to his sons?

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Lesson Twenty Six

READ: I Samuel 8:1-22

THINK: Probably the biggest mistake Israel ever made is recorded in I Samuel 8:20 -- ". . .that we also may be like all the nations . . .". God's people can never be like the other nations. We're called to be separate and holy.

God told Samuel to give the people what they wanted. For the next three generations, Israel enjoyed what is known as their Golden Age. But it lasted only for three generations, and ultimately resulted in civil war, the division of the kingdom into two separate nations, the destruction of ten of the tribes, and centuries of persecution for the remaining tribes.

The first king of Israel was Saul (Hebrew - *Sha'ul* – ‘asked.’ They "asked" for a king), son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. Because he rebelled against God, and even consulted a fortune teller, God removed him as king, and his son was not permitted to succeed him.

The second king was David (Hebrew – beloved... David was called a man after God's own heart), son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. It was in David's heart to build a temple in Jerusalem, but God would not allow him, saying that David had been a man of war, and the temple should be built by a man of peace. God went on to say that David's son, Solomon (Hebrew - *Shlomo* - His Peace), would build the temple.

Solomon was the third king of Israel. He built the Temple in Jerusalem, and offered great sacrifices to the LORD. God spoke to him and offered him anything he desired. Solomon asked for wisdom, that he might be able to rule God's people wisely. The answer pleased the LORD, who also gave him the things he didn't ask for: Long life and wealth.

During the reign of Solomon, Israel was a major world power. Word of his

wisdom and wealth spread, and reached the ears of the Ethiopian queen (the Queen of Sheba), who traveled all the way to Jerusalem to see Solomon. Apparently, she was converted to Judaism at the time, for the existence of Ethiopian worshipers of God, having the Torah, can be traced back to then. Ethiopia remained a righteous nation from the time of that queen through to approximately AD 1000. It was at that time that the Roman church destroyed the last remnant of the Apostolic church in Ethiopia (probably founded by the eunuch converted in Acts chapter 8). The Jewish religion continued to be practiced in Ethiopia until the 1980's, when the Ethiopian Jews, known as Falashas (Amharic - Strangers), were brought to Israel. (Some claim that Sheba was modern day Yemen, not Ethiopia. This instructor sees insufficient evidence for such a belief.)

In his later life, Solomon married many foreign women, and built temples for their gods. His wisdom was corrupted, and he died out of favor with God. With his death, Israel's Golden Age came to a screeching halt, and civil war ensued. The twelve tribes were never again to be a united nation.

WRITE: Why was it a mistake for Israel to request a king?

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Lesson Twenty Seven

READ: I Kings 11:1-13; 12:25-33

THINK: Because of the sin of Solomon, God declared that the kingdom would be divided into two separate nations. Ten tribes would form one nation in the north, and the House of David (and the tribe of Judah) would retain one tribe in the south, probably Benjamin.

The student should be aware that even though the land had been divided among the tribes, the tribes had not, for the most part, been able to secure their portions. The Philistines and the Moabites still retained strongholds in the land, and some of the tribes never were able to claim their portions. Therefore, the division of the tribal territories existed mostly on paper. The tribe of Simeon probably did not claim its portion in the south, and was one of the ten tribes that made up the northern kingdom of Israel. The small tribe of Benjamin was closely associated with Judah, and seems to have been incorporated into it in forming the southern kingdom of Judah.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, definitely lacked the wisdom for which his father had been known. Instead of listening to the elders of the nation, who were wiser than he, he chose to listen to his friends, and announced his intention to tax the northern tribes excessively. Because of this, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, led a rebellion of the northern tribes against Rehoboam, declaring those ten tribes to be independent of Judah. Rehoboam's first inclination was to go to battle against the north, but a man of God reminded him that the division of the kingdom was decreed by the LORD, so Rehoboam did not go up against them. Nevertheless, a technical state of war did remain in effect between the two kingdoms for a number of generations.

WRITE: What was the reason that God caused the division of the kingdom, taking ten tribes away from the House of David?

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MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Twenty Eight

READ: II Kings 17:6-23

THINK: Immediately following this lesson is a list of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel, beginning with Jeroboam I, the son of Nebat, whose legacy is that he caused Israel to sin, and ending with Hoshea, the last king of Israel.

Some of the kings of Israel were known by more than one name, and these aliases are in parentheses. Next to each name, you will notice the letter "E." This stands for "Evil," indicating that the king did evil in the sight of the LORD. Of course, all the kings of Israel did evil, so these E's may seem unnecessary. They are included here, though, for comparison purposes: Some of the kings of Judah, listed in the next lesson, did right in the eyes of the LORD, and their names are followed by a "G," for "Good." One king of Judah started out good, but ended up doing evil. This is indicated by "G/E."

The king of Israel who is probably most familiar to us is Ahab. Married to the infamous Jezebel, this king more than once defied the prophet Elijah. Ahab and Jezebel were worshippers of Baal and Asherah. (Asherah was another name for the Babylonian goddess Semiramis. Her name is incorrectly translated in the King James Bible as "the grove.") In spite of the fact that the LORD openly proved to Ahab and the people of Israel that He alone was God, their repentance was short-lived. (See 1 Kings 18:17-40)

In addition to the Canaanite god Baal (sometimes written in the plural, Baalim) and the Babylonian deities, Israel worshipped several other Canaanite gods. These included Chemosh, Milcom, and Molech. This last was by far the most abominable of the Canaanite gods. Molech (Hebrew - "he rules" or "ruler") was a statue with his arms outstretched before him. A fire was kindled between his arms, and the people would place their infants in his arms, where they would be burned alive as a sacrifice

to Molech. This was known as "passing their children through the fire to Molech."

Israel ignored repeated warnings from the prophets of the LORD. Eventually, the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and they were invaded by Assyria. The Assyrians carried them away and dispersed them throughout the known world. Other nations were brought in by the Assyrians to dwell in the land. These strangers adopted some of the customs associated with the worship of the LORD, but continued to practice their own religions, as well. Later intermarrying with stragglers from Israel, these were the forerunners of the Samaritans. The ten tribes themselves were never heard from again.

WRITE: How did the LORD prove He was the only God in the days of Ahab?

KINGS OF ISRAEL

Jeroboam I	E
Nadab	E
Baasha	E
Elah	E
Zimri	E
Omri	E
Ahab	E
Ahaziah	E
Joram (Jehoram)	E
Jehu	E
Jehoahaz	E
Jehoash (Joash)	E
Jeroboam II	E
Zachariah	E
Shallum	E
Menahem	E
Pekahiah	E
Pekah	E
Hoshea	E

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Lesson Twenty Nine

READ: II Kings 25:1-21; Lamentations 1:3-4,8-9,18; 2:13-14; 3:22-23; 4:11-14; 5:11-22

THINK: Immediately following this lesson is a list of the kings and the one queen of Judah, beginning with Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and ending with Zedekiah. It can be seen from this list that Judah's spiritual condition was like a roller-coaster: up and down, as one ruler would restore the worship of the LORD, and another would turn to Baal, etc.

God warned Judah of impending destruction many times, but never as eloquently as He did by the mouth of Jeremiah. The third chapter of Jeremiah is a good example of this, as God compared the sins of Judah to the sins of the destroyed kingdom of Israel, and pleaded with Judah to repent, declaring that He was married to Judah.

Josiah was eight years old when he came to the throne of Judah. He had never heard the word of the LORD, for both his father and grandfather had been evil men who worshiped heathen idols. But from the beginning of his reign, Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. We can only assume that his mother, Jedidah, had some knowledge of the true God and taught this to her son.

When Josiah was twenty-six years old, he ordered repairs made to the temple, which had fallen into serious disrepair. While this was being done, the High Priest made a discovery: He found the book of the Law (the Torah) hidden away in the temple. It had been generations since anyone in Judah had seen the book or heard its words. The book was given to a scribe to read to the king.

When Josiah heard the words of the Torah, he began to weep, and tore his garment, a sign of deep mourning. His heart trembled because he realized that Judah had not been keeping the Law, and that the LORD had promised destruction if the Law was

not obeyed. There was in Jerusalem a woman of God, a prophet, by the name of Huldah. Josiah sent messengers to her, asking that she inquire of the LORD regarding the destruction spoken of in the Torah. Huldah sent the following message to the king:

"This is what the LORD, God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me that the LORD says: Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon all its inhabitants, even all the words of the book that the king of Judah read, because they have forsaken me, and burned incense to other gods, provoking me to anger by the works of their hands; therefore my anger is kindled against this place, and will not be quenched. But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, this is what you will say to him: This is what the LORD, God of Israel, says about the words which you have heard: Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your garment and wept before me, I have heard you, says the LORD. Behold, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers and you will be gathered to your grave in peace. Your eyes will not see the evil that I will bring upon this place."

Josiah and all of Judah turned to the LORD and held a Passover celebration. The idols and false prophets were destroyed out of the land. The repentance was complete and genuine, but the damage had already been done by previous generations, and the LORD did not turn away His anger. But, as He promised, Josiah saw none of it, and was buried with his ancestors in peace. His son, Jehoahaz, did not follow in his father's footsteps, but did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did all the kings of Judah after him.

In the reign of Zedekiah, Babylon invaded Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and carried the people into captivity in Babylon. Zedekiah's sons were killed before his eyes, and then he himself was blinded and imprisoned.

It is perhaps fitting that the last king of Judah was named Zedekiah (Hebrew - Tzidkiyahu): This name means "the LORD (Yah) is righteousness" or "the LORD is justice." Judah got away with sin far longer than Israel had, and at times, sinned even more than Israel had. But in the end, the LORD, who is righteous, meted out justice.

WRITE: How many rulers of Judah were good? How many were evil? (Count Joash as evil, since he ended up that way.)

KINGS AND QUEEN OF JUDAH

Rehoboam	E
Abijah	E
Asa	G
Jehoshaphat	G
Jehoram (Joram)	E
Ahaziah	E
(Queen) Athaliah	E
Joash (Jehoash)	G/E
Amaziah	G
Uzziah (Azariah)	G
Jotham	G
Ahaz	E
Hezekiah	G
Manasseh	E
Amon	E
Josiah	G
Jehoahaz	E
Jehoiakim (Eliakim)	E
Jehoiakin (Jehoiachin)	E
Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	E

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Old Testament History Lesson Thirty

READ: Jeremiah 25:8-14; 30:10-24

THINK: As the prophet Jeremiah had warned for more than twenty years, Judah was carried away into captivity under the reign of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. During this captivity, God continued to speak through His prophets, most notably Daniel and Ezekiel. Daniel's prophecies are particularly interesting because he often gave specific time frames in which his prophecies would be fulfilled. For example, he foretold how long it would be from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah (Dan. 9:25-27). These verses contain in-depth theology, involving not only the coming of the Messiah, but also the Great Tribulation and the antichrist. Counting the "weeks" in these verses as seven years instead of seven days, we do have an accurate time frame for when Messiah would come.

Daniel was a eunuch in the court of the Babylonian king, along with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the three young men, also eunuchs, who were thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship the king's image.

Daniel was greatly respected by the Babylonian king because of his spiritual wisdom and his ability to interpret dreams. Daniel rose to great political power as a result of his favor with the king. Nebuchadnezzar had learned to respect not only Daniel, but also the LORD, even though the king still worshiped idols. After his death, though, his son Belshazzar came to the throne, and he did not respect the LORD.

Belshazzar made a great banquet for thousands of his lords, and they drank wine from the gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. As they drank, they praised their idols of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly, the king saw part of a hand that appeared and wrote

on the wall. The hand wrote four words, the first two of which were identical. Although the words were in Aramaic, the language of the people, the king could not understand the meaning, nor could any of his astrologers or fortune tellers.

The queen remembered that Daniel had wisdom and had interpreted many things for the late Nebuchadnezzar, and recommended that the king send for him. Daniel was called to the feast and told the king that the hand and the writing were from God. He then interpreted the words. Note that Daniel interpreted the words, he did not translate them. Below is an exact translation, followed by the interpretation Daniel gave:

Mene, Mene - numbering, numbering

Tekel - a unit of weight measure (like pound, ounce or gram)

Ufarsin - and breaches (splits, divisions)

(Note: The words are Aramaic, which was known by those present. They could read the words, but without an interpretation, they didn't make sense.)

Mene - God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.

Tekel - You have been weighed on a scale, and found lacking.

Ufarsin (or the singular form *Peres*) - Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.

That same night, Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Mede took the throne. Daniel enjoyed favor under the reign of Darius as he had under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

WRITE: Read the 6th chapter of Daniel, and answer the following questions:

1. What law did Daniel break?
2. What was the penalty?
3. Why was the king unable to prevent Daniel from being punished?
4. What did Darius do while Daniel was with the lions?
5. What decree did Darius make after God delivered Daniel?

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Lesson Thirty One

READ: Esther 3:13; 4:10-17

THINK: Through an unusual series of circumstances, a Jewish woman became queen of the Medo-Persian Empire during the captivity, and the fate of all the Jews rested in her hands.

Ahasuerus, the king, had been forced to banish his wife, Vashti, because she had publicly defied him and humiliated him before his lords. He soon became lonely, and sought a new wife. He chose a young woman named Hadassah (Hebrew - Myrtle). The king did not know his new wife was Jewish. He changed her name to Esther (from the Chaldean *Ish Tar*, a title of the Babylonian goddess Semiramis).

There was a man named Haman who hated the Jews. Like the king, Haman did not know the new queen was Jewish. He spoke to the king about the Jews, describing them only as a people who would not obey the king's laws and who should be destroyed. He managed to persuade the king, and Ahasuerus signed a law giving all people permission to kill the Jews on a certain date. Once signed, a Medo-Persian law could not be repealed, even by the king.

Esther risked her life by going before the king uninvited. It was punishable by death to enter the king's presence uninvited. The only hope for such an unbidden visitor was if the king held out his scepter; only then would the person's life be spared. At the time that Queen Esther went before the king, it had been a month since he had sent for her. She had no way of knowing whether she would be allowed to live as she entered his presence. To her great relief, the king was pleased to see her and held out his scepter. She invited the king and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet, she invited them both to a second banquet. At that banquet, she asked the king to spare her life and the lives of her people.

The king still did not realize that she was Jewish, and that it was Haman's plot that

was putting his wife in jeopardy. In anger, he asked the queen who it was who dared to threaten her life and the lives of her people. She named Haman as the guilty party. At this, both Haman and the king realized that Esther was Jewish. Ahasuerus left the banquet in great anger. Haman, realizing that his own life was now in danger, rushed to the couch where the queen was reclining. He fell to his knees and took hold of her to plead for his life.

At that moment, the king returned, and, seeing Haman, assumed that he was attempting to rape Esther. Immediately, a servant covered the face of Haman with a cloth, a sign that he was now under sentence of death. They hung Haman on a gallows that he himself had built, on which he had planned to hang Esther's uncle Mordecai.

The king could not change his law, but he passed a new one, giving the Jews the right to defend themselves against all their enemies. Thus the Jewish people were saved by the courage of Queen Esther. This deliverance is commemorated today by the Jewish feast of Purim.

WRITE: Some people feel that women are less capable than men, and should not be entrusted with important jobs. Consider, though, the following:

1. Deborah was one of the best Judges Israel had.
2. Esther's courage saved her people.
3. The church in Philippi was in the house of a woman named Lydia, indicating that she was the pastor.
4. In the evangelistic husband/wife team of Priscilla and Aquila, it was Priscilla who was the main preacher, not her husband. (We know this because on at least one occasion, her name was listed first. At that time, a woman's name never preceded her husband's unless she were more important, for example, nobility, royalty, wealthy, etc. Both Priscilla and her husband were tent-makers, so her name coming first doesn't indicate social status, but her preeminence as preacher.)

In consideration of these things, do you think that God considers women less capable than men, or feels that they cannot handle important jobs?

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Lesson Thirty Two

READ: Ezra 3:1-13; 6:14-22; Nehemiah 2:1-5; 4:7-8,13-23; 6:15; 8:1-18; 9:1-38

THINK: In 538 BC, Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire, decreed that all captive peoples might return to their homelands. More than 50,000 people returned to Judah, including Jeshua (Joshua) the priest, and Zerubbabel. These two godly men set up the broken altars of the LORD in the ruins of the temple, and inspired the people to lay a foundation for a new temple on that site. Soon a new temple rose in Jerusalem, surrounded by the ruins of the city, a city with no walls.

Nehemiah was the cup-bearer of another Medo-Persian king, Artaxerxes. He asked the king for permission to go to Jerusalem to build the walls of the city. In the land of Judah, there was great opposition to the project from ungodly people, and Nehemiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem had to build the walls with one hand, and hold a weapon in the other.

After the temple and city walls were repaired, Ezra the scribe gathered the people together to hear him read the Torah. The people worshiped freely and enthusiastically, wept at the reading of the Law, and dedicated themselves fully to the LORD.

WRITE: When the people wept at the reading of the Law, they were told not to weep, but to rejoice. According to the verses you read at the beginning of this lesson, for what reason were they told not to weep?

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Lesson Thirty Three

READ: Joel 3:16-21

THINK: Joel was the last prophet of the Old Testament. (The OT is not in chronological order, so although Malachi is the last book, Joel was actually the last prophet of the Old Testament period.) For approximately four hundred years after the ministry of Joel, no important prophet walked in Judah. The period of the OT canon had come to a close. The next time God would speak to His people would be through the angel Gabriel, who appeared in the temple to a priest named Zechariah (Zacharias), the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-20). The time between the close of the OT canon and the appearance of Gabriel in the temple is called the Four Hundred Years of Silence.

Politically, Judah was quite busy during that time. The Medo-Persian empire lost control of Judah when Alexander the Great conquered the known world for Greece. Alexander was intrigued by the Jews, and found their religion fascinating. Later rulers, however, were not so fond of it. Antiochus Epiphanes slew the priests in the temple and sacrificed a pig (an unclean animal) on the altar. The Jews revolted, and for a time, they were independent. But far to the west arose a new threat, a new world power. This was Rome. Far stronger than any previous enemy, Rome conquered the Greek empire, and Judah as well. Not until 1948, 2000 years later, would the Jews ever be an independent nation again.

The Israeli national anthem is HaTikvah, that is, The Hope. It expresses the age-old desire of the Jewish people to be once again an independent nation. Presented here is an English translation:

As long as within the heart
a Jewish soul beats,
and as long as one eye
turns eastward to Zion,

then our hope is not yet lost.

The hope is 2000 years old:
To be a free nation in our land,
the land of Zion and Jerusalem.

WRITE: Final Exam follows this lesson.

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Old Testament History

Final Exam

1. What promise did Joseph exact from his family before he died?
2. Who were the Hyksos?
3. Who was Miriam?
4. Who told Moses "*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*," and what do the words mean?
5. How many plagues did God send against Egypt? Name two.
6. By what animal did the Jews try to represent God in the wilderness?
7. What supernatural manifestation of God led the people of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land?
8. Who were the only two Israelites who came out of Egypt and lived to enter the Promised Land?
9. Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. What did God permit him to do instead?

10. Who was Rahab? How was she rewarded for her faithfulness?
11. Which tribe was split in half when the Promised Land was divided among the tribes?
12. Which tribe received no portion of land? Why didn't they receive a portion?
13. What were the people called who ruled Israel after the death of Joshua? Name one of them.
14. How many generations did Israel's Golden Age last?
15. What were the names of the kings of Israel during the Golden Age?
16. The Queen of Sheba visited Solomon. What do we call Sheba today?
17. What is Jeroboam the son of Nebat most remembered for?
18. Who was the infamous wife of Ahab?
19. What happened to the northern kingdom of Israel?
20. Who was Huldah?
21. Which prophet was a eunuch in Babylon?
22. What did the king of Babylon do to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah?

23. When Jeshua the priest and Zerubbabel returned to Judah from Babylon, what was the very first thing they tried to repair, before the temple or city walls were even rebuilt?
24. Who was the last Old Testament prophet?
25. Approximately how many years was it from the end of that prophet's ministry until God spoke again? What do we call that period of time?

Name

Date