

Old Testament
Exposition I
OT5112

Faith Seminary

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Genesis

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. The author of Genesis is Moses. Until the advent of modern criticism, this view was held by most commentators. His authorship is attested by Jesus in John 5:46 and Luke 24:27, 44 wherein He refers to the whole of the Pentateuch as Moses' writings. Further, in John 7:22-23 Jesus alluded to Genesis 17:12 by saying, "Moses gave you circumcision" and then referred to it as the Law of Moses. Thus, for the man of faith Jesus' testimony is sufficient to establish Mosaic authorship. That he may have had some sources from which he drew his historical materials is quite likely, though ultimately only those elements allowed under the superintendency of the Holy Spirit made it into the original autographs.

This stands in contrast to the present source and form critical views which see the Pentateuch developing over a period of years through a series of redactors. The accounts of Genesis reflect early traditions which survived, with modifications, until the 10th and later centuries when portions of the materials making up the Pentateuch were compiled (Bright, p. 80). Wellhausen proposed a composition made up of a 9th century B.C. Jehovistic source (J), an 8th century B.C. Elohist source (E) independent of J, a source represented principally in Deuteronomy (D) from the reign of King Josiah between 640 and 609 B.C., and finally a 5th century B.C. priestly source. J and E were combined first with Deuteronomy added during Josiah's day, Leviticus 17-26 was then added after Ezekiel's ministry, with the rest of the priestly material being compiled by Ezra. Finally, the whole Pentateuch was revised somewhere around 200 B.C. (as explained by Harrison w. 21-22). This view stands opposed to Mosaic authorship.

Date. Accepting Mosaic authorship, the book was written sometime during his ministry while leading the nation through the wilderness (1446-1406 B.C.).

Audience. Genesis was written to the newly formed nation of Israel as they wandered through the wilderness and anticipated entrance into the land of promise.

Historicity. Harrison notes that the modern critical views, whether the source critical approach (as described under the discussion on authorship) or the "historical" approach (sees cycles of tradition arising around important events in the religious life of the nation, such as Passover) would allow for some measure of historicity within the materials of Genesis. He notes that they would generally allow for a more general than specific level of historicity (Harrison, p. 543). This is asserted in the work of Bright who initially affirms that the historicity of the traditions should no longer be denied and that the patriarchs were "actual historical individuals." He says further, "The authentic flavor of the stories forbids us to dismiss the patriarchs as legendary, and the picture of them presented there is not in the least mythological" (Bright, p. 87). Yet, a short time later he argues that "the simple stories conceal complex clan movements; in them, the individual blends with the group and his doings reflect those of the group" (Bright, p. 93). This is not a denial of the existence of the characters named, but only of the reality of the events being described as individual experiences of those characters rather than tribal movements (as when Jacob returned to Canaan).

Though the book was not written as a purely historical document, and though it reflects selection of materials for theological purposes, every person and event is depicted accurately and truthfully such that an eye witness would have seen it as described by Moses. Support for the

historicity of the patriarchal accounts of Genesis can be found in several lines of evidence. First, the patriarchal names are characteristic of the Amorite population of the West Semitic family during the second millennium and not the first (La Sor, et al, p. 102), Second, the social and political environment through which Abraham traveled was characteristic of the Middle Bronze period, and most of the cities he visited (Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, Jerusalem) were in existence during this period (La Sor et al p.103). Third, the nomadic style of the patriarchs was characteristic of the early second millennium (La .Sor. et al p.104). Finally, many of the social and legal customs, some which were later outlawed under Moses and not practiced during the monarchy, were in use during the period of the second millennium (La Sor, et al. p. 105). Thus the material reported by Moses accorded well with what is now known of the period of the patriarch. So, assuming he had access to family histories and other sources, his accounting of the Patriarchs has the marks of authenticity and accuracy.

The historical validity of Genesis is deemed reliable on the basis of New Testament assertions. Both Jesus' and Paul's arguments are occasionally based upon the assumption of the historical reality of the people and events reported within Genesis especially the first eleven chapters. Jesus affirmed the historical truth of Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4-6). Noah and the flood (Matt. 24:37-38), Abraham (Matt. 3:9; 22:32), and more. Paul built his arguments from those same people and incidents. For example, he spoke of Adam as a historical person (his fall bringing death to man, Rom. 5:14; his preeminence in the created order, 1 Tim 2:13-14) as well as Abraham (Rom. 4:1ff). The testimonies of the other New Testament authors ring in harmony with Paul's.

Canonicity. Its place within the canon of Jewish and Christian Scripture has remained unquestioned (at least by me).

Intent. As they moved toward the Promised Land, Moses wrote to show the origin of the people of God in order to help them understand how it could be that they were His elect nation.

Literary Component

Genre. Genesis contains no mythical literature. All that it asserts, including the accounts in chapters 1-11 and all other miracles reflects accurately the actions of God upon this world. Though some similarities do exist between such things as the creation and flood accounts and myths within the Ancient Near East, such as the Assyrian Enuma Elish, the dissimilarities are so vast that dependence or borrowing is nearly impossible to demonstrate with any degree of certainty. Nor can one effectively argue for polemic within Genesis. Examples of critical dissimilarities include the Bible's monotheism, high view of God and man, and divine concern for man's well being and judgment of man's sin.

Concerning whether its genre should be considered that of either history or biography, Ross answers well when he says. "Genesis was not intended to be a mere chronicle of events, a history for history's sake, or even a complete biography of the nation. It is a theological interpretation of selected records of the ancestors of Israel" (Ross, BKC, 1:19). So, some portions of Genesis are historical narrative and some are biographical, though not for those purposes alone.

La Sor, et al, see two basic literary forms within Genesis. The first, reflected in chapters 1, 5, 10, and 11:10-26, is characterized by "schematic, almost formulaic, character and careful logical arrangement." These are the creation account, two genealogies, and the table of nations in chapter 10. Their second form is the "story," and encompasses the remaining chapters of the book (Old Testament Survey, pp. 70-71).

Genesis is also not an etiology, though some of its passages produce such an effect. It was not written to explain the origins of the universe, of sin, or of the various nations across the world, though it does accomplish such ends. Thus, though some portions of the text are etiological in nature that is only secondary to the purpose of Moses when he recorded the accounts.

Arrangement. The presentation of Genesis is built upon 11 *t'ôlêd'ôt's* (*Toledots*). These accounts of the people who follow the person named develop the historical narration of Genesis from Creation until the elect nation is in Egypt and her last patriarch is dead. It moves from the broad universe and all of mankind before the flood, through a narrowing process in which only one member of one of the 70 dispersed nations is chosen by God for the special covenantal relationship of blessing through which the world as a whole would again find blessing. From Abraham, then, the narrowing process continued through Isaac and Jacob until the nation of blessing was established as God's people.

Characterization. A multitude of characters march across the pages of Genesis. Some are presented only in passing, or play a short role within the life of one of the people in focus. Even so, there is some character development within some of them. For example, Cain and Esau's characters are developed to an extent in order to reveal their flaws and explain certain relationships which developed later. Yet, Ishmael, other than in his picking on Isaac, is rather enigmatic.

The major characters include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. Their personalities and qualities are developed differently. For example, little is actually said of Adam and, though he plays such a crucial role in man's history, little time is devoted to developing him. About all that can be said is that he named the animals, fell to temptation, had kids, and died.

More time is spent upon Noah, but still, not as much as the later characters. Yet, the picture of him is equally realistic. The Scriptures not only expose his faith and the fact that he was the only man pleasing to God in his day, but also that he was a man who obeyed God and acted in faith (as demonstrated both in his building the ark and the altar when he departed the ark). Still, his failure is not hidden either when his drunkenness is discussed.

Abram/Abraham is given an even larger portion of text than his two predecessors. Again, his personality is developed further beyond them and he is shown to be obedient and disobedient, steadfast in his faith and wavering to the point of fleeing to Egypt in famine and listening to Sarah in order to have a child. His weakness of character is overcome in time through his growing faith which began in his call, blossomed when he believed God's promise, and was demonstrated to be mature when he went to offer Isaac in sacrifice. He is developed as a mortal man with men's weaknesses who chooses to follow God and believes Him with the result of a maturing character. Abraham is the characterization of righteousness.

Jacob is given even more space than Abraham but his character is not nearly as pleasant as his grandfather's. In presenting Jacob, Moses is again honest in revealing both his strengths and weaknesses. He is revealed as an opportunist and a schemer, along with his mother. He begins and ends his life struggling and more self centered than his predecessors. He is the one who chooses to strike bargains with God. Yet, he is also a man of faith. As he develops and matures through the narrative it becomes evident in his prayers to God that he truly believes His words and trusts in Him to provide for him according to the covenant to which he has attached himself. That he continued to have faults can be seen in his dealings with his sons and with the Canaanites. Yet, his faith in God and desire to obey Him can be seen clearly in his stopping at

Beersheba to offer sacrifices and awaiting God's permission to enter Egypt before proceeding out of the land of promise. His prophetic words in the end also reflect the maturity of his faith.

Joseph, the final major character, is developed in the most idealistic manner of the men. The only apparent fault which can be attributed to him from the text is his attitude toward his brothers when revealing his dreams. Still, that could be debated as well. His character is developed through the series of trials through which he continues to be faithful to his God and masters and in which God's hand of blessing is made evident each step of the way. Each fall he experiences is by Divine design and each elevation comes within God's timing. He is the man of faith par excellence through whom the people of promise are preserved and blessed.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

Person of God

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is seen from the beginning to the end of the book. He is sovereign in His acts of creation and in the instructions He gave to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and others. He exercised His sovereignty in such acts as driving Adam and Eve from Eden, destroying the world with the flood, dividing the nations at Babel, and blessing the patriarchs, from Abram to Joseph.

Foreknowledge. God's foreknowledge is demonstrated in His prophetic utterances, beginning in chapter 3 with His declarations of consequences and curses. These have proven to be the beginning point of much of revelation which found its culmination in the ultimate revelation of God, Christ, and in His final defeat of Satan upon the cross. His foreknowledge is also shown in His choice of Isaac over Ishmael even before Isaac's birth. Further, it is seen in the promise to Rebekah that her older child would serve the younger, which would later be fulfilled in the Israelite domination of the Edomites.

Faithfulness. God's faithfulness is revealed throughout the book. The first example, in fact is the demonstration of His faithfulness to wicked Cain in protecting him from harm with the mark upon him. His faithfulness to Noah and his family in delivering them from the flood is another example. Further, there are all the instances with Abraham in which God blessed him, often in spite of his own sin, and gave to him and Sarah a son of promise. God's faithfulness continued through each of the elect seed of Abraham as can be seen in His protection of Isaac and material blessings upon him and then His blessing of Jacob when he was both outside of the land of Canaan and within. Finally, God's faithfulness to preserve His elect seed continued in the life of Joseph who He elevated to prominence in Egypt and thereby provided deliverance from famine to Jacob's tribe along with the rest of the world.

Grace. God's grace is evident throughout the book, again, within those same contexts as His faithfulness. Further, the blessing of Ishmael and Esau, though they were outside the covenant, demonstrates God's grace imparted to others. His patience with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob even when they sinned demonstrates His grace once more. For example, when Abraham disobeyed and went down to Egypt, God was gracious to him in delivering him and Sarah from the disaster and causing them to leave Egypt with more than they had come.

Mercy. God's mercy is also evident throughout the book. The best example of it is in the life of Lot who He spared along with his daughters who were clearly living outside His will within Sodom, the condemned city.

Love. The love of God is, again, evident throughout, especially within His dealings with both His elect and their non-elect seed His relationships with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and

Joseph only touch upon the demonstration of His love. His provision of water for Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness demonstrates His love for even the non-elect. His hearing the prayers of barren women and opening their wombs again demonstrates His love for individuals. His provision of Egypt to His elect nation demonstrates His love for His people.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. The principle purpose of God evident within Genesis is that of electing a nation through whom He would bless the world. Other purposes of God which are evident in Genesis include such things as the extension of His rule upon earth through man (which was lost by Adam), the salvation and preservation of man, and the establishment of a covenantal relationship between God and men.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God administers His purposes through men with whom He develops a personal, covenantal, relationship.

Election of a nation. God's purpose of electing a nation through whom He would bless the world is seen being worked out from the beginning of Genesis. With the fall came the promise to Adam and Eve of One who would defeat the Serpent's seed. This one's lineage is narrowed down through Noah when God acted to preserve the one righteous man, thereby enabling Him to keep His prior promise. With Abraham, though, this purpose became both explicit and evident. Within His covenant with Abram came the promise that through him the world would be blessed, and so the promise of a seed continued. Further, he was promised that a nation would come from his loins. This nation was further narrowed down to the seed Isaac with Ishmael's non-election and elimination from the line of blessing. Then, Jacob was selected over Esau and through him the nation was born, being carried down to the womb of Egypt where it would grow into a great multitude.

OUTLINE

- I. God's creative word brought forth a perfect world over which man was given and exercised dominion. 1-2
 - A. God spoke the world into existence, giving man dominion. 1:1--2:3
 - 1. He created light and separated it from darkness. 1:1-5
 - 2. He created the expanse of heaven. 1:6-8
 - 3. He separated land from the water and created plant life 1: 9-13
 - 4. He created the luminaries. 1:14-19
 - 5. He created the sea life and birds. 1:20-23
 - 6. He created the animal life, including man to whom He gave dominion over the earth 1:24-31
 - 7. With the work completed, He rested on the seventh day. 2:1-3
 - B. God created man, placed him in Eden, warned him, and then brought the animals and his mate to him, giving him dominion over them. 2: 4-25
 - 1. Man was created from the earth and placed in Eden. 2:4-9
 - 2. The four rivers flowed from Eden, the garden of God, and Adam was warned not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. 2:10-17
 - 3. The animals were created and brought to Adam to name, and when no suitable helper was found among them Eve was created for Adam 2:18-25
- II. God's words of judgment and election came amid the corruption of man pronouncing ultimate judgment upon evil while limiting its effects and preserving the line of blessing 3-11
 - A. God's words of judgment came upon man and the evil one as sin entered and corrupted the world. 3-4
 - 1. God's word of judgment came upon man and the evil one as a result of Eve's deception and Adam's sin. 3
 - a. The serpent deceived Eve and Adam chose to fall. 3:1-7
 - b. Sin resulted in fear and God's judgments upon the serpent. Eve, Adam, and the world. 3:8-21
 - c. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden. 3:22-24
 - 2. Cain, the first murderer, produces a murderer while Seth's line calls upon God. 4
 - a. The first sin of man against man, murder, brings judgment from God. 4:1-15

- (1) Cain murders Abel when his sacrifice is rejected and Abel's is accepted by God. 4:1-8
 - (2) God curses, marks Cain, and drives him away from his family. 4:9-15
 - b. The descendents of Cain produce a murderer. 4:16-24
 - c. With Adam's next son and grandson, men call on God. 4:25-26
- B. God's word of election continued the line of blessing even as those descended from Adam declined morally until God finally regretted creating man. 5:1--6:8
 - 1. Adam's descendents are listed as far as Noah's sons. 5:1-32
 - a. Adam begat Seth. 5:1-5
 - b. Seth begat Enosh. 5:6-8
 - c. Enosh begat Kenan. 5:9-11
 - d. Kenan begat Mahalalel. 5:12-14
 - e. Mahalalel begat Jared. 5:15-17
 - f. Jared begat Enoch. 5:18-20
 - g. Enoch begat Methuselah. 5:21-24
 - h. Methuselah begat Lamech. 5:25-27
 - i. Lamech begat Noah. 5:28-31
 - j. Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 5:32
 - 2. With the corruption of all mankind God became sorry that He had created man, but found in Noah one who pleased Him. 6:1-8
 - a. Sons of God took wives and produced the Nephilim. 6:1-4
 - b. When all men, except Noah who found favor, had become corrupted, God became sorry that He had created mankind. 6:5-8
- C. God's word to Noah delivered him and his sons from judgment and established a new world order. 6:9--9:29
 - 1. God's word to Noah led him to prepare the ark through which God was to deliver him and his family from the coming flood. 6:9-8:19
 - a. Noah was found by God to be last righteous man. 6:9-12
 - b. Noah built the ark in obedient to God's command. 6:13-22
 - 2. God preserved Noah and his family in the ark. 7-8
 - a. Noah and his family entered the ark when God told him to. 7:1-5
 - b. With 40 days and nights of rain, the flood came. 7:6-12
 - c. The water prevailed 150 days. 7:13-24

- d. The water decreased. 8:1-5
 - e. Birds were sent out, the raven flying over the waters, the first dove returning empty, the second with an olive leaf and the third staying away, 8:6-12
 - f. Noah and the animals disembarked from the ark. 8:13-19
 - g. Noah offered sacrifices and God promised to never again curse the ground or destroy man with a flood, and that the created order would continue while the earth remains. 8:20-22
- 3. God's word of blessing established a new world order and made a covenant with man never to destroy the world by flood again. 9:1-17
 - a. God blessed Noah and his sons, established a new order, including animals fearing men, men eating animals, and capital punishment. 9:1-7
 - b. Noahic Covenant: God promised never to destroy the world by flood again and gave the rainbow' as the sign of His covenant with man. 9:8-17
- 4. Noah's life following the flood included personal sin and its consequence of his drunkenness and the cursing of Canaan, his grandson. 9:18-29
 - a. Noah's sons are named. 9:18-19
 - b. When Noah became drunk from wine he produced and Ham looked upon his nakedness, he cursed Canaan. 9:20-27
 - c. Noah died at 950 years of age. 9:28-29
- D. God's account of Noah's sons details His spread of the nations in response to their corporate rebellion and traces the line of election to Abram. 10-11
 - 1. Table of Nations: The genealogy of the sons of Noah provides the origins of 70 nations. 10
 - a. The genealogy is introduced. 10:1
 - b. The sons of Japheth are named. 10:2-5
 - c. The sons of Ham are named along with their sons. 10:6-20
 - (1) The sons of Ham are Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 10:6
 - (2) The sons of Cush are listed 10:7-12
 - (3) The sons of Mizraim are listed. 10:13-14
 - (4) The sons of Canaan are listed. 10:14-20
 - d. The sons of Shem are listed. 10:21-31
 - e. A summary of the genealogies is made. 10:32
 - 2. God disperses the descendants of Noah following their rebellion and then elects one of Terah's sons to carry on His program of promise. 11

- a. When Noah's descendents decided to remain together as a single people and began building the Tower of Babel, God intervened and scattered them by confusing their languages. 11:1-9
- b. The generations of Shem: Shem's descendents are listed in their order through his son Arpachshad until Terah. 11:10-26
- c. Following the listing of Terah's sons, he departed to Haran along with Abram and Lot, and later died there. 11:27-32

III. God's word of election separated Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons as the line through whom He promised to bless the world. 12-50

A. God's covenantal promises to Abram brought blessing in spite of personal sin. 12--25:18

- 1. Though his life is characterized by the failure of going to Egypt, God cuts a covenant with Abram focusing primarily upon the promise of a land and a seed. 12-15
 - a. God called Abram to a covenantal relationship with Him in the land of Canaan and he obeyed by moving there. 12:1-9
 - b. When faced with the test of a famine, Abram sinned by going to sojourn in Egypt and God delivered Sarah from Pharaoh's harem and blessed Abram materially. 12:10-20
 - c. Abram and Lot return from Egypt and separate. 13:1-13
 - d. Following Abram's separation from Lot God repeats His land promise to him. 13:14-18
 - e. Lot was captured by Chedorlaomer's army, Abram took his men, rescued Lot and was blessed by Melchizedek. 14
 - (1) Chedorlaomer carries off Lot. 14:1-12
 - (2) Abram rescues Lot and the others. 14:13-16
 - (3) Abram pays tithes to Melchizedek, is blessed by him, and returns people and property to the kings of the plain. 14:17-24
 - f. Abram believes God's promise of a son through his own flesh. 15:1-11
 - g. The land promise is confirmed by God in the cutting of a covenant. 15:12-21
- 2. Though he falls by having Ishmael and lying to Abimelech Abram/Abraham demonstrates the maturing of his faith in by interceding for Sodom's cities and Abimelech, seeking peace with his neighbors, and offering Isaac in obedience to God's command. 16--22:19
 - a. Because of Sarai's leading, Abram has Ishmael through Hagar. 16
 - (1) Sarai gives Hagar to Abram in order to raise up a seed and then

- mistreats her so that she flees from Sarai's presence. 16:1-6
 - (2) Hagar is sent back by God after He promises to bless her son. 16:7-14
 - (3) At age 86, Ishmael is born to Abram. 16:15-16
 - b. When God repeats His promises to Abram, He changes his name to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah, further promising them a son named Isaac, and establishing circumcision as the sign of their covenant. 17
 - (1) God repeats His promises and then changes Abram's name to Abraham. 17:1-8
 - (2) God commands circumcision to be used as the sign of the covenant between Him and Abraham's seed. 17:9-14
 - (3) God changes Sarai's name to Sarah, and promises a son through her who will be called Isaac. 17:15-21
 - (4) Abraham responds to God's promise and circumcises all. 17:22-27
 - c. Abraham's intercession for the righteous of Sodom and Gomorrah does not save the cities but does bring deliverance for Lot. 18-19
 - (1) When God appears to tell Abraham that Isaac will be born within a year He also reveals His coming Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah and allows him to intercede for the righteous within the cities. 18
 - (a) God appears to Abraham and accepts his hospitality. 18:1-8
 - (b) God promises Abraham that Isaac is to be born within a year and Sarah laughs. 18:9-15
 - (c) God looks upon Sodom and Gomorrah and sends His two angels to investigate. 18:16-21
 - (d) Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah and God agrees to spare the cities if only ten righteous people are found within them. 18:22-33
 - (2) While condemning the cities, the angels of God warn Lot to flee, which is followed by the cities' destruction and the birth of Moabites through Lot's incestuous debasement. 19
 - (a) The two angels enter Sodom and find it completely wicked. 19:1-11
 - (b) Lot is warned of the coming judgment and flees to Zoar. 19:12-22
 - (c) The cities are destroyed along with Lot's wife, who disobeyed by looking back. 19:23-26
 - (d) Abraham saw the destruction. 19:27-29
 - (e) Lot gets drunk, commits incest, and the Moabite nation arises from him. 19:30-38
 - d. Abraham's deception brings judgment upon Abimelech who is then

- blessed by Abraham when he restores Sarah to him. 20
- (1) When Abraham deceives Abimelech about Sarah, God warns him of judgment if he does not restore her to Abraham. 20:1-7
 - (2) Abimelech confronts Abraham who then intercedes for him so that God allowed his family to be fruitful again. 20:8-18
- e. God keeps His promise to give Sarah a son which then results in her driving Hagar and her son out of the household. 21:1-21
- (1) Sarah gives birth to Isaac when Abraham was 100 years of age. 21:1-7
 - (2) When Isaac was weaned, Hagar and Ishmael were sent away with God's permission, and God promised Hagar to make a great nation out of her son. 21:8-21
- f. Though Abraham had treaties with Abimelech of the Philistines, they had disputes over wells and eventually confirmed Abraham's ownership of the well at Beersheba. 21:22-34
- g. Abraham's faith is tested with the offering of Isaac and results in God's provision of a sacrifice and confirmation of His covenant. 22:1-19
- (1) Abraham is instructed by God to sacrifice Isaac and takes him to the designated mountain. 22:1-8
 - (2) God then intervenes, providing a ram, and confirms His covenant with Abraham, 22:9-19
3. Following the death of Sarah, Abraham acts to provide Isaac everything necessary for blessing from God in the land of promise by obtaining him a wife and leaving all of his possessions to his elect son. 22:20--25:11
- a. Abraham learns that Milcah as born children for Nahor. 22:20-24
 - b. When Sarah dies, Abraham purchases the field of Ephron in Kiriath-arba (Hebron) in order to use its cave as a burial sight. 23
 - c. Abraham provides a wife, Rebekah, for Isaac. 24
 - (1) Abraham commissions his servant to get Isaac a wife. 24:1-9
 - (2) The servant prays for divine guidance and through God's aid finds Rebekah. 24:10-27
 - (3) The servant meets Rebekah's family and relates his story.
 - (4) Rebekah agrees to go to Isaac. 24:50-60
 - (5) Isaac takes her as his wife. 24:61-67
 - d. Before Abraham dies he has 5 sons through Keturah whom he sends away with gifts and leaves all of his possessions to Isaac. 25:1-11

4. God's account of Ishmael's descendants demonstrates His faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to make him a great nation though he was not included in the line of promise. 25:12-18
- B. God's covenantal promises to Jacob brought blessing in spite of personal sin. 25:19--36
1. God's election of Isaac's younger son for the line of blessing was accomplished in spite of his son's sins and included sending him away from Canaan to find a wife. 25:19--28:22
 - a. God's pre-birth choice of Jacob over Esau was confirmed in Esau's selling his birthright 25:19-34
 - (1) God opened Rebekah's womb and Esau and Jacob were born, following the promise that the older would serve the younger. 25:19-26
 - (2) As an adult, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red stew. 25:27-34
 - b. Though Isaac repeated his father's sin with Abimelech, he obeyed God by remaining in Canaan and God's blessing brought first conflict and then peace with the Philistines, though Esau's wives grieved him. 26
 - (1) When a famine came and God called upon Isaac to stay in Canaan he obeyed, but then lied to Abimelech about Rebekah and had to be protected through God's intervention. 26:1-11
 - (2) Isaac's increased wealth caused disputes over wells with the Philistines. 26:12-17
 - (3) Isaac re-dug the wells of his father. 26:18-22
 - (4) At Beersheba God appeared to Isaac, who then made an altar and remained there. 26:23-25
 - (5) Isaac's enemies made peace with him, recognizing that God's blessing was upon him. 26:26-33
 - (6) Esau married Judith and Basemath, Canaanites, who brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah. 26:34-35
 - c. Jacob's deception of Isaac obtains for him the birthright but results in his being sent out of the land. 27
 - (1) Isaac sends Esau hunting in anticipation of blessing him. 27:1-4
 - (2) Rebekah prepares food for Jacob in order to deceive Isaac into giving his blessing to Jacob. 27:5-17
 - (3) Jacob deceives Isaac and is given the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. 27:18-29

- (4) When Esau returns to find his blessing stolen, his anger motivates Rebekah to send Jacob away to her brother. 27:30-45
 - (5) Rebekah talks Isaac into sending Jacob away. 27:46
- d. When Jacob departs to go to Haran, he is met by God who repeats His promises to him and he in turn promises loyalty to God if He keeps His word. 28
 - (1) Jacob is sent by Isaac to Paddan-aram in order to find a wife from among his relatives. 28:1-9
 - (2) God appears to Jacob in dream at Bethel and promises to give him Canaan, many descendents, and to be with him until He accomplishes all He promised. 28:10-17
 - (3) Jacob promises loyalty and a tithe if God provides for and returns him safely to his father's house. 28:18-22
- 2. God's covenantal promises to Jacob were the basis of his blessing while in Haran and during his return to Canaan. 29-32
 - a. Though Jacob was initially deceived by Laban, he served him for 14 years for his two wives and then came to terms of employment when he sought to leave for home. 29-30
 - (1) Jacob met Rachel at the water well at midday. 29:1-12
 - (2) Jacob served seven years for Rachel. 29:13-20
 - (3) Laban deceived Jacob and so he served again for Rachel. 29:21-30
 - (4) Leah bore Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. 29:31-35
 - (5) Bilhah bore Dan and Naphtali for Rachel 30:1-8
 - (6) Zilpah bore Gad and Asher for Leah. 30:9-13
 - (7) Leah then bore Issachar (Mandrakes), Zebulun, and Dinah, followed by Rachel bearing Joseph. 30:14-24
 - (8) When Jacob asked to leave, Laban agree to terms of employment (speckled and spotted goats along with the black sheep). 30:25-36
 - (9) Jacob bred Laban's flock to strengthen his own wages and prospered while Laban declined. 30:37-43
 - b. God protected Jacob when he departed for Canaan secretly and Laban pursued him. 31
 - (1) When faced with antagonism from his brother-in-laws. Jacob Was led by God to depart and told his wives of his plan, which they supported. 31:1-16
 - (2) Jacob fled while Laban sheared his flock and Rachel stole her father's idols. 31:17-21
 - (3) When Laban caught up to Jacob he was warned by God not to harm him, though Jacob pronounced death upon the taker of his idols

- 31:22-32
- (4) Laban searched for but did not find his idols when Rachel sat upon them. 31:33-35
 - (5) Jacob contended with Laban concerning his 20 years of labor. 31:36-42
 - (6) Jacob and Laban made a covenant of peace at Galeed/Mizpah. 31:43-55
- c. In the crisis of arriving home to an angry Esau, Jacob sent gifts, wrestled with God, and became Israel. 32
- (1) Jacob met angels of God at Mahanaim. 32:1-2
 - (2) When Jacob sent word to his brother and then heard that he was coming with 400 men to meet him, he prayed to God for protection on the basis of His earlier promises. FAITH 32:3-12
 - (3) Jacob sent presents (200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milking camels with colts, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys) to Esau to appease his anger. 32:13-21
 - (4) Jacob sent his family across the ford of the Jabbok and was renamed Israel after wrestling with God all night. 32:22-32
3. God's covenantal promises to Jacob included protection and led to his worship of God at Shechem, Bethel and Kiriath-arba (Hebron). 33-35
- a. Jacob settled in Shechem and worshipped God there after he was welcomed by Esau. 33
 - (1) After Esau welcomed Jacob and invited him to Seir, he moved to Shechem. 33:1-17
 - (2) Jacob bought land at Shechem and erected an altar, "El-Elohe-Israel." 33:18-20
 - b. Jacob's move to Shechem resulted in Dinah's rape and her avenging his two eldest sons who slaughtered the men of the city. 34
 - (1) Dinah was raped by Shechem, who then asked for her in marriage and agreed to circumcise all the men of the city. 34:1-17
 - (2) Simeon and Levi struck down all the men of Shechem and looted the city as revenge for Dinah's rape. 34:18-31
 - c. Following the trouble at Shechem, Jacob moved first to Bethel where he met again with God, and then to Kiriath-arba (Hebron) and there buried Isaac. 35
 - (1) When God commanded Jacob to move to Bethel he put away all

- idols from his family. 35:1-4
 - (2) Jacob was protected by God during his move to Bethel. 35:5-8
 - (3) God appeared again to Jacob at Bethel, naming him Israel and promising to make a company of nations of him and to give them the land promised to Abraham and Isaac. 35:9-15
 - (4) Jacob then moved to Ephrath and Rachel died en route after giving birth to Ben-oni/Benjamin. Reuben lay with Bilhah. 35:16-22a
 - (5) Jacob arrived at Hebron, Isaac's home, with twelve sons by Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun), Rachel (Joseph and Benjamin), Bilhah (Dan and Naphtali), and Zilpah (Gad and Asher). 35:22b-27
 - (6) Isaac died (180 yrs old) and was buried by Jacob and Esau at Hebron. 35:28-29
- 4. God's account of Ishmael's descendents demonstrates His blessing upon the non-elect son of Isaac. 36
 - a. The accounting of Esau's line is introduced. 36:1
 - b. Esau had three wives and five sons, and moved from Canaan into the region of Mount Seir. 36:2-9
 - c. Esau's sons gave him 10 grandsons. 36:10-14
 - d. The 14 chiefs of Edom who were descendents of Esau are listed. 36:15-19
 - e. Sier the Horite had 7 sons who were also chiefs of Edom. 36:20-30
 - f. The 8 kings of Edom are listed along with their cities. 36:31-39
 - g. The chiefs descended from Esau are listed according to the locations of their rule. 36:40-43
- C. God's word to Joseph through dreams enabled him to preserve his family and bless Egypt in spite of the sins of his brothers. 37-50
 - 1. Following revelations from God that he would be elevated above his family, Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt because of the hatred of his brothers. 37
 - a. The account of the descendents of Jacob was introduced with Jacob living in the land of Canaan. 37:1-2a
 - b. Joseph was specially loved by Jacob and hated by his brothers. 37:2b-4
 - c. Joseph related two dreams of his ascent above his brothers and parents and was rebuked. 37:5-11
 - d. Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers and report on them. 37:12-17
 - e. As Joseph approached, his brothers wanted to kill him but Reuben convinced them to throw him into a pit. 37:18-24
 - f. At Judah's suggestion they then sold Joseph to some Egypt bound Ishmaelites for twenty silver pieces. 37:25-28
 - g. While his brothers deceived Jacob into believing he was dead, Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar in Egypt. 37:29-36.

2. God continued Judah's line through Tamar, his daughter-in-law, who proved more righteous than Judah by acting immorally in order to continue his son's name. 38
 - a. Judah married a Canaanite who bore him three sons. 38:1-5
 - b. Er and Onan were killed by God and Tamar was left a childless widow in her father's house awaiting Shelah's maturity. 38:6-11
 - c. When Judah went to shear sheep, following his wife's death, Tamar deceived him into thinking she was a prostitute and conceived a son through him. 38:12-19
 - d. Tamar returned home while Judah attempted to send the kid as payment and get back his pledge (seal, staff and belt). 38:20-23
 - e. Tamar revealed that Judah was the child's father when he wanted to burn her for her harlotry. 38:24-26
 - f. Tamar gave birth to Perez and Zerah. 38:27-30

3. While in Egypt, God blessed Joseph even through the circumstances of slavery and unjust imprisonment and eventually elevated him to the second highest position in Egypt, by giving him interpretations of dream and enabling him to prepare Egypt for the coming 7 years famine. 39-41
 - a. God was with Joseph, who acted faithfully and righteously, in both slavery and imprisonment. 39
 - (1) God blessed Potiphar through Joseph and so he gave Joseph charge of everything. 39:1-6
 - (2) When Joseph refused to lie with Potiphar's wife she accused him of attempting to rape her. 39:7-18
 - (3) When Potiphar threw Joseph into jail he prospered there and was soon in charge of everything under the chief jailer. 39:19-23

 - b. When the king's cupbearer and baker were imprisoned with Joseph he interpreted their dreams of restoration and execution accurately, but was forgotten by the cupbearer when he was restored according to Joseph's word. 40
 - (1) The king's chief cupbearer and baker were imprisoned with Joseph and had dreams. 40:1-8
 - (2) Joseph interpreted the cupbearer's dream as promising restoration and asked him to remember him before the Pharaoh. 40:9-15
 - (3) Joseph interpreted the baker's dream as promising that Pharaoh would hang him, 40:16-19
 - (4) The third day Pharaoh did according to Joseph's interpretations, but the cupbearer forgot about him. 40:20-23

 - c. When God warned Pharaoh of coming plenty followed by famine, He

elevated Joseph to leadership and blessed him through the cupbearer's testimony and Joseph's interpretation. 41

- (1) Two years after the elevation of the cupbearer, Pharaoh had two dreams (cows and ears of grain) which could not be interpreted by his men. 41:1-8
 - (2) The cupbearer reported to Pharaoh about Joseph's dream interpretations. 41:9-13
 - (3) When Joseph was brought into Pharaoh's presence, Pharaoh recounted his dreams to him. 41:14-24
 - (4) Joseph interpreted the dreams as promising seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine and recommended that Pharaoh appoint someone over the task of collecting food for the famine. 41:25-36
 - (5) Pharaoh appointed Joseph over the land of Egypt and gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potephra as his wife. 41:37-45
 - (6) Joseph stored food during the years of plenty. 41:46-49
 - (7) Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph during the years of plenty. 41:50-52
 - (8) When the famine came Joseph then sold the stored grain to the Egyptian people and others as well. 41:53-57
4. Through the circumstances of the famine Joseph was reunited with his father and repentant brothers who were given the best of the land and provided for during the remainder of the famine. 42--47:26
- a. When the famine brought the 10 oldest sons of Jacob to Egypt, Joseph tested them by taking Simeon hostage and required that they bring Benjamin to Egypt on their second trip. 42
- (1) When the famine was severe in Canaan Jacob sent his 10 oldest sons to Egypt to buy grain where they were recognized by Joseph. 42:1-7
 - (2) When Joseph accused them of spying, his brothers denied the charge and admitted to there being 12 sons of Jacob. 42:8-17
 - (3) When Joseph offered to keep Simeon hostage while the others returned to Canaan, his brothers agreed and believed that their troubles were punishment from God for their treatment of Joseph. 42:18-24
 - (4) Joseph had their money returned to their sacks, which they discovered en route home and so were terrified that God had again judged them. 42:25-28
 - (5) They reported to Jacob what had been said and Joseph's demand that Benjamin be brought to Egypt. 42:29-34
 - (6) Reuben offered his two sons as hostage in exchange for Benjamin's life if he failed to bring him back from Egypt. 42:35-38

- b. When his brothers arrived with Benjamin, after Judah offered himself to Jacob in exchange if he failed to return him home, Joseph had a meal with his brothers and honored Benjamin. 43
 - (1) When their condition was severe again, Judah offered himself to Jacob in exchange for Benjamin. 43:1-10
 - (2) Jacob released Benjamin to his brothers, sent double the money along with gifts for Joseph, and entrusted his sons to God. 43:11-15
 - (3) When they arrived with Benjamin, Joseph had Simeon returned to them and invited them to a meal in his home. 43:16-25
 - (4) At the meal the brothers were arranged according to birth order and Benjamin was given an extra portion by Joseph. 43:26-34
- c. When Joseph put his brothers to the test of losing Benjamin, Judah offered himself in exchange and pleaded for his release for their father's sake. 44
 - (1) Joseph had both their money put into their sacks and his cup placed into Benjamin's and then sent his steward to intercept and accuse the men of theft. 44:1-5
 - (2) After they offered the guilty person's death and their slavery if the cup were found among them, the steward found it in Benjamin's sack and they returned to the city. 44:6-13
 - (3) When brought to Joseph's presence they attributed their problem to God's judgment and Joseph took Benjamin as his slave. 44:14-17
 - (4) Judah offered himself in exchange for Benjamin, recounting the anxiety of Jacob and his own fear that his father would die if Benjamin did not return with them. 44:18-34
- d. Following the rest, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and sent for his father after Pharaoh offered the best land of Egypt to his family. 45
 - (1) Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and told them to return to Canaan and bring all of his family back to Egypt. 45:1-15
 - (2) Pharaoh heard of Joseph's family and offered the best of the land of Egypt to them as their new residence. 45:16-20
 - (3) The brothers returned and reported to Jacob that Joseph lived and so Jacob agreed to go to Egypt. 45:21-28
- e. Jacob sacrificed at Beersheba, where he obtained God's permission to leave Canaan, before going to Egypt where he met Joseph in Goshen. 46
 - (1) When Jacob stopped at Beersheba to offer sacrifices to God, He promised to bless him in Egypt and make him a great nation. And so he went to Egypt. 46:1-7
 - (2) The names of all the company, 70 in all, were listed. 46:8-27
 - (3) Joseph met his family in Goshen and then instructed them to tell

Pharaoh that they were herdsmen. 46:28-34

- f. Entering Egypt, Jacob's family got the best of the land and was blessed even as the Egyptians sold all they had, including themselves, to Pharaoh in order to live. 47:1-26
 - (1) When his brothers and father met Pharaoh, Jacob blessed him and they told him their occupation and were given the best land of Egypt, Goshen, to live in, 47:1-12
 - (2) As the famine continued the Egyptians spent all of their money and then all of their livestock on grain so that Pharaoh owned everything. 47:13-19
 - (3) All lands except that belonging to the priests of Egypt became Pharaoh's along with the people, and so they were required from then on to pay Pharaoh a fifth of their production each year. 47:20-26
- 5. The final years of Jacob involved the blessing of his sons and burial in Canaan. Joseph ended his days with a request to be carried back when the nation returned. 47:27--50
 - a. Jacob prepared for his death by adding Joseph's sons to his inheritance and then prophesying each son's tribe's future place within the coming nation of Israel. 47:17--49
 - (1) After 17 years Jacob prepared for his death by asking Joseph to bury him in Canaan. 47:27-31
 - (2) Jacob gave Joseph the double portion of the firstborn by giving his two sons portions as tribes of Israel, elevating the younger over the older. 48
 - (a) When Joseph learned Jacob was ill, he brought his sons to him and Jacob claimed them as his own. 48:1-7
 - (b) Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, placing Ephraim above Manasseh and thereby giving Joseph the double portion of the firstborn. 48:8-22
 - (3) As death approached, Jacob called together his sons and prophetically established their future places within the nation of Israel. 49:1-27
 - (a) Jacob called for his sons to hear his prophecy concerning them. 49:1-2
 - (b) Reuben's preeminence was taken away because he defiled his father's bed. 49:3-4
 - (c) Because of their violence, he promised to scatter Simeon and

Levi among their brothers in Israel. 49:5-7

- (d) Judah is given the rule. 49:8-12
- (e) Zebulun will dwell by the seashore, toward Sidon. 49:13
- (f) Issachar will become a slave at forced labor. 49:14-15
- (g) Dan will judge his people but be a serpent in the path. 49:16-18
- (h) Though Gad will be raided, he too will raid his enemies. 49:19
- (i) Asher would have rich food. 49:20
- (j) Naphtali gives beautiful words. 49:21
- (k) Joseph is blessed with fruitfulness. 49:22-26
- (l) Benjamin devours the prey and divides the spoil. 49:27

- (4) After asking to be buried with Abraham and Isaac, Jacob died. 49:28-33

c. Following the honored burial of Jacob, Joseph blessed his brothers and credited God with using them, and then asked to be carried back to Canaan in the future when the sons of Israel would return. 50

- (1) Joseph had Jacob embalmed and the Egyptians mourned 70 days for him. 50:1-3
- (2) The sons of Jacob mourned 7 more days in Canaan and then buried him in the cave of his fathers. 50:4-14
- (3) Joseph's brothers, fearing reprisal, approached him only to be blessed by him and glory given to God for using their past evil deed to deliver them. 50:15-21
- (4) Joseph saw three generations of grandchildren born to him, and at 110 died after asking that his bones be carried 'with the sons of Israel back to the land of Canaan. 50:22-26

Exodus

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. Moses is the author of Exodus. Moses is identified as recording the events and instructions of God contained in the account in such places as Exodus 17:14; 24:4, 7, 12 and 34:27. Further evidence is contained in Numbers 33:1-2 and Deuteronomy 31:9-11 that he continued throughout his time to record God's instructions and the nation's history. The New Testament writers also accepted, without question, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as attested in John 5:46-47 and 7:19 (Jesus), Acts 3:22 (Peter), and Romans 10:5 (Paul). Keil says of the Pentateuch, and thus of Exodus, "It cannot be shown to bear any traces of post-Mosaic times and circumstances; on the contrary, it has the evident stamp of Mosaic origin both in substance and in style" (C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, K & D, p. 19). These indications include such things as: sufficient details to indicate an eyewitness account (such as the number of palm trees at an oasis); an accurate knowledge of Egyptian customs, names, and titles; and a "thorough knowledge of the geography of Egypt and Sinai" (Davis, *Moses and the God's of Egypt*, p. 46).

Date. The two major positions on the date of Exodus are the early date of 1445 B.C. and the late date of approximately 1280 B.C.

Late Date. Arguments for the late date include: 1) Exodus 1:11 links the Israelite oppression with the building of the storage cities of Pithom and Raamses. 2) The Edomite opposition to Israelite passage through their territory would not have been possible during the 15th century because of lack of sedentary occupation during that time. 3) The presence of numerous destruction layers in Palestinian mounds which date to the 13th century and not the 15th. 4) The Hebrews are linked to the Habiru of the Amarna Letters. 5)

The absence of any extensive construction projects by Thutmose III and his successor in the delta region of Egypt. Responses to these arguments are as follows: 1) Concerning the storage cities: Since Exodus 1:11 occurred before Moses' birth, and he was 80 years old at the Exodus (Ex. 7:7), then the building of these cities would have been well before the Exodus and Raamses II could not have been the Pharaoh who ordered their construction. With regard to the city being named Raamses before a Pharaoh was so named, the name was known and used earlier based upon extant inscriptions of the 12th dynasty. So, these two cities do not need to be built by Raamses II, nor do they require a date of construction after 1445 B.C. 2) Concerning Edomite opposition: The absence of population since the Edomites remained a nomadic group for all but a couple of centuries of their existence in the region of Edom. Though they remained nomadic, archaeological evidence indicates that they probably had built an extensive line of fortress defenses along their border which they could occupy when threatened and so command the heights and block entrance into their territory. So, this argument, too, is weak. 3) Concerning the destruction layers throughout Palestine: First, dating destruction layers is a tenuous project at best. Also, the presence of destruction layers does not demand Israelite destruction in the 12th century, but could easily have been accomplished by Israelite oppressors. Further, there is now evidence of a shift from sedentary to semi-nomadic occupation in many of the cities during the 15th century, which correlates much more closely to the biblical account of the conquest in which only a few cities (Jericho, Ai, and Hazor) were burned and the rest reoccupied by the conquerors. 4) Concerning linking the Hebrews to the Habiru: Though the Amarna Letters may be mentioning the Hebrews as a part of the broad group designated "Habiru", nothing demands that they refer solely to Israel.

Rather, they may reflect the general trend of that time amongst several semi-nomadic groups who were moving around and conquering various locations 5) Concerning the absence of construction in the delta by Thutmosis III: Evidence is growing which indicates that there was indeed a great deal of building in the delta region during the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt.

Early Date. The early date of the Exodus grows out of a serious consideration of two key texts of Scripture. First, in I Kings 6:1 the Exodus is described as taking place 480 years before the 4th year of Solomon's reign. Since Solomon's 4th year is placed at 966/B.C., the Exodus is understood then to have occurred in 1446/5 B.C. Though this point is rejected by late date proponents on the grounds that 480 was a round number meant only to communicate 12 generations, there is nothing in the text which would indicate such. Further, accepting such an approach to direct statements of Scripture would call into question all other chronological statements. The second passage is Judges 11:26, in which Jephthah claimed in the second year of his judgeship (around 1100 B-C) that 300 years had elapsed between Israel's sojourn at Heshbon and his time. This would require Israel's arrival in Canaan around 1400 B.C. Thus the only way to move the Exodus forward would be to deny the historical accuracy of Jephthah's statement which was not denied by the King of Ammon. Other evidence in support of the early date include the destruction of Jericho, though erosion and debate amongst archaeologists on the meaning of the evidence continues. Further, as noted when answering the late date position, the growing evidence of an occupational shift without total destruction of the cities did occur in the late 15th century.

Audience. Moses wrote to the Israelite nation which had been redeemed from Egypt and was wandering in the wilderness awaiting God's permission to enter the promised land.

Historicity. A great deal of historical assertions within Exodus continues to be improvable from any ancient records unearthed to date. Cole notes well, though, "It is enough that, with later Israel, we know and believe that such an event happened, and that we too interpret it as a saving act of God" (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TOTC, p. 16). Like Genesis, the history presented in Exodus is not reported for history's sake, but to reveal God. And, so, it is written from a theological perspective rather than a purely historical one. Yet, all that is affirmed within the text is historically accurate, including the miracles of God and motives of men.

Canonicity. Exodus has been accepted as canonical without question along with the rest of the Pentateuch.

Intent. Moses recorded Exodus to serve as a bridge between the origin of the nation and the establishment of the theocratic kingdom under Moses. (BKCOT, p. 105.)

Literary Component

Genre. Exodus contains primarily historical narrative, though some sections are also legal literature, though within the framework of the historical account of God's dealing with the nation.

Arrangement. The book is arranged chronologically as well as logically. The historical accounts are kept in chronological order. The instructions, listing of the laws, description of construction, and erection of the tabernacle are detailed logically as well as historically, reflecting the order of God's instruction and the order of construction.

Characterization. Moses is the central character of the book, though God is its central focus. As in Genesis, the character of Moses is depicted accurately and includes his faults and failures. He is not glorified. The same is true of Aaron and Pharaoh and the other people who appear within the book. Though every facet of their personalities is not pursued, yet they are

shown invariably to be finite men with failings who live by the grace of God or die from His wrath. Moses' character is developed through both his actions and dialogue with God and others. Also, different from Genesis, the character of the nation as a mass of people is developed, as seen especially in their murmurings.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

Existence of God. The existence of God is evidenced throughout the narrative by the accounts of His actions and words. It is assumed through out as well as being demonstrated in the accounting of His deeds.

Sovereignty. God's sovereign control is a central theme of this book. His sovereignty is demonstrated first in His dealings with Pharaoh and judgments upon Egypt. He is sovereign over the gods of Egypt, over nature, and over government. In the movement of the nation, His sovereignty is worked out through the leadership of Moses in guiding and communicating to the nation as well in His appearances, both to Moses and the people. The ultimate expression of His sovereignty is made in Exodus 33:19 where He says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

Holiness. God's holiness is focused upon throughout the book, though primarily in the legal sections and the description of the tabernacle, robes, and sacrifices. It is first demonstrated when his anger burned against Moses in 4:24-26 for failing to circumcise his sons. It is demonstrated in the Passover and His demands for proper sacrifices. It is fully evidenced in both the legal codes He delivers and in the sacrifices and ordinances of worship and cleansing detailed through Moses. It is only with difficulty that men could approach God in His holiness. Finally, God's holiness is seen in the burning flame of His presence and the warnings that any who should break through to view Him would be killed.

Faithfulness. God's faithfulness is a central focus from the beginning of the book. Davis calls Him "a God of perfect fidelity" (John S. Davis, *Moses and the God's of Egypt*, p. 48). He remembers His covenant with the patriarchs and acts to keep His work by sending a deliverer. He again demonstrates His faithfulness by keeping His promise to spare those whose homes were marked with the blood of the lamb. He provided for the nation in each phase of their journey as well.

Righteousness. The codified law and moral ethics demanded demonstrate God's righteousness as well as His judgments upon sin within the outworking of the story.

Grace. God's grace is demonstrated in His response to Moses' intercession and agreements to neither blot out Israel for her sins nor to take His presence away from her as He had first said He would following her idolatry. His grace is also demonstrated in the provision of food.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. The purposes of God in Exodus include the establishment of an elect nation as a theocratic kingdom under Moses' leadership and the fulfillment of His mania to the patriarchs to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage and make of them a great nation.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God administered His purposes through the human agency of Moses, sending him as the nation's deliverer and His prophet, and though

miraculous interventions of both judgment and provision. With Moses as His spokesman, God revealed His will and ways to the people while revealing His power in judgments upon the Egyptians. Through Moses, God brought the plagues upon Egypt and provided the revelation for both Israel's protection during the Passover and then deliverance across the Red Sea. Through him also, God revealed the laws of His covenant and worked through Moses' intercession in both showing mercy to the people and judging them. He further established His theocratic kingdom both through the revelation given Moses and by endorsing him as His elect leader by meeting with him personally. God's administration of deliverance and provision is seen in not only the plagues, but also such things as the manna water, and meat provided to the people in order to sustain them on their trip to the land of promise.

OUTLINE

- I. God's separation of a people for Himself was accomplished by His demonstrating His sovereignty over Egypt redeeming Israel from the final judgment upon Egypt, and bringing them to Himself in the wilderness. 1-18
 - A. God separated Israel for Himself by humbling Egypt and Pharaoh through the judgments of the plagues. 1-11
 1. God raised up Moses as the deliverer for Israel. 1-4
 - a. As the Israelites multiplied, a new Pharaoh arose who oppressed them and attempted to stop their growth unsuccessfully. 1
 - b. When Pharaoh commanded that the boys be drowned in the Nile, Moses' parents disobeyed and he was adopted by the princess until he fled Egypt for killing an Egyptian, remaining with Reuel in Midian until Pharaoh died and the people cried out to God. 2
 - c. At the burning bush God called and empowered Moses, providing Aaron, and through attesting signs convinced Israel's leaders that He was concerned for the nation. 3-4
 - (1) When God met with Moses on Horeb in the burning bush, He identified Himself as YHWH and promised to deliver the nation while judging Egypt. 3
 - (2) Though Moses initially objected, God provided him with three signs (staff to snake, leprous hand, water to blood) and a mouthpiece, Aaron, through which he convinced Israel's leadership that God was concerned for the nation's welfare. 4
 2. God delivered Israel with a mighty hand through the plagues while Pharaoh hardened his heart. 5-11
 - a. When Moses approached Pharaoh with God's demand to let His people go, he increased their hardship. 5-6

- (1) When Moses and Aaron called upon Pharaoh to release the people he instead increased their labors, blaming Moses, rather than releasing them to worship God. 5
 - (2) Against the background of Moses and Israel's leadership's objections, God again promised to deliver Israel from Egypt and take Him to Canaan as He had promised the Patriarchs. 6
- b. Through the ten plagues God punished Egypt while Pharaoh hardened his heart until He struck Egypt's first-born and Israel was finally released. 7-11
 - (1) When Moses and Aaron performed their first sign, staff to snake, the magicians imitated it and Pharaoh's heart was hardened. 7
 - (2) **Plague of Nile turned to blood:** At God's command. Moses turned the water of the Nile to blood, which the magician's again imitated. 7:14-25
 - (3) **Plague of Frogs:** The plague of frogs was again imitated and Pharaoh hardened his heart once it was removed. 8:1-15
 - (4) **Plague of gnats:** The plague of gnats could not be imitated by the magicians, but Pharaoh still hardened his heart. 8:16-19
 - (5) **Plague of swarming insects:** The plague of insects, which attacked only the Egyptians, brought initial permission to depart but was followed by Pharaoh's hardened heart again. 8:20-32
 - (6) **Plague of pestilence on the livestock:** When God struck only the Egyptian livestock with deadly pestilence Pharaoh still hardened his heart. 9:1-7
 - (7) **Plague of boils:** Then God struck the Egyptians with boils, such that the magicians could no longer stand before Moses, and He hardened Pharaoh's heart. 9:8-12
 - (8) **Plague of hail:** When God promised hail which would destroy all men, cattle, and plants outside of shelters, believing Egyptians heeded and others died, with Pharaoh still hardening his heart. 9:13-35
 - (9) **Plague of locusts:** The plague of locusts came when Pharaoh was willing only to allow the men to worship God and was followed by God's hardening Pharaoh's heart. 10:1-20
 - (10) **Plague of darkness:** When God struck the Egyptians only with thick darkness, Pharaoh offered to allow the people, without livestock, to worship until God hardened his heart again, at which time he drove Moses from his presence forever. 10:21-29
 - (11) Moses warned of the final plague and then departed from Pharaoh's presence while God continued to harden his heart. 11
- B. God's separation of a people for Himself was accomplished by His redeeming Israel from the final judgment upon Egypt, and bringing them to Himself in the wilderness. 12-18

1. **Plague on the first-born:** With Israel's first observance of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, came the final plague which was then followed by their release from Egyptian captivity 430 years after the nation had entered into the land. 12
 2. In leading them out of Egypt, God claimed the first-born of man and beast as His own, taking them toward the wilderness of the Red Sea rather than toward the Philistines. 13
 3. God drew the Egyptians after Israel as she departed from Egypt, glorifying Himself by drowning the Egyptians in the sea through which Israel had just passed safely. 14
 4. Following the celebration of their deliverance, the nation was led to Marah where they grumbled and were provided for by God, and then to Elim, a place with plenty of water. 15
 5. When faced with a shortage of food, though the people grumbled, God provided quail at night and manna in the mornings to sustain them for the 40 years in the wilderness. 16
 6. At Rephidim God provided water from a rock when the people complained and victory over Amalek through Moses' uplifted hands. 17
 7. When Jethro visited Moses and suggested he select judges to assist him, he listened to his counsel. 18
- II. The separated people's constitution for nationhood was given to them by God in a vassal style of covenant. 19-24
- A. God came down and initially met with Moses on the mountain after claiming Israel as His possession and warning the people to consecrate themselves and stay off the mountain. 19
 - B. God gave Israel the ten foundational commandments and established the proper altar with which to worship Him while the people stood back in fear of His voice. 20
 1. God began the revelation of the laws of His covenant through Moses with ten foundational commands. 20:1-17
 - a. God's introduced His words to Moses. 20:1
 - b. He identified Himself as the one who redeemed Israel. 20:2
 - c. He prohibited worshipping any other gods. 20:3
 - d. He prohibited making idols of Himself. 20:4-6
 - e. He prohibited taking His name in vain. 20:7
 - f. He sanctified the Sabbath day and commanded that it be kept holy and no work be done on it. 20:8-11
 - g. He commanded children to honor their parents. 20:12
 - h. He committed murder. 20:13
 - i. He prohibited adultery. 20:14
 - j. He prohibited theft. 20:15
 - k. He prohibited bearing false witness. 20:16

1. He prohibited coveting someone else's possessions. 20:17
 2. The people were frightened by God's voice and asked Moses to speak to them instead of God and then stood at a distance. 20:18-21
 3. God commanded the people never to make idols and to sacrifice on earth or uncut stone alters which had no steps. 20:22-26
- C. God detailed the civil laws of the covenant. 21-23
1. The laws concerning the killing of people or livestock called for death in certain circumstances and restitution in others depending on whether people or animals were involved and whether intention or negligence could be demonstrated. 21
 2. Various laws were given concerning restitution of property and punishment for other offenses. 22
 3. Various other regulations concerning treatment of people, Sabbaths, and feasts were given along with a promise of God's aid in their return to Canaan if they retained faithful. 23
- D. The civil/moral laws were accepted by the people, which resulted in their worship and entering into a covenant with God along with a fellowship meal by their leaders and Moses' call upon the mountain for 40 days. 24
- III. God's tabernacle provided the means by which He dwelt among Israel as King in spite of their rebellion. 25-40
- A. God detailed the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture along with the priestly garments, oils, and incense. 25-31
1. God commanded Moses to raise a contribution from the people for the construction of the tabernacle and priestly garments. 25:1-9
 2. He described in detail the tabernacle and its furnishings to Moses. 25:10--28:43
 - a. The Ark, the Table of Showbread, and the Lamp stand with its seven lamps. 25:10-40
 - b. The 10 linen curtains, 11 goat hair curtains for a tent over the tabernacle, and then a covering for the tent of ram's and porpoise skin the boards, the bars to hold the boards, the veil between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, and the screen for the doorway of the tent. 26
 - c. The alter, the court. And, He commanded them to keep the lamp turning with clear olive oil perpetually. 27
 - d. The holy garments, including a breast piece, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, and sash, the Urim and Thummim, gold bells, gold plate upon Aaron's turban, and the breeches which covered from their loins to their thighs. 28
 3. He detailed the procedure for Aaron and his sons' ordination with its sacrifices. 29

4. He provided additional descriptions of tabernacle items along with the anointing oil and incense. 30
 5. Along with some concluding comments, God named two key men in the work as well as reminded them to keep the Sabbath. 31
- B. The covenant, broken by the people, was reestablished by God in response to Moses' intercession. 32-34
1. Israel broke the covenant through idolatry while Moses was with God, bringing judgment from Him which was tempered by Moses' intercession and the slaughter by the Levites. 32
 2. When God removed His presence from Israel, though still allowing them to go to Canaan, Moses met with Him outside the camp, interceding for The nation and asking to see His glory. 33
 3. On the mountain for 40 days, Moses saw God's glory and He agreed to go in Israel's midst, reminding them of the covenantal stipulations with regard to national covenants, first-born, and feasts. 34
- C. The collection of the contribution and building of the tabernacle and other items were completed properly so that God moved His presence into the tent. 35-40
1. Repeating the Sabbath command, Moses called for the contributions for the tabernacle and for skilled workers, led by Bazalel and Oholiab. 35
 2. With the abundant supply of gifts, the workers made the tabernacle, its utensils, and priestly garments according to God's instructions. 36-39
 - a. With an overabundance of contributions, the skilled men along with Bazalel made the 10 curtains, the goats' hair curtains for the tent, the boards, the bars, and the veil. 36
 - b. They then made the ark, the table, the lamp stand along with its lamps and utensils, and the alter of incense. 37
 - c. They then made the alter of burnt offerings, the bronze layer, and the court with its pillars and hangings and screen. 38
 - d. They made the garments of Aaron, the ephod of hammered gold, the onyx stones were engraved with the names of the tribes and placed on the shoulder pieces, the breast piece, the robe of the ephod with pomegranate and bells on its hem, the tunics of finely woven linen, and the plate for the tunic with "Holy to the Lord" engraved upon it. 39
 3. Moses erected the tabernacle and set everything in its place according to God's command on the first day of the first month of the second year of the exodus, and the glory of God entered the tabernacle in the pillar of cloud/fire, and continued to do so for the remainder of their journey in the wilderness. 40

Leviticus

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. As with the other books of the Pentateuch, Moses is the author of Leviticus. This can be argued on the basis, first, of his presence at Sinai where the laws contained herein were revealed to him by God (1:1; 4:1; 6:1; 8:1; etc). Second, the book clearly follows Exodus as a literary unity and Exodus claims to be written by Moses (Ex. 17:14; 24:4, 7; 34:27-28). The same can be said of Deuteronomy (Deut. 31:9, 24). Finally, when Jesus referred to the law of cleansing (Lev. 14:2-32) in Matthew 8:4, He told the cleansed leper to present “the offering that Moses commanded.” This final point, for the man of faith, is sufficient to establish Moses’ authorship of the book.

Harrison notes the Wellhausen view that the “sense of sin in Israelite sacrifice was decidedly late development” led to the necessity of placing the “so-called P material” within the post-exilic period (Harrison, p. 593). The problem with such a view is that much of the material of Leviticus had no parallel within any culture of any time. This would include large sections of the book such as the clean and unclean animals and the laws of leprosy (Harrison, pp. 593-594). Harrison notes well, “In view of the tenacity with which this code was held in subsequent ages it is difficult to see how it could have emerged from a period subsequent to that of Moses without being recognized and dismissed as patently spurious and fraudulent” (p. 594). Thus, the Wellhausen approach to oral tradition and late transcription is neither necessary to explain the phenomena of the text nor effective in defending a late date of composition.

Date. Recognizing Moses as author, this book, along with the remainder of the Pentateuch, is understood to be written during Israel’s desert passage, before the nation’s rebellion at Kadesh which relegated them to the wilderness for 40 years. Accepting the beginning of the Exodus as being around 1446 B.C. and that the nation remained at Sinai until the 20th day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year of their departure from Egypt (Num. 10:11), sometime during 1444/3 B.C., then Moses likely wrote Leviticus during the time of his meetings with God on Sinai and before the nation’s departure.

Audience. The original audience was the redeemed nation of Israel, in a covenant relationship with God, still living in the wilderness and awaiting entrance into the promised land.

Canonicity. The canonicity of Leviticus has been universally accepted.

Intent. Leviticus was written by Moses in order to detail the divine requirements for holy worship and conduct.

Literary Component

Genre. Leviticus is legal literature, composed of both apodictic law (commands without consequences given) and casuistic law (“if this is done, then that will result”). Further, it contains two narrative sections (8-10 and 24:10-23), both serving to enforce the teachings of the legal sections.

Arrangement. The book is arranged logically, covering the requirements for proper worship first, and then for proper living.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

Holiness of God. God's holiness is affirmed repeatedly throughout the book. It is His holiness which is the basis of the people's call to holiness. For example, God commands Moses to tell the people, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (19:2). Everything associated with God, from the tabernacle (4:6; 5:15; 10:4; etc.), to the articles used in it (6:26; 8:9-10), to the priests portions of the sacrifices (6-7), and everything consecrated (6:18; 27:1ff), was holy. That God's holiness could be violated is both seen in the regulations of worship and life and in His response to violators of His holiness, killing Nadab and Abihu (10) and demanding the death of the man who cursed Him (24).

Presence of God. Along with being holy, God is present among His people. This is seen in the introductory formula where God speaks to Moses "from the tent of meeting" (1:1) and then is followed by repeated reminders that "then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying. . ." (4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8, 19, 24; 7:22; etc.). Sacrifices were to be offered outside the tabernacle, on the altar, "before the LORD" (1:3, 5, 11; 3:1, 7, 12; etc.). Further, the life of the nation was to be lived before the LORD as is reflected in chapters 17-27 and included sexual and marriage relationships, clothing, hygiene, inheritance of land, agricultural and dietary practices, vows, and annual feasts. Of note is that the emphasis of the book, even the blessing/cursing section of chapter 26 is not on God's continued presence among the people, that was resolved in Exodus 33:12-17, but upon their continued life in His presence, in His land. Thus comes the warning that they will be spewed out of the land, though with the promise of being returned.

Sovereignty of God. God's sovereignty is seen in His claiming the right to demand holy conduct. It is also seen in His promise to cut off from the people violators of His holiness (ex.: 20:3, 5, 6). Further, He as the sovereign promised to give to Israel the land of Canaan (20:24) and to drive them out if they failed to obey him (26).

Righteousness of God. God's righteousness is seen in His demand for the punishment of wrong doers and the necessity of satisfaction through death for sins. This is not only seen in such places as chapters 20 where death is decreed for various violations, but also 26 where punishment and exile are promised to the nation for its disobedience. Leviticus makes clear, both through the sacrifices needed to satisfy God and the consequences for disobedience, that God is righteous in His character and His dealings with men.

Grace. God's grace is seen in the provision of a sacrificial system by which men could be made right with Him and fellowship with Him in holiness. Through this system men could meet the demands of God's righteousness and then fellowship with Him in peace, knowing that their sins were covered and that an innocent animal victim had paid the death penalty in their stead.

Atonement

What is the meaning of atonement in Leviticus? Harrison's discussion of the word is insightful and so is quoted at length here:

The Hebrew verb *rpk*, "to atone," has been related to the comparatively late Arabic word *kafara*; "to cover"; to the Akkadian term *kuppuru*, "to wipe away," and to the Hebrew noun *kopher*, "ransom." The latter best suits the specific purpose of Israelite sacrificial theory as elaborated in Leviticus 17:11, which identified the life with the blood and laid down the principle that the blood "makes atonement by reason of the life" (RSV). The animal victim thus constituted a substitute for the human sinner, and

the offering up of its life in sacrifice effected a vicarious atonement for sin. (Harrison, p. 602)

It is far from easy to decide from the text if the sacrificial offering was meant to be a propitiation of divine anger as well as an expiation for human sin, for while there are undoubtedly some instances where the verb signifies “propitiation” (Exod. 32:30; Num. 16:41ff), there are others where it simply means “to cleanse,” as with the furnishings of the Tabernacle. (Harrison, pp. 602-603)

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. Leviticus was given by God in order to provide a means by which the nation of Israel, corporately and individually, could worship and walk in holiness before Him. This established for the people God’s definition of holiness and informed them on the means by which they could attain and maintain that holiness in their daily lives and worship. That the laws of holy worship and life were a means to blessing can be seen in the promises of blessing and punishment in chapter 26, specifically relating to life in the land.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. This purpose, the life of holiness, was administered through the priesthood and the sacrificial system under Aaron and his descendents. Their responsibilities in fulfilling the requirements for proper worship and atoning sacrifice were delineated in the first portion of the book (1-7). Their personal need for holiness was demonstrated in the consecration of Aaron and his sons and the consequences of their failure (8-10). Further, their responsibilities in maintaining national purity were made evident in the laws concerning cleanness and purification of lepers (11-15). The ultimate consummation of their responsibilities, though, came in the ritual and sacrifice of the day of atonement in which national holiness could once more be reestablished in both the tabernacle and the people (16).

National and personal holiness was also to be maintained through the vigilance of the common people in insuring obedience in their personal lives and in the lives of those around them, reporting and punishing evil doers. Thus the first requirement, that they offer all animals at the tabernacle, was aimed at ensuring proper worship among the common people (17). Then, the regulations concerning moral conduct among the people, in order that they be different from the Egyptians and Canaanites, provided the standards of conduct and consequences which would keep the nation holy before God (18-20). The focus was again shifted to the priests and Levites, but with regard to their daily lives apart from the tabernacle itself, delineating how they were to keep themselves pure (21-22).

The commands concerning annual feasts provided the means for the nation to maintain its holy relationship with God (23). Then, the provision for the tabernacle and the narrative section dealing with the man who cursed God showed the need to maintain holiness daily before God (24). The instructions concerning Sabbath years, Jubilee, restitution, and inheritances in God’s land served to show that the land was the LORD’s and His expectations for maintaining it in holiness (25). The blessings and cursings, which focus upon life in the land, again show the need for daily holiness on a national level as well as individual (as reflected earlier in chapters 18-20), in light of the fate of the Canaanites who they were to eject from the land (26). Finally, the question of vows and consecration again addressed the common people in their daily lives, showing the importance of keeping their word to God and His claim upon them (27). Thus, holiness was to characterize every facet of the nation’s daily life.

OUTLINE OF LEVITICUS

- I. The holiness of God demands that He be worshipped in a holy manner. 1-16
 - A. Holy worship requires that burnt, grain, peace, sin, guilt, and ordination offerings be presented properly, with the proper portions being given to Aaron and his descendents. 1-7
 1. **Burnt Offering:** The law of burnt offerings detailed the regulations for sacrificing a young bull, male sheep or goat, turtledoves or young pigeons. 1
 - a. The procedure for offering the young bull, without defect, was to lay his hand on its head and slay it. The priest would then offer the blood and sprinkle it around the altar. Then the priest is to skin it, cut it in pieces, washing its legs and entrails with water, and burn it all on the altar. 1:1-9
 - b. The procedure for the male sheep or goat, without defect, required that it be slain on the north side of the altar and the priests follow the same procedure as the bull offering. 1:10-13
 - c. The procedure for offering birds required that the priest wring off its head, drain its blood on the side of the altar, cast its crop and feathers on the ashes on the east side of the altar, tear it by its wings without severing it, and then offer it in fire.
 2. **Grain Offering:** The laws of grain offerings detailed the regulations for sacrificing grains to the Lord which prohibited leaven or honey and required all the frankincense to be offered while the priest kept all but a handful of the grain. 2
 - a. The grain offering, composed of fine flour, oil, and frankincense, involved a handful of flour and oil with all the frankincense being offered and the rest kept by the priest. 2:1-3
 - b. If the grain offering was cooked (baked, wafers, griddled), it was to be unleavened and cooked or spread with oil, and a memorial portion offered by the priest who would then keep the rest. 2:4-10
 - c. The grain offering could not contain any leaven or honey, but was to be seasoned with salt. 2:11-13
 - d. If the offering was of early ripened grain, it was to be offered as fresh roasted heads or grits.
 3. **Peace Offering:** The laws of the peace offering required the offering from the herd to be without defect, and to be slaughtered at the doorway of the tent of meeting after laying hands upon it. Its blood was to be sprinkled on the altar and its entrails, two kidneys, lobe on the liver, and the fat on them (including the fat tail of sheep) was to be offered on the altar by fire. 3
 4. **Sin Offering:** The laws of the offering for unintentional sin were detailed and

included a bull for the anointed priest or the nation as a whole, a male goat for a leader, and a female lamb or goat for a common person. 4

- a. The priest was to lay hands on the bull, kill it, and then its blood was to be sprinkled seven times in front of the veil, be put on the horns of the alter of incense, and poured out at the base of the alter of burnt offerings. Then all the fat, kidneys, and lobe of the liver (like the peace offering) was to be offered by fire while the remainder of the animal was to be burned outside the camp where the ashes were poured out. 4:1-12
 - b. The sin offering for the people was to be offered like the priests, except the elders were to lay hands upon it. 4:13-21
 - c. The leader's sin offering (male goat) is to be offered like the peace offering except that some blood is put on the horns of the alter of burnt offerings. 4:22-26
 - d. The common person's sin offering (female goat or lamb) was to be offered like the leader's offering. 4:27-35
5. **Guilt Offering:** For the man incurring guilt for any reason, offerings were prescribed according to his means and the nature of his offense. 5:1--6:7
- a. The offenses producing guilt included disobedience to public commands, touching anything unclean, or swearing thoughtlessly and required confession and an offering of a female lamb or goat to some for his sins. 5:1-6
 - b. If he could not afford an animal, he was to bring two turtle doves or pigeons. The first was to be a sin offering with some blood sprinkled on the alter and the rest poured at its base. The second was a burnt offering. Thus the sin was to be atoned for and forgiven. 5:7-10
 - c. If he could not afford birds, he is to bring a tenth of an ephah of fine flour (no oil or incense) and a hand full was to be offered to atone for his sins with the priest keeping the rest. 5:11-13
 - d. Unintentional sin against God's holy things required a ram for a guilt offering and restitution of a fifth part of the ram's value. 5:14-16
 - e. Unintentional sin against God's commands required a ram for a guilt offering. 5:17-19
 - f. Guilt incurred through robbery, extortion, or theft required restitution with one fifth added and a ram for a guilt offering. 6:1-7
6. The priests portion of the grain and sin offerings was described. 6:8-30
- a. The priest was to wear his linen robe and undergarments while removing the ashes from the burnt offerings to the east side of the alter while keeping the fire burning, then changing clothes and carrying the ashes to a clean place outside the camp. 6:8-13
 - b. The grain offering, once the hand full was offered as a memorial offering to God, was to be eaten unleavened within the court of the tabernacle by the

priests. 6:14-18

- c. **Ordination Offering:** The grain offering of the priest on the day of his anointing was to consist of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour prepared as cakes with oil on the griddle, offered half in the morning and evening, with all of it being offered by fire to God. 6:19-23
 - d. The sin offering was to be slain where the burnt offering was slain and eaten by the priests in a holy place in the court, its blood being washed from the garments, and the boiling pot broken (clay) or scoured (bronze) unless some of its blood was taken into the tabernacle (it was to be burned with fire). 6:24-30
7. The priest's portion in the guilt and peace offerings was described. 7
- a. The priest was to present and eat the guilt offering just like the sin offering, keeping for himself the skins and the priest's portions of grain offerings as well. 7:1-10
 - b. The peace offerings were to be accompanied by grain offerings which the priest was to offer and partake of as well. 7:11-14
 - c. Thanksgiving peace offerings had to be eaten the day they were offered while votive or freewill offerings could also be eaten the second day, with the remainder being burned with fire. 7:15-18
 - d. Anyone eating sacrificed meat who was unclean was to be cut off from the people. 7:19-21
 - e. Anyone eating fat or blood from sacrificed animals was to be cut off from the people. 7:22-27
 - f. The breast and thigh of the peace offering belonged to the priest offering the fat portions on the fire. 7:28-34
 - g. Conclusion: This section described the law of the burnt, grain, sin, guilt, ordination, and peace offerings, detailing the portions which belonged to Aaron and his descendents. 7:35-38

B. The demands of God's holiness are revealed in the consecration and offerings of Aaron and his Sons as well as the deaths of Nadab and Abihu for failure to treat God holy. 8-10

- 1. Consecration of Aaron and his Sons: At God's command, Moses assembled the people, clothed Aaron, anointed the tabernacle and Aaron, clothed his sons, offered the bull of the sin offering, the ram of the burnt offering, the ram of ordination (keeping his portions), sprinkled Aaron and his sons with oil and blood from the alter, and had them eat their portions at the doorway of the tent, with the sacrifices being repeated for seven days. 8
- 2. Offerings for Aaron and the Nation: On the eighth day, Moses had Aaron make sin and burnt offerings, first for himself (calf for sin, ram for burnt) and then for the nation (goat for sin, calf and lamb for burnt, grain, ox and ram for peace), which was then followed by their blessing the people and God's glory appearing to them and consuming the burnt offerings off of the alter. 9
- 3. When Nadab and Abihu burned strange fire, God killed them and forbade Aaron

to mourn, further forbidding alcoholic beverages to serving priests. Moses then had them eat their portions, discovering that they had unwittingly burned up the entire sin offering. 10

C. The personal holiness necessary for worshipping God is removed by certain foods and circumstances which render a person unclean, and so unqualified to enter the tabernacle, but can be regained in accordance with God's instructions. 11-15

1. Foods: God provided guidelines for determining which animals, birds, fish, or insects were considered clean or unclean for eating and how to cleanse oneself when coming into contact with them. 11
 - a. To be clean animals had to chew cud and split hooves, fish required fins and scales, birds could not eat carrion, and insects had to hop with jointed legs. 11:1-23
 - b. Contact required washing clothes, with cleanliness returning in the evening, while earthen items were to be smashed. 11:24-47
2. Childbirth: A woman giving birth was unclean for a week and 33 days (male) or 2 weeks/66 days (girl) before she could enter the sanctuary at which time she was to offer a year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a sin offering (if she could not afford the lamb she was to bring two birds). 12
3. Leprosy: God detailed the tests and quarantines for leprosy as well as the offerings for the cleansing of lepers. 13-14
 - a. The tests and quarantines for leprosy within people and clothes were described and were to be performed by the priests. 13
 - b. The offerings for the cleansing of lepers were described along with the test quarantine, and cleansing of houses. 14
 - (1) The procedure for cleansing lepers and the sacrifices to be made were given, along with the steps for integrating the person back into society. 14:1-32
 - (2) The test of leprosy in a house, its quarantine and cleansing were also described. 14:33-57
4. Unclean discharges: God prescribed the means for cleansing following discharges, including seminal or menstrual, or contact with those persons or things made unclean. 15

D. Day of Atonement: The holiness of God demands atonement for the nation's sin and tabernacle through proper sacrifices administered annually. 16

1. Aaron was to prepare himself by bathing, donning the holy garments, and taking the bull for his sin offering, and two goats and ram for the nation, casting lots to

- determine the goat of sin offering and the scapegoat. 16:1-10
2. Aaron was to then offer the bull, taking its blood along with sweet incense, to enter within the veil and sprinkle seven times on the mercy seat 16:11-14
3. He was then to slaughter the sin goat and sprinkle its blood on the mercy seat to cleanse it from the impurities of Israel. 16:15-19
4. He would then lay hands on the scape goat, confessing the nations sins, it would be released into the wilderness. 16:20-22
5. Removing the linen garments in the tent, he would bathe again and offer the burnt offerings for himself and the people, while the scape goat escort bathed and entered the camp and another took the bull and goat's carcasses and burned them outside the camp, afterward washing and reentering the camp. 16:23-28
6. It was to be a permanent statute. 16:29-34

II. The holiness of God demands a life of holiness from both the people and priests. 17-27

A. The holiness of God required holiness in the daily conduct of both people and priests. 17-22

1. Holy living meant sacrificing only at the tabernacle, not eating blood, pouring out and burying hunted animals' blood, and recognizing that eating torn flesh brought uncleanness until evening following bathing. 17
2. A life of holiness required moral conduct, including death for certain offenses, in contrast to the Egyptians and Canaanites. 18-20
 - a. God forbade them to practice incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, or child sacrifice like the Egyptians and Canaanites. 18
 - b. He commanded holy living because of His holiness and gave laws covering various issues of interpersonal relationships and worship. 19
 - c. He detailed those offenses which were to be punished with death and demanded holiness of the people because He had separated them from the peoples. 20
3. Holy living for the priests included strict standards moral, physical, and ceremonial perfection which extended to the sacrifices they accepted. 21-22
 - a. Aaron's descendants were given strict marriage and moral standards since they were set aside to God, being allowed to marry virgins only, to bury (touch while dead) nearest kin only, and to offer sacrifices only if they (the priests) were physically perfect. 21
 - b. God detailed the laws concerning ceremonial cleanness for priests and who was allowed to eat holy (sacrificed) food, accepting only animals without defect which were offered in a proper manner. 22

B. Personal holiness required participation in the annual feasts: Passover (14th day of 1st month) and Unleavened Bread (next 7 days), first fruits, Pentecost (50 days after first fruits), trumpets (1st day of the 7th month), atonement (10th day of 7th month), and

Booths (15th day of 7th month). 23

- C. The nation maintained its holiness through the proper disposition of the golden lamps and the show bread, by executing the man who cursed God, and properly administering justice for killing or injuring people and animals. 24
- D. The holiness of God demanded proper treatment of His land and observance of His commands for continued occupation of the land. 25-26
 - 1. National holiness required the observance of Sabbath years and the Year of Jubilee as well as redemption and property rights for Israelites and foreigners dwelling in the land. 25
 - 2. National holiness would bring blessings, including God's presence, peace, and prosperity in the land, while disobedience would end in exile until the land got its Sabbaths, though with God's promise not to destroy them because of His covenant with their ancestors. 26
- E. Holy treatment of those things consecrated to God included paying the proper redemption price, though first-born animals or anything/one devoted to destruction which could not be redeemed. 27

Numbers

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. The author is Moses. Those proposing sources from which Numbers was composed must necessarily deny Mosaic authorship since the account affirms his presence throughout and so no source would be needed by an eye witness such as he. Further, and with final authority for the man of faith, his authorship is attested by Jesus in John 5:46 and Luke 24:27, 44 wherein He refers to the whole of the Pentateuch as Moses' writings.

Wenham notes three arguments given by proponents of a documentary analysis of the book. He says, "Firstly, it is argued that the diversity of the material in Numbers is best explained by the presence of several sources. Secondly, the existence of the documents JE and P in Genesis and Exodus makes it probable that they continue in Numbers. Thirdly, the laws and traditions show evidence of having originated in different periods" (p. 19). He then answers these arguments by pointing out that diversity of either subject matter or style (which will vary with the subject matter) proves nothing about sources since "such differences are a function of the subject-matter" (p. 19). With the decline of the documentary hypothesis in Genesis and Exodus studies, the second argument has fallen on hard times. The flaw of the third argument is exposed when Wellhausen's approach to dating material is exposed. Wenham describes his approach at length:

Two fundamental value-judgments run through his greatest work, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1878). The first is that freedom and spontaneity are good, while organization and ritual are bad. The second is that spontaneity is early, but organization is late. These presuppositions of his work [sic] explain how he can argue with such conviction for the order of sources JEDP. JE, where worship is free and disorganized, was written first; D, with its organizing tendencies, came next; the hide-bound ritualism of P must be latest of all. (p. 27)

Since Numbers contains so much organizational material, then it would be understood as late by such a method. Still, the testimony of the text and New Testament stand in contrast to such conclusions.

Date. This book was composed while Israel camped in the plains of Moab awaiting God's permission to enter the land. This is affirmed by Moses in 36:13 when he concluded the book by saying, "These are the commandments and the ordinances which the Lord commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho (NASV)." Being written by Moses at this time, it was composed shortly before his death. With the Exodus beginning around 1446/5 B.C., this would have the nation approaching Canaan, and so this book written, somewhere around 1406 B.C. (See my notes on Exodus for further discussions concerning dates.)

Audience. The nation of Israel as they prepared to enter the land of promise.

Historicity. The historicity of this account can only be questioned by those who would question the authorship and push it to some redactor in the 9th or 7th centuries. With Mosaic authorship accepted, the historical veracity of the account can be accepted without question. That he did not give a complete annal of the nation's travels can be accepted. But, that every event described occurred as described is also accepted on the basis of Moses' integrity and Jesus'

confidence in his words as the Word of God.

Canonicity. As with the rest of the Pentateuch, its canonicity has been established from the beginning.

Intent. The intent of Numbers is more than to give an account of the censuses and travels of the nation. It is more than an instruction manual, ordering the nation for both travel and combat and instructing the Levites on their roles in moving the tabernacle, especially since it was apparently composed 38 years after they began following its procedures. Its narrative sections serve to demonstrate that it had a theological purpose. It not only recounted God's instructions, but also described the people's spiritual condition during the wanderings along with God's responses to them. Thus Numbers was written to show the place of faith and obedience in the nation's relationship with God. Finally, it served to show that none of the first generation who sinned entered the promised land.

Literary Component

Genre. Numbers is a mixture of historical and legal literature.

Arrangement. The book as a whole is arranged chronologically with blocks of narrative and law. It is further broken into shorter units which are indicated by inclusios. It has a threefold grouping of laws and narratives. Wenham sees "rondo form" being used. "It is cast in large cycles in which three important eras of revelation, at Sinai, Kadesh, and in the plains of Moab, are separated by two bridge passages describing the journeys from Sinai to Kadesh, and from Kadesh to the plains of Moab." (Wenham, p.15). Wenham notes well that "casting material in triadic form was an established literary device for the biblical writers. It does not mean that they have distorted the record by using what seems to us a rather contrived form" (p. 17).

Characterization. God is again the central character, with, Moses as His human agent continuing to be in focus. Yet, others come into view, primarily the rebels. Still, we get a glimpse of the faith of Caleb when he stood against the other spies and expressed confidence in God's ability to bring victory.

Ritual. Ritual is a key element within Numbers which is discussed by Wenham at length. In describing the essence of ritual he says well,

What then is the essence of religious ritual in the Bible? It is a means of communication between God and man, a drama on a stage watched by human and divine spectators. Old Testament rituals express religious truths visually as opposed to verbally. . . . Like words, rituals are a two-way channel of communication. On the one hand they are dramatized prayers, expressing men's deepest hopes and fears; on the other hand they are dramatized divine promises or warnings, declaring God's attitude towards man. (p. 29)

He notes further the difficulty faced today in understanding the rituals so little is explained in the texts describing them. (p. 31). He then attempts a social anthropological approach to the rituals, seeing, a correspondence between men and animals, seeing three classes of animals corresponding to three classes of men. The unclean, clean, and sacrificial animals would then correspond to Gentiles, Israelites, and priests (p. 33). This seems rather artificial. It is of interest, though, that herbivores are clean while predators are not with animals, birds and insects. Further, the unclean fish are the scavengers while the clean are either vegetarian or predators.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

Holiness. God's holiness is revealed throughout the account in Numbers even as it was in Leviticus. This is seen in the way He separated the tabernacle from the common people with the Levites and priests guarding it and keeping the people from breaking in and being destroyed (1:4--3:10). His holiness was further intensely shown in His instructions for moving the tabernacle and the care which had to be taken in order to keep the Levites from being destroyed by purposefully or accidentally looking upon the furniture of the tabernacle when it was disassembled for movement (4:1-20). Finally, the seriousness with which God takes His own holiness is seen in His denying Moses and Aaron entrance into Canaan because of a slight deviation from His instructions when Moses struck the rock instead of only speaking to it as God commanded (20:12).

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is demonstrated in both the blessings and judgments upon the people. He brought them victories at Arad and against Sihon and Og. Yet, He also killed large numbers of men for rebellion, and ultimately denied entrance into the land of all of Israel's adults at Kadesh except Joshua and Caleb. His sovereign control is also seen in His denying Israel entrance into Canaan at Kadesh when they repented following His judgment upon the unfaithful spies.

Faithfulness. God's faithfulness is demonstrated through the book in His continued provision of manna, even, after the rabble's complaints, and the provision of water. Further, He kept His promise to the patriarchs in bringing the people, not just once, to the promised land in spite of their sin and unworthiness.

Wrath. The wrath of God is seen in the nation's punishments in the wilderness, especially the various rebels who were burned with fire, swallowed by the earth, or stricken with various plagues from the Lord.

Grace. God's grace is seen in the repeated times that He allowed Moses or Aaron's intercession to hold back His wrath and spare the people (11:2; 12:13; 14:13-20; 16:47; 21:7; 25:7). Further, His grace is seen in the continued provision of the nation's needs even during days of rebellion. The story of Balaam's attempted curses which God turned into blessings further demonstrates his grace toward Israel. Finally, in chapter 15, the laws of sacrifice within the land, were given immediately following the Kadesh disaster and that generation's relegation to the wilderness, showing God's intention to bless them and keep His promises to the patriarchs in spite of their sin and apostasy.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. The purpose of God during the period covered within the book of Numbers was to judge the apostate generation while preparing the nation, militarily and spiritually, for entrance into the land.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God's purpose was administered through the theocratic rule of Moses in organizing the tribes and leading them to the plains of Moab. When His chosen leader was challenged or questioned, God supported Him by destroying his opposition. When Aaron's spiritual leadership was questioned, God supported him by causing his rod to bud and grow almonds. God's purposes were also worked out through the process of battle, with Him giving the victory.

OUTLINE OF NUMBERS

- I. Israel's initial preparation for entering Canaan included military organization, the giving of additional laws, the presentation of gifts by the nation's leaders as well as the Levites by the nation as a whole, and a second celebration of Passover. 1:1--10:10
 - A. The military organization of the nation was accomplished through a census of 11 tribes and Israel's ordering for march. 1-2
 1. At God's command, a census of all males 20 years and older within every tribe except Levi was taken, revealing 603, 550 fighting men in Israel. 1
 2. God arranged the tribes in military order in camps around the tabernacle and specified their marching order. 2
 - a. To the east of the tabernacle was Judah first, then Issachar, and then Zebulun. 2:1-9
 - b. To the south was Reuben, then Simeon, and then Gad. 2:10-16
 - c. The Levites, living in the middle, would follow the tribe of Gad when they set out. 2:17
 - d. To the west were Ephraim, then Manasseh, and then Benjamin. 2:18-24
 - e. To the north were Dan, then, Asher, and then Naphtali. 2:25-31
 - f. Israel camped and marched accordingly. 2:32ff
 - B. The wilderness organization of the tribe of Levi included a second census and the detailing of family duties. 3-4
 1. The Levites were numbered, with God taking the Levites in place of Israel's first-born sons, and with ransom (5 shekels each) given for the 273 first-born males of Israel who outnumbered the Levites. 3
 2. The duties of the major family groups of Levites were given by God. 4
 - C. Israel's spiritual preparation was accomplished through the giving of additional laws, presentation of gifts by the tribal leaders and of the Levites by the nation, and a second celebration of Passover. 5-9
 1. After they removed all the unclean from the camp, God gave laws concerning restitution and testing for adultery. 5
 2. God detailed the laws of the Nazarite. 6
 - a. He cannot eat/drink anything from grapes or alcoholic. 6:1-4
 - b. He cannot cut his hair. 6:5
 - c. He cannot touch dead persons. 6:6-8
 - d. He must be cleansed and restart the vow if he has accidental contact with someone dead. 6:9-12
 - e. His offerings at the completion of the vow included a year old male lamb (burnt), year old ewe-lamb (sin), ram (peace), basket of unleavened cakes

(fine flour/oil) and wafers (spread with oil) along with their grain and libation. Further, his head would be shaved and hair burned with the peace offering. 6:13-21

f. Priestly benediction. 6:22-27

3. Each tribal leader presented his offerings for the alter which included a silver dish (130 shekels) full of flour mixed with oil, a silver bowl (70 shekels) full of flour mixed with oil, a gold pan (10 shekels) full of incense, a bull, ram, year old male lamb (burnt), male goat (sin), and then for peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five year old male lambs. 7
4. The Levites purified themselves and, following the nation's laying hands upon them, were presented as a wave offering to God in place of Israel's first-born sons. 8
5. The Passover was celebrated a second time, with those unclean or absent being allowed to celebrate it the next month. 9

D. Israel's initial preparation was completed by the making of two Silver Trumpets for use in announcing movement, battle, and feasts. 10:1-10

II. Israel's further preparation for entering Canaan followed rebellion and included God's discipline, deliverances, and additional laws. 10:11--25

A. Israel's failure to enter Canaan resulted from rebellion and brought God's discipline. 10:11--14

1. The nation departed in battle order and traveled three days. 10:11ff
2. When three complaints arose, God judged the complainers while supporting Moses and providing 70 elders to assist him and quail for meat. 11-12
 - a. Following the first complaint (unspecified), which brought judgment of fire in their midst, and the second complaint by the rabble for meat to eat, God provided 70 elders to help Moses judge the people and quail to the people, along with a plague. 11
 - b. When Miriam and Aaron complained against Moses for marrying a Cushite, God struck Miriam with leprosy. 12
3. The rebellion of the nation in response to the lies of the spies led to that generation's relegation to the wilderness and defeat in battle when they repented. 13-14
 - a. The spies were sent into Canaan from Kadesh and all but Caleb and Joshua brought back bad reports. 13
 - b. When the people rebelled and God's wrath burned, Moses interceded and God killed the spies and condemned that generation to the wilderness, keeping them out even when they repented and tried to enter the land. 14

B. Israel's further preparation for entering Canaan included God's judgment upon rebellion, support of Moses and Aaron, and provision of additional laws for life in the land. 15-19

1. God provided laws concerning offerings when they entered the land, also requiring the death of a Sabbath breaker and tassels on their garments. 15
2. God demonstrated three times His support of Aaron and Moses and then detailed the duties and portions going to the Levites. 16-18
 - a. God killed those involved in Korah's rebellion and then sent a plague upon the people (Aaron atones with incense) when they grumbled against Moses, blaming him for the rebels' deaths. 16
 - b. God demonstrated His support for Moses and Aaron by causing Aaron's rod to bud while the other tribal leader's rods stayed dormant. 17
3. God detailed the duties of the Levites and their portions in the sacrifices, receiving the tithes of the people from which they were to tithe to the priests. 18
4. God detailed the procedures for ceremonial cleansing using the ashes of the red heifer. 19

C. Israel's movement to the border of Canaan brought God's discipline upon Israel's sin and His defeat of her enemies. 20-21

1. When Israel moved to Kadesh Miriam died, Moses and Aaron sinned by striking the rock, and Aaron died, being replaced by Eleazar as high priest. 20
2. As they traveled to Moab, Israel defeated the king of Arad, was punished with fiery serpents, and then defeated Sihon the Amorite and Og of Bashan, taking possession of their lands. 21

D. Israel's blessing in anticipation of entering the land could not be removed by either her enemies or her sins. 22-25

1. Though Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, he could only bless them. 22-24
 - a. When Israel camped in the plains of Moab, Balak called for Balaam, who got God's permission to go only after asking twice. 22
 - b. Balaam prophesied blessing for Israel twice. 23
 - c. After Balaam blessed Israel a third time he delivered three oracles against Moab, Edom, and Asshur. 24
2. Moabite women got Israelite men to worship Baal of Peor, which brought God's wrath until Phinehas killed an Israelite man copulating with a Midianite woman. 25

III. Israel's final preparations to enter Canaan included a final census, defeat of Midian,

additional laws, and instructions concerning distribution of the land. 26-36

- A. The new census revealed that they only men from the original census still living were Caleb and Joshua. 26
- B. Life in the land was to be governed by additional laws concerning land inheritance, offerings, and vows. 27-30
 - 1. God established land inheritance laws at the request of the daughters of Zelophehad and then, warning Moses of his coming death, selected Joshua as his replacement. 27
 - 2. The requirements for the Sabbath, New Moon, Passover, and First Fruits sacrifices were detailed. 28
 - 3. The required sacrifices for the feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths were detailed. 29
 - 4. The laws concerning vows permitted a woman's father or husband to annul her vow when he first heard of it. 30
- C. With the defeat of Midian, the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh settled Transjordan while promising to send their men into Canaan to help their brothers conquer it. 31-32
 - 1. Under Moses' direction an army of 1000/tribe which defeated and plundered the Midianites, killing all males and losing no men, sharing their spoils with the rest of Israel. 31
 - 2. Agreeing to send their fighting men with the other tribes into Canaan, the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh took possession of Transjordan (kingdoms of Sihon, Og, and the Midianite territories in Giliad). 32
- D. A complete list of camp sites detailed the nation's passage from Egypt to Canaan. 33:1-49
- E. God described the borders of the land, provided men to apportion it, and provided laws concerning the Levitical cities, cities of refuge, and inheritance of property through women. 33:50--36
 - 1. God commanded them to exterminate the Canaanites or else they would be a snare to Israel and God's judgment would fall similarly upon them. 33:50ff
 - 2. God described the borders of the land to be divided among the remaining nine and a half tribes and then He chose the men to apportion the land. 34
 - 3. God commanded that the Levites be given cities within the tribes, with six being designated as cities of refuge where manslayers could flee for protection until the death of the high priest, unless he committed murder. 35
 - 4. At the request of the men of Manasseh, God required that the daughters gaining an inheritance marry within their own tribe so that the land could not pass from one tribe to another. 36

Deuteronomy

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. The author is Moses.

Date. Written about 1405 B.C., just before Moses' death and Israel's entrance into the Promised Land.

Audience. The nation of Israel as they waited to enter the Promised Land.

Historicity. Again, its historical veracity is attested by Jesus.

Caonicity. As with the rest of the Pentateuch, its canonicity has been established from the beginning.

Intent. Deuteronomy was written to review and codify God's covenant with Israel.

Literary Component

Genre. Deuteronomy is a mixture of legal, and hortatory material along with some historical narrative. It is principally three sermons delivered to the nation by Moses in anticipation of their entrance. Thompson (*Deuteronomy*, 17) wishes to place the book into the genre of an Ancient Near Eastern treaty. It would then be seen as comprising first a preamble; second, a historical prologue reviewing the past relations between the two parties; third the treaty stipulations which include both general principles and specific stipulations; fourth, the treaty sanctions which comprise both curses and blessings; and finally, the witnesses which were gods who would guarantee the treaty. Ultimately, Thompson's conclusions are based upon the belief that:

It is beyond question that the structure of Deuteronomy is related in some way to the structure of the political treaties of the ancient Near East. Perhaps the Old Testament literary form is a special one which bears a close resemblance both to the treaties and to the law codes of the ancient Near East. Deuteronomy is, in any case, a carefully designed literary piece which owes much in its structure to ancient Near Eastern models. (*Deuteronomy*, 20-21)

His understanding requires an arrangement of the material into a treaty form which ignores the textual indicators of separate sermons. His outline of the book will be seen below.

Structure. For those holding to multiple sources or to some kind of treaty approach for the book, the structure is quite different from an outline of Moses' sermons. For example, agreeing with Wenham that there is a distinctive Old Testament covenant form over and against the Middle Eastern treaty form, Thompson sees the book structured as follows (*Deuteronomy*, 19):

1:6--3:29	Historical prologue
4:1-40; 5:1--11:32	Basic stipulations
12:1--26:19	Detailed stipulations
27:1-26	Document clause
28:1-14	Blessings
28:15-68	Curses
29:1--30:20	Recapitulation

My understanding of the book's outline is based on a conviction that it recorded the sermons of Moses and was not intended to encompass any kind of treaty format. The resulting outline will be detailed below.

Characteristics of the book. There are several literary characteristics unique to the book of Deuteronomy worth noting. These include the sections alternating between singular and plural "you," the introductory phrases used throughout the work, the manner of presentation, the range of legal material, and the presentation of the Decalogue.

You (singular) and you (plural) sections: Thompson (*Deuteronomy* 21ff) notes that many sections of the book have verbs and pronouns in the singular second person while other sections have them in the plural. Of interest is that both sections address the nation of Israel. This has naturally led some scholars to propose two sources. Both approached the problem by proposing that the plural "you" sections were editorial additions to the original singular "you" material. They were already intertwined by the time of the supposed Deuteronomic historian who supplied his own introduction to the first three chapters before including all of Deuteronomy with his history (Thompson, *Deuteronomy*. 22j. Thompson agreed with Lohkink that the changes in number was governed by the forms of the words more than by sources and so saw the variation in number to be a literary device of the author and not "necessarily point to a difference in authorship but to a difference in emphasis" (*Deuteronomy*. 23). This last option seems best. Moses was simply varying his address for stylistic reasons.

Introductory phrases: Thompson, holding to a covenant approach rather than sermonic understanding of Deuteronomy, notes that introductory phrases "appear to interrupt the flow of the covenant form" (*Deuteronomy* 23). He notes that some scholars use these to indicate various literary sources. He posits rather that they may have represented points in the "treaty document" where a pause was made so the recipients could make a response, accepting the treaty. He notes that *Deuteronomy* 27:14-26 indicates an oral response was expected at least at one point. The better understanding is to see these coming from Moses and arguing against a treaty outline as opposed to a sermon.

Manner of presentation: Thompson notes that "in some sections, particular laws are first stated in a simple form and are then followed by exhortation, warning, promise." He then concludes. "*Deuteronomy* is not codified law, but preaching about the law of Yáhwēh" (p. 24).

Types of legal material: The book is composed of Apodictic laws, casuistic laws, and other laws dealing with issues such as prophets, kings, idolatry, cities of refuge, holy war, first fruits, handling unsolved murders, feasts, priests, the sanctuary, and foods

The Decalogue: There are slight differences in the Decalogue of *Deuteronomy* 5 when compared to *Exodus* 20. Thompson's response is, "On the view that Moses was responsible for both forms of the Decalogue it is not inconceivable that after nearly forty years he 'would restate some of his principles to suit a new set of circumstances'"

(*Deuteronomy* 29). Of note is the claim of *Exodus* 20 to quote God verbatim while *Deuteronomy* 5 is Moses' (non-verbatim) exposition of that conversation.

DEUTERONOMY AND SUZERAIN-VASSAL TREATIES

1. What is a Suzerain-Vassal Treaty?
2. What is its structure? It had a five part structure:
 - A. Historical Prologue
 1. Identified the Hittite king who was initiating the treaty.
 2. Reviewed the history of the nations, recounting the good things the Hittites had done for the other nation.
 - B. Stipulations
 1. The laws of the Hittite king that the vassal nation was expected to honor.
 2. Would be reviewed and updated by each new king.
 - C. Witnesses
 1. A list of gods representing the pantheons of both nations.
 2. Sometimes included "heaven and earth."
 - D. Curses for disobedience
 - E. Blessings for obedience
3. How does Deuteronomy compare?
 Wolf (*An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*) makes this comparison:

Deuteronomy	Suzerain-Vassal Treaties
Historical prologue (1-4)	Historical Prologue
Stipulations (5-26)	Stipulations
Blessings and curses (27-30)	Witnesses
Witnesses (31-34)	Curses
	Blessings
4. How is Deuteronomy different?
5. What is Deuteronomy's literary structure?
 - a. First Sermon: Deut 1:1 to 4:43. Historical review and cities of refuge.
 - b. Second Sermon: Deut 4:44 to 28:68. Stipulations of the Covenant
 - c. Third Sermon: Deut 29-33. Moses' final exhortation to the nation included the "witness" of his song.
6. Are the similarities between Deuteronomy and Suzerain-Vassal Treaties intentional?

OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY

Introduction: This book contains Moses last words spoken to Israel. 1:1-4

- I. First address: Israel's call to covenantal faithfulness was based upon God's self-revelation in judgments and deliverances since Sinai and the danger of future judgement for failure. 1--4:40
 - A. The nation's history from Mt. Horeb to their conquests of the Amorites east of the Jordan recounted God's self-revelation through judgments and deliverances 1:5--3
 1. Movement from Mt. Horeb to defeat at Kadesh-barnea and condemnation to wilderness wandering. 1
 2. Passage by Edom and through Moab and Ammon, defeat of Sihon and extermination of his Amorite kingdom. 2
 3. Conquest of Og's kingdom, distribution of the land, God's denial of his entrance into Canaan and selection of Joshua. 3
 - B. Moses exhorted the nation to covenantal faithfulness on the basis of God's self-revelation through His deliverances and at Mt. Horeb, warning of future judgment when they fell into idolatry. 4:1-40
 1. Called upon the people to give heed. 4:1-8
 2. Remember their experience at Horeb. 4:9-14
 3. Guard against forgetting the covenant and falling into idolatry. 4:15-24
 4. Warning: when they fell into idolatry, they would perish from the land and be scattered from it in countries where they would have to worship other idols until they finally called upon God. 4:25-31
 5. Reminder: no other nation had been delivered out of a country by such miracles as they, nor had heard God's voice or seen His fire, and that should motivate them to keep His commands. 4:32-40
- II. The cities of refuge established by Moses east of the Jordan were Bezer (Reubenites), Ramoth in Giliad (Gadites), and Golan in Bashan (Manassites). 4:41-43
- III. Second address: Israel's call to covenantal faithfulness involved obedience to God's commands (laws) and renewal of the covenant in Canaan, including the repetition of the promises of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience. 4:44--28
 - A. Introduced with note that Israel was camped Opposite Beth-peor. 4:44-49
 - B. Israel's call included total allegiance to God with the promise of victory and fruitfulness for obedience and a curse for disloyalty. 5-11
 1. Recounted Ten Commandments, God's call for obedience, their fear and

- request that God speak to Moses, with him teaching them. 5
 2. Introduced the statutes by pronouncing the Shema, reminding them of the land God was giving them, warning against forgetting or testing Him once in the land. 6
 3. Warning against making covenants with the Canaanites, promised fruitfulness for obedience and enabled to dispossess enemies. 7
 4. Recounted God's provisions in the wilderness, warned against disobedience resulting from forgetting. 8
 5. Reminded that God's giving them the land was not because of their righteousness, recounting their idolatry at Horeb and rebellion at Kadesh which required his intercession to spare them. 9
 6. Recounted the making of the ark and second tablets, exhorted them to fear, love, and serve God. 10
 7. Called for obedience; blessing and victory if they avoided idolatry, a curse if they turned aside. 11
- C. Israel's covenantal faithfulness was to be expressed through obedience to the religious, criminal, civil, military, and moral laws of God within the land. 12-26
1. Though they could butcher and eat meat anywhere, they were to sacrifice only at the one place of God's choosing and only in the manner He designated. 12
 2. Kill any prophet, relative, or city which encouraged them to worship other gods. 13
 3. Eat clean foods and bring tithes to the place where God would establish His name. 14
 4. Lend freely and forgive debts of Israelites, freeing slaves and offering their first-born livestock to the LORD. 15
 5. Celebrate Passover, Weeks, and Booths annually at the place chosen by God, appointing judges, not erecting fertility symbols. 16
 6. Justice administered fairly, fixtured kings to obey God's law. 17
 7. Levites to be supported, child sacrifice avoided, only true prophets sought. 18
 8. Cities of refuge provided for the innocent killer only, false witnesses punished. 19
 9. Rules of warfare: exemptions from battle, who should die, which trees to spare. 20
 10. Various laws concerning unsolved deaths, marriage of captive women, inheritances, rebellious sons, and hanging criminals. 21
 11. Various laws concerning daily life and moral living. 22-25
 12. First-fruits of their new land and the third year tithe 26
- D. The covenant was to be renewed on Mounts Gerizim and Ebal and include both curses and blessings. 27-28
1. The Covenant was to be renewed on Mounts Gerizim (blessings by Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin) and Ebal (curses by Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtai), with the Levites pronouncing the curses and

- the people saying “Amen” to each. 27
 - 2. Declaration of the covenant sanctions: blessings would result from obedience and curses from disobedience moving from famines to defeat to exile. 28
- IV. Third address: Moses’ appeal to the nation was to choose life through obedience to God over desolation and exile for disobedience which would only end when they again chose to seek God. 29-30
 - A. Reminding them of God’s provision in the wilderness, Moses warned of judgment upon any man who thought he could serve other gods with impunity and that their land would become desolate and they would be uprooted from the land if they ever forsook God. 29
 - B. If, when scattered by God, they repented, then God would bring them back to the land and bless them. 30:1-10
 - C. Moses solemnly appealed to them to choose life. 30:11-20
- V. Moses’ final deeds included a challenge to the people and Joshua, the command that the covenant be read and renewed every seventh year, the writing of all the law in a book, his song of witness, and his blessing of the tribes before going up onto the mountain to view Canaan and die. 31-34
 - A. Moses’ challenge for the people and Joshua was that they were to be strong and courageous in taking the land. 3 1:1-8
 - B. Moses’ command to the nation was that the covenant be read and renewed each seventh year when debts were forgiven. 31:9-13
 - C. God commanded Moses to write a song as a testimony against Israel in their iniquity and then Commissioned Joshua, commanding him to be strong and courageous. 31:14-23
 - D. Moses then recorded all of the law in a book and deposited it in the Ark as a testimony against the nation, telling the leaders that he knew they would rebel against God in the future. 31:24-29
 - E. Moses’ song of witness. 31:30--32:47
 - F. Moses was commanded by God to go up to the mountain where he would die after viewing Canaan. 32:48-52
 - G. Moses blessed the people, naming all the tribes except Simeon. 33
 - H. Moses died on Mount Nebo after viewing Canaan and was replaced by Joshua. 34

Joshua

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author and Date. The author of the book is unstated and uncertain. The Talmud identified Joshua (Woudsira, p. 5). This would put the date of writing at about 1400 B.C., accepting an early date for the Exodus and conquest.

Within the literary-critical view, represented by Wellhausen, Joshua is included with the first five books and viewed as a Hexateuch. Chapters 2-11 are seen as coming from an Elohist source while 13-22 represent "P" (Woudstra, p.7). Both would thus be 8th century or later in origin with a final redaction coming as late as post-exilic days. The most telling blow to the Hexateuch theory is that the book was listed with the Former Prophets within Jewish tradition and excluded from the Samaritan scriptures which accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture (Woudstra, p. 41).

The traditio-historical view, represented by Noth, sees three sources in Joshua. They are a collection of etiological legends in chapters 2-9 and two hero legends in chapters 10 and 11:1-9. He understands them to have been combined by a collector somewhere around 900 B.C. A basis of his approach is his view that there was a continuous history, written by the Deuteronomist which stretched from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (Woudstra, p.7). So, though he has altered aspects of the documentary hypothesis, he has not really left its basic approach.

Late date. A late date is argued for on the basis of a supposed difference between the account of the conquest in Joshua which is optimistic and the account in Judges I which sees the work as incomplete. This is answered by noting that even in Joshua the conquest is viewed as unfinished in numerous places (Josh. 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13; 23:4-5).

Early date. Several items favor an early date of composition. First, Joshua 16:10 still have Canaanites living in Gezer whose population was conquered and exterminated by Pharaoh who then gave the empty city to Solomon as a wedding present. Second, Jebus was yet unconquered in Joshua 15:63, and would not be until king David took it, necessitating writing before David's capture of Jerusalem. Third, the vivid style of writing which included detailed descriptions (Josh. 14:6-12; 15:16-19; and 17:14-18) suggests a writer close to the event rather than someone in the post-exilic period. Fourth, the expression "until this day" argues for someone removed from the immediate event but could have been using the "expression to inform his readers of the continuing presence of a given landmark or memorial" (Woudstra, p. 11). Even more telling is the remark in Joshua 6:25 that Rahab was still living "in the midst of Israel to this day" which would necessitate writing during her lifetime. Finally, the reference to the book of Jashur in Joshua 10:13, which is also mentioned in 2 Samuel 1:18, is inconclusive since it has not been found.

In conclusion, the evidence is inconclusive concerning who wrote the book, though Joshua could have written large portions of it. This writer is most comfortable with someone of the conquest generation, possibly one of Joshua's officers. The date of composition best fits with a time period soon after the conquest, before the death of Rahab and early in the time of the judges.

Audience. Joshua was written to the people in the land. Understanding its date as being soon after the conquest, the audience would have been the people of the conquest who still had work to do to completely purge the land of the Canaanites.

Historicity. The historicity of the book rests upon the closeness to the events of its

writing and one's acceptance of Divine inspiration to ensure truthful reporting. As in all of Old Testament historical literature, this must not be viewed as a history book in the modern sense which is written purely for history's sake. Though all incidents occurred as portrayed, the author still selected only those accounts useful for communicating the theological truths he sought to expound. These should be seen in light of the covenant and God's command to take the land by conquest and remove its native population completely.

Canonicity. Joshua has been accepted as Scripture by both Jewish tradition and Christian for as long as either group has had a canon. Thus, its canonicity has not been questioned by the church.

Intent. The author wrote to show that the taking of the land rested in the historical fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarchs and Moses. This is seen in the first verses of the book when God commanded them to cross the Jordan "to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses" (Josh. 1:2-3). Its outworking is seen in Joshua 11:23's affirmation that Joshua "took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel." And, finally, in Joshua 21:43, the author affirms that "the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to their fathers."

Woudstra sees the covenant as the basis for all of the historical books, that they detail its outworking in the history of the nation (Woudstra, p. 17).

Literary Component

Genre. The book is composed principally of historical narrative, though the final chapters contain some hortatory material.

Arrangement. The book is arranged chronologically and logically. It first details the conquest (chapters 1-12), which is then followed by the distribution and retaking of parts of the land (13-22), and then Joshua's final speeches and acts which preceded his death (23-24).

Characterization. God and Joshua are the key characters of the book. God's character will be discussed below. Joshua is developed within a Moses motif through his performing acts similar to Moses such as leading the nation across a body of water on dry land. (Ch. 3-4), meeting with God (5:13-15), and stretching out his javelin in order to bring victory (8:18). He is portrayed as a good leader and a faithful servant of God, not turning away from serving Him to the day of his death.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

YHWH. God reveals Himself to Israel as their God who was not to be trifled with, as in the consequence of Achan's sin. That His name included a promise to Israel to fulfill His promises to their fathers is seen in that He proved to them the truth of His name, "I will be what I promise I will be" (Dr. Johnson's class notes).

Conqueror. That God was the true conqueror is seen in the victories wrought by Him and the defeat as well. Against a minor foe, Israel was defeated when He was not with them (Chp. 7). When He fought for them, they not only walked over flattened walls (Chp. 6), but saw Him, kill more of their opponents than themselves in battle (Chp. 10). With their obedience came assured victory with Joshua, God's appointed representative to lead the nation in battle, never seeing defeat.

Faithful. His faithfulness in keeping His promises to the patriarchs and to Joshua is seen

through both the battles and then the distribution of the land.

Giver of the land. That God gave the land to Israel, and they did not take it in their own power, is seen in His command in Joshua 1:2, “Arise, cross this Jordan, you and this entire people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.” This is worked out through the victories granted them and the defeat of every opponent during Joshua’s days in the land.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. The purpose of God was to take the land from the Canaanites and give it to the Israelites through holy war.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. This purpose was administered through the agency of holy war which was led by Joshua, God’s appointed leader. It was accomplished through the human means of combat which was made effective through God’s miraculous interventions (walls of Jericho, sun standing still, hail stones, and fear which gripped the people). It was accomplished as a consequence of God’s promises to their fathers, and only within the context of obedience to His covenant.

OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

- I. Israel’s conquest of the land followed their spiritual preparation and resulted from Joshua’s leadership and their obedience to God’s direction. 1-12
 - A. God prepared Joshua and the people for conquest of the land by elevating Joshua in their eyes and restoring them spiritually through circumcision and celebration of the Passover. 1-5
 1. With God’s commission and promise of success, Joshua commanded the people to prepare to cross Jordan. 1
 - a. God commissioned Joshua to give the land to Israel, promising to be with him, giving success wherever he went. 1:1-9
 - b. Joshua commanded the people to prepare to cross Jordan. 1:10-11
 - c. When Joshua commanded the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh to fulfill their promise to fight with Israel, they promised to follow him and obey. 1:12-18
 2. The spies sent by Joshua found the city in fear and were aided by Rahab whose life they promised to spare in exchange for theirs. 2
 - a. When Joshua sent two spies to Jericho, Rahab hid them. 2:1-7
 - b. Before hiding the men, Rahab had recounted God’s deeds and asked for her and her family’s lives in exchange for theirs, to which they agreed. 2:8-14
 - c. Before leaving, the men conditioned Rahab’s family’s survival on their being in her house during the attack and placement of a scarlet cord in her

- window. 2:15-21
- d. The spies then escaped Jericho and reported to Joshua what had happened. 2:22-24
3. As the people obeyed Joshua's instructions and the ark entered the Jordan, its waters were cut off and the people crossed on dry ground. 3
 - a. When the people camped by the Jordan, the commanders gave instructions for the crossing. 3:1-4
 - b. Commanding them to consecrate themselves, Joshua sent the ark ahead of the people. 3:5-6
 - c. At God's instruction, Joshua commanded the priests to enter the Jordan with the promise that its waters would be cut off. 3:7-13
 - d. When the ark entered the Jordan its waters were cut off at Adam and the people crossed on dry ground. 3:14-17
 4. When the people crossed over, they revered Joshua and he had twelve stones piled both in the river and at Gilgal as memorials of God's deed. 4
 - a. At God's command, Joshua sent twelve tribal representatives to bring twelve stones out of the Jordan to pile as a memorial of their crossing. 4:1-7
 - b. When the people had crossed and twelve more stones were piled up in the middle of the Jordan, Joshua was exalted like Moses before the people. 4:8-14
 - c. Then, at God's instruction and Joshua's command, the ark was brought out of the river and its waters flowed again. 4:15-18
 - d. At Gilgal they set up the twelve stones as a memorial of God's drying up the Jordan like He had done the Red Sea. 4:19-24
 5. As fear swept through Canaan, Israel circumcised themselves and celebrated the Passover in the land, followed by Joshua's meeting the Captain of the host of the Lord. 5
 - a. When the Amorite and Canaanite kings hear of Israel's miraculous crossing their hearts melted. 5:1
 - b. In obedience to God the men circumcised themselves at Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away, and then celebrated the Passover and ate some of the produce of the land, with manna ceasing the following day. 5:2-12
 - c. Joshua met the Captain of the host of the LORD opposite Jericho. 5:13-15
- B. By God's direction and through Joshua's obedience and leadership, Israel conquered her enemies and occupied the land. 6-12
1. Through God's direction Joshua led the nation to victory against Jericho. 6

- a. God instructed Joshua concerning the battle plan for Jericho. 6:1-5
 - b. Joshua had the army march in silence once around the city with the ark and seven priests blowing ram's horns. 6:6-11
 - c. The process was repeated for six days. 6:12-14
 - d. On the seventh day, at Joshua's command, placing the city under the ban and ordering the protection of Rahab's family, Israel attacked and defeated Jericho. 6:15-21
 - e. Rahab's family was spared while the city was burned and its treasures put into the treasury of the tabernacle. 6:22-25
 - f. Joshua had Israel take an oath cursing anyone who would rebuild Jericho and God spread his fame through the land. 6:25-27
2. When God brought defeat for Israel's sin, Joshua restored the nation by exposing the sin and purging it from Israel. 7
- a. Israel sinned when Achan took what was under the ban. 7:1
 - b. When Joshua sent a force of 3000 against Ai, 36 died in their defeat. 7:2-5
 - c. When they were defeated Joshua mourned before God. 7:6-9
 - d. God revealed to Joshua Israel's sin and instructed him to burn the transgressor with all that was his. 7:10-15
 - e. When Achan of Judah was revealed by lot he confessed his sin. 7:16-21
 - f. Achan and his family and possessions were all stoned and burned with fire in the valley of Achor (trouble). 7:22-26
3. Following God's directions, Joshua defeated Ai and then renewed the covenant at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. 8
- a. God then instructed Joshua to ambush Ai. 8:1-2
 - b. Joshua then sent a 30,000 man ambush team behind Ai with a promise to draw the men from the city. 8:3-9
 - c. Setting a second ambush between Bethel and Ai, Joshua drew every man out of both Bethel and Ai with his maneuver. 8:10-17
 - d. At God's instruction, Joshua stretched out his javelin and Israel turned on the men of Ai while the ambush burned the city and they slew all its men. 8:18-23
 - e. With javelin extended, all of Ai was killed, plunder was taken, and the city burned and left a ruin. 8:24-29
 - f. Then, building an altar on Ebal and offering sacrifices, Joshua renewed the covenant on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim with all of Israel just as Moses commanded. 8:30-35
4. As the northern confederacy formed, the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites into a covenant and became slaves serving the tabernacle. 9

- a. The Canaanite kings agreed amongst themselves to fight Israel. 9:1-2
 - b. When the Gibeonites deceived the leaders of Israel, they made a covenant with them without consulting God. 9:3-15
 - c. When the deception was discovered, the people grumbled against their leaders, but the nation honored the covenant and made them Ibrced laborers. 9:16-21
 - d. Joshua delivered them from the people's hands by making them slaves, providing wood and water for the tabernacle. 9:22-27
5. Joshua led the nation in its southern campaign in defense of Gibeon, killing all in obedience to God's command. 10
 - a. Five Amorite kings (Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon) attacked Gibeon. 10:1-5
 - b. When Joshua went to Gibeon's defense God was with him and killed more with hail than Israel did with swords. 10:6-11
 - c. At Joshua's prayer the sun stood still a day and God fought for Israel. 10:12-15
 - d. Israel pursued their enemies to their cities and returned to Maikedah where the five kings were pinned in a cave. 10:16-21
 - e. Joshua killed and hung the five kings, encouraging Israel's leaders to be courageous 10:22-27
 - f. Joshua then led the people in killing the populations of Makkedah Libnah. Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, Debit, and from Kadeshbarnea to Gaza in obedience to God's command. 10:28-43
6. Defeating the northern confederacy and killing the Anakim in the hill country, Joshua accomplished the taking of the land as God had commanded Moses. 11
 - a. Jabin of Hazor led a northern confederacy to attack Israel 11:1-5
 - b. With God's assurance to Joshua, Israel exterminated the armies, hamstringing the horses and burning the chariots. 11:6-9
 - c. Obeying Moses' command, Joshua killed all the people of the cities of the northern confederacy, burning Hazor. 11:10-15
 - d. Joshua took all the territory as God hardened the people's hearts. 11:16-20
 - e. Joshua then killed the Anakim in the hill country, taking the land as God had commanded. 11:21-23
7. Summary of the conquest: Through Moses and Joshua's faithfulness, the Amorite and Canaanite kings were defeated and their lands given to Israel. 12
 - a. Moses defeated Sihon and Og and gave their land to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh. 12:1-6
 - b. Joshua defeated 31 kings and gave their land as an inheritance to the rest of Israel. 12:7-24

- II. Israel's apportionment of the land came through God's allotment to each tribe according to His plan. 13-21
- A. God commanded Joshua to apportion the land to the remaining tribes who had not received land across the Jordan. 13
 - 1. God identified those peoples in Canaan yet to be conquered and then commanded Joshua to apportion the land to the tribes. 13:1-8
 - 2. Moses had already given Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh an inheritance Sihon and Og's kingdoms east of the Jordan. 13:9-33
 - B. As the land was apportioned, Caleb received Hebron as his inheritance when Judah came forward for their allotment. 14
 - 1. The land was apportioned by Joshua, Eleazar, and the heads of the households of the tribes. 14:1-5
 - 2. When Judah drew near to receive their inheritance Caleb asked for and got Hebron as he had been promised by Moses. 14:6-15
 - C. With the apportionment of Judah's territory Joshua captured Hebron and Debir while the sons of Judah failed to take Jerusalem. 15
 - 1. The borders of Judah's inheritance were described. 15:1-12
 - 2. Caleb captured Hebron (Kiriath-arba) and Debir (Kiriath-seher), driving out the three Anakim. 15:13-19
 - 3. The cities given to Judah were listed. 15:20-62
 - 4. Judah could not drive out the Jebusites in Jerusalem. 15:63
 - D. When Ephraim's territory was allotted they were able to drive out all the Canaanites except those living in Gezer. 16
 - E. Manasseh's remaining portion was in the hill country north of Ephraim's, and though they had the strength they failed to drive out the Canaanites. 17
 - 1. The rest of Manasseh, including the daughters of Zelophehad, received their inheritance. 17:1-6
 - 2. Their territory was north of Ephraim, touching the borders of Asher on the north and Issachar on the east, and was not completely cleared of Canaanites. 17:7-13
 - 3. When they asked for easier land to conquer, Joshua told them they were strong enough to take what God had given them. 17:14-18
 - F. Joshua had the remaining tribes scout the land and then began apportioning it by lot, beginning with Benjamin. 18
 - 1. At Shiloh Joshua commanded the remaining seven tribes to map the remaining territories so they could be given to them by lot. 18:1-7

2. After the men described the land by seven divisions, Joshua cast lots to apportion it to the tribes. 18:8-10
 3. Benjamin's lot fell to the territory between Judah and the sons of Joseph. 18:11-20
 4. Benjamin's cities were listed, including Jerusalem. 18:21-28
- G. The remainder of the land was allotted to the seven tribes along with Joshua's inheritance. 19
1. Simeon's lot placed them in the midst of Judah whose territory had proven too large for them. 19:1-9
 2. Zebulun's lot placed them between Issachar, Naphtali, and Asher (just north of the Jezreel valley). 19:10-16
 3. Issachar's lot placed them in the Jezreel valley and went east to Tabor and the Jordan. 19:17-23
 4. Asher's lot placed them along the coast, reaching as far south as Carmel and as far north as Sidon. 19:24-31
 5. Naphtali's lot placed them the region between Asher and Lake Chinnereth, northward through upper Galilee. 19:32-39
 6. Dan's lot was on the coast, between Manasseh and Judah and bordered by Ephraim and Benjamin on the east. 19:40-48
 7. Joshua was then given Timnath-serah in Ephraim as his inheritance. 19:49-50
 8. Concluding comment. 19:51
- H. At God's direction Joshua established three more cities of refuge. 20
1. God instructed Joshua to establish cities of refuge in the land where innocent man-slayers could remain till the high priest died. 20:1-6
 2. The three cities selected were Kedesh in Naphtali (Galilee), Shechem in Ephraim, and Hebron. 20:7-9
- I. With the apportionment of the Levitical cities throughout Israel, God fulfilled His promise to give the land to the people. 21
1. The Levites were given 48 cities, chosen by lot, throughout all of the tribes. 21:1-42
 2. With the completion of the allotments God fulfilled His promise to give Israel its lands through military victory. 21:43-45
- III. Israel's continued occupation of the land was contingent upon their faithfulness to God in accordance with the renewed covenant under Joshua. 22-24
- A. When Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh built an altar on their return home, the rest of the nation, fearing apostasy and judgment, confronted them and learned it was a memorial and not something idolatrous or rebellious. 22

1. With the land apportioned, Joshua blessed and sent home the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh. 22:1-9
 2. The returning tribes built an altar by the Jordan and the rest of Israel took up arms when they heard. 22:10-12
 3. The tribes sent Phinehas and ten elders to investigate, reminding them of the nation's sin at Peor and Achan's sin at Jericho with their consequences. 22:13-20
 4. The leaders of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh reported that they built the altar as a memorial and not for purposes of worship. 22:21-29
 5. The people accepted their explanation and the altar was named "Witness" by the sons of Reuben and Gad. 22:30-34
- B. Joshua called together Israel's leadership and reminded them that God had kept His promise to give them the land but that they would perish off of it if they became idolatrous and failed to drive out the remaining Canaanites. 23
1. Joshua called together the leadership of the nation and reminded them to remain true to God, warning that their failure to finish driving out the Canaanites would bring them a snare and judgment from God. 23:1-13
 2. Reminding them that God had kept all of His promises of blessing, he warned the leaders that God would destroy them if they turned to idolatry. 23:14-16
- C. At Shechem Joshua renewed the covenant between God and Israel before he died, warning of judgment when they forsook God in the future. 24
1. God, through Joshua, reminded the people that it was He who took them out of idolatry and gave them the land. 24:1-13
 2. Joshua, his family choosing to serve God, challenged the nation to choose whether they would serve God or the gods of the Amorites. 24:14-15
 5. The people declared their choice, to serve the LORD. 24:16-18
 4. Even with Joshua's warning that God would judge them for apostasy, the people at Shechem covenanted to serve Him. 24:19-28
 5. Following Joshua's death, the people served God during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived him. 24:29-31
 6. Joseph's bones were buried at Shechem and Eleazar died and was buried at Gibeah of Phinehas in Ephraim. 24:32-33

Judges

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author and Date. Nowhere does the book of Judges name its author, though its acceptance within the Israelite community indicates he was a prophet. Jewish tradition placed the authorship with Samuel. His authorship is supported by four arguments which point to an early monarchy period of writing. First, the phrase, “In those days there was no king in Israel” indicates that the writer lived in a time when they did have a king. Second, Jerusalem was still held by the Jebusites (1:21) at the time of writing and was not captured by David until 1004 B.C. (2 Sam. 5:6-7). Third, Canaanites still lived in Gezer (1:29), which indicates a time before Pharaoh killed its population and gave the city to Solomon for a wedding present (1 Ki. 9:16). Fourth, the place name of “Bethlehem in Judah” occurs only in Judges 17:7, 9; 19:1, 2; Ruth 1:1, 2; and 1 Samuel 17:12 (though Micah 5:2 also makes reference to Bethlehem being in Judah). By pointing to an early date of composition, namely that of the early monarchy, and most likely during Saul’s rule, Samuel the prophet becomes the preferred option for author.

One argument against an early date of composition is the reference to Dan’s idolatry continuing “until the day of the captivity of the land.” This is understood by many to indicate that either the author/editor wrote after the deportation of the northern tribes of Israel by either Tiglath-pileser III in 732 B.C. or Sargon in 722 B.C. Rather, this could better be a reference to the Philistine invasion of 1 Samuel 4 in which the Ark was captured and Eli’s sons killed. It is likely that the tabernacle was destroyed during this time as well, as indicated by archaeological evidence which points to a 1050 B.C. destruction of Shiloh. It is also unlikely that David would have allowed such an idolatrous temple to remain intact during his reign (Cundall, p. 192).

The source-critical approach sees this work as a product much later than the early monarchy. Harrison describes it well. He says,

The majority of liberal scholars, whether guided by literary-critical or form-critical considerations, would generally concede that Judges passed through a lengthy process of development, characterized by the following distinct stages: first, an oral period, when many of the stories were composed (twelfth to tenth centuries B.C.); second, the writing of these sources in prose form, possibly by the authors of the Pentateuchal sources (tenth to eighth centuries B.C.); third, the early redaction of Judges on the basis of JE sources (eighth to seventh centuries B.C.); and fourth, the Deuteronomistic recension comprising Judges 2:6--16:31 with some omissions (late seventh century B.C.); and fifth, the final edition of the book as in the MT (post-exilic period). (Harrison, p. 684).

He notes afterward that the assumption of long oral transmission is hurt by the present understanding that the people experienced a high level of literacy during the time of the judges and it is just as likely that the stories were recorded very close to the time of their occurrences (Harrison, p. 685). His response to critical scholars is insightful,

Clearly there was a good deal of material available upon which the editor of Judges was able to draw, as indicated by the cycles of tradition that make up the bulk of the book. The pursuit of mythical J and E sources into Judges is completely pointless, for the only sources which can be identified with certainty are the tradition-units represented in the

various cycles themselves. Judges is no more the work of a compiler who pasted together various documents than is the Pentateuch itself (Harrison, p. 689).

Alt and Noth represent another approach, that of the traditional-historical school. Harrison observes that they favor “an emphasis upon hero-sagas and strata of tradition as oral and literary antecedents of a Deuteronomic recension” (Harrison, p. 683). Their view is equally weak since they too require a lengthy period of oral transmission.

Audience. Accepting Samuel’s authorship, his audience would have then been the generation of Israelites who demanded a king (1 Sam. 8:5) and were thereby rejecting God’s rule (1 Sam. 8:7).

Historicity. One’s view of the historicity of Judges hinges upon one’s view of the date of composition and understanding of Hebrew historical literature. With shared Divine and prophetic authorship the historicity of the book is accepted. Though it is not a complete history of the period of judges, those incidents recounted occurred as described. Still, only those elements necessary for expressing the message of the book were included and so it should not be viewed from the same perspective of modern histories.

Chronology. The period of the judges begins with the death of Joshua and ends with the crowning of Saul as king over Israel. For those, like Harrison, who hold to a late date of the Exodus and thus of the conquest, there are intense chronological problems. He notes that if the conquest was begun in 1240 B.C. (instead of around 1406 B.C.), and David was crowned king around 1010 B.C., there are only 230 years left to fit in the conquest, Joshua’s life, the judges, and Saul’s reign. His response to the problem is to posit that the judges did not have consecutive periods of leadership, but served concurrently. He further notes that if the periods were to be taken as consecutive, then it would require more than 500 years between the beginning of the conquest and David’s ascendancy (Harrison, pp. 692-693).

Accepting an early date of the Exodus, and thus a conquest beginning around 1406 B.C., and accepting that some judgeships probably did overlap, the problem is removed. There is then sufficient time, about 350 years, for all of the events described to transpire between Joshua’s death and Saul’s enthronement around 1050 B.C. Lindsey argues well for an actual beginning date of Othniel’s judgeship on the basis that the elders who entered Canaan with Joshua would have been under 20 at Kadesh-barnea in 1444 B.C. If they lived as long as Joshua, which is unlikely, then their deaths at 110 years of age would have been around 1354 B.C. (Lindsey, BKCOT, pp. 373-374). Since the idolatry which brought on the first oppression seems to have begun after their deaths, then Othniel raising up as judge would not have occurred any less than 8 years after the death of the last elder, or somewhere around 1340 B.C. or later.

The occupation of Gilead by the Ammonites can also be dated from the assertions of Jephthah. In Judges 11:26 he stated that the Israelites had occupied Transjordan for 300 years. Since this occupation would have begun in 1406 B.C. (early conquest), then Jephthah’s deliverance had to be around 1100 B.C. For those arguing for a late Exodus and Conquest, those 300 years will not fit into their limited chronological framework without attributing either error to Jephthah or to the text.

Samson’s judgeship can likely be traced backwards from either the time of Samuel’s judging Israel or from the time of Saul’s accession to the throne, since he continued the deliverance from the Philistines which Samson had begun. Samson likely overlapped Samuel’s ministry.

Canonicity. Judges has been accepted within the Hebrew Scriptures and included

within the Former Prophets. It was then accepted into the Christian Scripture as well. Thus, its canonical status is not questioned.

Intent. The prominence of Gibeah and Jabesh-gilead in the epilogue of Judges suggests that Saul may have been in focus when the accounts were recorded. Thus the intent may be directed both to the generation who demanded a king, demonstrating God's covenantal faithfulness and right to rule, and to Saul to encourage his faithfulness to God who was the source of blessing, not a judge or king. Thus, the intent of Judges is theological rather than historical, as noted above. It is written in order to call the nation and king to covenantal faithfulness.

Literary Component

Genre. Judges is historical narrative. Though, Noth sees it as basically a collection of hero-sagas (Harrison, p. 683), it is far more historical and theological than that.

Arrangement. The book can be arranged into four major sections. First, it has a prologue (1:1--3:6) which describes the cause of Israel's problems and details the cycle of events which characterized that age. The second section (3:7--16) details the ministries of the judges and contains two subsections. The first, (3:7-- 8:32) details the deliverances of (Judith through Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, and Gideon with the four turns of the cycle of sin, judgment, deliverance, and blessing still intact, indicating God's full intervention on behalf of the people. The second (8:33--16) demonstrates a deterioration in the nation which is reflected in the deliverers provided by God who depend more on themselves than on Him. Finally, the epilogue (17-21) shows the moral and political chaos into which the nation fell when it departed from covenantal faithfulness.

Characterization. God is the principle character, though He is not seen communicating with or through people nearly as much as in the Pentateuch and Joshua. The people who play major parts in the book are all quite human. They are characterized by flaws and by a declining spirituality until finally Samuel, who has the Spirit of God resting upon him, cannot even tell when God's Spirit left.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

YHWH. God continues to reveal Himself as the God of the Covenant, "I am who I will be." He is still the same God of the Exodus who demanded holy living and covenantal faithfulness, who delivered the nation from Egypt and gave them the land He had promised to the Patriarchs. It is also He who raises up judges to deliver them.

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is seen in His control of Israel's history even as the nation wallows in sin. It is He who raises up oppressors and then deliverers. It is He who blesses them with peace while they obey. It is He who subjected them to the trials of oppressors as demonstrated in His departure from Gilgal and rebuke at Bochim (2:1-5).

Faithfulness. God's faithfulness is demonstrated in His covenantal loyalty even when the people sinned. He continued to provide and empower deliverers even as the nation wandered away from Him and wallowed in the sins of intermarriage and idolatry which He had prohibited.

Grace. God's grace is seen in His provision of judges to deliver even though He had warned that if they left Him that the nation would perish out of the land. Yet, this was delayed for many centuries.

Compassionate. The compassion of God toward His people can be seen in God's

providing judges to deliver Israel each time. This is most clearly stated, though, in 10:16 where, even after rejecting the nation's plea for help and telling them that He would deliver them no more, it says that "He could bear the misery of Israel no longer." Thus He added Jephthah whom the people had chosen for their judge.

Judge of Israel. Ultimately God is revealed as the true judge of Israel, who both renders just judgments upon the nation for its sins, but also who delivers them from their successors. His judicial side can be seen in His judging between Israel and Ammon concerning the rights to the land in Judges 11:27. His military deliverer side can be seen in His call of Gideon to lead His army against the Midianites.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. The purposes of God worked out in the history of Israel were tied to her covenantal relationship to Him as defined by Moses and the Law. As in Joshua, where the covenant was renewed twice, that covenant still had effect for the following generation who had forgotten God. Thus, God was working out the blessing and cursing aspects of the covenant as especially seen in Deuteronomy 27 and 28.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God administered His purposes through nations whom He raised up as oppressors to discipline the people and through judges whom He raised up as deliverers. Thus, the majority of God's work was through the established world order, though the individuals anointed by Him as judges received supernatural enablement. Ironically, these enablements did nothing to strengthen their spiritual lives or that of the nation, though the nation generally remained faithful as long as the judge remained.

OUTLINE OF JUDGES

- I. Prologue: The evil not purged from the land when Israel occupied it and failed to drive out the violated her covenant, brought chastisement and testing from God, and resulted in intermarriage and idolatry. 1:1--3:6
 - A. Though Judah and Simeon had success, the other tribes failed to completely remove the Canaanites from their territories. 1
 - B. Because of the failure of Joshua's generation and following generations forsaking Him. God judged them with oppressors and delivered them through human judges. 2
 1. Moving from Gilgal to Bochim. God chastised the nation for its failure to drive out the Canaanites. 2:1-5
 2. The mostly obedient generation of Joshua was followed by a generation who did not know the LORD. 2:6-10
 3. Cycles of sin, judgment, deliverance, and blessing were the experience of the nation under the judges. 2:11-23
 - C. The people sinned against God, by intermarrying and worshipping with the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Jebusites whom He had left in their midst to test them, along with the Philistines, Sidonians, and Hivites. 3:1-6

- II. The evil which increasingly overcame Israel brought judgment and then deliverance from God, which was followed by periods of blessing. 3:6--16
 - A. As Israel's apostasy brought oppression. God heard the people's cries and provided righteous judges to deliver them. 3:6--8:32
 1. Othniel: When Israel served the Baals and Asheroth, God sold them to a king of Mesopotamia for eight years before delivering them through Othniel, which was followed by 40 years of rest. 3:6-11
 2. Ehud: When Israel sinned again, God strengthened Eglon of Moab for 18 years before delivering them through Ehud the assassin, which left the land undisturbed for 80 years. 3:12-30
 3. Shamgar: He saved Israel after Ehud, killing 600 Philistines with an ox goad. 3:31
 4. Deborah and Barak: When Israel sinned and was oppressed, though she was judged by Deborah, God raised up Barak to deliver them from Jabin and so gave the land rest for 40 years. 4-5
 - a. When Israel sinned after Ehud's death, God sold them to Jabin in Hazor for 20 years before delivering them through Barak. 4
 - b. Deborah's song celebrated the victory over Jabin and Sisera's death at the hands of Jael, and the land was undisturbed for 40 years. 5
 5. Gideon: When Israel sinned again, God gave them over to Midian for 7 years until Israel cried out and He raised up Gideon who refined rule in favor of God's, brought the land rest for 40 years, but also caused Israel to sin. 6--8:32
 - a. When Israel was again overcome by evil and God gave them over to the Midianites until they cried out, He sent a prophet to chastise them and then raised up Gideon. 6
 - (1) When Israel did evil God gave them over to Midian until they cried out to Him 6:1-6
 - (2) God then sent a prophet who told them that they had disobeyed Him. 6:7-10
 - (3) God next appeared to Gideon and commissioned him to deliver Israel. 6:11-24
 - (4) Before the deliverance began, God had Gideon destroy his father's altar to Baal and offer a bull on a new altar to Him. 6:25-32
 - (5) When the Midianites and Amalekites next came to prey upon Israel, Gideon assembled Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. 6:33-35
 - (6) Gideon then tested God with fleeces to assure himself that He would indeed deliver Israel through him. 6:36-40

- b. Using Gideon and 300 men, God defeated the Midianites. 7
 - (1) When Gideon camped at the spring of Harod, God reduced the army to 300 men so He would be credited with the victory. 7:1-8
 - (2) God then reassured Gideon by having him overhear a Midianite dream. 7:9-15
 - (3) God then defeated the Midianites. 7:16-24
 - c. Though Gideon acted well in defeating the Midianites and refusing rule, declaring God to be their ruler, he led Israel into sin with his ephod. 8
 - (1) When the Ephraimites complained about being left out of the attack Gideon consoled them. 8:1-3
 - (2) After capturing 2 more Midianite kings Gideon punished 2 Transjordan cities which did not assist him. 8:4-21
 - (3) Though he spoke well in refusing rule, stating that “the LORD shall rule over you,” he caused the nation to stumble with his ephod while giving them rest for 40 years. 8:22-32
- B. As Israel continued in apostasy, they also began to rely on men to deliver them as their unity disintegrated and God provided only partial deliverances. 8:33--16
- 1. After Israel sinned against God by crowning Abimelech, who murdered his brothers. God removed him and punished Shechem. 9
 - a. Abimelech conspired with Shechem to murder his brothers and make himself king. 9:1-6
 - b. Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, cursed Abimelech and Shechem. 9:7-21
 - c. Abimelech ruled over Israel 3 years before God removed him and punished Shechem. 9:22-57
 - 2. After two judges brought peace and Israel was again overcome by evil, and after God had rejected their pleas and repentance, He was moved by their misery to deliver them once again. 10
 - a. Tola: Tola of Issachar delivered Israel and judged 23 years. 10:1-2
 - b. Jair: Jair the Gileadite judged 22 years after Tola. 10:3-5
 - c. When Israel was again overcome by evil and was sold to the Philistines and Ammonites, their cry to the LORD was rebuked and their repentance rejected until God could stand their misery no longer. 10:6-18
 - (1) When Israel was overcome by the idolatry of all her neighbors, God afflicted them with the Philistines and Ammonites. 10:6-9

- (2) When they cried out to God and He initially rejected their plea, they put away the foreign gods and served Him until He could bear their misery no more. 10:10-18
3. Jephthah: Jephthah, the deliverer selected by the men of Gilead, defeated the Ammonites by God's enablement, but at the loss of his daughter as a burnt offering. 11
 - a. When confronted with the Ammonites the men of Gilead selected Jephthah, an illegitimate son of a harlot, to be their judge. 11:1-11
 - b. Jephthah rejected the king of Ammon's demand for Gilead's return to him since it was God who gave the land to Israel and then called upon God to judge between them. 11:12-28
 - c. After committing to offer a burnt offering to God, Jephthah defeated the Ammonites only to have his only daughter come out and subsequently be sacrificed. 11:29-40
4. Jephthah judged 6 years after putting down the Ephraimites and was then followed by Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon who judged 25 more years. 12
 - a. When the Ephraimites attacked Gilead for not including them, Jephthah defeated them and judged Israel 6 years. 12:1-7
 - b. Ibzan: He judged 7 years. 12:8-10
 - c. Elon: He judged 10 years. 12:11-12
 - d. Abdon: He judged 8 years. 12:13-15
5. Samson: With both the nation and himself overcome by evil, Samson could only begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. 13-16
 - a. Israel's return to evil brought 40 years of domination by the Philistines while God raised up Samson before his conception to be a Nazarite deliverer. 13
 - b. As Samson sinned by eating honey from a lion's carcass as well as marrying a Philistine, her betrayal led to his killing 300 men and her being given to his friend. 14
 - c. After discovering his wife was given away, Samson burned the Philistine's crops and slaughtered a large number, killing an additional 1000 with the fresh jawbone of a donkey and then judging Israel 20 years while they remained under Philistine domination. 15
 - d. After sinning with a prostitute, Samson was captured by the Philistines through the aid of Delilah and then killed 3000 men and women in the temple of Dagon. 16

III. Epilogue: The evil overcoming Israel was such that the tribe of Dan deserted its inheritance for a northern city and Benjamin fought the other tribes rather than punish rapists. 17-21

- A. The religious apostasy of Israel could be seen in Micah and then the tribe of Dan's idolatry after they deserted their inheritance to move north. 17-18
 - 1. Micah the Ephraimite set up images and hired a Levite as his family pteist. 17
 - 2. When some Danites left their inheritance to take Laish, they also stole Micah's idols and ephod and made Jonathan their high priest in Dan, which continued until the captivity of Israel and destruction of the house of God at Shiloh. 18
- B. The moral degradation of Israel could be seen in the atrocity of Gibeah and the resulting war with the Benjamites which nearly ended in their extermination. 19-21
 - 1. After a Levite stopped in Gibeah and the men of the city raped his concubine, he notified the other tribes of the atrocity with her body parts. 19
 - 2. When the Benjamites refused to deliver up the men of Gibeah, the other tribes killed all but 600 of them. 20
 - 3. After killing all residents of Jabesh-gilead except the virgins for not coming to the war, Israel gave the 400 virgins to the Benjamites and then allowed them to kidnap 200 more wives in order to preserve their tribe in Israel 21:1-25

Ruth

LITERARY DESIGN

Author. The author of Ruth is unknown. Morris reports a Rabbinic tradition within Talmud. *Baba Bathra*, 14b, that Samuel was the author, and then notes that this tradition is late and so not decisive.¹ Harrison and Hubbard reject Samuel's authorship on the grounds that the genealogy "presupposes" David was a well known figure (i.e., King) at the time it was recorded. If this were true, then Samuel would have been dead for some time.² Thus they want to push the book beyond Samuel and at least into David's reign over all of Israel, not just Judah. Hubbard argues further that the parenthetical comment about the shoe custom, since Samuel would have been of Obed's generation and so only once removed from Boaz, could not be from Samuel since it "seems too short a time for the shoe custom to fall into disuse and require explaining."³ I feel these are weak arguments. As a prophet who had anointed David as the coming king (1 Sam. 16) he would have known of his coming greatness and would have also foreseen the strain between the northern and southern tribes. Further, he could have written this account to show God's hand in preserving the line of Judah which led to David. The account would have been built upon the previous records of the preservation of Judah's line through Tamar (Gen. 38) and of Judah's selection by Jacob as the one with whom the scepter of ruler-ship would reside (Gen. 49:8-12). Secondly, if the shoe custom had passed from use during Samuel's days, which is very likely, then he would see the need to explain its meaning, recognizing that the coming generations would need to understand the significance of what had happened. Thus, he cannot be legitimately eliminated on the basis of those two issues. Keil notes that Ruth's style and language is markedly different from that of Judges, a book also attributed to Samuel.⁴ This is indeed a more telling argument against Samuel's authorship, but can also be answered on the basis of a difference in purpose and subject matter. Where Judges reveals the spiritual decline and failure of the nation and its leaders, the message of Ruth runs counter to it and reports a story of faith and loyal love (dsj).

¹Leon Morris. "Ruth" in *Judges and Ruth*, p. 229.

²R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 1060; Robert L. Hubbard, *The Book of Ruth*, NICOT, p. 23.

³Hubbard, p. 23. He (p. 24) suggests an unknown female author on the basis of the book's focus upon women and female assertiveness. He himself admits that, other than slight internal evidence as noted above, the idea of tenuous at best.

⁴C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*, K & D, p. 468.

Date. The dating of Ruth is made difficult due to the lack of any direct chronological references within the text as is characteristic of many of the prophets. Using the genealogy as a key, an early date of composition can be understood. From this Keil sees a need for David to

have attained the pinnacle of his fame before the book was written, but rejects any view which has it composed much later.⁵ The statement that the days of the judges were past in Ruth 1:1 and the genealogy to David argues for a date of composition during the early monarchy of Saul or David but before the selection and/or enthronement of Solomon. This strengthens the likelihood of either Samuel's or possibly Nathan's authorship.

Late date arguments are based principally upon supposed Aramaisms within the text.⁶ Keil answers the argument from Aramaisms. He notes that the supposed Aramaisms include *yriWb[}T'* (2:8), *^yqiB;d]Ti* (2:21), *^Wrxoq]yi* (2:9), *yT]m}c'*, *yT]d]r'y;*, *yT]b]k'v;* (3:3,4), the use of *ar;m;* for *hr;m;* (1:20), and the use of *^hel:* and *^n j;* (1:13). He also comments that they all occur within recorded conversations and not within the narration of the story. This then argues that rather than evidencing a late writing the "author received these forms and words from the language used in common conversation in the time of the judges, and has faithfully recorded them."⁷ Morris supports his position when he says, "if the early forms are hard to account for in a late document, late forms in an early document are not so difficult, provided they are not the characteristic language of the book."⁸ Hubbard agrees with them and notes that the language of Ruth is closer to that of Genesis and Samuel rather than the books of Esther, Chronicles, and Nehemiah which are known to be late.⁹ It is classic Hebrew.¹⁰ Morris summarizes the answer to the late date argument based on language well. He says,

The conclusion is inescapable that the language of the book as a whole does not provide a late date. Indeed, as far as the language is concerned, the indications are that the book is early. Only a very small number of words are cited for a late date, as we have seen, they do not prove it. By contrast, the overwhelming majority of words and constructions points to an early date, to a time when classical Hebrew was the norm.¹¹

⁵Keil and Delitzsch, p, 469.

⁶Hubbard, pp. 24-25.

⁷Keil and Delitzsch, p. 469.

⁸Morris, p. 236

⁹Hubbard, p. 30.

¹⁰Morris, p.235

¹¹Ibid., p. 234.

Thus the weight of evidence from language still favors an early composition.

Language is not the only internal evidence of an early date, though. Harrison sees a strong argument for early composition in the "atmosphere" of the story which reflects a familiarity with the time of the judges and could not have come from a post exilic author

since his community was far too different.¹²

The argument from the shoe custom being obsolete at the time of writing for a late date of the book is also weak. Morris argues well,

It depends on one verse (4:7), which could have been a gloss inserted at a later time. In any case, while the words point to a date later than that of the events described, they do not necessarily indicate a very late date. The writer knows the old custom, which may indicate that he lived near enough to the change-over to remember what the previous custom was.¹³

As stated earlier, this adds credence to the likelihood of Samuel or Nathan's authorship either as David approached kingship or soon after. The argument that differences between the shoe custom in Ruth and that of Deuteronomy 25 indicate a late date is answered by Hubbard.¹⁴ He considers them to be different and unrelated customs. Further he notes that the *go'el* custom was in view in Ruth rather than the levirate marriage law.¹⁵ So, the need for conformity to Deuteronomy is unnecessary. And, finally, if the author of Ruth were post-exilic and concerned with keeping the law or such, he would have certainly written the story to conform with the levirate structures.¹⁶

¹²Harrison, p. 1062.

¹³Morris, pp. 234-235.

¹⁴La Sor, et al. (William S. La Sor, David A. Hubbard. and Frederic Wm. Bush. *Old Testament Survey*, p. 612), though they hold to an early date, do not see a great deal of coherence between the accounts in Ruth, Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and Genesis 38 (Judah and Tamar) concerning the Levirate marriage in Israel. Morris (p. 235), on the other hand, tries to argue that there is no contradiction with Deuteronomy. Though they would hold to an early date, this would place them more in agreement with late date types.

¹⁵Hubbard, p. 27

¹⁶A final note comes from Morris. He (p. 233) notes *twā Ruth* occurs in the LXX among the historical books immediately after Judges. He says further (p. 231) that the list of OT books contained in "MS. 54 of the library of the Greek patriarchate in Jerusalem," which is a very old Hebrew-Aramaic list, places Ruth between Numbers and Job. With regard to Ruth's later placement in the books called *Ketûbîm* instead of the history books, he says (p. 232): "Ruth, in common with the other *Megillôt*, came to be used liturgically. The five were read at major festivals, so there was every reason for grouping them together." These are evidences of a very early acceptance by the Jewish community.

Audience. The intended audience of Ruth is clearly the united nation of Israel. Based upon its early date of composition, and the likelihood of the Davidic empire either being endorsed (Samuel as author) or established (Nathan), the audience is the people of the newly established kingdom of Israel.¹⁷ This will be detailed further under the discussion of authorial

intent.

Historicity. The historicity of the book is established through the closeness of its composition to the time when it happened. Its historicity continued to be accepted by the people of Israel/Judah and is reflected in Josephus. He based his introduction of the Davidic period directly upon the testimony of Ruth, saying in the end of his account,

I was . . . obliged to relate this history of Ruth, because I had a mind to demonstrate the power of God, who, without difficulty, can raise those that are of ordinary parentage to dignity and splendor, to which he advanced David, though were born of such mean parents.¹⁸

Canonicity. The canonical status of Ruth has not been questioned. As stated above, Josephus recounts the story of Ruth as historical and is clearly dependent upon the book as his accepted source.¹⁹ Matthew included Ruth in his genealogy (1:5), thereby accepting the testimony of her story as truth. Hubbard notes that the earliest Jewish and Christian records include Ruth in their Scripture lists, including *Baba Bathra* 14b and Melito of Sardis (both 2nd century A.D.), Origin in the 3rd century A.D., and Jerome in the 4th.²⁰ Thus its canonicity has been accepted from earliest times.

Intent. The area of least agreement seems to be the question of the author's intent in writing Ruth. The first view is that it was written as a protest against Ezra and Nehemiah's prohibition against marriages to foreign women and rests upon an assumed late date of composition. Though presented by Hubbard and Morris as a view held by others, Morris goes on to note that no evidence is given for this position by its proponents.²¹ The weakness of this position is that it would not have reflected the official position of the spiritual leadership of the nation, namely Ezra and Nehemiah, whose counsel was followed and led to a movement of national racial purification and who would have had a great deal to say about whether the book would be accepted into the canon of Scripture.²² Hubbard notes that the book lacks the "obvious marks of a

¹⁷Hubbard, p.41.

¹⁸Josephus, *Antiquities*, V.9.4.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, V.9.1-4.

²⁰Hubbard, p. 5.

²¹Morris, p. 240; Hubbard, p. 35.

²²Harrison, p. 1061

polemic.”²³ He then points out that the obvious chance for a polemic occurred when the nearest kinsman passed up his opportunity to buy the land “because of some unstated threat to his inheritance, not because of Ruth's race.”²⁴ Thus, Ruth should not be seen as a polemic

against racial purity.

A second view is that it was simply written as a story of friendship for entertainment. The strength of this view is the fact that the book was written with a view to pleasing its audiences.²⁵ I agree, in that its pleasantness comes from its literary beauty and style as well as the story as it occurred. Still, this is not the purpose. Its focus upon spiritual and familial duties denies this as an option.²⁶

A third option is that it was written in support of levirate marriages and to remind the readers of the importance of carrying out their duty. This view falls short, as noted above, when its focus upon the kinsman redeemer is seen as something separate from the levirate marriage. Further, in this story it is not a brother who marries and so, as Morris notes, “There is no example of levirate marriage in the proper sense.”²⁷

A fourth view is that the book was written to endorse David as king and to provide his genealogy, which is not given in any other books of OT.²⁸ Hubbard sees the presentation of the preservation of David’s line as a significant, though secondary, theme in Ruth.²⁹ He argues from the appearance of key historical names (Rachel, Leah, Perez, Judah, and Tamar in 4:11-12) that Ruth is presented as a founding mother comparable to Jacob’s two wives.³⁰ He then lists eleven motifs characteristic of the patriarchal narratives as evidence of literary design.³¹ Thus it has “a political pulpose: to win popular

²³Hubbard, p. 35.

²⁴Ibid., p. 36.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 38-39.

²⁶Morris, p. 241.

²⁷Ibid. p. 242.

²⁸Keil and Delitzsch, p. 466.

²⁹Hubbard, p. 39.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., pp. 40-41. These motifs include: migration because of famine, childlessness which endangers the line, permanent immigration to Canaan by a foreigner, protection of the woman elected to bear the son, betrothal-type scene, “female sexual initiative overcoming male inaction to provide an heir, purchase of property resulting from a death (this is really stretching it), integration of foreign immigrants, marriage of a foreigner, divine gift of conception providing one or more sons of destiny, and the acceptance of David’s rule by appeal to the continuity of Yahweh’s guidance in the lives of Israel’s ancestors and David.”³² The weakness of this view is the lack of any hint in the story itself of this purpose.³³ The historical names are mentioned by the women and may well have been a common blessing. Further, the genealogy is tacked onto the end of the story as an addendum more than a conclusion.

The final, and preferred view is that the book was written to teach the sovereignty of God in the lives and actions of everyday people.³⁴ Morris speaks well when he states that

the book is about God. It deals with unimportant people and unimportant matters. But it deals with them in such a way as to show that God is active in the affairs of men. He works His purpose out and blesses them that trust Him.³⁵

This can be seen in part in the shift in emphasis or characters from Ruth in chapter 2, to Naomi in chapter 3 and then Boaz in chapter 4. Thus it is not a biography about any one of them. God is the central character, even if silently present.³⁶ Morris notes “the implication throughout is that God is watching over His people, and that He brings to pass what is good.”³⁷ Further, Naomi’s words in 1:14 express the thrust of the book, “namely, that things do not happen by chance. God is a sovereign God and he brings to pass what He will.”³⁸

Literary Component

Genre. La Sor, et al., describe Ruth as a “novella”, a short story with a purpose of edifying its readers/hearers.³⁹ Hubbard rejects novella on the basis that Gunkel’s use of the term implied a fictional story “told to entertain, edify, or advocate rather than overcoming of obstacles. Some are certainly more evident than others. I am not overly convinced.

³²Ibid., p. 42.

³³Morris, p. 242.

³⁴Hubbard, p. 1.

³⁵Morris, p. 229.

³⁶La Sor, et al., p. 615. They state their view well (p. 616) with these words: “The author stresses one particular aspect of God’s providence--its hiddenness.”

³⁷Morris, p. 242.

³⁸Ibid., p. 258.

³⁹La Sor, et al., p. 614

inform.”⁴⁰ He prefers the term “short story” as a description of Ruth and presents four characteristics of this genre.

First, it evidences a distinct literary style which uses elevated prose and semipoetic rhythmic elements, especially in speeches. Second, its content combines interest in typical people, including important figures, with an interest in the affairs of ordinary life even if these turn out to have national import. In that regard, unlike the novella, the short story contains valuable historical information. Third, the purpose of the short story is both to entertain and to instruct. Hence, its protagonists evidence both typicality and

individuality. They represent typical human beings in whose joys and sorrows the audience is invited to participate and whose character the audience is either to emulate or to avoid. At the same time, however, the short story views the vicissitudes of ordinary events as the arena where God's providence works subtly. Fourth, the audience delights in the author's creative wedding of message and literary artistry in the story.⁴¹

Though Keil calls it historical narrative, I consider the two genres to overlap sufficiently, if they are not identical, to be treated the same.⁴² This is a better option than a novella since it is clearly presented with the intention of being viewed historically as evidenced by both the time indicator (1:1) and the genealogy leading to David.

Characterization. Of note in the story of Ruth is that there are no villains. Naomi, though made bitter through her calamities, is presented as a woman of faith who saw God's hand in everything and then acted to continue her husband's lineage once she saw the opportunity was present in Boaz. Ruth is also presented as a woman of faith. First, she turned to God and left her previous gods. She was faithful in her devotion to Naomi and obedient in following her leadership. Further, as expressed in Boaz's praise of her, she chose to fulfill her duties to her deceased husband in marrying Boaz rather than find a younger man who would not carry on his line. Boaz is also presented as a righteous man. This is seen in his genealogy and concern for Ruth's honor as well as his willingness to redeem her.

But, what of Orpah and the unnamed kinsman? I do not feel either of them is presented in a negative light. Orpah had to be asked twice to return home, and so was obedient at least. The unnamed kinsman was willing to redeem Naomi, but also concerned to protect the inheritance of his own children. His children by his first wife stood to lose land if Ruth had more than one son since it was only her first son who would count as Elimelech's heir. The others would be his children by law. So, his passing the right of redemption to Boaz should not be seen in a totally negative light.

⁴⁰Hubbard, p. 47.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Keil and Delitzsch, p. 465.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God.

This is another of the books of the Old Testament, like Esther, in which God is not recorded as giving any kind of direct revelation, whether through a theophany, angelic messenger, or prophet. Yet, His presence is throughout the book and it speaks volumes concerning His character. That which is spoken is reviewed in the paragraphs which follow.

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is a focus of this story. It can be understood in the famine which struck the land of Israel, but is introduced fully in the bitter words of Naomi (1:13) when she declared that the Lord's hand had gone forth against her. Her statement of faith in His sovereign control of her life set the tone of the theme of God's sovereign care of widows which would develop later in the account. The aspect of His sovereignty exercised within this account

is His causality,⁴³ Naomi sees Him as the first cause of her troubles, though without questioning His right to act in that way. Still, her predicament is God's doing. His sovereign control of their circumstances in blessing them is then related in the story through the seemingly happenstance coming of Ruth into Boaz's portion of field, his concern for her welfare, his willingness to redeem her, his success, and God's giving Ruth a child to carry on Mahlon's name. That it was God's hand is seen in the words of the women at the end of the story (4:14a) who say, "Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today." That He also expresses His sovereign control of life through human agency is seen in Ruth's return with Naomi, which was necessary for carrying on the name of her son, and in providing Boaz who was willing to act as kinsman-redeemer.

Yahweh, the Covenant God. Except for the one reference to God as Shaddai by Naomi in Ruth 1:21, He is always referred to as Yahweh, Israel's covenant God.⁴⁴ This focuses upon another aspect of His character, namely, that He is the God who relates to His people through His covenant. It is within the delineations of the covenant that Naomi and Ruth find succor in the laws of gleaning and then of the kinsman-redeemer. God works through His covenant to protect them and preserve Elimelech's line.

Loving concern for widows. In Exodus 22:22 God commanded Israel, "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan." Deuteronomy 10:18 declares that God "executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing." Then in Deuteronomy 24:19ff He gave the laws concerning harvesting the crops once and leaving the gleanings to aliens, widows, and orphans. In the story of Ruth each of these concerns of God are seen within the story. Boaz is raised up as the one who protected Ruth from affliction in the fields. Through him God provided her and Naomi food initially, and then everything following their marriage. Through the laws concerning gleaning, and Boaz's righteous obedience to that law, their needs were met until the time when he could act upon Ruth's greater need of a redeemer. Always, through His declared

⁴³Hubbard, pp. 68-69.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 67.

will and the agency of men living in covenant obedience, God expressed His Concern for them. Thus, where Naomi originally felt stricken by God, she found herself blessed and the women of the village could testify that it was God who did not leave her without a redeemer, Obed, through Ruth and Boaz.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. There are several purposes of God evident within the story of Naomi and Ruth's redemption. Though none are stated directly, they are made evident in light of His previous revelations within the Mosaic Covenant.

Exercise His sovereignty. The first, and principle, purpose of God in the story of Ruth is the exercise of His sovereign prerogative to curse and bless. This is seen first in the famine which drove Naomi's family from Judah into Moab where her sons would take themselves wives. Then it is again seen in the demise of Naomi's husband and sons which she properly

attributed to God's choice and doing. But, more importantly is the exercise of His sovereignty through the agency of what might be considered chance. As the author put it, Ruth "happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz" with him on the scene to take note of her and bless her. What seemed a chancy move, her request of his redemption on the threshing floor, again served God's sovereign purpose in providing a redeemer through a man willing to assume the responsibility and its costs.

Preservation of a chosen line. The second is the preservation of an elect line through the raising up of an offspring for a childless widow through which her husband's name may be continued. This is seen in the outworking of the plot of the book and the gracious provision of a kinsman redeemer who was willing to fulfill his duties according to the Law. The full significance of God's work is seen in the genealogy which showed that the fruit of their obedience was the royal seed, David. God acted to preserve the line of blessing for the nation. We know further, that this was also the line of the Messiah which He preserved once more even as He had in Sarah and Tamar.

Bless through obedience. Even more crucial to the story, though, is God's purpose to bless in accordance with His covenant with the nation of Israel, and through the agency of men and women rightly related to Him through that covenant. This is made evident through Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. Naomi returned home and guided Ruth in living according to the covenant in both her gleaning and pursuit of a husband who could continue Elimelech's line through the law of redemption. Also, Ruth's willingness to place herself under God's protection and seek a kinsman redeemer rather than a younger husband became the means of God's blessing her and Naomi, as well as the nation. Finally Boaz's righteous willingness and actions to be the kinsman redeemer called for by God and needed by the women caused him to become God's agent of blessing and provision. God worked through people to continue His purposes and provide for His elect people.

Reward righteousness. Another aspect of the purpose of God developed in Ruth is that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Naomi's blessing of her two daughter-in-laws (1:8-9) and Boaz's blessing of Ruth (2:12) both "presupposes the OT doctrine of retribution whereby human acts produce corresponding consequences."⁴⁵ That Ruth is accordingly rewarded is seen in the provision of Boaz who redeemed her and thereby provided not only for her but also for her mother-in-law.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. As noted above, the principle focus of this historical narrative is upon the administration of God's purposes through human agency. This is seen in Naomi's initiative in returning home, and Ruth's determination to remain with her, which enabled God to preserve Elimelech's line. Then, Boaz's interest and protection of Ruth led to her and Naomi's provision of sustenance through the harvesting season. Again, Naomi's initiative in sending Ruth to seek redemption along with Ruth's obedience worked to allow God the opportunity to work through Boaz, who responded in faith and faithfulness to the Covenant. Finally, Boaz, through his negotiations with the unnamed kinsman and then by providing Naomi a son through Ruth, completed the process of preserving the family line through which God was to bless the nation. Nowhere is there any direct revelation or guidance provided. Each player acts according to the revelation previously given in the Law and God acts through them.

Even though the principle focus is upon human agency, yet God's own intervention is also made evident in the administration of His purposes. It was He who brought the famine which sent the family to Moab where Ruth was found. It was He who brought about the deaths of Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion. It was He who kept Orpah and Ruth's wombs closed until

their husbands died, it was also He who “visited His people in giving them food” after those ten years and opened the way for Naomi and Ruth’s return (1:6). Finally, it was He who opened Ruth’s womb and provided Naomi a grandson who could carry on her husband’s name and later provide a royal seed to the nation. Thus God, too, was directly involved in the working out of His purposes in the individual lives of His elect people. He used primary as well as secondary causality.

OUTLINE OF RUTH

- I. The sovereign will of God results in the death of Naomi’s husband and sons in Moab and His care results in her return to Judah with Ruth. 1
 - A. Through the agency of a famine Naomi’s family moved to Moab where his sons married and then all the men in her family died. 1:1-5
 - B. Through the agency of God’s blessing in Judah Naomi arose to return to Judah and her invitation to Orpah and Ruth to return to their families was heeded only by Orpah. 1:6-14
 - C. God’s care for Naomi resulted in Ruth’s refusal to separate herself from her. 1:15-18
 - D. Naomi and Ruth returned safely to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest, 1:19-22

- II. God’s care for Naomi and Ruth came through the protection and provision of gleaning privileges by Boaz, a near kinsman-redeemer. 2
 - A. Through God’s sovereign choice Ruth is noticed by Boaz when she “by chance” chose to glean in his fields. 2:1-7
 - B. God cared for Naomi and Ruth through Boaz’s generous offer of protection. 2:8-13
 - C. God cared for Naomi and Ruth through Boaz’s provision of food to Ruth and instruction to his servants to grant her gleaning privileges. 2:14-16
 - D. God continued to provide for Naomi and Ruth the rest of the harvest season through Boaz, a near kinsman-redeemer 2:17-23
- III. God works through Naomi and Ruth’s initiative to provide a redeemer. 3
 - A. God works through Naomi when she instructs Ruth what to do and say in order to seek Boaz’s aid as kinsman redeemer. 3:1-5
 - B. When asked to redeem Ruth, Boaz praises her and agrees to insure her redemption the following day. 3:6-13

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 70.

- C. Boaz sends her home in honor to await the outcome. 3:14-18
- IV. God works through Boaz to redeem Ruth and raise up a son to Mahion, thereby continuing the lineage of David. 4
 - A. God opened the way for Boaz to redeem Ruth when the primary kinsman redeemer passed that responsibility to him. 4:1-6
 - B. God provided Ruth a redeemer when Boaz took her as his wife in order to raise up an heir to Mahlon. 4:7-12
 - C. God blessed Naomi by giving Ruth a son to be her redeemer and thereby preserving the lineage of David. 4:13-17
 - D. The concluding genealogy traces the lineage of David from Perez, through Boaz and Obed, and on to David. 4:18-22

1&2 Samuel

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author and Date. The author of the books of Samuel is unknown. Though Samuel likely supplied or even recorded most of the material preceding his death, evidence is lacking for even those chapters. The book was likely composed sometime between the division of the kingdom in 931 B.C. and the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. This is indicated first because there is no reference, or even hint, to the fall of Samaria. Second, Ziklag, a Philistine city, is described in I Samuel 27:6 as belonging to “the kings of Judah to this day” (Vos, p. 8). This would also indicate a pre-exilic authorship rather than post-exilic. Third, a distinction is made between Israel and Judah eight times (1 Sam. 11:8; 17:52; 18:16; 2 Sam. 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:42-43; and 24:1, 9). During the Davidic and Solomonic rules such a distinction would not have been viewed favorably. Placing its composition at around 900 B.C., the author was likely a prophet in Judah who utilized accounts left by Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and possibly others (La Sor, et al., pp. 227-228; Vos, p. 8). This position is most comfortable to me as well.

The Critical approach, on the other hand, is to chase after various documentary sources. Harrison provides Pfeiffer’s list of doublets used by critical scholars to argue for literary sources. These are:

the announcement concerning the end of Eli and his house on two occasions (1 Sam. 2:31ff.; 3:11ff.); the secret anointing of Saul (9:26--10:1), followed later by two public ceremonies (10:21; 11:15); two occasions on which Samuel rejected Saul as king (13:14; 15:23); two introductions of David to Saul (16:21; 17:58); two escapes of David from the court of Saul (19:12; 20:42); two occasions on which David spared the life of Saul (24:3; 26:5); three different covenants between David and Jonathan (18:3; 20:16; 42; 23:18); two flights by David to Gath (21:10; 27:1), and the confused tradition regarding killing of Goliath (1 Sam 17:51 [sic]; 2 Sam. 21:19). (Harrison, pp. 696-697)

Noting that “it ought to be observed that facile critical assertions of discrepancies, incongruities, and the like have frequently been made on very inadequate grounds,” he goes on to discuss some of these supposed doublets and shows that they are legitimately separate incidents (Harrison, p. 700). He notes that there were not two rejections of Saul from king since I Samuel 13:14 is a declaration that his dynasty would not continue and then later, in 1 Samuel 15:23ff, he is finally rejected. The twofold introduction of David to Saul is not two separate accounts of the same incident but two separate incidents. In the first instance (1 Sam. I 6:14ff) Saul personally met David for the first time while in the second instance (1 Sam. 17:55ff) his inquiry is not with reference to his identity but his lineage and social standing, “presumably prerequisite to the admission of the hero to the royal company and court” (Harrison, p. 702). The two times David spared Saul’s life are not the same incident since they occurred in different locations and under different circumstances. In the first instance, Saul was in a cave relieving himself (1 Sam. 24:3ff.) while in the second (1 Sam. 26:5) Saul was within his camp lying in a slit-trench in the midst of his army (Harrison, p. 703). Harrison’s commentary on the liberal approach is insightful. He notes: “It must be remarked again that many of the alleged discrepancies in the Biblical narratives are the direct result of careless reading--or sometimes of deliberate misrepresentation--of Hebrew text” (Harrison, p. 703). The best argument for a discrepancy seen

by Harrison (p. 704) is the problem of Goliath's reported killing by David in 1 Samuel 17 (and 19:5; 21:19; and 22:10, 13) while Elhanan is credited with his death in 2 Samuel 21:19. In 1 Chronicles 20:5 Elhanan was said to have killed Lahmi, Goliath's brother. Thus, the problem seems to be more one of textual transmission rather than original error, with a copyist somewhere along the line making the mistake in 2 Samuel 21.

La Sor, et al, have noted that though "attempts have been made to trace the influence of the Yahwist and Elohist in 1-2 Samuel" the problems inherent within the documentary hypothesis are even greater when it is applied to Samuel. The result they see is that more "recent studies of Samuel have tended to stress the background and origin of various sections of the book rather than look for parallel strands dovetailed by an editor" (La Sor, et al, p. 228). Ultimately these scholars fail to offer anything which would seem a better option than to accept a prophetic author soon after Solomon's reign who wrote and/or compiled the accounts.

Audience. Assuming an authorship during the divided monarchy and before Samaria's fall, the audience would have then been the people of the divided kingdoms, principally the southern.

Historical Setting. The book of Samuel covers a period of about 150 years from the birth of Samuel about 1120 B.C. to the enthronement of Solomon in 971 B.C. At the beginning of this period the nation was in a state of moral chaos such that even the sons of the high priest were permitted to sin openly and the people were subjected to military defeat by God as punishment. It was a time when the Philistines were expanding and dominating the region from the west and the Ammonites were encroaching from the east (1 Sam. 11). Then, in 1 Samuel 8, when Samuel sought to make his sons judges, their own corruption was such that the people rejected them and requested a king, which began the chain of events leading to the Davidic dynasty established by God. Thus, this period of history in Israel saw the transition from judges to kings and from a loose tribal confederacy to a strong central government.

Canonicity. The place of the book of Samuel has been established within the canon with it being included among the Former Prophets by the Jewish community and the historical books within Christianity.

Intent. Harrison assigns a principally historical purpose to the book of Samuel, namely, that of describing "the way in which the monarchy was established and the part played by the prophet Samuel in its institution" (Harrison, p. 695). Vos would agree in principle, seeing it describing "the founding of the Hebrew monarchy" and secondarily describing "the rise of the prophetic office in Israel" (Vos, p. 9). Recognizing that God is the primary author of Scripture and had it recorded in order to teach, reprove, and instruct, a merely historical accounting of events falls short of the Author/author's intended purpose. Its purpose should be seen in light of the previous books and history of Israel in which God revealed Himself. Coming out of the period of the judges when God was to be their recognized ruler and demonstrated His sovereign control of Israel's welfare, this should also be seen in action within this book. Thus, a better choice is to see that the purpose of Samuel was to show how the sovereign rule of God was delegated to Israel "though its divinely elected Davidic kings" (Merrill, BKCOT, p. 432).

Age of Saul. No specific age of Saul is given and the text of 1 Samuel 13:1 which states that "Saul began to reign at the age of one year" is quite problematic. Based upon the ages of his children (Ishbosheth was murdered at about 42 and Jonathan, his eldest son, dies at about 40), and assuming he came to office at a relatively young age (between 20 and 30) his reign would have lasted around 35 to 40 years, which agrees with Acts 13:21 (Harrison, pp. 712-713).

Matriarchate. Harrison (pp. 716-717) reports that some scholars have attempted to see a matriarchal system in force in Israel which would have influenced claims to the throne. Thus, David's concern when Merab married Adriel instead of himself would have been based upon the thought that the husband of Merab would be in line for the throne. David's marriage to Maachah, the daughter of the king of Geshur, was then designed to absorb that kingdom into his own. This view is then imposed upon the motives of Phaltiel when he wept at the loss of Michal back to David in 2 Samuel 3:16. These speculations are no more than that, speculations. The granting of the kingdom to Solomon and riot the husbands of one of David's daughter should be sufficient to argue against such a view. Such a view would also make Jonathan's relationship to David, in which he recognized that the kingdom was taken from him and given to David and responded in loyalty and faith meaningless.

Literary Component

Genre. Other than the Psalm of David in 2 Samuel 22, the book of Samuel is historical narrative.

La Sor, et al. note that "in contrast with Judges and especially Kings, the editorial framework is scarcely discernible, with a maximum of straightforward narration and a minimum of interpreting, advising, or exhorting" (La Sor, et al., pp. 228-229).

Arrangement. The accounting of events in Samuel is chronological, moving from an emphasis upon the lives of Samuel, then Saul, and finally David.

Characterization. The three principle characters, other than God, within this book are Samuel, Saul, and David, though Jonathan and Joab also play important roles. None of the men are presented in an idealized manner. Their strengths and weaknesses are made evident throughout the text. Their characters are developed both through actions and conversations which reveal their thoughts and heart's intents. The three main characters are developed most fully while only aspects from the other two are brought out as contrasts with either Saul or David in order to highlight strength's or weaknesses for the reader. Thus, they act as foils in the development of the men's lives, Samuel is the steady, faithful, servant of God who was respected throughout his life but could not reproduce himself in his sons. He stood for God and followed His commands faithfully, bringing Israel back to a certain level of obedience while not acting as a deliverer within his judgeship. Saul's character, on the other hand, reflects the people's shallow faith more fully. He is depicted as the ideal man to suit the people and his flaws become quickly evident as the story develops. He is contrasted with Jonathan, the loyal friend of David and man of faith who served his father and God faithfully and did not fall into the sin of rebellion which had been the spiritual demise of his father. David, like Saul, was a man with a flawed character who also fell to sin. Yet, as his character developed through the chapters he is revealed as a man of faith and one willing to confess his sin and repent rather than pass the blame upon his people. Still, Joab's forcefulness and violence serves to heighten the reader's awareness of David's weakness and indecision following his adultery and murder of Uriah. Still, where Joab is an opportunist and power oriented, David always remains true to his God and people, being a man after God's own heart.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is again demonstrated within this book through His elevating those He chooses and bringing down those He rejects when and how He chooses. His

sovereignty is demonstrated early on with the defeat of Israel before the Philistines and their loss of the ark. That it is not a defeat for Him is demonstrated when Dagon fell down before Him all three times and the Philistines were afflicted and forced to return His ark to Israel. He did not need men to fight His battles. Though the people rebelled in asking for a king, it was still He who appointed Saul. Further, His sovereign control was again demonstrated when He removed Saul and replaced him with another, David, of His own choosing, selecting the youngest of sons in an insignificant family in an insignificant village. Finally, it was He who brought the victories over the Ammonites and Philistines.

Grace. God's grace is demonstrated in His response to David's repentance concerning Bathsheba and Uriah. He allowed David to live. It is again demonstrated in the options He offered David when He came to punish the nation for the census.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. In Samuel God established His rule within Israel through the agency of Samuel, His judge/prophet, and Saul and David, kings chosen by Himself. A second purpose was that of blessing the nation within the promised land.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God's administration began as a theocracy with Samuel serving as God's appointed judge and prophet. Then, when the people rejected Him he chose to administer His program through a divinely appointed monarchy beginning with Saul and then being given over to David and his seed. God blessed the nation by delivering them from the Philistines and other enemies, first through Saul and then later through both Saul and David via military victories.

OUTLINE OF THE SAMUELS

- I. God's mediated rule was extended through Samuel until the people rejected Him by asking for a king, at which time He chose Saul. 1 Samuel 1-9
 - A. In response to Hanna's plea, God gave her Samuel whom she gave back to Him as a Nazarite. 1 Sam. 1
 - B. Hannah rejoiced before the LORD when she dedicated Samuel with a song of praise. 1 Sam. 2:1-10
 - C. God rejected Eli and his line for the unrebuked sins of his sons while Samuel ministered before Him. 1 Sam. 2:11-36
 - D. The LORD called Samuel and confirmed him as a prophet when He notified Eli through him that He was about to punish his house for its sins. 1 Sam. 3
 - E. God defeated the Philistines after they defeated Israel and captured the ark, forcing them to return it and then restoring Israel through Samuel who delivered them. 1 Sam. 4-7
 1. The ark was captured and Eli's sons killed by the Philistines in battle which precipitated Eli's death and fulfilled God's curse. 1 Sam. 4
 2. When the Philistines brought the ark into their temple the idol of Dagon bowed and in their cities plague and confusion reigned as God defeated both them and their gods. 1 Sam. 5
 3. Realizing God's judgment upon them, the lords of the Philistines returned the

- ark on a cart to Beth-shemesh. 1 Sam. 6
- 4. Following the ark's restoration and the nation's repentance, God gave them victories over the Philistines until they again controlled their original territories. 1 Sam. 7
- F. When the people rejected God's rule He selected Saul as their king. 1 Sam. 8-9
 - 1. The people rejected Samuel's sons and asked for a king, rejecting God's rule. 8
 - 2. God selected Saul as king and revealed him to Samuel when he searched for donkeys. 9
- II. God's mediated rule was extended through Saul who was rejected for disobedience, saw God's blessing pass from himself to David, and finally fell in battle to the Philistines. 1 Samuel 10-31
 - A. God elevated Saul to the throne, winning the nation's support through victory over the Ammonites, and then rejected his dynasty when he acted presumptuously in offering his own sacrifice, though He gave him victories during his reign. 1 Sam. 10-14
 - 1. God revealed Saul as Israel's first king through the lot at Mizpah after Samuel had already anointed him privately. 1 Sam. 10
 - 2. With his first victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead, Saul became respected by the people and so the kingdom was renewed at Gilgal. 1 Sam. 11
 - 3. At Gilgal Samuel addressed the people concerning their sin in rejecting God as king and challenged them to remain true and obedient to God lest they and their king be swept away. 1 Sam. 12
 - 4. God rejected Saul's dynasty when he offered sacrifice instead of waiting on Samuel in the face of Philistine might. 1 Sam. 13
 - a. Saul established garrisons at Michmash and Gibeab and Jonathan captured a Philistine garrison at Geba. 13:1-4
 - b. When the Philistines came to Michmash the people began to flee, hide in caves, and desert while Saul was in Gilgal. 13:5-7
 - c. When Samuel delayed and Saul offered a burnt offering to the Lord himself, the LORD pronounced that his kingdom would not endure but that He had selected a new king. 13:8-14
 - d. As the Philistines raided the country, only Saul and Jonathan had swords. 1 Sam 13:15-22
 - 5. Following Jonathan's initial victory through courage and faith, his life had to be spared by the people when he innocently trespassed Saul's injunction to eat nothing until the battle was over. 14
 - B. God rejected Saul as king when he failed to utterly destroy the Amalekites. 1 Sam. 15
 - C. God chose David as the next king, placing him in Saul's court and blessing him in

combat while protecting him from Saul. 1 Sam. 16-26

1. God chose David as the next king and placed him with Saul, using him to defeat Goliath when he taunted God's people. 1 Sam. 16-17
 - a. After God chose David as the next king, Saul selected him as his armor bearer and harpist to sooth his tormented soul. 1 Sam. 16
 - b. When Goliath taunted Israel's army. David challenged and killed him. 1 Sam. 17
2. God protected David, who in turn preserved Saul's life as Saul pursued him throughout Judah's wildernesses. 1 Sam. 18-26
 - a. As God elevated David in the people's eyes by blessing him in combat, Saul feared him and sought to either kill him or have him killed in battle, Michal. 1 Sam. 18
 - b. When Saul sought to kill David, God preserved him through Jonathan's intercession, Michal, and Samuel. 1 Sam. 19
 - c. David and Jonathan made a covenant of peace between their families and Jonathan confirmed Saul's intent to kill David at the New Moon feast. 1 Sam. 20
 - d. David was helped by Ahimelech at Nob and fled to Gath. 1 Sam. 21
 - e. After David fled from Gath to Moab and then Judah, Saul slaughtered the priests and utterly destroyed Nob (ban), with only Abiathar escaping to David. 1 Sam. 22
 - f. David defended Keilah while fleeing Saul through the Judean wilderness and strongholds. 1 Sam. 23
 - g. David spared Saul's life in a cave of Engedi and promised not to destroy his household. 1 Sam. 24
 - h. God kept David from avenging himself on Nabal through the wisdom of Abigail. 1 Sam. 25
 - i. When Saul pursued David in the wilderness of Ziph and David again spared his life, he ceased pursuing him. 1 Sam. 26
- D. God brought about Saul's death on Gilboa while David strengthened his position with Judah from Zikiag under the protection of a Philistine king. 1 Sam 27-31
 1. David fled to the Philistines and raided enemies of Judah from Ziklag, killing the people and taking their spoil. 1 Sam. 27
 2. When Saul consulted the medium at En-dor. Samuel told him he and his sons would die. 1 Sam. 28
 3. God kept David from fighting Saul by his being sent back by the Philistines, thereby enabling him to rescue the captives of Ziklag from the Amalekites. 1 Sam. 29-30
 - a. When the other Philistine lords objected, Achish sent David back to Ziklag

1 Sam. 29

- b. Discovering Ziklag sacked, David pursued and defeated the Amalekites, sharing the booty with all his men and the cities of Judah. 1 Sam. 30

- 4. By God's decree, Saul and his sons died in battle on Mt. Gilboa. 1 Sam. 31

III. God's mediated rule was extended through David, who acted wisely in uniting the nation, giving him victory over his enemies, establishing His covenant with him, and disciplining him for sin. 2 Sam. 1-31

- A. God strengthened David as king of Judah while preparing the hearts of the northern tribes through his honoring Saul, Abner, and Ish-bosheth. 2 Sam. 1- 4

- 1. David lamented for Saul and Jonathan, killing the Amalekite who brought the news and claimed to kill Saul. 2 Sam. 1
- 2. When Judah crowned David, Abner crowned Ish-bosheth in Mahanaim and then lost in battle to Joab. 2 Sam. 2
- 3. After Abner had agreed to win Israel over to David, Joab murdered him without David's knowledge and so was cursed. 2 Sam. 3
- 4. David avenged Ish-bosheth by executing his murderers. 2 Sam. 4

- B. God established David's kingdom with the people and through victories against all their enemies, establishing His eternal covenant, with him. 2 Sam. 5-10

- 1. God established David's rule through his acceptance by all of Israel, his capture of Jerusalem, and two defeats of the Philistines in the valley of Rephaim. 2 Sam. 5
- 2. David brought the ark to Jerusalem from Kiriath-jearim, first by cart and then properly with sacrifices and rejoicing. 2 Sam. 6
- 3. God established His covenant with David when he sought to build a temple. 2 Sam. 7
- 4. God blessed David militarily and so he subdued the Philistines, Moab, Zobah, the Arameans of Damascus, and Edom. 2 Sam. 8
- 5. David blessed crippled Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, by giving him all of Saul's property and inviting him to his table regularly. 2 Sam. 9
- 6. When David's ambassadors to Ammon were abused, Joab and then he defeated the Ammonites and their allies. 2 Sam. 10

- C. God disciplined David for his sins through conflicts within his home which led to civil war and conflicts throughout his country, though protecting him from harm and restoring him to his throne. 2 Sam. 11-20

- 1. David committed adultery and murder while his army fought against Ammon. 2 Sam. 11
- 2. God rebuked David through Nathan, forgiving him and killing the child and promising a sword, though He still gave him complete victory over Ammon. 2

- Sam. 12
3. Absalom murdered Amnon for raping Tamar and then fled to Geshur while David grieved. 2 Sam. 13
 4. Through Joab Absalom returned to Jerusalem and was eventually restored by David. 2 Sam. 14
 5. God preserved David's kingdom against Absalom's revolt through victory in battle. 2 Sam. 15-18
 - a. David fled Jerusalem when Absalom initiated his rebellion, leaving Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai as spies. 2 Sam. 15
 - b. As David fled Ziba betrayed Mephibosheth, Shimei cursed David, and Absalom entered Jerusalem and raped David's concubines. 2 Sam. 16
 - c. God thwarted Ahithophel's counsel with Hushai's so that David escaped and rested while Absalom's army entered Gilead. 2 Sam. 17
 - d. God defeated Absalom's army, Joab killing him. 2 Sam. 18
 6. God restored David to Jerusalem with the support of Judah while Joab removed the rebel, Sheba, after murdering Amasa. 2 Sam. 19-20
 - a. David prepared to return to Jerusalem, forgiving his adversaries and being aided by Judah as he crossed the Jordan. 2 Sam. 19
 - b. When Sheba rebelled, Joab reestablished David's authority after murdering Amasa. 2 Sam. 20
- D. David's final years included atoning for sins and being disciplined by God, and were also marked by a remembrance of God's protection of him and provision of mighty men to aid him. 2 Sam. 21-24
1. When God cursed the nation for Saul's slaughter of some Gibeonites, David atoned for his sin by giving over 7 of Saul's grandsons for execution and then burying them along with Saul and Jonathan in Kish's tomb. 2 Sam. 21
 2. David's song of deliverance was given. 2 Sam. 22
 3. David's mighty men and their deeds were recounted. 2 Sam. 23
 4. God punished Israel when David took a census. 2 Sam. 24

1&2 Kings

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Date. The book was most likely written sometime between 560 B.C. and 538 B.C. The last event recorded in 2 Kings is the release of Jehoiachin from prison which occurred in the 37th year of his imprisonment in 560 B.C. Since the first return of Jews from Babylonian captivity, which occurred in 538 B.C., is not mentioned it likely had not yet occurred.

Author. The most likely author was Jeremiah, though Ezra and Ezekiel have been posited as well. The presence of a single author who used multiple sources best explains the consistent style throughout the work. The style is marked by such things as the author's choice of material to report (records of kings' deeds and ministries of prophets related to those kings), the evaluation of kings with regard to their keeping the Mosaic Law; the consistent method of describing the beginnings and endings of the reigns of kings, and various key phrases which recur throughout the work ("now the rest of the acts of . . . are they not written . . . ; . . . evil in the sight of the LORD; he reigned . . . years and his mother's name was . . . ; As surely as the LORD lives" (Constable, BKCOT. p. 483)).

Three written sources are named within Kings and so indicate that they were used by the author. They include the Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Ki. 11:41), the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (reported throughout 1 Ki. 14:19--Ki. 15:31), and the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (reported throughout 1 Ki. 14:19--2 Ki. 24:5). Other sources (records of prophets?) could have contained such things as the stories of Elijah and Elisha.

In *Baba Bartha* 15a, Jeremiah is identified as the author. Patterson and Austel (p. 6) develop what they term "a reasonable case" for Jeremiah. They write,

Since he was descended from the priestly line of Abiathar, and since in all probability his father, Hilkiyah, was active in communicating both the traditional facts and the teaching of Israel's past, it is very likely that Jeremiah had access to historical and theological source materials. Furthermore he would have had more ready entrée to the royal annals than any other prophet. Certainly no other prophet was so intimately involved in the final stages of Judah's history. If so, Jeremiah may have been active in composing the greater part of the history of the Book of Kings (1 Kings 14--2 Kings 23:30) during the so-called silent years of his prophetic ministry after his call in 627 B.C., during the long reign of the godly Josiah. Certainly the contents of all but the last appendix (2 Kings 25:27-30) could have been written by Jeremiah (Patterson and Austel, p. 6).

That 2 Kings 24:18--25:30 is almost identical to Jeremiah 52 would seem to support this view. Even so, there are verbal differences between the two accounts. This is also weakened by the account of Jehoiachin's deportation and imprisonment which occurred while Jeremiah was in Egypt (Harrison, p. 720).

Though the above argument is attractive, I feel that Ezekiel would be the more likely candidate since he ministered at a time when he could have written the complete account with its two exilic appendices, with Ezra writing Chronicles. Even so, I admit that these are only speculations and that the actual author will remain a mystery for now.

Audience. Based upon the date of composition, the community of exiles in Babylon is

the acknowledged audience of the writer.

Historical background. The historical events described within this book begin in 971 B.C. and end in 562 B.C. When the account begins, during Solomon's reign, Israel was the dominant power in her region with both Egypt and Assyria experiencing periods of weakness. Then came the growth of Aramean power as well as Assyrian pressure in the ninth century. Assyria then grew stronger and so Samaria eventually fell to her force in 722 B.C. when Sargon II sacked her capital and carried the rest of Israel captive. Assyrian domination soon stretched down into Egypt and many Judean cities fell to Sennacherib, though Jerusalem under Hezekiah survived (701 B.C.). As Assyria fell from power, Babylon grew and soon began to dominate the scene until, in the end, Judah's rebellions against her dominion led to three conquests (first two resulted in deportations only in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C.), with the third fall of Jerusalem ending in total destruction and deportation by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

Historicity. Though this is history written with a purpose of instruction, it is still historically reliable in all it affirms. The frequent references to other records serve to heighten one's awareness of the author's desire to describe accurately the events of each king and prophet's life.

Canonicity. Kings was included in the canon of Jewish Scripture as a part of the Former Prophets. Its canonicity has never been questioned.

Chronological Problems. The chronology of the kings, especially of Judah stands as a major problem in the study of these books. Though only about 325 years passed during the period covered by Kings, the reigns of the kings listed in Judah, from Solomon to Zedekiah adds up to 388 years. Three explanations have been given for this problem. First, the problem is created in part by the difference between Judah and Israel's methods of determining the period of a king's reign. Worse yet, each nation changed its method at least once (Constable, BKCOT. p. 484). Initially Israel used a nonaccession year method of computing reigns which was changed to the accession-year system of Mesopotamia near the end of the ninth century B.C. Judah, on the other hand, began with the accession-year method, switching to the nonaccession year system for about 50 years beginning in the middle of the ninth century B.C., and then returned to the accession-year method until her fall to Babylon (Harrison, p. 733). Further, Israel began its calendar year each spring in the month Abib/Nisan while Judah began in the seventh month of the religious calendar. A second explanation for the difficulty is that the two countries used different calendars. Third, there is the likelihood of co-regencies. This is seen especially in the mesh of reigns in 2 Kings where the 12th year of Ahaz was the accession year of Hoshea of Israel (2 Ki. 17:1), while Hoshea's 3rd year marked the accession of Hezekiah of Judah (2 Ki. 18:1), and finally where the 4th and 6th years of Hezekiah's reign are identified with the 7th and 9th of Hoshea (2 Ki. 18:9ff). Even as Solomon shared rule with David shortly before his death, so this system of co-regency must have continued in Judah. This works out to Ahaz sharing co-regency with Jotham for 12 years and with Hezekiah for 13 years (Harrison, pp. 734-735).

Intent. The author's intention in writing Kings was more than to simply record and preserve a history of the kings. That he was using sources which were royal chronicles reveals that their deeds had been preserved. No, his work was to be more than that. He wrote with a "divine view of Israelite history" (Harrison p. 722). He was seeking to evaluate the monarchies by the measure of their compliance with the Mosaic Law. Thus he was most likely writing to explain to the Jews the reasons for their exile, namely the sin and idolatry of the nation as seen in her kings. Patterson and Austel (p. 7) understand that he wrote "to demonstrate conclusively to his readers both the necessity of the believer's keeping his covenantal obligations before God

and the history of those most responsible for leading God's people in their stewardship of the divine economy: Israel's kings and prophets." Where Chronicles focuses upon the kings of Judah and the involvement of the priests, Kings emphasizes both nations' kings and prophets.

Deuteronomist History. Though some similarities in terminology exist between Deuteronomy and Kings, this is not a firm basis for assigning both to some Deuteronomistic historian. As Harrison notes,

Although both are based strictly upon the precepts of the Covenant relationship at Sinai, Deuteronomy deals with the lessons to be gleaned from history, whereas 1 and 2 Kings are concerned directly with the Covenant ideal, and the extent to 'which men and nations strayed from it. Whereas in Deuteronomy the blessings of God accrued to those who kept the provisions of the Covenant agreement, in the books of Kings both men and nations alike were evaluated morally and spiritually according to whether or not they had deviated from the Covenant (Harrison, p. 722).

Thus a Deuteronomic history is out of the question, especially since this writer understands the author of Deuteronomy to be Moses while the author of Kings is exilic. Rather, it must be the intimate familiarity of the author of Kings with the Law which is reflected in the similar terminology. Thus the similarities in terminology would be a natural result.

Literary Component

Genre. The book is composed of historical narrative which contains the author's evaluation of individuals' lives at regular intervals.

Arrangement. The material of the book is arranged in a mostly chronological manner. It basically follows the chronology of the kings' reigns, shifting between Judah and Israel. Even so, it is also thematically arranged such that certain aspects of a given king's reign may be lumped together rather than presented in a historical sequence. For example, Solomon's organization of his kingdom (1 Ki. 4), which would have occurred later in his reign, follows the third chapter's discussion of his wisdom. The author presents his data on each kingdom in the following order:

(1) an introductory statement concerning the accession of the king is given, this normally being synchronized with the reign of the corresponding king in the other kingdom; (2) then follows the biographical details--for the kings of the southern kingdom this includes a statement of the age of the king at his accession, the length of his reign, the name of the queen mother, and a spiritual evaluation of his reign; for the northern kingdom this involves a statement as to the capital city of the king, the length of his reign, and an indication as to his character--(3) then a selective record of the king's reign is presented, followed by a concluding formula that includes a source where further facts regarding the king's reign may be found, a statement of his death and burial, and an indication of his successor. Outstanding of the full-blown formula are Jehoahaz of Israel (2 Kings 13:1-9) and Azariah of Judah (2 Kings 15:1-7). (Patterson and Austel, pp. 7-8)

Characterization. The characterization of the various kings and prophets is straight forward and non-idealistic. Their strengths and weaknesses are exposed by the author, being developed in part through conversations and in part through reports on their conduct and

evaluation of their reigns in accordance with God's measure.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

God revealed Himself and His word through the prophets and through the good and evil consequences of kings' decisions as they related to the Mosaic Law.

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is demonstrated throughout these two books in His protection and discipline upon united Israel first and then the divided kingdoms as well. He accomplishes whatever He wills in the kingdoms. Through one prophet He announces the coming division of the kingdom to Jeroboam (1 Ki. 11:29-32). Then, by another prophet God promises to punish his dynasty for its idolatry through a coming king of Judah, who He identified then as Josiah (1 Ki. 13:1-4). Other encounters of prophets with various kings demonstrate that God was ultimately in control of the destinies of both nations and their dynasties. Finally, the fall of both kingdoms comes at God's command and in His own timing, as demonstrated in His ability to turn Sennacherib from Jerusalem and keep him away forever.

Faithfulness. God is faithful to His promises, both to bless or curse. His faithfulness to keep His promise to David is stated in I Kings 11:31-36, where He only gives 10 tribes to Jeroboam and leaves 2 to Rehoboam. When Elijah cried out to God, He revealed that He had kept 7000 men in Israel who still worshipped Him (1 Ki. 19:18). Further, God raised up at least 5 kings in Judah who led religious reforms, thereby staving off exile a few more years.

Patience. The long suffering character of God is revealed in His patient endurance of the sins of the nations. Even so, that patience eventually was replaced by judgment and eventual exile for the disobedient peoples.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purposes of God. The purposes of God expressed in this book were twofold. First, He sought to fulfill the promises of blessing and cursing within covenant through both natural and supernatural means, and second, He extended His rule through men.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God administered His purposes through kings and their usurpers, through prophets, and through foreign nations. The kings and their usurpers brought either stability and blessing, or weakness and trouble upon the two kingdoms. They both brought blessing and cursing from God by their lives, and blessed or cursed the people through the administration of their governments and allowance of false religions to proliferate. The prophets served as both spokesmen for God and agents of judgment, bringing droughts and anointing kings to depose others, while advising those who sought in sincerity. God judged the two nations with each other and with other nations, eventually sending both into exile through the agencies of Assyria and Babylon. The outworking of God's administration was the judgment of the nations for their disobedience as He operated within the framework of the covenant He had made with them.

OUTLINE OF KINGS

- I. God blessing Solomon's kingdom came because of his obedience, but His discipline of adversaries and then giving of the ten tribes to Jeroboam came when his heart was turned to idolatry. 1 Ki. 1-11

- A. God established Solomon's kingdom when he asked for an understanding heart, removing his enemies and giving him wisdom. 1 Ki. 1-4
 1. Solomon was established as king by David, being anointed by Zadok and Nathan, when Adonijah attempted to claim the throne. 1 Ki. 1
 2. Solomon established his kingdom by executing Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei, and by dismissing Abiathar and replacing him with Zadok in fulfillment of God's word concerning the house of Eli. 1 Ki. 2
 3. God gave Solomon life, wealth, and wisdom when He appeared to him at Gibeon and Solomon asked for an understanding heart, which was then demonstrated with the two harlots, 1 Ki. 3
 4. Solomon's kingdom was established and wealth grew even as the fame of his wisdom spread. 1 Ki. 4

- B. Solomon built the temple and dedicated it to the LORD with a 14 day feast. 1 Ki. 5-8
 1. Solomon began construction of the temple by contracting with Hiram of Tyre for timber and levying forced laborers from all of Israel. 1 Ki. 5
 2. Solomon built the temple, beginning 480 years after the Exodus, in the 4th year of his reign and completing the foundation in the 4th year and the whole house the 8th month of his 11th year, 7 years construction. 1 Ki. 6
 3. Solomon built his own house, a house for his Egyptian wife, and finished the work on the temple with Hiram's work in bronze. 1 Ki. 7
 4. Placing the Ark in the Holy of Holies, Solomon dedicated the temple, praying for God's blessing and offering sacrifices for the nation in a 14 day feast. 1 Ki. 8

- C. God established his covenant with Solomon and blessed him with wealth and wisdom as long as he was faithful. 1 Ki. 9-10
 1. God established His covenant with Solomon, who continued to build and prosper, putting all of the surviving Canaanites to forced labor and building a fleet of ships with Hiram of Tyre's aid. 1 Ki. 9
 2. Solomon's wealth grew through trade, and his fame spread to the world so that the Queen of Sheba came to see for herself. 1 Ki. 10

- D. When, in his old age Solomon began to worship the gods of his wives, God raised up adversaries, namely, Hadad the Edomite, Rezon in Damascus, and Jeroboam to whom God gave ten tribes and promised an enduring kingdom if he would obey Him. 1 Ki. 11

- II. God's blessing and cursing of the two kingdoms, with Israel going into exile, came only because he had pity on them and had promised to preserve David's dynasty, and resulted from Israel's continued rebellion and idolatry. 1 Ki. 12--2 Ki. 17
 - A. God divided the kingdom through Rehoboam's poor reply to the people, giving Israel to Jeroboam who led them into idolatry and Judah and Benjamin to Rehoboam who

- obeyed the man of God and did not go to war to retain the rest of his kingdom. 1 Ki. 12
- B. God cursed Jeroboam's altar at Bethel, promising that Josiah would desecrate it and then killing the prophet who had delivered the curse, but Jeroboam continued leading Israel into idolatry. 1 Ki. 13
- C. God cursed Jeroboam's family, killing his son, and punished Judah for idolatry by Jerusalem being sacked by Shishak of Egypt. 1 Ki. 14
1. God cursed Jeroboam's family through Ahijah the prophet, taking the life of Abijah his son and promising his family would be blotted out and Israel dispossessed from the land. 1 Ki. 14:1-18
 2. Jeroboam died and was replaced by Nadab. 1 Ki. 19-20
 3. When Rehoboam led Judah into idolatry Jerusalem was sacked by Shishak of Egypt.
- D. God exterminated Jeroboam's family through Baasha while Judah had a bad king in Abijah and a better one in Asa, though he made a treaty with Benhadad of Damascus 1 Ki. 15
1. Abijah replaced Rehoboam as king and did evil like him. 1 Ki. 15:1-8
 2. Asa replaced Abijah who did right before the LORD although he did not remove the high places and made a treaty with Ben-hadad of Damascus to weaken Baasha of Israel. 1 Ki. 15:9-24
 3. Baasha became king of Israel by killing Nadab, Jeroboam's son who reigned two years, along with the rest of the house of Jeroboam. 1 Ki. 15:25-34
- E. God cursed the dynasty of Baasha for his idolatry and replaced him with the dynasty of Omri, whose son introduced Baal worship to Israel after marrying Jezebel. 1 Ki. 16
1. God cursed Baasha's family to extinction through Jehu the prophet because he continued Jeroboam's idolatry. 1 Ki. 16:1-7
 2. God accomplished the destruction of Baasha's family when Zimri murdered Elah after two years and killed all of his household. 1 Ki. 16:8-14
 3. Omri took the kingdom from Zimri, making himself king and provoking God with his idolatry. 1 Ki. 16:15-28
 4. Ahab, Omri's son, proved worse when he introduced Baal worship into Israel after marrying Jezebel; Jericho rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite. 1 Ki. 16:29-34
- F. God used Elijah to punish Israel with famine, defeat the prophets of Baal, and to select a successor, commissioning him to anoint Hazael as king over Aram and Jehu over Israel. 1 Ki. 17-19
1. God cut off rain from Israel through Elijah's word and sent him first to the brook Cherith and then Zaraphath in Sidon to stay with a widow whose son he resurrected when he died. 1 Ki. 17
 2. After three years God sent Elijah to Ahab and through him defeated 450

- prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah before sending rain and enabling him to outrun Ahab to Jezreel. 1 Ki. 18
3. When Jezebel threatened Elijah and he fled past Beersheba, God sustained him, revealing Himself in the gentle breeze on Mt. Horeb and commanding him to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as prophet in his place, promising to leave only 7000 men in Israel. He then went and got Elisha. 1 Ki. 19
- G. God condemned Ahab for failing to kill Ben-hadad and for taking Naboth's vineyard, while sparing his life for a time because he humbled himself before Him, though He killed him when he fought again with Aram in spite of His warning through Micaiah. 1 Ki. 20-22
1. God condemned Ahab because he failed to kill Ben-hadad of Aram after he attacked Israel twice and was defeated by God's aid each time. 1 Ki. 20
 2. After Ahab lusted for Naboth's vineyard and Jezebel had him murdered, God, through Elijah, cursed Ahab and Jezebel to be eaten by dogs and their dynasty be ended like Jeroboam's and Baasha's, but then changed it to Ahab's son when he humbled himself before God. 1 Ki. 21
 3. God killed Ahab in battle after refusing to listen to Micaiah, allowing Jehoshaphat of Judah to survive the battle while Ahaziah led Israel in all the sins of his father. 1 Ki. 22
- H. God condemned Ahaziah to die from an injury through Elijah (who killed two commanders and their fifty with fire from heaven) when he tried to inquire about his fate from Baai-zebub 2 Ki. 1
- I. God took up Elijah and gave Elisha the first-born's share of his spirit which was demonstrated when he returned across the Jordan, purified water, and cursed some youths. 2 Ki. 2
- J. God gave victory over Moab to Jehoram of Israel, Jehoshaphat of Judah, and the king of Edom, providing them water when they sought Elisha. 2 Ki. 3
- K. God provided oil for a widow's debts and needs through Elisha, a child (also resurrected) to a Shunammite woman, unpoisoned food for some prophets in Gilgal, and multiplied food from a sack. 2 Ki. 4
- L. God healed Naaman's leprosy through Elisha and then placed it upon Gehazi when he took presents in Elisha's name. 2 Ki. 5
- M. Elisha recovered a prophet's axe head and blinded an Aramean army, delivering them to the king of Israel, though later Ben-hadad besieged Samaria to the point of extreme famine. 2 Ki. 6
- N. After Elisha promised plenty to the king, God routed the Arameans, 4 lepers discovered their empty camp, and the royal official who doubted Elisha's word was trampled in the gate. 2 Ki. 7
- O. Through Elisha, God provided for the Shunammite, elevated Hazael, and led Edom to revolt when Judah's kings followed the sins of Israel's kings. 2 Ki. 8
1. Elisha warned the Shunammite to avoid a 7 year famine, which she did and then

- had her property restored by Ben-hadad. 2 Ki. 8:1-6
 2. Elisha revealed to Hazael, when Ben-hadad was ill and inquired of him, that he would be king and would defeat Israel. 2 Ki. 8:7-15
 3. God led Edom to revolt against Judah when Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, practiced the sins of Israel's kings. 2 Ki. 8:16-24
 4. Ahaziah of Judah followed Jehoram's practices and fought with Joram of Israel against Hazael. 2 Ki. 8:25-29
- P. Elisha sent a prophet to anoint Jehu, who then killed Joram in Naboth's vineyard and Jezebel who was eaten by dogs. 2 Ki. 9
- Q. God fulfilled His curse on Ahab's dynasty through Jehu, to whom He gave only four generations of rule since he continued in Jeroboam's sins. 2 Ki. 10
1. Jehu killed everyone associated with Ahab including 42 relatives of Ahaziah of Judah and all Baal worshippers. 2 Ki. 10:1-28
 2. God promised Jehu only four generations in his dynasty because he continued in Jeroboam's sins. 2 Ki. 10:29-31
 3. Hazael captured more of Israel's territory. 2 Ki. 10:32-36
- R. God brought reform through Jehoiada's leadership of Jehoash, removing his mother and destroying Baal worship. 2 Ki. 11
1. God made Jehoash of Judah king through Jehoiada the priest after Athaliah had killed all his brothers and rule for six years. 2 Ki. 11:1-16
 2. Through Jehoiada's leadership, a covenant was made between God and Judah and the Baal temple and its priests were destroyed. 2 Ki. 11:17-21
- S. Jehoash served God while Jehoiada lived and repaired the temple, but without removing the high places, though he also paid tribute to Hazael. 2 Ki. 12
- T. God first allowed Israel to be reduced by Hazael of Aram and then, because of His compassion and not their righteousness, returned its territory through three victories by Joash. 2 Ki. 13
1. God allowed Israel to be greatly reduced by Hazael and Ben-hadad, his son, while Jehoahaz (Jehu's son) followed Jeroboam's sins. 2 Ki. 13:1-9
 2. Jehoahaz's son, Joash, was evil like his father. 2 Ki. 13:10-13
 3. God promised and gave three victories to Joash through dying Elisha, because of His compassion and the Abrahamic covenant, which returned the territory lost of Aram back to Israel. 2 Ki. 13:14-25
- U. God partially blessed Judah through Amaziah and restored Israel through Jeroboam II even though he persisted in Jeroboam's sin. 2 Ki. 14
1. Amaziah, who obeyed God like his father, defeated Edom. 2 Ki. 14:10
 2. He was defeated by Jehoash/Joash of Israel, who sacked Jerusalem. 2 Ki. 14:11-

3. Amaziah of Judah was assassinated and replaced with Azariah, his son. 2 Ki. 14:17-22
 4. God restored Israel's fortunes through Jeroboam II, even though he followed Jeroboam's sins, including the recapture of Damascus. 2 Ki. 14:23-29
- V. God disciplined Judah's kings with leprosy and defeat while Israel experienced repeated assassinations and defeat and deportation by Tiglathpileser. 2 Ki. 15
1. Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah, though he followed his father, did not remove the high places and was struck with leprosy by God. 2 Ki. 15:1-7
 2. Zechariah of Israel, the fourth generation of Jehu, was killed and replaced by Shallum for a month, who was then replaced by wicked Menahem, who paid tribute to Pul of Assyria. 2 Ki. 15:8-22
 3. Pekaniah replaced his father, Menahem of Israel, for two years before Pekah assassinated him and took the kingdom. 2 Ki. 15:23-26
 4. Hoshea assassinated Pekah, after much of Israel was captured and deported by Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, and made himself king of Israel. 2 Ki. 15:27-31
 5. God sent Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel against Jotham, who was co-regent with Uzziah and followed his spiritual lead. 2 Ki. 15:32-38
- W. Ahaz of Judah followed Israel's kings and then built a copy of an Assyrian altar in the temple after meeting with Tiglath-pileser in Damascus. 2 Ki. 16
- X. God completed His punishment of Israel by having them deported by Shalmaneser to Media because they forsook His covenant and worshipped other gods. 2 Ki. 17
- III. God's blessing of Judah came during the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, kings who sought after him and tried to return the nation to obedience, and then exile resulted from of her continued rebellion and idolatry. 2 Ki. 18-25
- A. God blessed Hezekiah, preserving his nation and extending his life, because of his faith and obedience, but promised exile for Judah when he sinned by showing the treasures and defenses to Babylonian officials. 2 Ki. 18-20
1. God blessed faithful Hezekiah while He sent Israel into captivity for her sins, though Hezekiah found himself besieged by Sennacherib when he trusted in God enough to rebel. 2 Ki. 18
 - a. God prospered Hezekiah, the best king since David, because he tore down the high places, cut down the Asherah, broke apart the bronze serpent, and trusted in the Lord, rebelling against Assyria and defeating the Philistines. 2 Ki. 18:1-8
 - b. After a three year siege, in the 6th year of Hezekiah, Shalmaneser captured Samaria and deported Israel to the cities of the Medes because they transgressed God's covenant and would not listen to Him. 2 Ki. 18:9-12

- c. When he rebelled against Assyria, Sennacherib captured all of Judah except Jerusalem and then, after Hezekiah paid tribute, ridiculed him for trusting in God. 2 Ki. 18:13-37
 2. God delivered Hezekiah from Sennacherib by striking 185,000 after he trusted in Him, sending for Isaiah and presenting the king's letter before God. 2 Ki. 19
 3. God gave Hezekiah 15 more years of life when he requested it and then condemned Judah to exile when he showed his wealth and defenses to Babylonian officials. 2 Ki. 20
- B. God condemned Judah to defeat and exile for sinning with Manasseh (and then Amon) worse than the people they dispossessed. 2 Ki. 21
1. Manasseh led Judah in sinning worse than the nations they dispossessed, building the high places and alters to Baal, Asherah, passing his son through the fire, and practicing divination. 2 Ki. 21:1-9
 2. God promised to wipe out Jerusalem and deliver Judah to their enemies because of the evil the nation committed. 2 Ki. 21:10-18
 3. When Amon followed Manasseh's sins, he was assassinated after two wars and replaced by Josiah. 2 Ki. 21:19-26
- C. God blessed Josiah, who sought Him fully all of his life and brought reforms throughout Judah and Samaria, but would not turn back the wrath decreed because of Manasseh's sins. 2 Ki. 22-23
1. God promised Josiah, through Huldah, that the calamities promised would not befall him when he sought Him following the discovery of the Law during repairs on the temple. 2 Ki. 22
 2. God's wrath was never averted even though Josiah accomplished great reforms. 2 Ki. 23
 - a. Josiah and the nation made a covenant to obey the command of God's covenant. 2 Ki. 23:1-3
 - b. He then cleaned out the temple, removed all the priests and false gods, defiled the high places, and defiled the altar at Bethel with bones as well as those throughout Samaria. 2 Ki. 23:4-20
 - c. He then had the nation celebrate the Passover. 2 Ki. 23:21-23
 - d. He, further, removed all the mediums, spiritists, and idols from the land. 2 Ki. 23:24-25
 - e. God's wrath was still not satisfied after Manasseh's provocations. 2 Ki. 23:26-27
 - f. Following Josiah's death in battle, Jehoahaz was imprisoned by Neco and replaced by Jehoiakim, who returned to Judah's former sins. 2 Ki. 23:28-37

- D. God punished Judah with defeat and then exile through the rebellions of her final three kings. 2 Ki. 24-25
1. God began His judgment of Judah by giving over Jehoiakim to Nebuchadnezzar, who replaced him with Jehoiachin, who also rebelled and was taken to Babylon and replaced with Zedekiah. 2 Ki. 24
 2. God finally completed His judgment upon Judah when Zedekiah rebelled and the city was sacked and burned, along with the temple, and the remaining people led away, with the stragglers fleeing to Egypt after Gedaliah's murder. 2 Ki. 25

1 & 2 Chronicles

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. Ezra is the likely author of Chronicles. The literary styles of Ezra and Chronicles are similar, as are their contents: “the frequent lists and genealogies, their focus on ritual, and joint devotion to the law of Moses. Most significant of all, the closing verses of 2 Chronicles (36:22-23) are repeated as the opening verses of Ezra” (Payne, p. 305). Ezra was likewise identified by Jewish tradition as the author of Chronicles along with the book of Ezra. Harrison rejects this view and says that “attempts to identify the Chronicler with Ezra appear inadvisable because of significant differences in style, historical and theological perspective, the treatment of source material, and the basic metaphysic of history as exhibited in the two compositions” (Harrison, p. 1157). Still, Ezra fits the timing and would have good reason for composing such a work.

In answer to critical analyses which would like to impose their Pentateuchal views upon this book and argue for various redactions and urtexts, Payne further notes, “Chronicles and Ezra are so closely connected in language, ideas, and theological purpose that it would be difficult to account for them on the basis other than that of unity of authorship” (Payne, p. 308).

Date. The last recorded event within Chronicles is Cyrus’ decree in 538 B.C. The genealogy in 1 Chronicles 3:17-21 where Zerubbabel’s two grandsons, Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah, are named would indicate a date at least around 500 B.C. for the earliest possible date of composition (Payne, p. 304). Harrison argues that the text of 1 Chronicles 3:21 does not indicate six or seven generations beyond Zerubbabel, but only two. The four names mentioned along with Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah are Davidic families, contemporary with the two grandsons and not descending from them (Harrison, p. 1155). The liberal position of a third century date for the book has been damaged severely by the discovery of fragments of Chronicles in cave four, and so must be pushed back to the mid-fourth century or later (Payne, pp. 304-305). Payne states a his summary argument for the date well:

For those, therefore, who accept the historicity of the events recorded in Ezra--from the decree of Cyrus in 538 down to Ezra’s reform in 458-457 B.C.--and the validity of Ezra’s autobiographical writing within the next few years, the date of composition for both books as one consecutive history must be about 450 B.C. and the place, Jerusalem (Payne, p. 306).

Audience. With Ezra recognized as author, the audience would be the returned remnant people of Judah who had abandoned idolatry but were in danger of intermarriage and syncretism with the surrounding peoples.

Historicity. The historicity of Chronicles has been strengthened in recent years of archaeological study. Harrison notes, “While Chronicles is clearly written from a special standpoint, it is a mistake to assume that the composition is of no historical value, as so many modern critics have done.” He notes further, “Specific criticisms concerning the historicity of Chronicles have included rejection of the high numbers contained in the narratives, which have been observed to be generally larger than their counterparts in the books of Kings” (Harrison, p. 1163). He explains the problems of the numbers from two perspectives. First, numbers in ancient documents were especially subject to scribal corruption during the process of transmission (p.

1164). This was complicated by the Hebrew text since they used alphabetic consonants for numbers (p. 1165). Second, he sees Chronicles providing “approximate numerical estimates in the form of round numbers, frequently designed to express the magnitude of the occasion” (Harrison, p. 1165). Payne notes concerning the reliability of the Chronicler, “Of the 629 specific numbers that occur in both books, only the figures in 1 Chronicles 22:14 and 29:4, 7, which list some of the precious metals offered for Solomon’s temple, might suggest the need to resort to an explanation of special providence” (Payne, p. 309).

Canonicity. Chronicles has always been accepted as a part of the Old Testament canon, being listed in the Bible after Kings. The New Testament occasionally quoted from it (according to Payne the UBS text lists 68 quotations) such as where Acts 26:17 quotes 1 Chronicles 16:35. Thus it was certainly viewed as inspired and canonical by the apostles.

One question raised is its relationship to Ezra and why the two books were listed separately within the Hebrew Scriptures (Note: The first century A.D. canon followed the order of English Bibles today while the rabbinic authorities later moved Chronicles to the end of the Hebrew Bible, where it is listed today. [Payne, p. 312]) Payne’s explanation is that

when God inspired Ezra in 450 to write the total volume, he also inspired him to place the last part of it (=Ezra) within the OT canon, as the divinely authorized sequel to the historical record of Kings. Only subsequently, perhaps at the canon’s final compilation shortly before 420, did God lead him to insert the rest (=Chron), as supplementary parallels to the materials found in Samuel and Kings (Payne, p. 312).

Intent. With Ezra understood as the author and the circumstances of his day as evidenced by the book of Ezra in view, Chronicles “becomes explainable as a concrete literary means to aid in the achievement of his purpose of rebuilding the theocracy” (Payne, p. 313). Payne goes on to explain the relationship of various emphasized subjects within the work on this basis. He argues,

1. Ezra’s goal of maintaining Israel’s racial and religious purity explains his stress on genealogical listings. . . .
2. Ezra’s zeal for worship according to the law and to its Levitical institutions explains his emphasis on the temple (1 Chron 22), the sacred ark (ch. 13), and its attendant Levitical priests and singers (chs. 15-16). . . .
3. Ezra’s concern to encourage the exiles who had returned to Judah explains his rehearsals of the past glories of David and the God-given victories of his dynasty (cf. 2 Chron 13; 17; 20; 25). (Payne, pp. 313-314)

Merrill, on the other hand, sees a different purpose. He says,

The purpose of 1 and 2 Chronicles is to show God’s elective and preserving grace in His covenant people through David, the messianic king and priest. The purposes of 1 and 2 Kings are different. These books explain the fall and destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem as evidence of divine judgment of God’s people who had forsaken His covenant requirements. The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, though not avoiding this theme, show that the gracious God of all the earth and all the ages has a better plan by which He will achieve redemptive reconciliation (Merrill, BKCOT, p. 591).

Literary Component

Genre. Chronicles contains both genealogies and historical narrative.

Arrangement. The book is arranged chronologically, with a genealogy which brings the reader up to David's time, and then details the reigns of his dynasty until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Vocabulary. The book is filled with characteristic vocabulary which also stresses his theological interests. These include expressions such as "seeking God," "pure heart," "faithfulness," and "forsaking the LORD."

Omissions from Samuel and Kings. There are several large sections of material in both Samuel and Kings which are omitted from Chronicles. For example, David's history omits the material within 1 Samuel 15-31 which details his life in Saul's court and period as a fugitive. The material of 2 Samuel 2-4 which describes the period of division between David and Ish-bosheth is also ignored. David's adultery and murder, along with its consequences in his family as recorded in 2 Samuel 11--1 Kings 2 are left undisclosed. Solomon's history is likewise silent concerning his eliminations of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei and deposing Abiathar, as well as his multiplied wives and idolatry with its resulting punishment from God (1 Ki. 11). Finally, the northern kings are basically ignored by the writer of Chronicles except where they effect the telling of the stories of the kings of Judah. Payne argues against a motive of idealizing the stories or hiding the men's faults, but rather sees the omissions as resulting from the author's theological intent. He notes that "in developing his theological commentary on the events of the past, he leaves out certain material that does not contribute to the point he is emphasizing" (Payne, p. 320).

Events in Kings which are explained in Chronicles. Four events in Kings are explained in Chronicles and stress the doctrine of God's retribution upon Israel. Second Chronicles 12:1 explains Shishak's invasion (1 Ki. 14:25) as resulting from Rehoboam's sin. Second Chronicles 16:7-10 explains Asa's illness (1 Ki. 15:23) being for his distrust and oppression. Second Chronicles 26:16-21 explains that Uzziah's leprosy (2 Ki. 15:5) came from his unlawful invasion of the temple. And 2 Chronicles 33:12-16 seems to explain Manassah's long reign (2 Ki. 21:1) as resulting from his late repentance, though one must note that God's wrath was still not turned back.

OUTLINE OF CHRONICLES

- I. Prologue: God provided a line of blessing from Adam to David as revealed in the genealogies. 1 Chron. 1-9
 - A. The genealogy from Adam to the sons of Jacob and Esau was quickly reported. 1 Chron. 1
 - B. Judah's genealogy revealed God's blessing upon the whole tribe even as He provided David to the nation and continued his lineage until the time of writing. 1 Chron. 2-4
 1. After a quick listing of Jacob's sons, Judah's sons were named and then Hezron's genealogy, which included David, was detailed. 1 Chron: 2
 2. David's genealogy was traced down to Zerubbabel's 2 grandsons, Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah. 1 Chron. 3

3. Other families within the tribe of Judah were detailed. 1 Chron. 4:1-23
- C. The genealogy of the tribe of Simeon was given with a short report of their taking Gedor from some Hamites as well as their destruction of the remnant of Amalekites on Mt. Seir. 1 Chron. 4:24ff.
 - D. The genealogies of Reuben and Gad are given in brief and the Transjordan half of Manasseh's leaders are named along with a short description of their conquest of Transjordan and then exile by Tiglath-pileser. 1 Chron. 5
 - E. The genealogy and allotment of cities to the tribe of Levi was detailed. 1 Chron. 6
 - F. Short genealogies for Issachar, Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Ashur were given. 1 Chron. 7
 - G. A more extensive genealogy of Benjamin was made. 1 Chron. 8
 - H. After noting that Judah was carried to Babylon for her unfaithfulness, the residents of post-exilic Jerusalem are named. 1 Chron. 9
- II. God blessed David, giving him victory and allowing him to move the ark to Jerusalem and make preparations for the temple's construction and service, while punishing Israel for the census. 1 Chron. 10-29
- A. God punished Saul with death in battle for his disobedience and seeking a medium instead of inquiring of the LORD. 1 Chron. 10
 - B. God blessed David's kingdom, defeating his enemies and establishing his throne forever, though not allowing him to build His temple. 1 Chron. 11-20
1. David was established in his rule at Hebron and made Jerusalem his capital with the aid of his heroes and army. 1 Chron. 11-12
 - a. After his anointing in Hebron. David captured Jerusalem with the aid of his 30 heroes. 1 Chron. 11
 - b. The men who joined David in Ziklag were named by their tribes, and then his army while he was king of all Israel was described. 1 Chron. 12
 2. David moved the ark from Kiriath-jearim to the home of Obed-edom after God struck down Uzza for touching it. 1 Chron. 13
 3. God guided David in defeating the Philistines in 2 battles at Rephaim. 1 Chron. 14
 4. God blessed the movement of the ark to Jerusalem when David had it moved scripturally and appointed Levites to minister before God. 1 Chron. 15-16
 - a. God helped the Levites carry the ark to Jerusalem when David commanded it be done according to the Law. 1 Chron. 15
 - b. David placed the ark in its tent and appointed the Levites to minister before the LORD. 1 Chron. 16
 5. God blessed David and promised to establish his kingdom when he sought to

- build a temple, refusing him that honor while giving into his son. 1 Chron. 17
 6. God helped David conquer Philistia, Moab, Zobah, the Arameans of Damascus, Edom, Ammon, and Amalek and reign over all Israel with justice and righteousness. 1 Chron. 18
 7. God gave Joab and David victories over the Ammonites and their Aramean allies while David subdued the Arameans. 1 Chron. 19
 8. David then defeated Ammon severely and then defeated the Philistines of Gezer and Gath. Three giants killed. 1 Chron. 20
- C. After God punished Israel for the census, David prepared for the temple's construction, organized the Levites for temple service, and organized his government. 1 Chron. 21-29
 1. God punished Israel by plague when David ordered a census, relenting of His anger when David offered sacrifice on the threshing floor of Oman the Jebusite. 1 Chron. 21
 2. David prepared materials and assembled workmen for the building of the temple and charged Solomon to both build the temple and to keep the law of the LORD. 1 Chron. 22
 3. David organized the Levites for temple ministry and operation. 1 Chron. 23-26
 - a. David numbered and organized the Levites to assist the sons of Aaron with the service of the temple. 1 Chron. 23
 - b. David, with Zadok (Eleazar's line) and Ahimelech (Ithmar's line) organized the priests into 24 divisions to serve in the temple. 1 Chron. 24
 - c. He organized the sons of Asaph, Hemam, and Jeduthun to sing in the temple. 1 Chron. 25
 - d. He organized the gatekeepers and the men over the treasures of the temple. 1 Chron. 26
 4. David organized his government, appointing men over the 12 monthly army divisions, the tribes, his storehouses, and other government positions. 1 Chron. 27
 5. David ended his days, charging Solomon to build the temple and remain faithful to God and then guiding the people in anointing Solomon king a second time. 1 Chron. 28-29
 - a. David announced God's choice of Solomon to rule and build the temple and then charged Solomon to remain faithful to God and to follow the plans He gave to David by inspiration. 1 Chron. 28
 - b. David charged the people to support Solomon, which they did with their offerings, and then offered sacrifice and established him again on his throne. 1 Chron. 29
- III. God blessed Solomon in response to his obedience, accepting the temple and promising him an established throne through obedience or exile and destruction for disobedience. 2

Chron. 1-9

- A. God blessed Solomon at Gibeon, after he offered sacrifice and requested wisdom, enabling him to amass military might and great wealth. 2 Chron. 1
 - B. God's accepted Solomon's building and dedication of the temple, His glory filling it, and promised to establish his throne if he obeyed but to exile the nation and discard the temple if he disobeyed. 2 Chron. 2-7
 - 1. Solomon organized the aliens in Israel and arranged with Hiram of Tyre for lumber and a skilled craftsman named Hiram-abi. 2 Chron. 2
 - 2. Solomon built the temple and made all of its furnishings and utensils. 2 Chron. 3-4
 - 3. Following the delivery of the ark, Solomon's prayer of dedication, and sacrifices, God's glory filled the temple and He promised an established throne for obedience but exile and rejection of the temple for disobedience. 2 Chron. 5-7
 - a. After the ark was brought into the Holy of Holies amid innumerable sacrifices and praise by the priests and Levites, the temple was filled with God's glory in a cloud. 2 Chron. 5
 - b. Solomon recounted God's promise to David and then offered his prayer of dedication. 2 Chron. 6
 - c. God accepted Solomon's prayer and fire consumed the burnt offering, and then after the seven day feast consecrating the court, He promised to dwell in Jerusalem and establish Solomon's throne if he obeyed Him, but uproot the people and discard the temple if he forsook Him. 2 Chron. 7
 - C. God blessed Solomon's kingdom with wealth and splendor as he followed David's instructions and served God faithfully. 2 Chron. 8-9
 - 1. Solomon strengthened Israel, put the aliens to forced labor, offered the proper sacrifices, moved Pharaoh's daughter, and carried out all of David's instructions concerning the temple service. 2 Chron. 8
 - 2. His wealth and splendor surpassed all the other kingdoms, being acknowledged by the Queen of Sheba. 2 Chron. 9
- IV. God gave victory and peace or defeat and exile to the kingdom of Judah in response to the kings' and people's faithfulness or failure to worship Him and keep His covenant, ultimately sending them into exile for their sins. 2 Chron. 10-36
- A. God divided the kingdom and all the Levites and God-fearers left Israel and moved to Judah. 2 Chron. 10-11
 - 1. God divided Israel from Judah through Rehoboam's rejection of the people's request for relief. 2 Chron. 10
 - 2. After God stopped Rehoboam from attacking Israel, the Levites and all the God-seekers of the tribes moved to Judah and strengthened her. 2 Chron. 11

- B. God blessed the nation and its rulers when they sought Him and punished them when they rebelled, finally sending them into exile for their sins. 2 Chron. 12-36
1. God punished Judah with vasseldom to Shishak of Egypt because Rehoboam forsook God and then humbled himself before Him. 2 Chron. 12
 2. God gave Abijah victory over Jeroboam because he trusted in Him and served Him faithfully. 2 Chron. 13
 3. God blessed Judah with victory and peace as long as Asa trusted and sought Him, but brought wars and disease when he ceased to seek Him. 2 Chron. 14-16
 - a. God blessed Judah with peace and then victory over the Ethiopians because under Asa they trusted in Him and removed the high places, alters, and Asherim from Judah. 2 Chron. 14
 - b. With the promise that if he sought God, He would let him find Him, but if he forsook God, He would forsake him, Asa cleared out all idolatrous images and deposed his mother (but without removing all the high places), seeking God with all his heart and leading the nation to renew the covenant, with the result that God gave him peace. 2 Chron. 15
 - c. God cursed Judah with wars after he failed to trust God against Baasba of Israel, then refusing to seek God for his diseased feet while oppressing some people. 2 Chron 16
 4. God blessed Jehoshaphat with victories and peace because he sought Him and had His law taught throughout Judah, established just judges, and removed idolatry, but also disciplined him for alliances with Israel. 2 Chron. 17-20
 - a. God blessed Judah with peace and prosperity because Jehoshaphat sought Him, removed the high places and Asherim, and had his officials teach the Law throughout Judah. 2 Chron. 17
 - b. Jehoshaphat married Ahab's daughter and joined him against the Arameans after God warned of defeat. 2 Chron. 18
 - c. After God chided him for aiding Ahab, Jehoshaphat went through his territory and set up just judges in all the cities. 2 Chron. 19
 - d. When faced with invasion by Moab, Ammon, and Edom, he led the nation in trusting God with the result that He defeated the armies Himself and they had peace, though Jehoshaphat failed later by allying himself with Ahaziah of Israel and was disciplined by the ships' destruction. 2 Chron. 20
 5. God punished Judah with defeat and Jehoram with disease of his bowels because he murdered his brothers and led Judah to follow in Israel's idolatry, leaving only his youngest son as survivor. 2 Chron. 21
 6. God had Ahaziah killed in Jehus' purge of the house of Ahab because he deserted God to walk in the ways of the house of Ahab. 2 Chron. 22:1-9

7. When Athaliah sought to kill all the line of David, God spared Joash and through Jehoiada the priest, removed Athaliah and the Baal priest and temple and made Joash king. 2 Chron. 22:10--23
8. Though he did well in restoring the temple while Jehoiada lived, Joash departed from following God after his death with the result that God gave Judah over to a smaller Aramean army and later had Joash assassinated. 2 Chron. 24
9. Joash of Israel defeated Judah and sacked Jerusalem after Amaziah: defeated Edom because he took and worshipped Edom's gods. 2 Chron. 25
10. God gave Uzziah victory and strength as long as he sought Him, but struck him with leprosy when he tried to offer incense in the temple (Zechariah, Isaiah). 2 Chron. 26
11. God gave Jotham victory over the Ammonites, who paid tribute, because he ordered his ways before the LORD like his father. 2 Chron. 27
12. God humbled Judah with defeat on all sides because Ahaz walked in the ways of Israel's kings, worshipping Baal and burning his sons, closing the temple, and worshipping the gods of Aram. 2 Chron. 28
13. God blessed and delivered Hezekiah because he sought Him with a whole heart and led the nation to return to Him and trust in Him in times of emergency. 2 Chron. 29-32
 - a. As soon as he came to the throne, Hezekiah repaired the temple, had the priests and Levites cleanse it, and then led the nation in offering sin and burnt sacrifices and peace offerings once again to the LORD. 2 Chron. 29
 - b. In his second month Hezekiah led the nation in celebrating the Passover (a month late and with many people still unclean), which lasted two weeks and was accepted by God. 2 Chron. 30
 - c. Following the Passover, the people removed the high places and idolatrous alters and images from Judah, bringing their tithes and offerings to the temple, and Hezekiah had the materials distributed among the priests and Levites, obeying God with all his heart so that God blessed Judah and they prospered. 2 Chron. 31
 - d. God blessed Hezekiah and Jerusalem for his faith, delivering them from Sennacherib of Assyria, giving him a sign when he became mortally ill, though wrath did come upon him for personal pride. 2 Chron. 32
14. God humbled Manasseh through Assyrian imprisonment in Babylon after he led Judah to do more evil than the nations they dispossessed, so that in his latter years he removed idolatry from the temple and Judah, though the people still worshipped God on the high places. 2 Chron. 33:1-20
15. Amon followed Manasseh's sin and was assassinated after two years. 2 Chron. 33:21-25
16. God delayed judgment upon Judah because Josiah purged idolatry from Judah and Israel and led the nation in celebrating the passover. 2 Chron. 34-35
 - a. God delayed the final judgment of Judah because Josiah purged idolatry

from Jerusalem, Judah, and the cities of Israel, renewing the covenant with God after finding the Law in the temple as it was being repaired. 2 Chron. 34

- b. Josiah led Judah in celebrating the Passover, and after setting the temple in order, later died in battle against Neco of Egypt. 2 Chron. 35

- 17. God delivered the nation to Babylonian captivity following the last four kings, all who turned from Him and brought about His wrath upon the nation. 2 Chron. 36

- a. Jehoahaz (Joahaz) was deposed by Neco and carried captive to Egypt 2 Chron. 36:1-4
- b. Jehoiakim did evil in God's sight and was carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. 2 Chron. 36:5-8
- c. Jehoiachin, who also did evil, was also taken to Babylon after three months. 2 Chron. 36:9-10
- d. Zedekiah also rebelled against God until His wrath arose to the point where there was no remedy. 2 Chron. 36:11-16
- e. God gave Jerusalem to Babylon so that the city and temple were destroyed and the people exiled until the land had enjoyed all its sabbaths as spoken through Jeremiah. 2 Chron. 36:17-21

- V. Epilogue: God stirred the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, to rebuild His house in Jerusalem and return the people to the land in accordance with the word of Jeremiah. 2 Chron. 36:22-23

Ezra

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. The Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 15a) attributes the book to Ezra, after whom it is named. Internal evidence for Ezra's authorship of the book by his name comes from Ezra 7:27--9:15 where he refers to himself in the first person. Though this position may be objected to on the basis that some redactor or the chronicler used his memoirs directly without editorial alteration, there is no evidence to support such a claim.

Date. Based upon internal evidence, the date of composition must be after 450 B.C.

Relationship to the book of Nehemiah.

Argument for unity of Ezra and Nehemiah. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are treated as one book within the Hebrew Bible and were considered such by the Talmud which saw Ezra as the author of Chronicles as well, though Nehemiah was supposed to have completed the work (*Baba Bathra* 15a). The two were not divided until around the 1500's A.D. Further, they were a unit in the oldest MSS of the LXX and called Esdras B (Yamauchi, p. 572).

Argument against unity. The arguments against unity of the two texts are based upon internal evidences (Yamauchi. p. 573). The strongest argument is the very similar, almost identical, lists of returnees in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. The likelihood of the same list being given twice in the same account is very slim.

Order of Events in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Reverse order view. Some place Ezra's ministry after Nehemiah's arrival rather than seeing him in Jerusalem prior. This view then places his return in 398 B.C., well after Nehemiah had completed his work. This supposes that the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:7 is Artaxerxes II Mnemon who ruled from 404 to 458 B.C. Further, Ezra 10:6 says that Ezra went to the room of Johanan/Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib. The Johanan of Nehemiah 12:22, who are called the grandson of Eliashib, are identified as the Johanan of the Elephantine papyri at the close of the fifth century. Thus, Ezra would have been meeting with the grandson of Nehemiah's contemporary. The weakness of this argument is found in the commonality of the name, Johanan, in the fifth century. Thus, there would likely have been a Johanan in each generation of Eliashib's family. Second, this argument assumes that both Nehemiah's mention of Ezra and Ezra's of Nehemiah is later insertions. Yet, "such a mistake so close to the history it describes is extremely unlikely" (Fensharn, pp. 8-9).

Later contemporaries. A second view attempts to allow the texts assertion that Nehemiah and Ezra were contemporaries to stand, its approach is to amend 7:7 to read the "thirty-seventh" year of Artaxerxes, which would have Ezra returning in 428 during Nehemiah's second term as governor (La Sor, et. al., pp. 650-651). This emendation has no textual evidence in its support and so must be viewed as mere speculation.

Traditional view. The traditional view is to see Ezra's ministry as beginning prior to and then being contemporaneous with Nehemiah after his arrival. First, this understands Ezra 7:7 to affirm Ezra's return to be in Artaxerxes' seventh year of rule. It also understands that the dating of Nehemiah 1:1 places Nehemiah's return 12 years after Ezra's. Second, the Judah of Nehemiah 12:10-11 and 22 is someone other than the Judah of Josephus who met Alexander the Great, who might better be identified as Judah II (Yamauchi, pp. 581-582). This recognizes that the present lists of high priests may not be complete. Further, this is based upon the absence of any reference to "the suffering and chaos of the mid-fourth century B.C when Judah joined in the Phoenician

rebellion, harshly put down by Artaxerxes III" (Yamauchi, p. 580). Third, the removal of either Ezra or Nehemiah's name from the wall's dedication procession in Nehemiah 12:36 would leave one of the processions without a leader.

Problems with this view have been proposed. First, Nehemiah is not mentioned in Ezra. This, though, is consistent with the timing of their arrivals. Ezra's reforms should have occurred several years before Nehemiah's arrival and thus the period covered in the book of Ezra would have ended before then as well. Second, Nehemiah only mentions Ezra once, and then says nothing about his reforms. Fensham attempts to blunt this argument with the view that his memoirs reflect that "Nehemiah was to a certain extent self-centered in what he did" (Fensham, p. 6). Such an argument is a little too critical of the man. Rather, the better answer seems that the book of Nehemiah focuses upon a period of time after Ezra's reforms and so need not say much about him. Third, where Ezra 10 describes the people's divorces from foreign women, the problem still existed in Nehemiah's time. This is really not a problem either since the people could easily have regressed during those years. In summary, the arguments against the traditional view are weak.

Fensham details well the sequence of events and so is quoted at length.

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 458 with the sole aim--and by order of the Persian king--to promulgate a religious reform. He was at the head of a party of returnees who were typical of the various groups which had returned during the sixth and fifth centuries. Presumably, after his reforms Ezra returned to Susa.

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem in 445 as governor of Judah, appointed by Artaxerxes. As governor he had authority over all the Jewish activities, including all aspects of religious life. He succeeded in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem despite the hostility of neighboring nations he reorganized Judah economically (Neh. 5) and restored the cultic activities which had fallen into disuse after the departure of Ezra.

During Nehemiah's twelve-year stay in Jerusalem Ezra returned and supported Nehemiah's attempts to carry through his reforms. This reconstruction then explains why Nehemiah is mentioned in the second part of Ezra's memoir (Neh. 8-10) and why Ezra is mentioned in the second part of Nehemiah's memoir (Neh. 12). What became of Ezra after this is nowhere stated. Perhaps he returned to Susa. He is not mentioned in connection with Nehemiah's second arrival in Jerusalem, c. 430. Nor is what happened to Nehemiah after the reforms of his second term mentioned anywhere. The sources break off at c. 430. Nevertheless, the point is clear that the temple had been rebuilt, the wall of Jerusalem restored, the cultic activities properly organized, and the purity of the religion preserved (Fensham, p. 7).

Audience. With Ezra accepted as the author, and based upon the text of the book itself, his audience necessarily should be seen as the post-exilic community within Judah during the period after 450 B.C. They were a small enclave of faithful Jews who had returned to their land in obedience to God but also had already partially succumbed to the temptations to intermarry and mix culturally with those who were residing in the land when they had arrived. They were experiencing external pressures to conform.

Historical Background. The world of Judah at this time was Persian. Cyrus founded the empire by rebelling against and then conquering the Median empire by 550 B.C. He then expanded it and absorbed Babylon's empire in 539 B.C., thereby controlling all of western Asia

as far as Egypt. Unlike his predecessors, Cyrus' policy was to return the Babylonian deportees to their homelands and reestablish their religious systems, giving them a measure of autonomy, Thus the return of Zerubbabel and rebuilding of the temple resulted from his generous policy (La Sor, et. al., p. 644). The period of time covered in the book of Ezra spans from the return of Zerubbabel in 538 B.C. under Cyrus, through the reigns of Cambyses, Darius I, Xerxes (biblical Ahasuerus, 485-465 B. C., and into the reign of Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.), thus about 90 years. Cambyses' achievement was to add Egypt to the empire (Kidner, p. 14). With his death came a period of conflict until Darius I was able to restore order to the empire in his second year of rule. It was also during this time that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah ministered, specifically striving to encourage the people to finish rebuilding the temple (Kidner, p. 14). Xerxes (Ahasuerus in Esther) though only briefly mentioned in Ezra (4:6) played a major role in history through his defeat by the Greeks. Artaxerxes, in 459 B. C., then had to contend with an Athenian sponsored revolt in Egypt which may have been viewed as threatening his empire. Thus, Ezra's return to rebuild Judah may have been an attempt by him to build a loyal buffer state between himself and Egypt (Yamauchi, p. 571). Then, three years later Megabyzus, the satrap of Syria, after crushing the revolt in Egypt, himself revolted from 449 to 446 B.C. Assuming that Ezra 4:7-23 occurred during this period of foment, Artaxerxes would have understandably been suspicious of any building activities. Then, in 445, when Nehemiah his trusted official requested permission, he would have felt more free to allow the walls to be rebuilt because both the rebellion in Egypt and of Megabyzus had been resolved (Yamauchi, p. 571).

During the Babylonian captivity the Jews seem to have experienced significant social and economic freedom within the cities of their exile. This is indicated not only by the story of Esther, but also by the gifts provided the returnees. In addition the royal line was preserved through Jehoiachin who was included into the Babylonian court and given rations by the king (2 Kings 25:29-30), as confirmed with the Babylonian court records (ANET, p. 308). Thus, the first returnees could look to royal leadership who would be accepted by their conquerors namely, Zerubbabel, and to significant monetary support from their fellow countrymen. In all, there were three returns from Babylon, Zerubbabel's in 538 B.C., Ezra's in 458 B. C., and Nehemiah's in 444 B. C.

Problem of Sheshbazzar leading the return. In the first chapter of Ezra, the leader of the first return appears to be Sheshbazzar (1:8, 11), to whom Mithredath the treasurer gave the articles of the temple which had been carried off by Nebuchadnezzar. Yet, in the very next chapter Zerubbabel is named as the leader of the return. La Sor's answer to this apparent problem is to identify Sheshbazzar with "Shenazzar" in 1 Chronicles 3:18, who were the fourth son of Jehoiachin and brother of Shealtiel, Zerubbabel's father (La Sor, et. al., p. 648). Still, Sheshbazzar is identified in 5:14-17 as being the one who laid the foundation of the temple and was appointed governor. La Sor argues that either Sheshbazzar's work on the temple was so insignificant that Zerubbabel, who did most of the work, got the credit, or that Zerubbabel did the work under the authority of Sheshbazzar (La Sor, et. al, pp. 648-649). Another option would be to see Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel as one and the same person since they are never mentioned together. The name of Sheshbazzar in Ezra 5 is a quote of Tattenai's letter to Darius. Another option would be to see Sheshbazzar as Zerubbabel's Persian name and so the use of that name is necessarily conspicuous in those sections dealing with the Persians in which he would be named. The other option would be to see Sheshbazzar as the appointed governor while Zerubbabel was the popular leader of the nation, being recognized as the legitimate heir to the Davidic throne.

Historicity. The historical accuracy of Ezra has been strengthened by recent archaeological finds, especially with regard to the names of Sanballat, Geshem, and Tobiah. The Elephantine papyri further reveal that by 407 Sanballat's sons, Delaiah and Shelemiah, both having names linked to Yahweh worship to some extent, were officials acting in his name (Kidner, p. 1). Thus, the accuracy of the text has been strengthened by our knowledge of the historical circumstances throughout the empire as well as within the region about Judah.

Canonicity. The book of Ezra was accepted within the canon of Hebrew Scripture and was included in its third division, the Writings (La Sor, et al., p. 638).

Intent. Ezra is not merely a history book. Nor is it Ezra's memoirs. Its intent must be linked to the audience who received it. They were exiles who had returned under Ezra and Zerubbabel (and possibly those under Nehemiah if the book is dated a little later). They were feeling threatened by the people's around them as revealed in Nehemiah. And, they were wavering in their faithfulness through intermarriage. Thus, Ezra can be seen to be writing to encourage the returned remnant to remain faithful to true temple worship and to fulfill their covenant obligations to God. This is seen especially in chapters 9 and 10 where the people respond by cleaning out the sin in their midst by dissolving the mixed marriages.

Literary Component

Genre. Ezra is both historical narrative, with genealogical listings and several official correspondences interspersed, and autobiography, recounting the works and prayers of Ezra.

Text of Ezra. Though much of Ezra is written in Hebrew, some sections are also recorded in Aramaic. These include 4:8--6: 18 and 7:12-26 which are mostly quotes of official correspondences, which would have been written in Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of their day.

Arrangement. The book first covers the first return under Zerubbabel before turning to the work of Ezra. Thus, it is arranged chronologically.

OUTLINE OF EZRA

- I. God's blessing upon the first returning exiles enabled them to rebuild the temple mild opposition and appoint priests and Levites to their duties as well as celebrate the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. 1-6
 - A. God moved many Jews to return and rebuild the temple after Cyrus granted permission. 1
 1. God stirred Cyrus to send a proclamation, in fulfillment of Jeremiah's words, allowing the Jews to return to Judah and rebuild the temple. 1:14
 2. God raised up a group of people who returned, bringing the temple utensils under the care of Sheshbazzar. 1:5-11
 - B. The returning exiles were listed by leaders, families, communities, and religious/social positions along with those lacking proof of lineage, giving a total of 42,360 men, 7,337 servants, and 200 singers along with livestock and an accounting of the offerings. 2

- C. Temple worship was revived through the erection of the alter and offering of all sacrifices and celebration of feasts and the laying of the foundation according to the Law and to David's instructions. 3
 1. Under Zerubbabel the people set up the alter on its foundation in the seventh month and offered the daily burnt offerings. 3:1-3
 2. They then celebrated the Feast of Booths according to the law and offered the burnt offerings for the new moons and other fixed festivals. 3:4-6
 3. They then laid the foundations of the temple and celebrated its completion in the manner commanded by David. 3:7-13

- D. Because the Jews refused to allow the surrounding people help rebuilt the temple, they obtained permission to stop the work from the reign of Artaxerxes to Darius. 4
 1. When the Jews refused to allow the local people to help build the temple, they opposed their work, beginning in the reign of Cyrus 4:1-5
 2. Their opponents wrote an accusation against the Jews during the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes). 4:6
 3. The leaders of the surrounding people were able to stop the work by obtaining Artaxerxes' permission. 4:7-23
 - a. Letter to Artaxerxes: In their letter to the king they accused the Jews of having a history of rebellion and of attempting to rebuild their walls. 4:7-16
 - b. Letter from Artaxerxes: Artaxerxes responded by commanding them to force the Jews to stop their work. 4:17-22
 - c. They then stopped the work by force of arms. 4:23
 4. The work remained stopped until the 2nd year of Darius. 4:24

- E. God blessed their work, encouraging them through Haggai and Zechariah and turning the heart, of Darius toward them, so that they were able to finish the temple, dedicate it, and celebrate the Passover according to the Law. 5-6
 1. God blessed the work when construction resumed with Haggai and Zechariah's encouragement, causing Tattenai to allow the work to continue while he awaited Darius' instructions. 5
 - a. Under Haggai and Zechariah's prophetic encouragement, Zerubbabel began again the rebuilding of the temple. 5:1-2
 - b. When Tattenai the governor confronted them, God gave them grace so that he allowed work to continue while he awaited word from Darius. 5:3-5
 - c. Letter to Darius: Tattenai reported the construction to Darius and the Jews' claim that Cyrus had ordered the work. 5:6-7
 2. With Cyrus' letter of support, they finished the temple, dedicated it, appointed

the priests and Levites, and celebrated the Passover. 6

- a. Cyrus' Memorandum: Cyrus' command to rebuild the temple was located at Darius' command. 6:1-5
- b. Letter from Darius: Darius ordered that the Jews be left alone and the rebuilding of the temple be supported from the region's taxes. 6:6-12
- c. The temple was completed in the 6th year of Darius. 6:13-15
- d. The Jews then dedicated the temple and appointed the priests to their divisions and Levites according to the Law. 6:16-18
- e. They then celebrated the Passover and observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread according to the Law with joy. 6:19-22

II. God's blessing upon Ezra's return and reform provided him support from both Artaxerxes and the princes of Judah. 7-10

A. God provided for and blessed Ezra's return. 7-8

1. God worked in Artaxerxes to make Ezra governor and to support him with people and money to return to Judah and teach the Law of God. 7
- a. Ezra obtained permission and organized a group to return and teach God's statutes and ordinances in Judah. 7:1-10
- b. Artaxerxes' decree: he appointed Ezra governor, approving his accompaniment by other Jews, commanding he be financially supported, and that he teach and enforce the Laws of God and the king. 7:11-26
- c. Ezra blessed God and gathered men together. 7:27-28
2. God blessed the return, providing both people and safety for the return as well as support once in Judah. 8
- a. Those wishing to return gathered with Ezra by the river Ahava. 8:1-14
- b. When no Levites were found in their midst, he sent to Iddo and got some to go. 8:15-20
- c. God listened to their prayer and fasting for protection on the journey. 8:21-23
- d. Ezra assigned the precious objects to 12 leading priests. 8:24-30
- e. God blessed their journey to Jerusalem and they delivered the precious objects to the temple treasurer. 8:31-34
- f. They sacrificed to God and then delivered the king's decree to the satraps and were supported accordingly. 8:35-36

B. Ezra upon learning of mixed marriages, confessed their sins before God and led the people in repenting and dissolving the unlawful marriages. 9-10

1. When Ezra learned of the Jews intermarrying, he was appalled and confessed their sin to God. 9

- a. Ezra sat appalled when he learned of mixed marriages amongst the returnees. 9:1-4
 - b. Ezra's Prayer: He remembered God's blessing upon the remnant as well as His warning not to intermarry and confessed their guilt before Him. 9:5-15
- 2. The people responded by finding the offenders and dissolving the marriages. 10
 - a. The people, led by Shecaniah, responded to Ezra's prayer with repentance and obedience to the Law. 10:1-4
 - b. The leaders commanded all Jews in Judah to assemble in Jerusalem. 10:5-8
 - c. When Ezra confronted the people, they confessed their guilt and committed themselves to remedying it, with only four men opposing it. 10:9-15
 - d. The men appointed by Ezra investigated. 10:16-17
 - e. The list of offenders revealed 18 priests, 6 Levites, 1 singer, 3 gate-keepers, and 86 others. 10:18-44

Nehemiah

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. Nehemiah is the author of the book which bears his name. The primary objection to his authorship is based upon Nehemiah 12:11 and 22 where Jaddua is mentioned. The objection posits that this Juddua was High Priest from 351 to 331 B. C. when Alexander the Great entered Jerusalem (Harrison, p. 1146). The weakness of this objection is that there could easily have been at the time of Nehemiah someone named Juddua within the priestly family other than the later high priest. In the light of this objection, Harrison's comments on authorship summarize well. He says, "In considering Nehemiah as a whole, there seem to be only highly subjective reasons for not regarding this work as the autobiography of the renowned civil governor of Judaea" (p. 1146).

Date. Nehemiah wrote his account sometime after 430 B.C.

Relationship to the book of Ezra. For information on the relationship of the two books, see my notes on Ezra. My position is to see the two books as separate works. Also, for an accounting of the chronology of the two books, see my discussion in my notes on Ezra.

Audience. The post-exilic Jewish community over which he sat as governor.

Historicity. The historical veracity of the account is accepted. The discovery of the Elephantine Papyri and its confirmation of Johanan and Sanballat as historical figures filling the roles assigned them in the text have provided support of the accuracy of the accounts and the placement of Nehemiah during the reign of Artaxerxes I (Harrison, pp. 1147-1148).

Canonicity. This book has been accepted within the canon of Scripture by all except a few dissenting voices.

Intent. Nehemiah wrote to justify his work before God and encourage the people to remain faithful, trusting God to aid them against their enemies.

Literary Component

Genre. This book is a combination of biography, historical narrative, and short prayers.

Arrangement. The book is arranged chronologically.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

Sovereignty. God's sovereignty is demonstrated in His blessing of Nehemiah before the king and provision of his needs. Further, His sovereign control of circumstances is seen in the exposure of the plot to thwart their work. That His plans could not be stopped by mere men is seen in the enemies' attempts to stop the work which was frustrated by the discovery of Cyrus' decree by Darius.

Faithfulness. A central focus of this book is God's faithfulness during adversity. He protected them and brought the task of building the walls to completion.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. God's purpose of blessing and restoring His people after disciplining them is exhibited in this book. This is seen in both sections of Nehemiah, both the restoration of the walls, and thus the central city of the nation, and then the spiritual restoration of the people.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. God's purpose of restoring the nation was

administered through a human governor appointed by Gentile overlords. This was not administered through either a theocracy as under the judges or a monarchy as under the kings of Israel and Judah. It was accomplished during the times of the Gentiles. God administered His purposes specifically through the agency of a man who was willing to trust Him and lead others to obedience.

OUTLINE OF NEHEMIAH

- I. God's restoration of the nation, beginning with Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls, was accomplished by His blessing Nehemiah before the king and with the people, using him to organize the people, govern fairly, and blunt personal attacks which threatened to slow or stop the work. 1-6
 - A. Nehemiah confessed Israel's sins and prayed for God to grant him compassion before the king after he learned of the distress of the Jews in Judah. 1
 - B. He went to Jerusalem, inspected its walls, and enlisted the leadership of Judah in rebuilding it in spite of the opposition of the nations around them. 2
 1. God answered his prayer and the king granted him permission to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. 2:1-8
 2. He inspected the walls in secret, knowing that Sanballat and Tobiah opposed him. 2:9-16
 3. After announcing his plan to rebuild, the leaders of Judah joined the task while he responded to Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem's mockery with confidence in God. 2:17-20
 - C. God raised wide support from among the people as evidenced in the list of men and groups who participated in the repairs. 3
 - D. God frustrated their enemies' plans to stop the work by force through Nehemiah organizing half the people to guard while half worked and all slept within the city. 4
 1. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked the work in their anger. 4:1-3
 2. Having repeated their mockery, Nehemiah included an imprecatory prayer concerning them, noting that the wall was built to half its height. 4:4-6
 3. He, upon learning of their enemies' plan to disrupt the work, posted guards everywhere and encouraged the people to trust God. 4:7-14
 4. God thereby frustrated their enemies' plans while the Jews carried their weapons while they worked. 4:15-20
 5. So, half worked while half guarded and they all slept inside Jerusalem. 5:21-23
 - E. Nehemiah governed the people fairly, protecting the poor from usury and supporting himself without taxing the people as was his right. 5
 1. When the people complained because of usury by the nobles and rulers, he confronted them in an assembly and had them return the property and interest money. 5:1-13

- a. The people complained because they were being forced into slavery by other Jews in order to pay debts and taxes. 5:1-5
 - b. Nehemiah confronted the nobles and rulers concerning their usury and had them return the people's properties to them. 5:6-13
 - 2. Nehemiah asked God to remember him because as governor he did not tax the people for his support, but rather fed others at his table at his own expense. 5:14-19
- F. The wall was finished in 52 days, even amid personal attacks and conspiracies to discredit Nehemiah. 6
- 1. Nehemiah trusted in God and refused to respond to personal attacks by the enemies of Judah. 6:1-14
 - a. When invited to meet with his enemies and charged with treason, he rejected them each time. 6:1-9
 - b. When false prophets were hired to frighten him, he refused to respond in fear but prayed to God. 6:10-14
 - 2. When the walls were completed in 52 days, even with many nobles communicating with Tobiah, they were that God had been with the Jews. 6:15-19
- II. God's spiritual restoration of the nation was accomplished through Nehemiah who organized the priests and Levites along with a city government and restored the people to obedience of the Law. 7-13
 - A. Having organized the city's security, Nehemiah called for a national assembly, noting the census of the returnees. 7
 - 1. Nehemiah organized the security of the city. 7:1-3
 - 2. He called an assembly of the people and then found the census of the returnees. 7:4ff.
 - B. Through Ezra's ministry the people were brought to repentance and renewed the covenant with God. 8-10
 - 1. The people responded to the Law as it was read and translated to them, first by weeping and then by keeping the feast of booths. 8
 - a. As Ezra read the Law, 13 Levites translated it to the people. 8:1-8
 - b. After responding to the Law with weeping, Nehemiah and Ezra encouraged the people to celebrate a feast to God. 8:9-12
 - c. The people celebrated the Feast of Booths when they learned of it in the

Law and listened to the Law for 7 days of the feast and then called a solemn assembly. 8:13-18

2. The nation assembled to confess their sins and make a covenant with God. 9
 - a. They assembled and confessed their sins in mourning and worshipped the LORD. 9:1-4
 - b. Then 8 Levites led the nation in a Psalm of Praise and Confession, recounting God's deliverances, their forefathers' sins, and God's judgments, concluding with a commitment to make a covenant with God. 9:5-38
3. The Covenant: The people covenanted not to intermarry or do business on the Sabbath, but to contribute a third of a shekel per year to the temple service and to provide wood and their proper tithes and offerings to the priests. 10
 - a. The names of the leaders who signed the covenant are listed, beginning with Nehemiah. 10:1-27
 - b. The people covenanted not to intermarry or conduct business on the Sabbath with the nations around them. 10:28-31
 - c. They also covenanted to contribute a third of a shekel per man each year in support of the temple service. 10:32-33
 - d. They further covenanted to provide wood for the altar and to bring their first fruits, first-born, and tithes to the Levites who would then tithes to the priests. 10:24-39
- C. The leaders were named and the numbers of the tithe of volunteers who occupied Jerusalem were detailed along with a listing of villages occupied throughout Judah. 11
- D. The names of priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel were given along with Jeshua the Levite's descendants. 12:1-26
- E. The wall was dedicated while the temple choir sang and the people rejoiced; after which the people continued to support the temple service all the time Zerubbabel and Nehemiah governed. 12:27-47.
 1. All the Levites and priests were gathered in Jerusalem and purified themselves, the people, gates, and walls for the dedication service. 12:27-30
 2. The first choir appointed by Nehemiah and led by Ezra, proceeded right on the wall as far as the Water Gate on the east. 12:31-37
 3. The second choir was followed by Nehemiah and proceeded left upon the wall as far as the Guard Gate. 12:38-39
 4. Then the two choirs sang and the people rejoiced so loudly that they could be heard from afar. 12:40-43
 5. They then appointed the men responsible for collecting and storing the contributions to the Levites ministering in the temple. Further, the people gave the portions due by Law all the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. 12:44-47

- F. Nehemiah, being faithful to God, led the nation in reforms which included excluding foreigners from the assembly, removing Tobiah from the temple, restoring the priests and Levites to their duties along with the tithe for their support, enforcing the Sabbath laws, and stopping the mixed marriages. 13
1. Foreigners excluded: When the reading of the Law revealed that all Ammonites and Moabites were to be excluded from the assembly of God, the people responded by excluding all foreigners. 13:1-3
 2. Tobiah from the temple: Nehemiah expelled Tobiah from his chamber in the temple after he returned from Artaxerxes, cleansing it and returning the utensils and grain offerings and frankincense to the room. 13:4-9
 3. Tithing restored: He then restored the Levites to the posts they had deserted when the people stopped tithing and had Judah bring their tithes again, asking God to remember him. 13:10-14
 4. Sabbath observed: When he found people doing business on the Sabbath, he reprimanded the nobles and then locked the gates of the city on the Sabbath, asking God to remember him. 13:15-22
 5. Mixed Marriages: When he learned of mixed marriages he confronted the sinners and rebuked them violently, driving out a grandson of Eliashib the high priest, asking God to remember those who defiled the priesthood. 13:23-29
 6. Summary: He purified the people and appointed duties for the priests and Levites and arranged for the supply of wood and first fruits, for which he wished to be remembered by God. 13:30-31

Esther

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. The author of Esther is both unstated and unknown. *Baba Bathra* (15a) attributed its authorship to “the men of the Great Synagogue.”⁴⁶ Harrison reports that Ibn Ezra (A. D. 1092-1167) agreed with Josephus (*Antiquities*, XI, 6.1) that Mordecai was the author.⁴⁷ Mordecai’s authorship is weakened by the epilogue (Esth. 10:2) which refers to him in the third person. Even so, that ending alone is not reason enough to eliminate him. All that can firmly be said about the author is that he was likely a native of Persia and that had access to sources such as Mordecai’s writings (Est. 9:20) and the Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia (Est. 10:2). The author’s intimate knowledge of Persian customs and the layout of both Susa and the royal palaces argue for both a Persian resident as author as well as one who lived close to the time of the incidents.⁴⁸

A very real option for authorship is Nehemiah, who served Artaxerxes I, the successor of Ahasuerus/Xerxes.⁴⁹ He was certainly literate and had access to the royal archives. He was also intimately familiar with the palace and government. It is likely that he either knew Mordecai or would have known of him, depending upon each man’s age. Further he would have known of the incident recounted in Esther either from living through it or hearing it recounted by his parents. Having returned to Judah to restore Jerusalem and being involved with the reconstruction of the people both nationally and spiritually (alongside Ezra), he would have had a personal interest and seen a need for the Palestinian Jews to be reassured of God’s protection and provision for their well being. Thus (I speculate) upon his return to Persia following his tour as governor of Judah he very likely interviewed eye witnesses and/or researched the records and wrote the Scroll of Esther.

The determination of the date of composition is as its authorship. The earliest possible date is soon after the death of Ahasuerus (Xerxes I; 486-464 B.C.).⁵⁰ Those holding to this date, such as Harrison, would understand the epilogue’s reference to him and “all the accomplishments of his authority and strength” to be a reference to his having passed from the scene, much like the references in Kings and Chronicles in the

⁴⁶R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*. p. 1087.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸Joyce G. Baldwin, *Esther*, p. 20; Harrison, *Introduction*, pp. 1087, 1089.

⁴⁹John Bright, *A History of Israel*, p. 379; F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. 14-16.

⁵⁰Harrison, p. 1087.

concluding comments about Israel and Judah’s kings.⁵ Thus it would have been written some time after 464 B.C. following the completion of the composition of the annals of his reign.

Further, the presence of Persian names and loan-words within the book argues for an earlier writing rather than within the Greek period.⁵²

Other proposed dates span the years to as late as the Maccabean period. Pfeiffer is identified by Harrison as an example of the late date position. His arguments are based upon the silence in Jewish writings concerning the feast of Purim until 2 Maccabees 15:36 which identified “the Day of Mordecai” as preceding by one day the “Day of Nicanor” which celebrated the defeat of Nicanor near Beth-horon in 161 B.C. Further, the absence of Purim in 1 Maccabees 7:49, is then seen by him to indicate that it was unknown to Judas Maccabaeus. Thus, Pfeiffer considers the date of Esther to be within the reign of John Hyrcannus, somewhere around 125 B.C.⁵³ Arguments against a late date include the following: 1) Evidence of anti-Semitism can be found at the beginning of the Persian period in the destruction of the Jewish temple at Yeb by hostile Egyptians (Elephantine papyri). 2) In Esther the Jews are not fighting for religious freedom (as during the Maccabean revolt) but for racial survival. 3) The narrative of Esther is situated in Persia and reflects the religious and social conditions within Persia rather than in Palestine. 4) The Jews depicted in Esther were not interested in developing a pure religious society within a pagan culture, but rather were seeking religious tolerance alongside the other religions.⁵⁴ 5) The scroll reflects the background of the first Jewish dispersion rather than the Maccahean period.⁵⁵ La Sor, et al., notes

Elements commonly found in second-century Palestine--dualism, angelology, and satanology, commonly attributed to Persian influence--are not even hinted at in this work which shows so many indications that it originated in or was at least thoroughly familiar with, Persia.⁵⁶

Finally, Harrison answers the problem of silence in early Jewish writings concerning the feast when he says,

⁵¹Ibid., p. 1088.

⁵²Ibid., p. 1090.

⁵³Ibid., p. 1088.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 1089.

⁵⁵Ibid.; La Sor. et al., *Old Testament Survey*, p. 628.

⁵⁶Ibid.

The fact that Ben Sira was apparently ignorant of Esther and the feast of Purim need only

point to an origin for both in the eastern Diaspora, and imply that they only became familiar to Palestinian Jews in the second century B.C.⁵⁷

So, the weight of evidence points to an early date of composition likely during the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus.

The arguments for early writing all fit well for Nehemiah as its author. He would have been literate in Hebrew and could have incorporated the Persian loan words easily since he would have also been fully literate in their language. Finally, his position within the Persian court could well account for his intentional silence concerning the name of God or any references to prayer. He would have been sensitive to court attitudes concerning non-state religions. His own memoirs (the Book of Nehemiah), on the other hand, would have been more personal and could have been left in or sent to Judah without needing to be presented before the king or another of his officials for approval.⁵⁸ Further, the book of Nehemiah is similarly devoid of Persian concepts found in second century Palestine as noted by La Sor, et. al. earlier.

Audience. Three possible intended audiences include either the Jews of the Persian Diaspora, those who returned to Palestine, or of the Greek Diaspora (late date position). For those holding to a late date, such as Pfeiffer, the audience is the Greek Diaspora and Esther reflects the patriotism of the Maccabean revolt with Haman being symbolic of Antiochus Epiphanes.⁵⁹ This view sees the mass conversions to Judaism mentioned in Esther 8:17 and 9:27 to be those which occurred under the Maccabees, when Jews were finally able to “reverse the policies of Antiochus” and compelled Gentiles to become Jews.⁶⁰ The weakness of this view is that it sees the book as allegorical and political rather than historical and theological. It also fails to account for those traits within the text, such as the Persian loan-words and familiarity with the, historical Persian court, which argue forcefully for an earlier date of composition.

Those holding to an early date of composition see the audience as either the Babylonian/Persian Diaspora Jews or else those who had returned from captivity. These two options are determined, at least in part, by the accepted location of composition. If it is seen as written by a Palestinian Jew, then a Palestinian audience is preferred. If it is written by a Persian resident then a Diaspora audience can be understood. My feeling is that Nehemiah's authorship does not remove a Palestinian target audience since he could have likely been motivated to write Esther following his stay in Judah and after seeing the pressure the people were under from outside enemies. They would be in need of a

⁵⁷Harrison, p. 1090.

⁵⁸I realize that this is quite speculative, but it would fit well with inspired authorship, early composition, and theological intent rather than mere history.

⁵⁹Harrison. p. 1088.

⁶⁰Ibid.

reminder that God could preserve them even against enemies such as Tobiah and Sanballat (Neh. 4:1ff).

Historicity. The historicity of the book of Esther has been challenged by many. First, the reference in Esther 2:5-7 has been understood to mean that Mordecai was carried into captivity in 597 B.C. and the story of Esther occurs 124 years later. This is adequately answered by recognizing that Kish is the one who actually was carried into captivity and that Mordecai was born within Persia.⁶¹ A second problem centers around the wife of Ahasuerus, Xerxes I. Amestris was apparently a powerful queen and had been married to Ahasuerus for some time since two of her sons accompanied him into battle against the Greeks. Yet, neither her name can be phonetically linked to Vashti, nor can Esther's to hers.⁶² In part the answer to this problem is found in the large harem which Xerxes kept, and so it is not unlikely, especially in light of the account of his restocking his supply of concubines following his defeat, that he changed queens more than once during his time as king.⁶³ Further, Vashti can be a personal, or second, name of Amestris since it was not uncommon for nobles to have several names as in Xerxes/Ahasuerus. A third objection is the sending of decrees in various languages. Harrison answers this by pointing out the tolerance exhibited by the Persians toward their conquered nations.⁶⁴ A fourth objection is the number of people killed on the day of Purim. The problem is not serious, though, because large massacres are known to have occurred before this time within the ancient Near East.⁶⁵ Further, when the 75,000 is extrapolated into the many cities and villages throughout the vast Persian empire, it is not so implausible. Finally, the answer concerning the historicity of the account given by La Sor, et al., is insightful. They note that "the background is so full of accurate Persian detail that it must be based on history."⁶⁶ Baldwin, though recognizing the historical accuracies, is more tentative in her willingness to concede historicity. She says, "the author presents his work as if it were history, though this is the kind of information we should expect him to include even if he were composing a historical novel."⁶⁷ Though there is a hesitancy to accept its historicity among modern scholars, the book's claim to historicity is both implicit and explicit, especially with its introduction and conclusion. Thus it should be taken at face value.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 1091.

⁶²Baldwin, p.20; Harrison, p. 1091.

⁶³Ibid., p. 1092; La Sor, et al., p. 626.

⁶⁴Harrison, p. 1092.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶La Sor, et. al., p. 626.

⁶⁷Baldwin, pp. 16-17. It is my feeling that she has been much too influenced by Mitchner's works.

Canonicity. Though canonicity of the book has been debated in the past among both Jewish and Christian groups, it is assumed for the purposes of this paper.⁶⁸

Intent. On the surface the book would seem to be written with the purpose of explaining

the historical basis of the feast of Purim, a view held by Harrison and Soggin⁶⁹ Though they reject this first view La Sor, et. al., do admit to one argument which supports it. They note, “The feast has no known origin in Persian, Babylonian, or other lore. If it did not originate in a historical event, such as described in Esther, it must have originated as a result of the (fictional) story of Esther.”⁷⁰ Yet, inbedded within the literary structure of the book there lies a greater message. If it were simply a book written to inaugurate a secular feast, as would be surmised from the absence of God’s name or command to celebrate within the book, then its inspiration could be brought into question.⁷¹ The answer lies in its greater purpose which moves beyond the mere recounting of heroes deeds and their institution of a feast to honor their accomplishments. The answer lies in the author’s intention to describe God’s sovereign care for His people, even those who were disobedient in not returning to the promised land when the oportunity had come. Baldwin notes, “Though no mention is made of God’s providence, it nevertheless plays a prominent part, and may even give the book its *raison d’être*.”⁷² La Sor, et al, see the persecution of the Jews as Satanic in origin and an “attempt to defeat God in his redemptive purpose.” Their approach leads them to conclude, “The divine revelation here can be summarized, at least in part: ‘Let my people alone. If you attempt to harm them the harm will return on you.’”⁷³ I feel that this second view is closer to the point of the story. Though it is written as a court history and has an aetiological element to it, the purpose must be seen in light of the Abrahamic covenant and God’s faithfulness in blessing those who bless Abraham’s descendents and cursing whoever curses them.

⁶⁸C. F. Keil (*The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*. K & D, pp. 313-318) and Carey A. Moore (*Studies in the Book of Esther*, pp. XXIV-XXX) provide fairly complete dicussions of the question.

⁶⁹Harrison, p. 1085; J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 403.

⁷⁰La Sor, et al. p. 627.

⁷¹Soggin, p. 403.

⁷²Baldwin, p. 13. Following a discussion of the archaeological evidence supporting Purim as coming from “Pur”, for dice which was used in determining fate, she says further (p. 23), “Given that the Jews lived in a fate-ridden culture while they inhabited Persia and the other lands of the exile, we can readily appreciate that their theology needed to comprehend a belief in the power of their God to overrule the way the dice fell.”

⁷³La Sor, et. al., p. 629.

From this comes the comforting promise that God is still keeping His pronilse even with regard to those still scattered.

Literary Component

Genre. Esther is a historical narrative with a theological purpose and message. It was written to do more than communicate the history behind the feast of Purim. It was written to communicate truths about God and His acts on behalf of His covenant people. Esther is the central figure of the story, but it is clearly not written simply to recount her deeds. Her exploits are merely a part of the whole and no more significant than Mordecai's words and deeds in delivering the nation. Further, the epilogue, recounting Ahasuerus' and Mordecai's greatness is far more reminiscent of Kings and Chronicles than of either a biography or an aetiological work.

The type of meaning is found at two levels. The most immediately evident is that of the historical events narrated and the resulting institution of Purim as a Jewish festival. The more central focus of the story, though partially hidden by the absence of a direct reference to God, is God's sovereign protection of His people. This is seen in the selection of material, both in divinely timed incidents such as Mordecai's discovery of the plot against the king, Ahasuerus' sleeplessness, and in the few conversations we are allowed to overhear.

Literary design. The literary design of the story is that of a fast moving historical drama. Little time is wasted between events and each scene is passed through quickly. Only those conversations most necessary for conveying the player's thoughts and feelings are included. Further, the details of palace setting and life, though sparse, give the account the flavor characteristic of a true Persian setting.⁷⁴ The focus upon intrigue and irony, such as Esther's request for Haman and his enlistment by Ahasuerus in honoring Mordecai, serve to heighten the delight of the hearers but also to reveal the character of the players as well as God's sovereign control in elevating Mordecai and punishing Haman an even before each man's schemes could be fully developed. Baldwin describes some of its literary features well. She says,

Foreshadowing and anticipation, contrast and balance play a significant part in conveying the message that things are not what they seem. What appear to the participants to be coincidences are shown in the long run to be evidences of God's hand at work; he is well able to surprise and re-establish those he has brought low⁷⁵

This will be seen further in the arrangement of the book.

⁷⁴Baldwin, p 23.

⁷⁵Ibid. p. 25.

Arrangement. The story is developed through three parallel occasions of feasting.⁷⁶ It is during these occasions that key events take place and the theme of reversal is worked out within the book.⁷⁷ The account begins with God's preparation for moving His deliverer into place at a feast through Vashti's removal. Haman's designs are thwarted and he falls victim of his own schemes at Esther's feast. And finally, the book concludes with the condemned people celebrating their deliverance with a feast.

Characterization. Though the account is quite short, the characters are developed masterfully through a few comments and recorded conversations. The two critical, and debated, characters in this account are Esther and Mordecai. They will be discussed last in this section.

Vashti. The least developed is Vashti, who appears and then disappears from the scene in the first few lines of the Scroll. Her role is simply to be removed so that God can place His choice in her place.

Ahasuerus. The picture drawn of Ahasuerus fits well the extra-biblical accounts of him as well.⁷⁸ Even so, he is almost as ambiguous as Vashti even though he is present throughout the account. His capriciousness can be seen in his early opulence and his unconcern for a group of people within his empire who offend his favorite court official.⁷⁹ Still, that he had strong character traits can be seen in his loving response to Esther, his desire to reward those loyal to him, and his respect for Persian law. To the Persian official reviewing the account, Ahasuerus is not degraded. Though there are the hints that he has been manipulated by Haman, he does not appear as a weak king. His responses do demonstrate to the Jewish reader, though, that even an unjust and all-powerful ruler such as him can be used by God to elevate His own and avenge their enemies.

Haman.⁸⁰ Haman's character is developed quickly and remains consistent up to his demise. He is the antagonist, the enemy of the people of God. He is shown to be proud

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 28.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁷⁹David J.A. Clines (*The Esther Scroll*, pp. 31-33) considers the first chapter to be satirical and to present Xerxes and the Persian court as a bunch of fools. He then assumes that the rest of the book is satirical as well. I disagree, seeing this as more than a secular book which is written for entertainment and justification of a feast.

⁸⁰Harrison (p. 1085) understands Haman to be a descendent of the Amalekite King Agag who was defeated by Saul in I Samuel 15:8ff. As I understand the passage, though, Saul killed all the other Amalekites except Agag, who was then killed by Samuel. Thus, Haman, though an Agagite, was not a descendent of Agag the Amalekite, but from some other nation. Further, Whitcomb (*Esther*, EBC, pp. 62-63) notes that an inscription of Sargon of Assyria mentions Agag a city in Media which became a part of Persia, and vengeful as well as scheming. This is not accomplished by contrasting him with Mordecai (the protagonist), but by describing his actions in working out his revenge upon a people for the offense of a single person (Esth, 3). His pride is demonstrated again in his later conversations with his family when he boasts of his invite to Esther's feast and laments his personal offense from Mordecai's refusal to do homage (Esth, 5:9-13). His meager ego cannot endure even the slightest offense without exacting revenge. His impatience is also seen in his decision to rid himself of Mordecai inmediately rather than waiting for the original day of his choice (Esth. 5:14). Yet, it is his proud and impetuous flaws that become the agent of his undoing. First, they provide God the means of humiliating him

when he was called upon to choose the means by which Ahasuerus would honor Mordecai and then was enlisted to carry out the blessing of the very man he wanted executed (Esth 6). Finally, his impetuous action of falling upon Esther's couch in order to beg for his life provides the final glimpse into his lack of character. In the face of death he groveled rather than stood with dignity (Esth. 7:7). In the end it was his manipulative and arrogant character, that he would manipulate the king for his own personal ends and which unwittingly included an attack upon his queen, that was his undoing. And, though he had maneuvered the king to attain his desire, it was through both God and Esther's maneuvers that he was beguiled and overcome.

Esther. With Esther, her wisdom is made quite evident from the beginning of her character development and continues to the end of the story. She finds favor with all. When faced with the problem of her people's annihilation, she does not panic, but takes leadership, even in her dealings with Mordecai. Her hesitancy to approach the king is not an evidence of cowardice, but of wisdom. Still, in response to Mordecai's words, she takes the risk necessary in order to deliver her people. In approaching the king, both her courage and wisdom are made evident. With the all powerful king who could kill her at his whim, she did not take a direct approach. In her subtle approach through the two-day banquet, requesting the presence of her enemy, and exposing his plot and its implications at the proper time, her wisdom is demonstrated fully. She is revealed to be a woman worthy of a queen's crown. Never is the king's authority or wisdom in question in her words. Submissively, at the king's insistence, she reveals her desire, namely deliverance from her enemy. Then, once she has deposed of Haman and has the king in an attitude of approval and support for her, she pleads for her people's lives while still submitting to the king. And, therein lay the key to her success in delivering the Jews.

Mordecai. Mordecai is the protagonist of the story, not Esther. Though he is loyal to the king of Persia, he imitates his highest official, the antagonist of the story. He stands up to an official in the face of opposition. Though the basis of his disobedience is not directly stated, it is evident that his response was that which was expected of any other Jew of his day. Keil argues for a religious motive on the basis of the Persian concept of divine royalty. He says,

Now the custom of falling down to the earth before an exalted personage, and especially before a king, was customary among Israelites; . . . If then, Mordecai refused to pay this honour to Haman, the reason for such refusal must be sought in the notions that the Persians were wont to combine with the action, i.e. in the circumstance that they regarded it as an act of homage performed to a king as a divine being, in incarnation of Oromasdes.⁸¹

Further, Haman's inquiry and statement to Ahasuerus in 3:8 indicates that the Jewish society was distinguishable in that day and that Mordecai was being a consistent Jew. Mordecai's loyalty to the king is demonstrated in his reporting the conspiracy. His wisdom is demonstrated in his averting the disaster by writing a law which could counteract the original one.

Were Esther and Mordecai righteous or rebellious Jews? The question is raised because of two problems. First, Jews had already returned to Judah with Zerubbabel some sixty years earlier.⁸² Yet, Mordecai (and so Esther as his ward) had chosen to remain in Susa. Would this indicate a lack of faith? Second, Mordecai commanded Esther to remain silent concerning her nationality, which she did. Again, this, on the surface at least indicates a lack of faith in trying to go unnoticed as a Jew whose people were known to keep to themselves and observe their own laws and customs.⁸³ These, combined with the absence of God's name from the book and only

the mention of fasting without reference to prayer, could be seen as arguing for them being secular Jews. Worse yet, Esther seemed to cooperate fully in entering Ahasuerus' harem. These are all weak arguments when the book is seen as a theological work focusing upon God's sovereignty. As has been pointed out, if this were written within the Persian courts then it was likely the author's choice to make it as religiously non-polemical as possible. The absence of God's name would then logically necessitate the absence of any direct references to prayer. The king ordered all the beautiful women to be collected and so Esther should not be viewed as a volunteer but a conscriptee. Further, fasting was normally accompanied by prayer and so Mordecai's sackcloth and Esther's call for fasting should be understood to have included prayer for deliverance and to have been expressions of faith in God. Mordecai's message that deliverance would come from some other source was not a secular comment, but a statement of faith in God's ability to deliver them apart from her. Further, his words, "And who knows whether you have attained royalty for such a time as this?" should be understood as a confession of God's sovereign placement of Esther within the king's harem along with her elevation to queen. Thus there are ample examples of faith to indicate that they were believing Jews who had not yet made the return home to Judah, and as a result of the circumstances would not. Nehemiah is a man of faith, and yet we find him working in the king's court rather than having returned home with Zerubbabel. Further, there were other exoduses to follow in the years to come. Those future returnees were still living in Persia during Esther's day just like her and Mordecai. Thus, their faith should not be questioned. They were people of faith who God used as His instruments of deliverance.

⁸¹Keil, p. 343.

⁸²Baldwin, p. 17.

⁸³Ibid.

TREOLOGICAL THEMES

One difficulty in the study of Esther is the absence of any direct references to God, especially the absence of His name.⁸⁴ Yet, much can be said of God's character and purposes from this account of His preserving His chosen people.

The Person of God

Sovereignty. The principle character of God which comes through the literary design of the story is His sovereignty over the affairs of men. This is seen in incidents such as Vashti's refusal. Esther's appropriation into the king's harem, her selection as the new queen. Mordecai's learning of the plot against the king, the king's sleepless night, and Haman's arrival just as the king wished to honor Mordecai. Always, God was positioning key people and manipulating the king in order to accomplish the preservation of His elect nation.

Foreknowledge. God's foreknowledge is seen in the fall of Vashti and Esther's elevation in anticipation of Haman's attack. His placement of Mordecai to learn of and report treason well in advance of Haman's scheme again shows God's foreknowledge that Haman would react against this very man and plan his demise.

Faithfulness. A third aspect of God's character is seen in His covenantal faithfulness even when the people have not been faithful to Him. Though there has been opportunity to return to Judah by this time and those remaining in the Persian Diaspora can legitimately be described as disobedient to God's command to return when the captivity was completed, yet He acts on their behalf anyway. His actions are based upon one main aspect of the Abrahamic covenant, His promise to Abraham that "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse" (Gen. 12:3). It is primarily seen in the fall and destruction of Haman and his sons as well as the destruction of the enemies of the Jews throughout the Persian empire.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. The purpose of God exhibited in Esther is the preservation of His elect people who He intends to restore eventually to the land of promise. This is seen not only in Esther, but from His promises within the prophets (esp. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc) to bring His people back to the land from the lands of their captivity even into the eschaton and especially when the Davidic Millennial kingdom is established. This purpose is, at least in part, an outworking of the Abrahamic covenant and so we see also that the purpose of keeping His covenants are in effect also.

⁸⁵ As noted earlier, I consider Nehemiah as the likely author. And, since he likely used court records to write parts of the account, would have been under governmental scrutiny and so would have had to be circumspect in avoiding any statement inflammatory toward the state religion or crown. Thus, he masterfully included both God's sovereign involvement and Esther and Mordecai's faith through implication rather than direct reference.

Concerning His redemptive purpose, God is seen preserving the Messianic line by preserving the nation.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. The administration of God's purpose of preservation came through the agency of divinely timed circumstances and divinely placed people whose rise and fall were sovereignly worked by God. He accomplished this through Ahasuerus, the pagan king, as well as His own elect and specially elevated people. In this case, though, the administration of his purposes was accomplished neither by prophets or kings, but by ordinary men and women of faith who He placed into positions of leadership. For a people under Gentile domination, this is especially encouraging since they had no hope of reestablishing the Davidic kingdom any time soon.

OUTLINE OF ESTHER

- I. The sovereign care of God is demonstrated through a series of circumstances in which He

causes Esther and Mordecai to find favor with the King. 1-3

A. Queen Vashti is deposed by Ahasuerus during his feast following her refusal to obey his command. 1

1. King Ahasuerus throws a great banquet. 1:1-9
2. Vashti refuses his summons and is deposed. 1:10-22

B. Esther finds favor with all and is made queen, and through her Mordecai defends the king's life. 2

1. Ahasuerus is convinced by his counselors to seek a new queen by increasing his harem. 2:1-4
2. Mordecai and Esther are introduced as Jews of the exile 2:5-7
3. Esther is taken into the harem and keeps her race secret. 2:8-11
4. Esther finds favor in the harem during the time of her preparation. 2:12-15
5. Esther finds favor with Ahasuerus and is made queen. 2:16-18
6. Mordecai through Esther exposes a conspiracy against Ahasuerus and his deed is recorded in the Book of the Chronicles. 2:19-23

II. God preserves His elect nation through Mordecai and Esther, whom He sovereignly places into positions of influence, when Haman seeks to exterminate all Jews. 4-9:19

A. Haman, the adversary of the Jews, uses his newly gained position of power to initiate a plan for the extermination of the Jews. 3

1. Haman is elevated and then decides to destroy the Jews when Mordecai refuses to bow to him. 3:1-6
2. Haman determines the day of the Jews' destruction by lot (Pur) and then obtains Ahasuerus' permission. 3:7-15

B. Mordecai acts in faith to encourage Esther to use her position to save the Jews. 4

1. Mordecai and the Jews mourn in sackcloth when they learn of the plot against them. 4:1-3
2. Mordecai informs Esther of the plot and asks her to intercede before the king on the Jews' behalf. 4:4-8
3. Esther replies that she is not invited. 4:9-12
4. Mordecai convinces her to go to the king by reminding her of her placement and expresses faith that deliverance will come from elsewhere if not from her. She agrees on the condition that the Jews observe three days of fasting. 4:13-17

C. God acts through Esther and the circumstances of the king's sleeplessness to elevate Mordecai and eliminate Haman. 5-7

1. Esther acts to defend the Jews by bringing the king and her adversary together. 5
 - a. Esther invites Ahasuerus and Haman to a banquet. 5:1-4
 - b. When asked again for her request, she asks that they come to a second banquet. 5:5-8
 - c. Haman boasts of his invitation and is advised to hang Mordecai. 5:9-14
 2. God acts through Ahasuerus' sleeplessness to remind him of Mordecai's loyalty and so thwarts Haman's attempt to execute him. 6
 - a. Ahasuerus cannot sleep, is reminded of Mordecai's aid, and so decides to honor Mordecai before Haman can ask for his life. 6:1-9
 - b. Before Haman can speak, Ahasuerus commands him to honor Mordecai, and then Zeresh warns of his decline. 6:10-14
 3. Esther pleads for her life and brings about Haman's execution. 7
- D. Through the elevation of Mordecai and Esther's intercession before the king, God preserves the Jews when they are allowed to defend themselves against their enemies. 8-9:19
1. Mordecai is promoted into Haman's office, whose property is given to Esther. 8:1-2
 2. Esther pleads for the Jews and obtains permission to write a second law. 8:3-8
 3. The Jews are given permission to defend themselves. 8:9-14
 4. On the day of Purim the Jews avenge themselves against those who hate them. 9:1-10
 5. The Jews in Susa fight a second day and hang Haman's ten sons, 9:11-15
 6. The Jews fought on the 13th and feasted on the 14th except in Susa. 9:16-19
- E. Feast of Purim is established through God's agents of deliverance as a memorial of His preserving the Jews from extinction. 9:20-32
1. Mordecai commands that Jews everywhere celebrate the feast of Purim. 9:20-28
 2. The letter from Mordecai under Esther's authority, establishes the days of Purim. 9:29-32
- III. Epilogue: Ahasuerus was great and advanced Mordecai to prominence in his kingdom. 10

Job

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. The author of Job is unknown. Whether there was a single author or a composite of works is debated by the liberal scholars Who see “a gradual aggregation of materials on an original base” and include the wisdom poem of chapter 28, the speeches of Elihu in chapters 32-37, and the discourses of God in chapters 38 and 41 as later additions (Smick, p. 845). Further argumentation is based upon the supposed incongruities between the prologue and epilogue. Smick’s conclusion is insightful.

It is neither prudent nor necessary to assume a view of the composition of the book that rules out the possibility of the use of source materials and some kind of literary development involved in the composition of the Book of Job. But the fact is, any attempt to know exactly what that was is sheer guesswork. There is as much reason to believe that the book, substantially as we have it, was the work of a single literary and theological genius as to assume it is the product of numerous hands often with contrary purposes. We do not know who the writer was, but his work has witnessed to the spirits of the faithful through the ages that he was divinely inspired (Smith, p. 847).

Date. The proposed dates of composition range from the time of Moses down to 400 B.C. The problem of dating is that no historical event (Exodus, conquest of Canaan, exile, or any other one event) or Israelite institution (such as monarchy, temple, etc.) is mentioned within the book which would permit dating (Anderson, p. 62). Further, though there are many affinities between portions of Job and such prophetic writings as Proverbs, Psalms, Isaiah, Lamentations, Jeremiah, Hosea, etc., they do not especially reflect a dependence of Job upon the other authors (Hartley. pp. 11-15). Rather, the other witters of the Old Testament were more likely familiar with Job and its concepts and were reflecting that familiarity rather than visa versa.

Pre-Mosaic authorship. The absence of references to Israel or her covenant with God, as noted above, along with the second millennium milieu of the story, argues strongly for an author who predated Moses. This is further strengthened by the existence of godly men of prominence in a region which was overcome by idolatry by the time of the Exodus. Further, the presence of many words which occur only in Job and are related to some other cognate language, at least related to Aramaic if not its earlier form, evidence an author who was other than Hebrew. The story of Job, then, would have been brought into the Hebrew canon by someone of Moses or Joshua’s stature and could likely be the oldest book of the Bible.

Mosaic authorship/era. The Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 15a) held to Mosaic authorship. Smick, in a sense, argues for something at least originating during this period or earlier. He posits that the possibility remains that either all or parts of the book “existed outside Israel for a long time as oral tradition or even in written form until an unknown Israelite author under divine inspiration gave it its present literary form.” This is based on the “non-Israelite flavor” and canonical status. Further, such things as “Job’s longevity of 140 years, his position as a man whose wealth was measured in cattle and who acted as priest for his family, and the picture of roving Sabeian and Chaldean tribesmen” are all characteristics of the second millennium B.C., the period of the patriarchs, and not that of the first millennium (p. 853).

Solomonic date. Delitzsch proposes a Solomonic date of composition (1:20-21). He

bases this first upon the doctrine of Wisdom reflected in Job (28) which he views as more developed than in Proverbs. Second, he sees the doctrine of a future general judgment of all men in Job 19:29 as reflective of Ecclesiastes 12:14. Finally, he sees the resurrection of the dead in Job 19:25-27 reflecting the theology of Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37, Hosea 6:2, and Daniel 12:2. His view is summarized in his assertion that, “the prevailing representations of the future in the book of Job are exactly the same as those in the Psalms of the time of David and Solomon, and in the Proverbs of Solomon” (Delitsch, 1:22).

Later dates are also argued, but with little value. Its canonical status had to be early and the attribution of the Talmudic community of the book to Moses, though slight evidence, certainly weighs heavily to discount any dates nearer to their own.

In conclusion, no date can be established with certainty. The book was certainly complete by Ezra’s day. My personal preference is to see its origin prior to the Mosaic era with its inclusion in the canon coming soon after the Torah.

Place of Origin. The place where the story originated is also impossible to determine with any degree of certainty. Job’s residence was in the land of Uz (1:1). On the basis of Genesis 10:23, which identifies a son of Aram as Uz, indicates that either he became a family group within the Aramean tribes or his family eventually became a city of the Arameans. The mentioning of Uz as a son of Nahor in Genesis 22:20-22 does not especially indicate a tribe or city grew out of him, though this is also possible. That being the case, Uz would again be located within the region occupied by the Arameans.

The location of Uz still remains unclear. Lamentations 4:21 places Edom within Uz and so it could refer to the region to the east of Palestine. The proximity of Edom to the caravan routes and her reputation for wisdom, would at least make it possible that Job was a descendent of Esau, though there is nothing in Scripture to confirm this.

Audience. An unknown author and unknown date of composition makes selecting a specific, history bound, and audience impossible. Yet, based upon the message of Job, its intended audience can be deduced to be the community of righteous men who faced suffering.

Historicity. That Job was a historical person is evidenced by the assertion of God through Ezekiel and his linkage with Noah and Daniel as one of the three great righteous men (Ezek. 14:12-20). Further, James (James 5:11) also considered both the man and his experience as historical. Thus, the account of activities in heaven and on earth should be accepted as historical.

Canonicity. The book has always been accepted within both the Hebrew and Christian canons. Though its location in the Hebrew Bible has shifted over time, it has remained a part of the accepted inspired literature, found within the third division, the Writings, and located generally with Psalms and Proverbs, whether before, between, or after them (Smick, pp. 853-854.)

Intent. The book of Job appears to have been written as a theodicy. It attempts to explain the problem of the righteous person suffering (Archer, pp. 16-19; Hartley, p. 47). Harrison disagrees and says instead that “Job does not set out to answer the problem of suffering, but instead shows that even a righteous man can utilize such an experience as that through which the hero passed to attain to new heights of emotional and spiritual maturity” (p. 1046). Harrison is out to lunch on this one.

Literary Component

Genre. Though the prologue and epilogue are historical narrative, the majority of the

book is cast in various genres including laments, wisdom, proverbs, riddles, curses, and hymns (Anderson, p. 33; Smick, p. 845). Thus Anderson identifies the book as a whole as an “epic history of early Israel” and sees it as on a par with the “epic” stories of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses (pp. 36-37).

Relation to other ancient works. Job has similarities to several other ancient works, especially amongst the wisdom literature of Egypt and Mesopotamia (Anderson, p. 24; Hartley, pp. 6-11). Still, no single work has been found which could be a precursor of Job since they are all strikingly different in their problems and solutions (Anderson, pp. 24-30). The similarities should be related to the genre of wisdom literature and thought which was widespread throughout the Ancient Near East. Hartley states well the book’s relationship to other literature. He says, “This comparison of parallel literature with the book of Job shows that the author may have been influenced by the rich literary tradition of the ancient Near East about suffering, but more in format than in substance” (p. 11).

Arrangement. The book has an “A-B-A” literary structure (Smick, p. 847) which includes a prologue (1:1-5), the speeches (1:6--42:6), and then an epilogue (42:7-17). Anderson describes the arrangement of the book well. He says,

By a simple arrangement of corresponding materials in balancing positions, a scheme is built up on which the episodes of the story are easy to follow. The massive speeches that make up the bulk of the book have been incorporated into the narrative framework with a symmetry that effects artistic harmony. At the same time there is a development in the tempo that leads from climax to climax, until the final resolution. The speeches are assembled in cycles through which tension is built up from stage to stage. Thus the second interview with the Satan is more drastic than the first, and Yahweh’s second address to Job is more tremendous than the first. The exchanges between Job and his friends become more and more heated as round follows round. But the drama does not move steadily upwards to its peak and then down through the dénouement to the end. Job’s crowning speech is set off by using a beautiful poem on Wisdom (chapter 28) as an interlude after the three main cycles are finished. The tranquility of this meditation contrasts with the turbulence before and after it, and provides needed relief for the reader. By a similar device the two most stupendous moments in the book--Job’s final intrepid challenge (chapters 29-31) and Yahweh’s overwhelming reply (chapters 38-41)--are kept apart by the speeches of Elihu (chapters 32-37), whose very slowness of movement creates an interval of suspense against which the words of the Lord become all the more majestic (Anderson, p. 19).

Within, the speech sections there are three subsections. First there are the two interviews of Satan by God (1:6--2:13), then Job’s dialogues with his three friends (3:1--37:24), and finally the two dialogues with Job by God (38:1--42:6). The middle group further contains four rounds of speeches with Job (3:1--31:40) and then four speeches by Elihu (32:1--37:24). Thus there is a balanced structure of dialogues within the book (Anderson, p. 20).

I have arranged the material differently, accepting most of this structure, but seeing a prologue and epilogue with two major sections of dialogue, namely that of Job’s three friends and then that of Elihu and God.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

The Person of God

Sovereignty. This theme is seen throughout the book, beginning with God's dialogue with Satan and concluding with His blessing once again of Job. His sovereignty is affirmed by every speaker, including Himself.

Theological Purpose and Administration

The Purpose of God. God rules His universe and allows His saints to suffer in order to prove their faith.

The Administration of the Purpose of God. This purpose of God is administered through the agency of men and angels. This is seen in Satan's involvement and limitations in Job's testing. Satan in turn used natural means to afflict him. Still, God's purpose for Job's individual life was not thwarted. He blessed him doubly before his life was over and proved through him that men could remain loyal to God regardless of their treatment

OUTLINE OF JOB

- I. Prologue: Job, a blameless man, was afflicted with adversity and illness by God after Satan challenged his integrity. 1-2
 - A. Job was a blameless man who was also blessed by God with wealth and children. 1:1-5
 - B. His integrity was proven each time God allowed Satan to afflict him. 1:6--2
 1. When Satan challenged Job's fear of God as selfishly motivated, He gave everything of Job's into his power. 1:6-12
 2. After Satan despoiled Job and killed his children, he responded by blessing God. 1:13-22
 3. When Satan again challenged Job's loyalty after God pointed out his integrity, He permitted him to do anything but kill Job. 2:1-6
 4. After Satan struck him with boils, Job continued to trust God and refused to curse Him. 2:7-10
 5. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar came to comfort Job, sitting with him in silence for 7 days. 2:11-13
- II. The Dialogue-Dispute: Job's companions accuse him of sin on the basis of reciprocity, calling for repentance, while Job asserts his integrity and innocence before God, asking for an opportunity to plead his case before Him. 3-27
 - A. Job laments his birth as he looks upon his miserable state. 3
 - B. First cycle of speeches: As his friends see his misery as evidence of sin, Job declares his innocence and seeks the face of the Sovereign God. 4-14
 1. Eliphaz affirms that a man reaps what he sows and cannot be just before God who reproves and gives relief. 4-5
 2. Job challenges Eliphaz to show his sin and sees that life seems futile to him

- while he is in misery. 6-7
 - 3. Bildad says God will not reject integrity nor support evil doers. 8
 - 4. Job responds that God is all powerful, that no man can be justified before Him, and then complains to God about His treatment of him. 9-10
 - 5. Zophar rebukes Job and calls upon him to purify his ways and seek God. 11
 - 6. Job rejects the counsel of his accusers, says that God is sovereign, and asks for an opportunity to plead his case before Him. 12-14
- C. Second cycle of speeches: As his friends insist that his calamity has come from God, Job rejects their false comfort while recognizing that his affliction is from God and that the wicked do sometimes prosper. 15-21
 - 1. Eliphaz rebukes Job for not admitting guilt and says that God rewards the wicked with fruitlessness and destruction. 15
 - 2. Job rejects their counsel, sees that his distress is from God, and wishes he could speak with Him. 16-17
 - 3. Bildad argues that the wicked are judged for their evil. 18
 - 4. Job accuses his friends of tormenting him and says that though He has afflicted him he will yet see the LORD, his Redeemer. 19
 - 5. Zophar says that the wicked, though he may have momentary prosperity, will reap sudden loss as his portion from God. 20
 - 6. Job rejects their vain comfort, noting that the wicked do prosper even though their lives are fleeting. 21
- D. Third cycle of speeches: As Eliphaz and Bildad assert his guilt and need for repentance, Job reaffirms his integrity and innocence before the Almighty God who indeed judges the wicked. 22-26
 - 1. Eliphaz accuses Job of injustice and calls upon him to return to God. 22
 - 2. Job wishes he could be tried before God, being confident that he would be found innocent while noting that God's eyes are upon the ways of the wicked and valiant. 23-24
 - 3. Bildad says that man cannot be lean before God. 25
 - 4. Job rejects Bildad's counsel and then reflects on God's omnipotence. 26
- E. Job's closing discourse: He reaffirms his integrity and affirms that God does judge the wicked. 27
- III. Job's commentary on Wisdom: Wisdom is more valuable and harder to find than all the treasures of the earth, being the fear of the LORD. "Behold the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (28:28). 28
- IV. The Monologues: While Job again asserted his integrity and remembered his past blessing in light of his present suffering. Elihu rebuked him for questioning God's justice, and God rebuked him for speaking out of ignorance when he knew so little about creation or God's power over it. 29-42

- A. Job remembers his past blessings, grieves over the disdainful treatment he is now receiving, and asserts his integrity while calling upon God to judge him if he has sinned. 29-31
 - 1. He remembers his past blessing, acts of mercy, and place of respect. 29
 - 2. He notes the disdain now shown him and the suffering he has endured with his good deeds going unrewarded. 30
 - 3. He affirms his integrity and calls for God to judge him if he has committed any sin of lust, injustice, or idolatry. 31
- B. Elihu defends God's justice and right to afflict while condemning Job for questioning Him. 32-37
 - 1. Introduction: Elihu is angry because Job justified himself before God and the three men had condemned him without finding an answer to his words. 32:1-5
 - 2. First speech: He rebukes the three and challenges Job to listen to his words as he glorifies God. 32-33
 - 3. Second speech: He declares that God is just in what He does. 34
 - 4. Third speech: He condemns Job for questioning God. 35
 - 5. Fourth speech: He justifies God's use of affliction on the basis of His greatness and wondrous deeds. 36-37
- C. The Theophany: God rebuked Job and challenged him to show he could stand before Him, exposing his ignorance and weakness with regard to creation, 'with the result that Job humbled himself and repented, retracting his words before God. 38-42
 - 1. God's first discourse: God rebukes Job for speaking without knowledge, pointing to his ignorance of creation and nature before challenging him to try to answer Him. 38--40:2
 - 2. Job humbled himself, admitting his insignificance. 40:3-5
 - 3. God's second discourse: God then challenged him to show that he could stand up to Him in power over creation, pointing to Behemoth and Leviathan as creatures only God could defeat 40:6--41
 - 4. Job admitted God's sovereignty and his own ignorance, retracting his words and repenting before him. 42:1-6
- V. Epilogue: God accepted Job's words, rejected his three friends' testimonies and restored Job's fortunes twice over. 42:7ff
 - A. The verdict: God rejected the testimony concerning Himself from Job's three friends and required that they make sacrifice and that Job pray for them in order to avert His wrath 42:7-9
 - B. The restoration: God restored all of Job's possessions twice over and gave him long life. 42:10-17

Psalms

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Authors. The book of Psalms contains the works of many men. Several are named in the superscriptions. These include:

David: Psalms 3-9, 11-32, 34-41, 51-65, 68-70, 86, 101, 1-3, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, and 138-145 (for a total of 73).

Asaph: Psalms 50, and 73-83 (for a total of 12).

Korah: Psalms 42, 44-45, 47-49, 84-85, and 87 (for a total of 9).

Solomon: Psalms 72 and 127.

Heman the Ezrahite: Psalm 88

Ethan the Ezrahite: Psalm 89.

Moses: Psalm 90.

The Davidic authorship of some of the Psalms has been questioned by critical scholarship on the basis that the *lamed* before the name. That the preposition can be translated as “to,” “for,” “of,” and other ways has been used as a basis for questioning David’s authorship. Ross notes that “its use to distinguish authorship has been well attested in the Northwest Semitic inscriptions, of other Semitic dialects such as Arabic, and other biblical passages such as Habakkuk 3:1” (BKCOT, p. 782). That David wrote and sang songs is attested clearly in such passages as 2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 15:3-28; 16: 4-43; and 23:1-5, 25.

Date. The writing of the Psalms spans the complete history of Israel from the time of Moses until after the nation’s return from Babylonian captivity. It would suffice to say that the majority of writing occurred during the glorious days of David and Solomon’s kingdoms.

Some of the Psalms have historical notations and so can be dated with fair certainty to specific times in history. These (14 in all) include the following:

Psalm 3 (seems related to 2 Sam. 15-18)

Psalm 7 (possibly to 1 Sam. 23:24-29)

Psalm 18 (almost identical to 2 Sam. 22)

Psalm 30 (possibly to 1 Chron 21: 1--22:1, it seems to have been written by David after his sin of numbering the people and for the purpose of being used in the dedication of the temple)

Psalm 34(1 Sam. 21:10--22:2)

Psalm 51 (based on David’s sin in 2 Sam 11-12)

Psalm 52 (1 Sam. 22:9)

Psalm 54 (1 Sam. 23:15-23)

Psalm 56 (1 Sam. 21:10-15)

Psalm 57 (either to the incident at Adullam in 1 Sam. 22:1-2 or at En Gedi in 1 Sam. 24)

Psalm 59 (1 Sam. 19:11)

Psalm 60 (2 Sam. 8:8, 13; and 1 Chron. 18:9-12)

Psalm 63 (possibly related to 2 Sam. 15:23)

Psalm 142 (either to the incident at Adullam in 1 Sam. 22:1-2 or at En Gedi in 1 Sam.

24)

Audience. The intended audience of the Psalms was the people of Israel, both individually and corporately.

Canonicity. The Psalms’ place within the canon has not been questioned since the time

of its inclusion.

Intent. The Psalms were written to be sung in either worship or praise of God, as well as to express the feelings of the people. Some were written with the king in view, others (such as the Songs of Ascent) with the worshippers in view as they approached the temple to celebrate the feasts. They all ultimately had God as their audience and either the people or the temple choir as their participants.

Literary Component

Genre. The Book of Psalms contains several different types of Psalms. These include the following (note: This material comes from Ross' work in BKCOT, pp. 784-787, unless otherwise noted.):

Individual laments. Individual laments are Psalms of prayer for help from God. They have a basic structure of five parts; 1) an introductory cry for help, 2) a lament, 3) a confession of trust in God, 4) the psalmist's petition, and 5) a vow or expression of praise to God.

National laments. National laments are similar in structure to individual laments.

Thanksgiving/declarative Praise Psalms. These also have five parts. 1) a proclamation to praise God, 2) an introductory summary of what God has done, 3) a report of God's deliverance, 4) a renewed vow of praise, and 5) praise for God or instruction for others to praise Him.

Hymns. These are also called Descriptive Praise Psalms. They are praises to God which do not grow out of some deliverance. Their structure is: 1) a call to praise God, 2) the reasons for praising God, and 3) a conclusion which includes a new call to praise God. Examples include Psalms 33, 36, 105, 111, 113, 117, and 135.

Pilgrim Songs. These have the heading "A song of ascents." Their contents seem designed for the people who were going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the various feasts. They are Psalms 120-134.

Royal Psalms. These have the anointed king in the foreground and reflect some high point of the king's reign. Examples include Psalms 2, 20, 45, 72, 89, 110, and 144. A subcategory would be the so-called enthronement psalms. These include Psalms 47, 93, and 95-99. Delitzsch (1:68-71) categorized these messianic psalms under 5 classes. First there are eschatological psalms (ex.: Psalms 96-99) "in which the poet, looking beyond his own age, comforts himself with the vision of this king in whom the promise is finally fulfilled." Second, some are typically Messianic psalms (ex.: Psalm 34:20; 109:8 in Acts 1:20) "in which David himself. . . gives expression in lyric verse to prominent typical events and features of his life." Third, there are the typico-prophetically Messianic psalms (ex.: Psalm 22) "in which David, describing his outward and inward experiences, --experiences even in themselves typical,--is carried beyond the limits of his individuality and present condition, and utters concerning himself that which, transcending human experience, is intended to become historically true only in Christ." The fourth category is that of indirectly eschatologically Messianic psalms (ex.: Psalms 2, 45 and 72) "in which, according to the time of their composition, Messianic hopes are referred to a contemporary king, but without, having been fulfilled in him." And then fifth, the eschatologically Jehovic psalms (ex.: Psalm 93) "are taken up with describing the advent of Jehve and the consummation of His kingdom, which is all through brought about by judgment."

Anderson (pp. 235-238) categorizes the Psalms somewhat differently. His categories include: Narrative/storytelling Psalms (135 and 136), Laments (Community = 89, 90, 94, 123, 126, 129, and 137; Individual = 27, 28, 31, 35, 36, 39-43, 52, 53, 77, 86, 88, 89, 109, 120, 139-142; and Penitential = 102, 130, 143), Songs of Thanksgiving (Community = 124 and 136;

Individual = 92, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138), Hymns of Praise (104, 145-148. and 150), Festival Songs and Liturgies (Covenant renewal = 81; Enthronement = 96-99; of the Davidic Covenant = 89 and 132; Royal = 72, 101, 110, and 144:1-11; Songs of Zion = 87, 121, and 122; and Liturgies = 115, 134), and Songs of Trust and Meditation (Songs of trust = 63, 91, 121, 125, and 131; Wisdom = 127, 128, and 133; and of the Torah = 119).

Arrangement. The collection of Psalms, in their final form, is arranged into five books with each book ending in a concluding doxology, and the whole collection ending in the crescendo of praise in Psalm 150. The Psalms are arranged in five books which are: Book I (1-41, with 41:13 as the concluding doxology), Book II (42-72, with 72:18-19 as the concluding doxology), Book III (73-89, with 89:52 as the concluding doxology); Book IV (90-106, with 106:48 as the concluding doxology), and Book V (107-150, with 150 serving as the concluding doxology for the whole Psalms).

Terminology. Several terms appear within the various Psalms which require some definition, though in most cases their meanings are quite uncertain.

Selah. Selah occurs 71 times. Either “it is the signal for an interlude or change of musical accompaniment,” or signifies either “change of voices” or “repeat from the beginning” (Kidner, pp. 36-37).

Higgaion. It is related to the verb meaning to murnur or meditate and so “as a musical direction it may perhaps indicate the quieter instruments” (Kidner, p. 37).

Shiggaion. Though the term seems to come from the verb “to err” or “to wander,” it seems to apply to the poetic form rather than the subject matter of Psalm 7. Thus it may refer to music which is wild and ecstatic and involve stirring the emotions (Kidner, p. 38).

Mikram. Based upon the subject matter of the psalms titled with this (Pss. 16, 56-60, all written by David), and its possible reference to covering, if it is related to an Akkadian cognate *katamu*, it could refer to a “silent prayer” (Kidner, p. 38).

Maskil. This title heads 13 psalms (32, 42, 44, 45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142). It is “the participle for a verb meaning to make wise or prudent, or to have success or skill.” Yet, not all of these psalms thus titles fit that description. It could possibly mean, then, something more like an “efficacious psalm” or a “skillful psalm,” though neither option is clearly supported (Kidner, p. 38).

OUTLINES OF SAMPLE PSALMS

Psalms

[Wisdom Psalm]

- I. The righteous man who delights in the Law will be established (1-3).
- II. The wicked man in contrast will perish in judgment (4-5).
- III. The two outcomes are determined by God (6).

Message: The righteous man, who is described as one loving God’s law and rejecting the ways of the wicked, will be blessed by God while the wicked man faces judgment.

Psalm 2

(ascribed to David in Acts 4:25)

[Royal Psalm; Indirectly Eschatologically Messianic]

- I. The kings of the earth conspire against God and His anointed (1-3).
- II. God scoffs at the conspirators, announcing the installation of His king on Zion (4-6).
- III. The king recounts God's promise to give him the nations (7-9).
 - A. The LORD declared him His son (7).
 - B. He offered him all the nations as his inheritance (8).
 - C. He promised him that he would defeat and rule the nations (9).
- IV. The kings of the earth are then warned to worship the LORD and bow to the Son, promising blessing for those who take refuge in Him (10-12)
 - A. The kings are called upon to show discernment by heeding the warning (10).
 - B. They are called upon to worship the LORD (11).
 - C. They are then called upon to do homage to God's Anointed in light of the possibility of His wrath and the promise of blessing for those who take refuge in him.

Message: As David warns the kings around him to submit rather than rebel, so the future kingdoms are warned to submit to the Messiah when He sets up His kingdom (prophetic psalm).

Psalm 22

For the choir director

upon Aijeleth Hashshahar

A Psalm of David

[Typical Prophetic Messianic]

- I. The psalmist calls out to God to hear him, knowing that He has listened to Israel in the past, that He has been faithful to him in the past, and reports that his enemies do not think God will deliver him (2-12).
 - A. He expresses his feeling that God has not yet listened to his cry for help (2-3).
 - B. He acknowledges that God has delivered Israel from distress in the past (4-6).
 - C. He tells how his people both reject him and laugh at his trusting in God (7-9).
 - D. He recounts how he has found God faithful to him since his birth (10-11).
 - E. He declares that he can only be helped by God now (12).

- II. The psalmist laments that his enemies have the advantage over him and are stealing his property, and that he is suffering emotionally and physically (13-19).
 - A. He reports that he is surrounded by enemies who are trying to destroy him (13-14).
 - B. He declares that he is discouraged and physically expended (15-16).
 - C. He reports that his enemies are taking away and dividing up his property and want to capture him (17-19).
- III. The psalmist petitions God to protect him and deliver him from his enemies and then declares his trust in Him (20-22).
- IV. The psalmist vows to praise God publicly for answering his petition and plans to include others in his celebration, also expecting future generations to benefit from hearing of his deliverance (23-32).
 - A. He promises to openly praise God and tell how He listens to the afflicted's call for help (23-25).
 - B. He promises to fulfill his vow before the faithful Israelites who he will include in his sacrificial feast (26-27).
 - C. He foresees men everywhere in the world responding to the message (28-30).
 - D. He foresees future generations of men remembering God's faithfulness in delivering him from his trouble (31-32).

Message: The psalmist calls upon God, who he knows to listen to people in distress, to start noticing his troubles with strong enemies, who have taken and are distributing his property and want to kill him, and to deliver him from them even as he, the psalmist, promises to praise God with a thanksgiving offering and public declaration of His deliverance which will be remembered by future generations who come under God's dominion.

Psalm 51

“A Prayer for Pardon for Sin”

A Psalm of Petition

[Individual Lament]

- I. Address: The Psalmist asks God for forgiveness for his sin (1-2).
 - A. His request is based upon God's loyal (covenantal) love (1).
 - B. His request is that God would remove his sin guilt from him (2).
- II. Lament: The psalmist laments the fact that he has sinned against God and that his very nature is sinful (3-6).
 - A. He laments that he has sinned against God and confesses his guilt before Him (3-4).
 - B. He confesses his sinful nature, even from birth (5-6).

III. Petition: The psalmist petitions the Lord to forgive his sins and to restore his fellowship with God (7-12).

A. He asks God to forgive his sins and remove guilt (7-9).

1. He prays for ceremonial and moral cleansing from God (7).
2. He asks for the removal of guilt (8).
3. He requests that God remember his sins no more (9).

B. He asks God to restore his fellowship with Him (10-12).

1. He prays for God to remake his nature to be holy (10).
2. He asks for God to keep him in the covenantal relationship of king (11).
3. He requests that God restore his joyful relationship with Him (12).

IV. The Vow of Praise: The psalmist vows to glorify God by leading others to repentance, by publicly praising Him for His forgiveness and by then offering sacrifices once God has responded to his heart's cry (13-19).

A. He vows to glorify God by convincing others to repent of their sins (13).

B. He promises to praise God publicly for His forgiveness (14-15).

C. He vows to praise God with animal sacrifices once He is pleased with the sacrifice of his humble hearted repentance (16-19).

1. He acknowledges that God prefers a humble confession over animal sacrifices (16-17).
2. He promises to offer sacrifices when God is satisfied with his humble repentance (18-19).

Message: The psalmist petitions God, based upon His character as a forgiving God who responds to humble repentance, for forgiveness of his sin and restoration of fellowship with Him in order that he may return to serving and praising Him and that he might lead others to do the same.

Psalm 62

For the choir director,
according to Jeduthan;
a Psalm of David.

I. David declares his trust in God as his protector and laments the intentions of his enemies to dethrone him (1-4).

A. He tells that he waits quietly upon God to deliver him from his enemies and that God will protect him from them (1-2).

- B. He reports how his enemies are secretly conspiring to dethrone him (3-4).
- II. David declares his trust in (GOD as his protector and calls upon others to trust Him to deliver them also (5-8).
 - A. He tells that he rests quietly in his faith in God to deliver him and that his remaining in power depends upon God (5-7).
 - B. He calls upon his listeners to trust in God and go to Him in prayer for deliverance from enemies (8).
- III. David declares that men and their efforts are meaningless and God's character such that He will repay men for their conduct (9-12).
 - A. He reports that all men are insignificant (9).
 - B. He calls upon men to stop trusting in wealth and to trust in God who can and will repay men according to their conduct (10-12).

Message: In light of the intentions of his enemies to dethrone him, David declares his trust in God to deliver him and calls upon the people to trust God in the same way rather than ill gotten gains, realizing that God repays men for their conduct.

Proverbs

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author and Date. Harrison sees the composite nature of Proverbs contributing to the problem of authorship and date (p. 1012). The first section attributed to King Solomon directly (10.1—22.16) “appears to be of considerably antiquity” and so should be viewed as Solomonic (Harrison, p. 1017). The first appendix, the collection of “Sayings of the Wise” (22:17--23:14) has been related to an Egyptian document called the *Wisdom of Amenophis* which has considerable similar material and has thus been dated anywhere from 1200 to 600 B.C. (Harrison, pp. 1015-1017). Harrison argues that evidence of “certain peculiarities in grammatical and syntactical form” indicates “that the Egyptian composition was a rather literal translation of a Semitic original” called “Tite Words of the Wise” which may have either been the collection used by Solomon or closely resembled it (Harrison, p. 1015). He notes further in regard to dating the material in Proverbs.

It can be observed, however, that all portions of Proverbs contain vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and gnomic concepts of great antiquity; and in view of the important place Canaanite wisdom is now known to have occupied in the Near Eastern corpus, it might not be amiss to devote more careful study that has been the case hitherto to the theory that both Amenophis and Proverbs depend to some extent upon earlier Semitic originals, perhaps of Mesopotamian provenance (Harrison, p. 1015).

The second Solomonic section of Proverbs (25:1--29:27) asserts in its opening verse that Hezekiah's men transcribe Solomon's proverbs into this collection. Harrison seems less ready to attribute them to Solomon, though, seeing them as merely playing “a part in formulating and editing collections of proverbs amassed in Hebrew gnomic circles” (Harrison, p. 1017). This denial of Solomonic authorship of this section of proverbs is unfortunate. Though their arrangement can certainly be attributed to others, the text is clear that Solomon should be credited with their creation. The identities of Agur (30:1-33) and Lemuel (31:1ff) remain enigmatic, and so their dating. Harrison, recognizing that the tenor of the words of Lemuel reflects a pre-exilic world, still sees from the Aramaic affinities someone other than Solomon (p. 1018).

My position is that most of the book is a collection of proverbs personally written by Solomon, some being arranged by him (his first section) and other arranged by Hezekiah's scribes (second section). The other portions attributed to the sayings of the wise, Agur, and possibly Lemuel (which could be another name for Solomon) were collected by Solomon and so reflect his selection as teaching truth and so worthy of inclusion in the inspired Scriptures. Thus the dating of the individual proverbs should be pushed back to Solomon's days. The dating of the collection probably should be placed within Hezekiah's time, not much later, though I would not have a problem with Ezra finalizing the form (except that there is not evidence to suggest such a late compilation).

Audience. The book was written for the instruction of young men. Harrison argues that it was specifically for wealthy young men. He says,

The teachings of the book were not initiated for the edification of young women, and

certainly not for young children if the caution against the adulterous woman is any criterion. The concern of the book, is predominantly with the youths of the upper classes, since they alone would be most likely to be able to afford the kind of excesses described in Proverbs and similar gnomic literature (Harrison, p. 1012).

His argument is weak with regard to its applicability to only the wealthy. The excesses could be lived out, though maybe on a smaller scale, by the poor as well. The poor are just as lustful and dishonest as the rich and have just as many opportunities to abuse their fellow men as well.

Canonicity. It has been included in the Hebrew canon, following after Psalms and Job (*Bara Bathra* 14b, 15a).

Intent. The five-fold intent of Proverbs is given in its first six verses. 1) “to know wisdom and instruction,” 2) “to discern the sayings of understanding,” 3) “to receive instruction in wise behavior,” 4) “to give prudence to the naive,” and 5) “to understand a proverb and a figure.” The foundation of all of this is the fear of the LORD (1:7). Thus, the purpose “then, is to develop in others, especially the young, a wise, skillful approach to living, which begins with being properly related to the Lord” (Buzzel, BKCOT, p. 902).

Literary Component

Genre. The genre of this book, of course, is the proverb. From the Hebrew term, *marshal*, possibly related to a verb meaning “to be like,” a proverb is understood as “a statement that makes a comparison or summarizes a common experience” (Buzzel, BKCOT, p. 903). Even so, there are several kinds of proverbs which will now be discussed (the information, unless otherwise noted, comes from Delitzsch’s commentary, pp. 6-13). Delitzsch identifies the basic structure of a proverb as a *distich*. This is a two-line poetic saying with some form of parallelism between the lines through which the truths are expressed. From this basic form all the various kinds of proverbs are built.

Synonymous parallelism. The second line repeats the thought of the first, using an altered (synonymous) form “In order to express the thought as clearly and exclusively as possible.”

Antithetical parallelism. The second line provides a contrast to the statement of the first line in order to explain its meaning.

Synthetic parallelism. Two different truths are expressed in the two lines, though there is some relationship between them.

Integral parallelism. The second line completes the thought begun in the first (this is called synthetic parallelism by others).

Parabolic proverbs. This is a “proverb explaining its ethical object by a resemblance from the region of the natural and every-day life.” They are made up of comparisons.

Emblematic parallelism. This is a form of parabolic proverb (?) in which “one line illumines the other by a simile or a metaphor” (Buzzel, BKCOT, p. 903).

In addition to the *distich*, there are also other forms of proverbs. The *tetrastich* last two lines related to the first two lines, normally in synonymous (23:15f.; 24:3f., 28f.), synthetic (30:5f.), or integral (30:17f.) parallelism (no antithetical ones have been identified). A *trislich* occurs when the idea expressed in the first line is repeated in the second with synonymous parallelism (27:22) or when the idea of the second is explained through the contrast of antithetic parallelism in the third line (22:29; 28:10). In the *pentastich* (ex.: 23:4f., 25:61f. 30:32f.), the

last three lines normally “unfold the reason of the thought of the first two.” Only one *heptastich* is identified (23:6-8).

Arrangement. See the outline below for the arrangement of the material.

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: The proverbs of Solomon are written to give prudence, knowledge, and wise counsel to the man who fears God. 1:1-7

Theme: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” 1:7

- II. Solomon’s words concerning wisdom: He exhorts his son to pursue Wisdom because she brings life and honor. 1:8--9
- A. He warns of calamity for those who ignore wisdom. 1:8ff
 - B. Wisdom will guard the path of the man who seeks it and protect him from evil men and women. 2
 - C. Wise living brings health and long life to the man who accepts the discipline of the LORD. 3
 - D. He calls upon his son to listen since wisdom brings guides the man to a long and healthy life. 4
 - E. He rejects sexual immorality, commending faithfulness to one’s wife. 5
 - F. He gives a series of warnings, against becoming surety, idleness, adultery, and seven abominations. 6
 - G. He again warns that going to a prostitute/whore is folly and leads only to death. 7
 - H. Wisdom calls the young man to come to her and enjoy her blessings, recounting her role in creation. 8
 - I. The woman of wisdom calls for the naive to come and learn understanding while the woman of folly is boisterous, leading the naive to death.
- III. Proverbs of Solomon: This collection of various proverbs contrasts the upright and the wicked and teaches about both wise and foolish life and conduct. 10:1--22:16
- IV. Appendix: The Sayings of the Wise Men. 22:17--24
- V. Proverbs of Solomon collected by Hezekiah’s men: This collection of various proverbs contain a majority of similitudes, moral lessons, and antithetic proverbs. 25-29
- VI. Appendix: The Sayings of Apur cover various topics on men and things.
- VII. Appendix: The Words of Lemuel recounts the counsel of his mother concerning whores, drinking wine, and justice. 31:1-9
- VIII. Appendix: The noble wife is hard working and dependable, as described in the acrostic poem in which each verse begins with a consecutive letter of the alphabet. 31:10-31

Ecclesiastes

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. In 1:1 the writer identifies himself as “the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” Since only Solomon was a son of David who reigned in Jerusalem, and the description of the writer’s accomplishments in 2:1-10 best fits him, Solomon is the text’s asserted author. Though some commentators would use 1:12 to argue against Solomon on the basis of the perfect tense (“I was king . . .”), that “tense actually denotes a state of action that began in the past and stretches forward to the present” (Kaiser, p. 27). A second argument against his authorship is based upon his statement in 1:16 that he had magnified wisdom “over all who were over Jerusalem before me.” Since David was the only Hebrew king before Solomon, this would seem to make little sense. Yet, Solomon could easily be looking back at the Canaanite kings as well as Melchizedek (Kaiser, pp. 27-28). Further argument against this objection to Solomon is the question concerning who else could boast of such wisdom. None other would seem a likely candidate based upon the evidence of Kings and Chronicles. A third objection comes from the supposed late character of the book’s language. Kaiser points to an absence of Hebrew vowels in the words point to a very early date of composition. He notes that “final vowel letters (*matres lectionis*) first appeared in the late eighth century B.C., and medial, or middle, vowel letters came into vogue at the end of the seventh or early sixth century B.C.” He notes further that the so-called Aramaisms are of a more Canaanite-Phoenician type not seen in any other Hebrew writings (Kaiser, p. 28).

Date. Recognizing Solomonic authorship leads to the question of date of writing, especially in terms of the period of his life. The reference to old age in 12:1-6 could serve as an autobiographical reference. Of significance too is the assertion of 1 Kings 11:9-26 that God raised up adversaries against Solomon as rods of affliction, and that they may have turned him back to the LORD. Further, the reference in 1 Kings 11:41 to Solomon’s wisdom at the end of his life may look at a return to God, though this is only a hint if anything at all. Kaiser’s assessment is accepted, in which he says.

Therefore, given the Solomonic authorship of the book, it will be best placed *not before* his apostasy, for the questions and sins of Ecclesiastes did not trouble him then, nor *during* his years of rebellion, for then he had no occasion to use the language of spiritual things. Ecclesiastes is best placed *after* his apostasy, when both his recent turmoil and repentance were still fresh in his mind (p. 31).

Audience. With Solomonic authorship comes a tenth century audience. Still, the content of the book may indicate more than an Israelite audience. Kaiser points to the Queen of Sheba and the other kings in Solomon’s domain as a likely audience since so many people were coming from other lands to learn of his wisdom (p. 32). A further evidence of this may be the absence of YHWH, the covenantal name of God, from the book and the references to Him as Elohim. Further, there is nothing said of the Abrahamic or Mosaic covenants or laws, of temple worship, or of Israel as a nation. Thus, the book appears to have been purposely designed to reflect a more general audience and to be identified within the mainstream of wisdom literature of that day.

Canonicity. The first evidence of its canonical status comes from Ben Sira in the early 2nd century B.C. who quotes from it without a statement as to its status (Eaton, p. 25). Josephus

mentioned Ecclesiastes as a part of the accepted Scriptures in his work, *Against Apion* (1.37-43). It was read on the third day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Kaiser p.41). Melito of Sardis and Origin list it as a part of canonical scripture. Thus, its acceptance was early. Eaton notes that at the Synod of Jamnia in A. D. 100, “Rabbinical discussions revolve not around *whether* Ecclesiastes was canonical, but *why* it was. Jamnia discussed only books already considered canonical: none was treated as a candidate for admission” (Eaton. p. 27).

Intent. The author’s intent is most clearly expounded in the book’s epilogue. He was seeking to encourage his readers to fear and keep His commandments (12:13). The book is written with this purpose in view. The vanity of life then serves as the motivation to focus upon the more important truth that God is the only permanent reality and that He will one day judge each person. Thus, life should be understood in its proper context and enjoyed as much as possible.

Literary Component

Genre. This book falls into that class of material known as wisdom literature. It contains poetry, a little autobiographical material, as well as proverbs and some narrative sections.

Arrangement. The book does not have a clear outline or progress of thought, but rather seems to ramble along, repeating ideas as if mulling them over some more. Thus, though there is some progress, the introduction and conclusions are supported throughout the book in its bits and pieces. Still, an outline will be attempted below and reflects a great deal of dependence upon Glenn’s work in BKCOT, though I disagree with his pessimistic evaluation of the message of the book.

OUTLINE

- I. The futility of Solomon’s efforts and wisdom led him to conclude that God intended men to enjoy their labors. 1-2
 - A. Tide: “The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” 1:1
 - B. The futility of human effort is seen in the repetitive, unchanging, nature of life 1:2-11
 1. Theme: Human effort is futile. 1:2
 2. Every aspect of life is repetitive and unchanging. 1:3-11
 - C. Solomon’s own life demonstrated the futility of human effort. 1:12--2:23
 1. He learned that seeking accomplishments and wisdom is futile in and of itself. 1:12-18
 2. He tried to find meaning in learning, accomplishments, pleasure, and possessions, but found them all to be futile by themselves. 2:1-11
 3. He then tried wisdom and realized that all men die alike, with the result that he hated life because of its futility. 2:12-17
 4. He came to hate the fruit of his labors when he realized that his heir would get it all without using wisdom, knowledge, or skill. 2:18-23

- D. Solomon concluded that a man should enjoy his labor since it is from God who blesses good men with wisdom, knowledge, and joy. 2:24-26
- II. God's created order makes oppression and greed meaningless and so should lead one to enjoy his labor and income as blessings from God. 3-5
 - A. Since God has created the world order in which men are to labor, they should rejoice in life and do good in light of His future judgment. 3
 - 1. There is an appointed time for everything. 3:1-8
 - 2. God has given men labor with which to occupy themselves while placing eternity in their hearts. 3:9-11
 - 3. Men should rejoice in life and do good since they live in God's created order which is characterized by futility and since they will one day be judged by Him. 3:12-22
 - B. Oppression, rivalry, greed, and dissatisfaction may motivate effort but do not produce lasting results. 4
 - 1. When he saw the oppression men face, he congratulated the dead and considered the never-born even more fortunate. 4:1-3
 - 2. Recognizing that labor and skill arise from rivalry, which is futile, he concluded that a little rest was better than a lot of effort. 4:4-6
 - 3. An example of vanity was the workaholic who never stopped to realize he had no heir to justify his deprivations. 4:7-8
 - 4. There is comfort and support in companionship. 4:9-12
 - 5. The replacement of an old king with a new one is futile because the people will become dissatisfied with him as well. 4:13-16
 - C. Wealth and oppression cannot satisfy. 5:1-17
 - 1. One should fear God and take seriously his vows to Him. 5:1-7
 - 2. Do not be shocked when you see oppression, but realize that the king's officials are watching. 5:8-9
 - 3. The love of money brings no satisfaction while a common worker can enjoy his sleep. 5:10-12
 - 4. Hoarding wealth is futile since it can be lost and cannot be taken to the grave. 5:13-17
 - D. The proper attitude is to enjoy one's labor or wealth, both which come as a blessing from God. 5:18-20
- III. Wisdom, though sometimes futile, guides a man through an uncertain life and motivates him to trust God and enjoy each day. 6-8:15

- A. Men cannot always enjoy the fruit of their labors or discern what is best. 6
 - 1. A prevalent evil among men is some men's inability to enjoy life, whether it involves wealth or length of days. 6:1-6
 - 2. Men can never satisfy their appetites. 6:7-9
 - 3. Man is fleeting and unable to discern the best for himself in life. 6:10-12
 - B. The wise man fears God even with the uncertainties of life and depends upon Him to protect him from scheming women. 7
 - 1. Wisdom is better than folly and should lead one to consider God's work in his life. 7:1-14
 - 2. Though righteousness does not guarantee long life and some wicked men live long, one should still fear God. 7:15-18
 - 3. Wisdom is the best choice as well as not taking men's curses seriously. 7:19-22
 - 4. When seeking wisdom, he discovered the scheming woman and found that the man pleasing to God would escape her while the sinner was caught. 7:23-26
 - 5. He has found few men and no women loyal, and that their unrighteousness does not come from God. 7:27-29
 - C. Wise living is no guarantee of long life though it should lead a man to support his government. 8
 - 1. Wisdom illumines a man. 8:1
 - 2. One should remain obedient and loyal to his king. 8:2-4
 - 3. A wise person obeys the authorities even when he cannot control the consequences or when facing injustice. 8:5-9
 - 4. Slow justice breeds crime and lifestyle is no guarantee of longevity. 8:10-14
 - D. Therefore a man should enjoy his life daily for as long as God allows him to live. 8:15
- IV. Life's unpredictability should motivate men to live life to its fullest, preferring wisdom over foolishness, and with the realization that they will someday answer to their Creator 8:16--12
- A. Since God's created order cannot be fathomed, men would live life to its fullest 8:16--9:12
 - 1. He realized that men cannot comprehend God's work. 8:16-17
 - 2. The lives of wise men are in God's control and their outcomes are known only to Him. 9:1
 - 3. All men, whether good or wicked, will die. 9:2-6
 - 4. Thus a man should enjoy the life God gives him and his wife as his reward. 9:7-9

5. Since life and death are unpredictable, a man should approach life vigorously. 9:10-12
- B. Foolishness is a destructive force which can never help the person or anyone around him. 9:13--10
1. Solomon saw that though wisdom was better than strength, it did nothing to elevate a poor man 9:13-18
 2. Foolishness does more harm than wisdom does good. 10:1-4
 3. It is evil when the wrong people are exalted or humbled. 10:5-7
 4. One should watch over his words since wisdom gives success and foolish talk, even in private, can only lead to trouble. 10:8-20
- C. Since life is unpredictable one should work hard and enjoy his youth while not forgetting his Creator. 11--12:8
1. Not knowing the future, one should be diligent in his labor. 11:1-6
 2. Since life is futile, one should enjoy it in his youth while recognizing that God will judge him for his deeds and that he will get old. 11:7-10
 3. Remember your Creator during your youth since you will one day die. 12:1-8
- V. Conclusion: One should fear and obey God since He will one day judge him. 12:9-14
- A. The preacher arranged proverbs, taught the people, and sought truth. 12:9-10
 - B. The wise words move men to action, excessive devotion to books wearies them. 12:11-12
 - C. Conclusion: "Fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." 12:13-14

Song of Solomon

LITERARY DESIGN

Historical Component

Author. Solomon is the author as stated in the first verse. Further, six other verses name him (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11, 12) and five refer to the king' (1:4; 12; 3:9, 11: 7:5).

Date. Though critical scholars attempt to date the book after Solomon, their arguments are speculative and fly in the face of the book's own assertion (see Carr's discussion for more critical information, pp. 19ff). Accepting Solomonic authorship, and considering that the book describes marriage to a foreign woman, probably the daughter of Pharaoh mentioned in 1 Kings 3:1 (based upon her description in 1:5-6). It was likely written early in his reign. Thus its date should be placed somewhere in the early tenth century B.C.

Audience. The nation of Israel is the audience. This song was likely written to be sung as a part of the wedding.

Canonicity. Its canonical status has never been questioned even though its interpretation has been difficult for many.

Intent. The Song of Solomon was written to extol human love and marriage.

Literary Component

Genre. It is both poetry and wisdom literature.

Arrangement. The story of the song is developed chronologically, moving from the engagement to the wedding and then to later marriage.

Characterization. The groom, Solomon, and his bride are only lightly developed through the story. The focus is upon their love, mutual admiration, and reconciliation. The man is pictured always in a good light, even after his wife had taken him for granted when he approached her bed chamber one evening.

The Garden Motif. The theme of the garden carries a *double entendre* within the song, and deserves a short discussion. In the Scriptures the use of "garden" can have both literal and figurative senses. For example, in many locations it means a literal garden. It was also the place where God was present after creation and blessed the man and his wife. The theme of Eden runs through the Scriptures. The garden was also a royal retreat. Solomon had his gardens, Ahab took Naboth's in 1 Kings 21 for his own personal use. Gardens were also places of cultic worship. And finally, the garden was used as an erotic symbol, possibly arising from its cultic use (Carr, pp. 55-60).

The garden is mentioned about 20 times in the Song of Solomon, several carrying a *double entendre*. For example, in their consummation of the marriage (4:12-5:1) the reference to her garden is nothing less than a euphemism for her female genitalia and an invitation to sexual union. That no cultic sense is involved in these references can be seen by the lack of cultic terminology. And so, these are simply poetic means of describing sexual charms and advances where ever the double sense is appropriate.

Interpretation

Four basic approaches have been taken in understanding and expounding the meaning of the Song of Solomon. They will now be discussed, summarizing the work of Carr (p. 36).

Allegory. The first approach to the Song is to interpret it allegorically. He notes,

Basic to the allegorical method is the idea that a given passage contains no factual or historically true record of any past event, but is merely a vehicle for some deeper spiritual truth. The grammatical-historical meaning of the text is ignored, so that what the original author said takes second place to what the interpreter wants to say (Carr, p. 21).

He says further, “Those commentators who allegorize the Song ignore the male/female relationship so vividly described in the poem, and interpret the whole book in terms of God’s dealing with Israel or Christ’s relationship with his church” (p. 22) He finally notes that the Song does not provide any of the usual hints that it is allegory since the places and people are all realistic (p. 23).

Typology. Carr describes the typological approach well. He says,

Typology recognizes the validity of the Old Testament account in its own right, but then finds in that account a clear, parallel link with some event or teaching in the New Testament which the Old Testament account foreshadows The typical interpretation does not provide a “different” meaning that replaces the one the text appears to present, but gives *an added dimension* to the sense already present in the text (Carr, p. 24).

This approach would then see the Song speaking to more than human love and marriage. For the Jewish interpreter the bride became a type of Israel with the man picturing God and the song describing the ideal relationship between Israel and the LORD (p. 25). This is often done for the church and Christ as well. This approach has been strengthened by the “Love Song” of Psalm 45 which is quoted with a Christoiological meaning in the New Testament (p. 26). Carr rejects this connection on the basis of the difference in vocabulary. Where the Psalm has various cultic terms within it, thereby carrying a religious purpose within its composition, the Song of Solomon is devoid of such terminology and so cannot be attributed a religious purpose (pp. 28-29). Finally, the New Testament does not attach to the Song of Solomon any Christological interpretations or applications (p. 31).

Drama. A third idea is that the Song was written as a drama to be acted or sung possibly at Solomon’s wedding. The weakness of this view is that the Song lacks the focus and unity necessary for a drama. It lacks the progression of a story line per se, even though some development is evident. Also, the book cannot be easily divided into acts or scenes and “would be virtually impossible to stage effectively” (pp. 32-34).

Literal. The final approach, and best, is to interpret the Song literally and see it as “what it appears naturally to be--a series of poems which speak clearly and explicitly of the feelings, desires, concerns, hopes and fears of two young lovers--without any need to allegorize or typologize or dramatize to escape the clear erotic elements present in the text” (p. 34).

OUTLINE

- I. “The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s.” 1:1
- II. The courtship: Solomon and his bride’s love grow as they long for each other.
1:2--3:5

- A. Introduction: The bride longs for Solomon who praises her beauty. 1:2-11
 - 1. The bride longs for the king's love. 1:2-4
 - 2. She feels insecure because of her dark skin and longs for Solomon's presence. 1:5-8
 - 3. Solomon praises her beauty. 1:9-11
- B. As their love grows, the bride dreams of romantic meetings with her fiancé. 1:12--3:5
 - 1. The two lovers exchange praises of each other. 1:12-2:6
 - 2. The refrain: The groom calls upon the daughters of Jerusalem not to wake his love till she pleases. 2:7
 - 3. The bride dreams that Solomon takes her on a romantic visit to the country. 2:8-17
 - 4. The bride dreams of missing Solomon, then finding him and bringing him into her mother's bed chamber. 3:1-4
 - 5. The refrain: The groom calls upon the daughters of Jerusalem not to wake his love till she pleases. 3:5
- III. The wedding: Solomon weds his bride and they consummate the marriage in love and purity. 3:6--5:1
 - A. Solomon marries his bride as depicted in the wedding procession. 3:6-11
 - B. On their wedding night they consummate the marriage amid the king's praises of her love and purity. 4:1--5:1
 - 1. The king describes his bride's beauty. 4:1-7
 - 2. He invites her to come with him. 4:8
 - 3. The king praises his bride's love. 4:9-11
 - 4. The king praises his bride's purity. 4:12-15
 - 5. They consummate the marriage 4:16--5:1
 - a. She invites him. 4:16
 - b. He enjoys her. 5:1
- IV. The marriage suffers from a period of indifference which is reconciled and grows into a more willing sexual relationship. 5:2--8:5
 - A. The bride's indifference led to separation and then reconciliation. 5:2--6:13
 - 1. The problem: The wife recounts her indifference and the husband's departure which left her seeking him. 5:2-8
 - 2. She realizes her attraction to her husband. 5:9-16
 - 3. She then learns that he is in the garden. 6:1-3
 - 4. The reconciliation: Solomon is glad to see her and praises her over his other

wives and concubines. 6:4-13

- B. Solomon describes his wife's charms and desires to enjoy them. 7:1-9a
 - C. She responds by inviting him to spend time with her and enjoy her charms. 7:9b-13
 - D. She reveals a desire for a greater intimacy. 8:1-4
- V. The Conclusion: The nature and power of love is such that it starts young and becomes an unquenchable fire, has immeasurable value, and is to be reserved for one's beloved. 8:5-7
- A. A picture of love: The two come home together. 8:5
 - B. Love is described as an unquenchable fire which is beyond value. 8:6-7
- VI. The Epilogue: How love began. She was given while young, in purity, and kept herself for him always. 8:8-14

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SONG OF SOLOMON

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