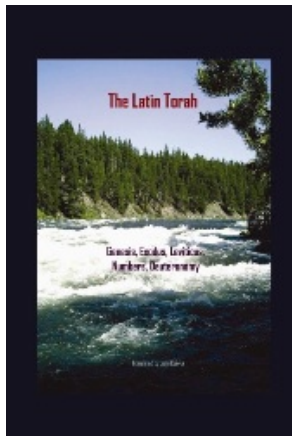


Study Guide to

The Latin *Torah* :
Fresh Translations of Genesis, Exodus,
Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy



Care and Feeding of The Latin Torah

Receive this book as an Honored Guest –

after all, its earliest copy sat in
the Ark of the Covenant.

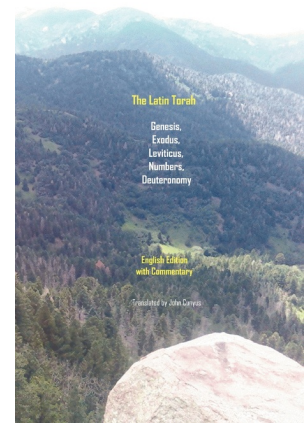
Set nothing else on top of it.

Do not set it on unclean surfaces.

Consider it holy,
because the One revealed in it is holy.

Act appropriately in its presence.

Use it to bless.



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Book Description for The Latin Torah

The Latin Torah : Fresh Translations of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy represents the oldest portion of the oldest extant Bible in the world. *Torah* , a Hebrew word meaning "instruction" or "teaching", is the Jewish name for the first five books of the Bible. This book of books and the God revealed in it are sacred alike to **Jews, Christians, and Muslims**. The documents have existed in some form since the reign of **King Solomon**, some ten centuries before Christ.

The **Latin version** of the Bible, found in ***Codex Amiatinus***, the world's oldest extant Bible (containing all the books in our "consensus" Bibles, plus a few extras), was painstakingly crafted by **Saint Jerome** in the late 4th Century of the Christian Era, at the apex of seven centuries of biblical scholarship in many languages.

In The Latin Torah , **John Cunyus** renders Jerome's ancient, Latin version into contemporary English, in a verse-by-verse translation.

Original Languages of the Old Testament:

Hebrew

Aramaic (five chapters in Daniel)

Divisions of the Old Testament

www.JohnCunyus.com

Torah

“Law”
“Instruction”
“Books of Moses”

Genesis

Creation to the death of Joseph.

Exodus

Enslavement to construction of the Tabernacle.

Leviticus

Laws for approaching the Lord.

Numbers

Israel’s struggles in the wasteland.

Deuteronomy

Moses’ farewell address.

Nevi'im

“Prophets”

“The Former Prophets”

Joshua

Story of the conquest.

Judges

The Israelite confederation.

***1 & 2 Samuel**

Samuel to David.

***1 & 2 Kings**

Solomon to Jerusalem’s fall.

Nevi'im

(Continued)

“The Latter Prophets”

“The Major Prophets”

Isaiah

8th Century Judah.

Jeremiah

7th-6th Century Judah.

Ezekiel

6th Century Babylon.

*“The Minor Prophets”

Hosea

Northern kingdom, 8th Century.

Amos

Northern kingdom, 8th Century.

Micah

Northern kingdom, 8th Century.

Joel

Post-exile Judah, 5th Century.

Obadiah

Judah, 6th Century.

Jonah

The story of the Great Fish.

Nahum

Post-exile Judah, 4th Century?

Habakkuk

Judah, 6th Century.

Zephaniah

Judah, 7th Century.

Haggai

Post-exile Judah, 6th Century.

Zechariah

Post-exile Judah, 6th Century.

Malachi

Post exile Judah, 5th Century.

Collectively known as

“The Twelve” in Hebrew.

Kethuvim

“Writings”

Ruth

Ancestor of David

***1 & 2 Chronicles**

Israel’s genealogy and history

Lamentations

Associated with Jeremiah and Jerusalem’s Destruction, 587 BC

Daniel

God’s guidance in captivity.

Ezra

Return from exile in Babylon

Nehemiah

Rebuilding Jerusalem after exile.

Esther

Delivered the Jews from Haman.

Psalms

Associated with David.

Hymn book of the Second Temple.

The “Wisdom Literature”

Job

Associated with Solomon.

Proverbs

How to Succeed.

Ecclesiastes

What lasts and what doesn’t.

Song of Solomon

What true love looks like.

*Books marked with asterisk are considered as one book in the Hebrew canon.

Three Sections of the Old Testament

Law, *Torah*, “Teaching”

Creation to Joseph, **Genesis**.

Enslavement to Sinai, **Exodus**.

Rules for Approaching the Lord,

Leviticus.

Israel’s Struggle in the Wasteland,

Numbers.

The Law’s Summary Prior to

Conquest, **Deuteronomy**

Morality, *Nevi'im*, “Prophets”

A prophet is God’s instrument to teach people right from wrong.

Former Prophets teach by example. Latter Prophets teach by writing.

Former Prophets:

The war for Canaan, **Joshua**.

The tribal confederation,

Judges.

Samuel, Saul, and David, **1 and 2 Samuel**.

Solomon to Jerusalem’s

Destruction, **1 and 2 Kings**

Latter Prophets:

The “Major” Prophets

During Israel’s destruction,

Isaiah.

During Jerusalem’s

destruction, **Jeremiah**.

In exile in Babylon, **Ezekiel**.

The “Minor” Prophets

Hosea, Northern kingdom,

8th Century.

Amos, Northern kingdom, 8th Century.

Micah, Northern kingdom 8th Century.

Joel, Post-exile Judah, 5th Century.

Obadiah, Judah, 6th Century.

Jonah, The story of the Great Fish.

Nahum, Post-exile Judah, 4th Century.

Habakkuk, Judah, 6th Century.

Zephaniah, Judah, 7th Century.

Haggai, Post-exile Judah, 6th Century.

Zechariah, Post-exile Judah, 6th Century.

Malachi, Post exile Judah, 5th Century.

Wisdom, *Kethuvim*, “Writings”

How to praise, **Psalms**.

Why bad things happen, **Job**.

How to Succeed, **Proverbs**.

What lasts, **Ecclesiastes**.

What real love looks like, **Song of Solomon**.

How to endure, **Daniel**.

What happened in Israel, **1 and 2 Chronicles**.

How we survived Haman, **Esther**

Purifying the priesthood, **Ezra**.

Rebuilding the city, **Nehemiah**.

Don’t be a bigot, **Ruth**.

Life can be rough, **Lamentations**.

Various Versions of “Old Testament” Scripture

The Septuagint. This was the Bible of many of Jesus’s contemporaries. A collection of Hebrew holy books was translated into Greek from Hebrew beginning three centuries before Christ’s birth. We get the title “Christ” from the Greek word Χριστός. used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word, מָשִׁיחַ – *Messiah* – meaning “anointed.”

The Vulgate. The Latin form of the Bible was crafted in the late 4th Century of the Common Era, partly based on earlier Latin translations, and partly on St. Jerome’s new translations. This became the Bible of Western Christendom, prior to the explosion of vernacular translations during the Reformation.

The Masoretic Text. This is the standard version of the Hebrew Bible today. The Hebrew canon, closed at Jamnia in 90 AD, was an abridged version of that which was in *The Septuagint*. The Masoretes themselves were Hebrew scholars, who standardized the ancient text in and around the 10th Century of the Common Era.

The Authorized “King James” Version. This is the Bible sanctioned by England’s King James I in 1611 AD on behalf of English-speaking peoples. It bases its Old Testament on the books found in the Masoretic text.

The Apocrypha refers to books found in The Septuagint, but not in the Masoretic text. Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Anglicans still use Bibles including the Apocrypha.

The Consensus Canon, is that which all four bodies sharing these books (Jews, Orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians) hold in common.

The Latin Old Testament Project is translating the Vulgate editions of the consensus, “Authorized”, English canon.

Order of Old Testament Books Greek, Hebrew, Latin, English

Septuagint (3 rd Century, BCE)	Hebrew (1 st Century CE)	Vulgate (4 th Century CE)	Authorized Version (17 th Century CE)
Genesis	Genesis	Genesis	Genesis
Exodus	Exodus	Exodus	Exodus
Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus
Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy
Joshua	Joshua	Joshua	Joshua
Judges	Judges	Judges	Judges
Ruth	Ruth	Ruth	Ruth
1 Samuel	1 Samuel	1 Samuel	1 Samuel
2 Samuel	2 Samuel	2 Samuel	2 Samuel
1 Kings	1 Kings	1 Kings	1 Kings
2 Kings	2 Kings	2 Kings	2 Kings
1 Chronicles	1 Chronicles	1 Chronicles	1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles	2 Chronicles	2 Chronicles	2 Chronicles
1 Esdras	Ezra	1 Esdras	Ezra
Ezra	Nehemiah	Ezra	Nehemiah
Nehemiah	Esther	Nehemiah	Esther
Esther	Job	Esther	Job
Judith	Psalms	Judith	Psalms
Tobit	Proverbs	Tobit	Proverbs
1 Maccabees	Ecclesiastes	1 Maccabees	Ecclesiastes
2 Maccabees	Song of Solomon	2 Maccabees	Song of Solomon
3 Maccabees	Isaiah	Psalms	Isaiah
4 Maccabees	Jeremiah	Proverbs	Jeremiah
Psalms	Lamentations	Ecclesiastes	Lamentations
Odes	Ezekiel	Song of Solomon	Ezekiel
Proverbs	Daniel	Job	Daniel
Ecclesiastes	Hosea	Wisdom	Hosea
Song of Solomon	Joel	Sirach	Joel
Job	Amos	Hosea	Amos
Wisdom	Obadiah	Amos	Obadiah
Sirach Prologue	Jonah	Micah	Jonah
Sirach	Micah	Joel	Micah
Psalms of Solomon	Nahum	Obadiah	Nahum
Hosea	Habakkuk	Jonah	Habakkuk
Amos	Zephaniah	Nahum	Zephaniah
Micah	Haggai	Habakkuk	Haggai
Joel	Zechariah	Zephaniah	Zechariah
Obadiah	Malachi	Haggai	Malachi
Jonah		Zechariah	
Nahum		Malachi	
Habakkuk		Isaiah	
Zephaniah		Jeremiah	
Haggai		Baruch	
Zechariah		Lamentations	
Malachi		Ezekiel	
Isaiah		Daniel	
Jeremiah		4 Esdras	
Baruch		Prayer of Manasseh	
Lamentations			
Epistles of Jeremiah			
Ezekiel			
Susanna			
Daniel			
Bel			

What Is the Old Testament?

(From The Jagged Edge of Forever: Deuteronomy, Daniel, The Minor Prophets)

The Christian Bible is divided into two major sections, known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. What Christians know as The Old Testament is simply The Bible to Jews. Four major religious groups accept The Old Testament as scripture: Jews, Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, and Protestants.

The Old Testament in the Bibles of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians contains several books not found in the Bibles of Jews and Protestants. These books, known as the Apocrypha, have come down to us in Greek, rather than Hebrew, originals. The consensus Old Testament, meaning the books held in common by all four groups, includes thirty-nine different books, making the Bible a book of books.

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, the language of ancient Israel, though it contained a few chapters written in Aramaic, the language of ancient Persia. There is evidence to suggest a proto-Hebrew was being written in the Holy Land as early as fifteen centuries before Christ. Though there was once a relatively large body of ancient Hebrew literature, the passage of time and the perils of manuscript transmission ultimately erased all of it, except for that found in the Bible. What survives from that period, then, is only that which subsequent generations of scribes and copyists deemed worthy of passing on, and the caprices of time failed to obliterate. Others refer to that process as God's supernatural superintending of His word.

The earliest known translation of the Old

Testament took place three centuries before Christ, in Alexandria, Egypt. The Greeks, whose cultural and political dominance swept the ancient Near East with Alexander of Macedon's conquests in the 4th Century, BCE, carried with them an intellectual curiosity about the peoples they conquered. One of the Ptolemies, Greek rulers who took over Egypt after Alexander's death, was impressed by the moral and ethical qualities of his Jewish subjects. Jews had lived in Egypt since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BCE, though their association with the place was far older.

Ptolemy's desire to know what set the Jews apart led him to commission a translation into Greek, which became known as *The Septuagint*. By this time, Hebrew was already an ancient language, unknown even to many Jews outside of Israel's ancient borders. *The Septuagint* became the Bible of the so-called Hellenistic synagogues, gatherings of Jews outside the Holy Land. It became also the Bible of the earliest Christian churches.

In the late 4th Century of the Christian era, the man history knows as Saint Jerome was sent by Pope Damasus to establish a standard text of the New Testament in Latin. There were already Latin translations and Jerome's Greek was excellent, so he accomplished his task in relatively short order. He then turned to the Old Testament.

Jerome first revised an existing Latin translation of the Septuagint Psalter, or book of Psalms. Not entirely satisfied, he then set about studying Hebrew and translating the

entire Old Testament. This work, completed in 405 CE, became the Bible of the Latin-speaking Western Church for over a thousand years. By means of it, Christian faith spread throughout Western Europe and beyond.

Though there are many ways of classifying the books in the Old Testament, the standard classification through the centuries has been three-fold. The Old Testament contains the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The divisions, outlined below, follow the standard Jewish system of classification.

1. **The Law** includes the first five books of scripture: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
2. **The Prophets**, are divided into former and latter prophets. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings are the former prophets (the books of 1 and 2 Samuel are combined in the Jewish Bible, as are 1 and 2 Kings). Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and The Twelve, or Minor Prophets, are the latter prophets.
3. **The Writings** include Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles (1 and 2 Chronicles are combined in Jewish scripture).

Who Has Studied This Book?

Just who of importance has studied this book, **Torah**, more or less in the form we have it now?

Samuel
Isaiah
Daniel
Malachi
Jesus
Paul
Jerome
Mohammed
Aquinas
Luther
Gandhi
King

When Was *Torah* Written?

Radical critics in the modern era tell us *Torah* did not attain its current form til the 6th century BCE. According to the critical story, after Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 BCE, the surviving priests and scribes wrote *Torah* from fragmentary traditions (J, E, P, and D) they had carried with them from their homeland into exile. They ascribed the documents to Moses to lend them authority, though they believed Moses had little to do with them. The gullible, tragedy-stricken Jewish survivors bought into the pious forgeries handed on to them by their leaders, and what we know as *Torah* was born. This critical view, in part, was based on the premise that written Hebrew did not exist prior to the 6th Century BCE.

The biblical text, though, suggests a much older date. Both Exodus and Deuteronomy represent themselves, in part at least, of being written prior to Israel's entry into Canaan. Joshua shows a broad, specific familiarity with "The Book of the Law." Several self-dating points exist in the text of Genesis, in particular. For details see *Self-dating of manuscript in *Genesis*. In Genesis 36:31, for instance, the phrasing indicates the scribe who originally penned that sentence lived after Israel's children began to have kings. King David, Israel's second king, specifically enjoined his son Solomon to pay attention to the "Law of Moses."

I am inclined to take *Torah* at its word, rather than the its critics. The next few sections highlight why. I do not doubt that different parts of *Torah* were written down at different points in time. I do not believe the time frame was 800 years, though, as do many modern critics. Most of *Torah* was written during Israel's years in the wilderness, then copied as one edited document during the reign of David. Thereafter, the text was passed on more or less intact by scribes working in various locations.

Self-dating of manuscript in Genesis

From Lot Fathers His Own Grandchildren

Genesis 19:36 Therefore, Lot's two daughters got pregnant from their father.

19:37 And *the* older birthed *a* son and called his name Moab. He is *the* Moabites' father, even to *the* present day. **19:38** *The* younger likewise birthed *a* son, and called his name Ammon, that is, "my people's son." He is *the* Ammonites' father, even to today.

Keys: Nations of Moab and Ammon were in existence when this line was written.

From Abimelech Tries to Make Peace with Isaac

Genesis 26:33 From which he called it "Abundance." And Beersheba became *the* city's name, even to *the* present day.

Key: Beersheba was known by that name when this line was written.

From Jacob Wrestles With an Angel

Genesis 32:32 For this reason, Jacob's children will not eat *the* nerve which withered in Jacob's thigh even to *the* present day, because He touched his thigh nerve and stunned *it*.

Key: Jacob's children practiced this custom when this line was written.

From Rachel's Death

35:19 So Rachel died and was buried on *the* road which led to Ephratha (that is Bethlehem). **35:20** And Jacob set up *a* title over her grave. This is Rachel's monument's title, even to *the* present day.

Key: Rachel's tomb was in existence as a shrine when this line was written.

From Kings in Edom's Land

Genesis 36:31 But *the* kings who reigned in Edom's land before Israel's children had kings were these . . .

Key: Israel had begun having kings when this line was written.

From Joseph Reduces the Egyptians to Slavery

Genesis 47:26 From that time even to *the* present day, *a* fifth part is paid to *the* kings in all Egypt's land. And it became like *a* law, apart from *the* priestly land which was free from this condition.

Keys: Egypt's people paid a 20% flat tax to Pharaoh at this time, and Egypt's priestly class was exempt.

“Bible Possibly Written Centuries Earlier, Text Suggests”

LiveScience

LiveScience.com

Clara Moskowitz, Staff Writer

livescience.com

– Fri Jan 15, 9:40 am ET

(2010)

Scientists have discovered the earliest known Hebrew writing - an inscription dating from the 10th century B.C., during the period of King David's reign.

The breakthrough could mean that portions of the Bible were written centuries earlier than previously thought. (The Bible's Old Testament is thought to have been first written down in an ancient form of Hebrew.)

Until now, many scholars have held that the Hebrew Bible originated in the 6th century B.C., because Hebrew writing was thought to stretch back no further. But the newly deciphered Hebrew text is about four centuries older, scientists announced this month.

"It indicates that the Kingdom of Israel already existed in the 10th century BCE and that at least some of the biblical texts were written hundreds of years before the dates presented in current research," said Gershon Galil, a professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Haifa in Israel, who deciphered the ancient text. (BCE stands for "before common era," and is equivalent to B.C., or before Christ.)

The writing was discovered more than a year ago on a pottery shard dug up during excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, near Israel's Elah valley. The excavations were carried out by archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At first, scientists could not tell if the writing was Hebrew or some other local language.

Finally, Galil was able to decipher the text. He identified words particular to the Hebrew language and content specific to Hebrew culture to prove that the writing was, in fact, Hebrew.

"It uses verbs that were characteristic of Hebrew, such as *asah* ('did') and *avad* ('worked'), which were rarely used in other regional languages," Galil said. "Particular words that appear in the text, such as *almanah* ('widow') are specific to Hebrew and are written differently in other local languages."

The ancient text is written in ink on a trapezoid-shaped piece of pottery about 6 inches by 6.5 inches (15 cm by 16.5 cm). It appears to be a social statement about how people should treat slaves, widows and orphans. In English, it reads (by numbered line):

1' you shall not do [it], but worship the [Lord].
2' Judge the sla[ve] and the wid[ow] / Judge the orph[an]
3' [and] the stranger. [Pl]ead for the infant / plead for the po[or and]
4' the widow. Rehabilitate [the poor] at the hands of the king.
5' Protect the po[or and] the slave / [supp]ort the stranger.

The content, which has some missing letters, is similar to some Biblical scriptures, such as Isaiah 1:17, Psalms 72:3, and Exodus 23:3, but does not appear to be copied from any Biblical text.

See also

www.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100223/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_israel_ancient_wall

How Accurate Are the Early OT Narratives?

“However, after World War I, archaeological research made enormous strides with the discovery of monuments and documents, many of which date back to the period assigned to the patriarchs in the traditional account. The excavations of a royal palace at Mari, an ancient city on the Euphrates, for example, brought to light thousands of cuneiform tablets (official archives and correspondence and religious and juridical texts) and thereby offered exegesis a new basis, which specialists utilized to show that, in the biblical book of Genesis, narratives fit perfectly with what, from other sources, is known today of the early 2nd millennium BC, but imperfectly with a later period. A biblical scholar in the 1940s aptly termed this result “the rediscovery of the Old Testament.”

The New Encyclopedia Britannica,
Volume I, Micropaedia,,
“Abraham,”
1998, pg. 36

Much of the 19th Century radical criticism drank from the well that said the biblical narratives were inventions of generations far removed from the events they reported.

This distance rendered their authority, as traditionally understood, suspect.

Radical criticism rejected the historicity and, thereby, the authority, of the texts. Scripture’s authors, in their opinion, committed pious forgery in writing works in the names of ancient figures like Moses.

Yet, to the discomfort of many, archaeology began to uncover more and more sources that validated the antiquity and accuracy of the world described in the texts.

It is within the realm of possibility that what the texts present themselves as being, they actually are.

About *The Vulgate*

(From The Way of Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)

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Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem is a carefully-restored version of what was long the official Bible translation, into Latin, of Roman Catholicism. The version I use in my translation came through BibleWorks, an excellent software tool for serious students of scripture. The German Bible Society holds the copyright to this particular version, and has graciously allowed me to use it in these translations.

Eusebius Hieronymus, known to history as Saint Jerome, was born 347 C.E., died 419/420 C.E. A “biblical translator and monastic leader, traditionally regarded as the most learned of the Latin Fathers,” Jerome combined a love of scripture with a vast knowledge of Classical learning. His translation grew out of his own longing for holiness and a Christian vocation. His life, mired as it was in controversy and struggle, set the stage for the preservation of scripture through the dark centuries following the collapse of Rome’s Empire in the West.

In 382 [C.E.], Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome, the leading biblical scholar of his day, to produce an acceptable Latin version of the Bible from the various translations then being used. His revised Latin translation of the Gospels appeared about 383. Using the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament, he produced new Latin translations of the Psalms (the so-called Gallican Psalter), the Book of Job, and some other books. Later, he decided that the Septuagint was unsatisfactory and began translating the entire Old Testament from the original Hebrew versions, a process that he completed about 405.

Rather than translating the Bible into the literary Latin of his day, he translated it into so-called Vulgar Latin, the language of ordinary people, intending that the Bible be read and understood as widely as possible. The translation draws its English name, “The Vulgate,” from this. By the 6th Century after Christ, the Vulgate had become

the official translation of the Roman Catholic Church. By means of the Vulgate, scholars transmitted the biblical tradition to the West. In 1455, Johannes Gutenberg printed a version of Jerome’s work, making it “the first complete book extant in the West and the earliest printed from movable type.”

Jerome’s translation is remarkable for both its faithfulness to the originals and the simplicity of its presentation. More than a mere translation, The Vulgate is one of the world’s great works of literature and a monument of the world’s religions. I offer this translation, convinced of the surpassing value of the Wisdom tradition in the Bible. May others find the same joy reading it as I have found translating it.

Some have asked, Why translate from the Latin, rather than the Hebrew? The Latin language lies at the root of Western learning. The Bible itself existed in the West in Latin, rather than Hebrew, for more than a thousand years. The oldest complete copy of the Bible in Latin, the *Codex Amiatinus*, created in Northumbria, England, dates to shortly after 700 C.E. By contrast, *Codex Aleppo*, oldest extant version of the Hebrew Masoretic Text, dates from the 10th Century of the Common Era.

In no way do I mean to take away from the surpassing value of the work in its original language. I chose to work in the Latin as a tribute to the monumental impact of The Vulgate in its own right. Whether we study the Bible in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, English, or any other language, it remains God’s Word to us.

Introduction to Genesis (From Beginnings: A Fresh Translation of Genesis)

The English name of this work, Genesis, was originally a Latin word meaning birth, nativity, or beginning. Its Hebrew name, בְּרֵאשִׁית , *Bereshith*, meaning first, beginning, best, or choice, derives from the Hebrew custom of naming Biblical works after the first word in those works. Genesis, accepted as scripture by all four of the major religious groups within the Biblical tradition, (Jews, Catholic Christians, Orthodox Christians, and Protestant Christians) is the first of the five scrolls of *Torah* , the fundamental law at the beginning of the Biblical revelation. The other books in *Torah* include Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Originally written in Hebrew, the work was translated into Greek some three centuries before Christ's birth, in and around the city of Alexandria, Egypt. It was translated from Hebrew into Latin by Saint Jerome between 382 and 405 CE. The date of Genesis' original composition is unknown. The dates of its first translations mean it could not have been written later than the 3rd Century BCE.

Genesis was long assumed to have been written by the prophet Moses, during the long years of wanderings in the wilderness following Israel's exodus from Egypt. Moses lived some twelve to sixteen centuries before Christ. His precise dates remain disputed among scholars.

Since the 19th Century, a substantial body of scholarly opinion has rejected Mosaic authorship. The so-called Documentary Hypothesis sees Genesis and its companions in the *Torah* as compilations of ancient

traditions, gathered as one and knit together into the form we now have them by various editors after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple in 587 BCE.

The purpose of Genesis is to show us no less than the origin of life as we know it. In the process, the work answers such seminal questions as:

- who is responsible for the universe's beginning
- what the world is
- when the world as we know it began
- where this drama of creation begins
- why the world is the way it is

According to Genesis, God is the creator of the universe. The world is not an accident, nor did life evolve by chance. It exists by the will of God, who continually guides and sustains it.

Similarly, humanity is no accident. Human life is the pinnacle of God's creation, made to reflect God's own image. Humanity was created as a bipolar unity, the twin poles being masculine and feminine. In the unity of these two poles, God's image is fully reflected.

Genesis tells us that the world as we know it is not as God originally intended. Humanity, misusing the freedom of action that comes with being in God's image, has acted in ways that disrupt the primordial harmony God created. The consequences of this disobedience surround us.

Nevertheless, the God of Genesis remains faithful to humanity. God acts with and

through individual humans to continue guiding the human story toward His own purposes. Thus, humanity matters in God's eyes, even as human actions matter to the course of God's creation.

God's faithfulness expresses itself in covenant relationships, through which God binds Himself to particular human beings and those same humans bind themselves to God. Far from being abstract, these covenants include specific expectations about faithfulness and behavior. They also include specific promises concerning land and offspring.

Even as Genesis describes the consequences of human disobedience, it offers its readers models of what human faithfulness looks like. The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, are not perfect. Yet God works with them, flawed as they are, to show through the written word what human life can be.

The last patriarch in Genesis, Joseph, offers perhaps the most complete model of a godly life. Joseph is in tune with the movement of God's Spirit through dreams and visions. He continues to trust God even in the midst of betrayal and hardship. He relates to those around him faithfully and wholeheartedly, even when they do not do the same with him.

Joseph uses his gifts to glorify God and help others, rather than to enrich himself. He is a faithful son, obedient to his father to the end. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he is a forgiving, gentle soul, whose willingness to let go of old wrongs gives those who wronged him the opportunity to grow and change as well.

Genesis also introduces the idea of prophecy.

Contemporary commentators are often uncomfortable with the notion of supernatural prophecy. We tend to want to reduce prophecy to pointed commentary about the state of the present world, rather than predictions about the future.

Though Biblical prophecy is often pointed commentary about the world as the prophets knew it, it is not only that. Genesis, particularly, is full of prophecies that point directly to the future. God foretells to Adam and Eve their ongoing struggle against the serpent in Genesis 3. God prophesies that Abram will become a great nation in Genesis 12:3, a prediction that is fleshed out with more details as the story unfolds. God prophesies that Abram's descendants will be enslaved four hundred years in Genesis 15:13. God repeats the prophecy of the promised land to both Isaac and Jacob. An aged Jacob prophesies in Genesis 48:19-20 that Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, will become prominent parts of Israel's future confederation. Judah's emergence as Israel's royal tribe is foreshadowed in Genesis 49:10.

Many modern scholars use the later of these prophecies as means of assigning a date to Genesis's final composition. Assuming that supernatural prophecy is not possible, they conclude Genesis could only have taken its present form after Judah had become Israel's royal tribe, an event that began only with David's career in the 10th Century BCE.

While this view predominates in most scholarly circles today, it is not the only view on the subject. Reputable scholars continue to affirm an early date for Genesis. Some go so far as to support the tradition of Mosaic authorship, especially in evangelical circles.

Among the issues cited by evangelical scholars is the citation of Hittites in Genesis 15:20. No record of such a people existed outside the Bible, leading many to doubt their existence. However, archaeologists discovered written evidence of the Hittites during the 19th and 20th centuries. Hittite civilization had long since been destroyed and, apparently, forgotten, by the time of the Jewish exile in Babylon. The fact that Genesis mentions them points at least to one strand of its story far older than the critics had estimated. Similar archaeological confirmation of other ancient tribal names has also been documented.

Given the inability of scholars to settle the questions surrounding Genesis's author and date of composition, the question becomes more one of theology and conviction than mere facts, dates, and place names. The external data neither proves nor disproves Mosaic authorship or contemporary scholarly understandings.

If we believe in a God who is capable of prophecy, who has entrusted a sacred Word to human beings, and who has superintended that Word through the millennia, nothing in the external data makes that belief intellectually untenable. On the other hand, if we begin by disbelieving in such a God, then nothing in the external data will make that position untenable either. To some extent, it is a matter of personal conviction.

This author believes that God has indeed revealed a holy, divine Word in scripture. He believes that this Word has been passed on faithfully through the millennia. By entering into that Word thoughtfully, prayerfully, wholeheartedly, the Voice that spoke it to begin with can in turn speak to us as well.

The Puzzle of Genesis

What are we to make of a book that tells us so many things we find difficult to believe:

- the world was created in seven days.
- Adam and his descendants lived tremendously long lives.
- A talking snake spoke to both Eve and Adam.
- "Sons of God" married human women and produced offspring who were giants.
- God destroyed the entire world with a universal flood.
- One man, Noah, was able to gather two of every kind of animal and save them, with his wife and family, from the flood.

There are two extremes when it comes to deciding what to make of Genesis. One, obviously, is to believe it as a literal, historical description of actual events. Evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, God created the world in seven actual days. No debate is allowed.

The other extreme is to reject Genesis all together. There was no seven day creation. Human beings never have lived the impossible lengths of time Genesis attributes to Adam and his offspring. A universal flood didn't happen, according to the geological record. Therefore Genesis is a book of discredited stories.

Most readers come down somewhere in between. It may be helpful to begin by stating the obvious. There are obvious similarities between Genesis and other ancient creation stories. They share what scholars call a mytho-poetic style.

Applying the word "myth" to Genesis generates heat, if it is not understood. Myth

in the popular mind is a story ‘that is not true.’ Myth in a technical sense, though, is a story that shapes the way humans see the world. Mythic language points to deeper truths about the world than a mere recounting of events. Genesis is certainly mythic in this sense. It continues to shape the way we see the world, three millennia or so after its composition.

Yet mythic language is not scientific language. It communicates truth through images, not formulas. The formula, $e=mc^2$, communicates truth in one way. The opening line of Genesis, “In beginning God created sky and land,” communicates truth in another way. Unless our minds are flexible enough to acknowledge truth can be communicated in different ways, we won’t be able to make much sense of Genesis or much headway in our science.

To get the most out of Genesis, we continually need to look beneath the surface of things. What do the stories we are reading tell us about God? What would life have looked like from the perspective of characters in the story?

In fact, there is more historical truth in Genesis than many of its modern critics care to acknowledge. Archaeologists have dug up many traces of civilizations unknown outside the Bible. Literary cultures did exist in the middle of the 2nd Millennium before Christ, ones quite capable of producing documents like Genesis. The document is not as easy to dismiss as mere ancient fable as its debunkers would like to admit.

The crux of the matter is the nature of the God who reveals Himself through this old, old book. He reveals Himself as a God with a

specific character, sometimes a character we find unpleasant and difficult. He judges and destroys sinners, as in the Flood and at Sodom and Gomorrah. He thwarts human aspirations, as at the Tower of Babel. He allows bad things to happen to individuals in order to further His own long term plans, as with Joseph.

Granted, this God reveals Himself to us through the idiom of ancient writers. Their world view in many instances is radically different from our own. We as readers, though, have to decide if we can separate the character of God from the world view in which that character is expressed? Does that divine character, expressed in this ancient, mytho-poetic language, exist separately from the world view? Or, if we find we cannot affirm the world view in light of our supposed superior understanding, do we throw out baby with bath water, God with Genesis, together?

These are questions that, ultimately, we have to answer for ourselves.

Here are the fundamental truths Genesis teaches us about God’s character, distilled from ancient world view and idiom:

- God creates all.
- God creates humanity with unique possibilities, in His image.
- God reveals His character in relationship to humanity: judge of harmful behavior, companion and benefactor of those who walk with Him.
- God raises up individual humans as examples of what He is guiding us toward in this great drama of creation.
- God has an underlying purpose that continues to guide all things.

Introduction to Exodus

Exodus continues the story of Israel's children that began in Genesis. Beginning with their reduction to slavery by a Pharaoh who had forgotten Joseph, it recounts the Lord's epic struggle to free them through Moses' hand. It then tells of their departure from Egypt and the beginning of their troubles in the desert. It also recounts the beginning of their written law, revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. This part of the story concludes with the people's construction of the Tabernacle of Testimony, the divinely-ordained focus of their newfound national life. The Tabernacle's completion marks the end of the book, Israel having made the passage from downtrodden slavery to independent nationhood.

Exodus is the second book of *Torah*. It immediately follows Genesis, and precedes Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. *Torah* is the Hebrew word for the first five books of what Christians call the Old Testament. *Torah* is one of the three main divisions of the Hebrew Bible, along with *Neviim* (Prophets) and *Kethuvim* (Writings). *Torah* is also called Pentateuch, a derivation from Greek meaning "Five Books."

These books share a common history. In many places, they are written by the same hand. Exodus continues the story of Israel begun in Genesis. In Exodus, Israel has both a single, national identity, and a plural sense of containing all those descended from Israel, the Biblical patriarch.

Torah introduces God to humanity, through story, genealogy, and law code. It recognizes justice, in the universe and among human beings, as belonging to God. It attempts to

make clear the principles by which God's justice works among humans. It places a binding law on those who believe. It makes clear, in story and statute alike, how seriously God takes this law, how pitilessly it is enforced.

Yet justice stands side by side with God's mercy, which unfailingly invites humanity into His presence. This is a God who makes covenants with individual humans. He also remembers those covenants through generations, and acts as obligated under them.

This notion is problematic, of course. If God acts, how so? What do we understand as an act of God? Are there accidents? Why do "bad" things happen to "good" people? The Book of Job is Israel's most famous answer to this question.

Torah tells how Israel's theocratic society came to be. It also spells out the moral and ritual law governing that society. In making clear the terms of the covenant between the Lord and Israel, *Torah* shows what God has agreed to do for His people; and what they have agreed to do for Him. It also establishes how others may become part of Israel, by participating in the covenant.

What Is Exodus About?

Exodus is about the Lord's coming down into human life, the gracious joining of divinity with humanity in its suffering.

It is about faithfulness: not humanity's faithfulness to God, but God's faithfulness to humanity.

It is an indictment of racism, cruelty, idolatry, and all other justifications we humans use to wrong others.

It states for all time whose side God is on when the strong rampage against the weak.

It is a demonstration of both God's love and God's power to sustain people in faith throughout time.

A New Pattern for Human Thought

The Book of Exodus beginning at Chapter 24, turns into a detailed commandment about how to make the items at the center of Israel's religious life. Most modern readers find these passages tedious, to say the least. Nevertheless, these instructions represent a pivotal point in human history.

Consider the implications for human life and well-being of being able to note in detail complicated processes and procedures. I once worked as a technical writer in a blind factory. My assignment was to detail all the steps in the manufacture of a louvered blind.

The woman working the machine had done it so long that the steps were automatic. I translated what she did automatically into a

written process. The point was to allow someone else to learn the procedure as well.

It's not as easy as it looks.

These passages from Exodus, dreary as they may seem to some, set the precedent for that type of writing. God gives Moses explicit details, to be followed to the letter. He even details the weight of the gold to be used in making the candelabra, the six-stemmed candlestick which stood inside the Tabernacle: 1 talent. In our terms, that's 120 pounds of gold, 1,920 ounces. At \$900 an ounce, roughly gold's price at the time of this writing in 2009, the metal alone would be worth \$1,728,000.

Dry, difficult, yet crucial as a pattern for future human thought.

The word of God – opening our understanding to an unseen universe, all around us.

Introduction to Leviticus

What Is *Torah* ?

Torah is the Jewish name for the first five books of the Bible. In what Christians call the Old Testament, we find Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Originally written in Hebrew, without punctuation, space between words, or vowels, these texts were translated into Greek in the 3rd Century before the Common Era. St. Jerome made his translations of them into Latin in the late 4th Century of the Common Era.

The word *Torah* in Hebrew means “learning” or “instruction.” The books of *Torah* , as the core of the scripture, are seen by many Jews as the holiest part of the Bible. These books of *Torah* are the heart of God’s revelation to humanity. Knowledge of them opens onto knowledge of the Holy One Himself.

Leviticus is the third book of *Torah* , picking up Israel’s story from where Exodus leaves off. At the end of Exodus, Israel sets up in the desert the Tabernacle of Testimony, according to God’s commandments. The Lord has chosen to dwell among the people in this Tent. Yet the Lord’s holiness makes coming into His presence a matter of risk. Only the holy may enter. One does not saunter casually into the presence of the God of all creation.

In Leviticus, the Lord spells out the rules by which Israel may come into His presence. The name, Leviticus, means “belonging to the Levites”. The Levites were members of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve Israelite tribes, descended from Jacob’s twelve sons. Moses and Aaron were both Levites. God had chosen the Levites as His priestly tribe in Exodus 32, when they rallied to Moses’ side

to punish Israel for its idolatry before the golden calf. God entrusted to them the care of the tabernacle.

Leviticus describes the rituals to be performed in the newly-established Tabernacle of Testimony. On a superficial level, the descriptions may strike modern readers as irrelevant, even tedious. On a deeper level, they are fraught with meaning: reminding us again and again of God’s holiness, our lack of holiness, and the cost of coming into the Lord’s presence. For those who accept God’s call to live in holiness, Leviticus remains a crucial symbol of what that call entails.

Originally written in Hebrew, Leviticus was translated into Latin by St. Jerome in the 4th Century after Christ. Leviticus was long assumed by both Jews and Christians to have been written by Moses, during Israel’s wanderings in Sinai. In recent centuries, many scholars have come to doubt Mosaic authorship, attributing Leviticus instead to the so-called Priestly source, or P. This theoretical Priestly Source is one of several sources out of which *Torah* was supposedly formed during Judah’s exile in the 6th Century BCE.

This author’s view is that if Moses is not a major source of *Torah* , if the account is a composite, or fiction, Leviticus is a harmful book. If, though, the Lord did call Moses and through Moses deliver Israel from Egypt, this book is a crucial part of the witness.

In short, I am a believer in the Lord, the God of Leviticus.

Whether you choose to believe is something

for you to answer. Believing goes beyond simply saying, “Yes, something like this happened.” Believing means obeying. God’s holiness, enduring throughout time, evokes obedience in a believing heart: obedience to His law, as expressed in *Torah* .

How to Read Leviticus

One’s heart has to be in the right attitude to understand Leviticus. If we read it casually, heedless of its significance in the broader story of *Torah* , it can be a danger to our souls. It becomes dangerous in the sense that, as casual readers, we may be tempted to dismiss or even scorn the precepts that were central to the Lord’s worship in the wilderness. It is better not to read it at all, than to read it in such a state of mind.

If, however, we read it mindful of the whole story, Leviticus becomes something transcendent. I mean by that, we must read it mindful of its context. The Lord God, infinite in holiness, author of all creation, chose to live in the midst of ordinary human beings. This marvelous event informs everything in Leviticus.

Yet the Lord’s holiness stands in stark contrast to our own lack of holiness. The Lord’s holiness, in fact, is fatal to us in our ordinary frame of mind. Holiness burns up sin, and unrepentant sinners with it. Coming into God’s presence must be done humbly, exactly as He has commanded it to be done. We must not presume to impose our terms on something so precious. Leviticus reminds us at every turn that this is God’s way to Himself, not one we have invented on our own.

As such, it speaks to us on several levels. On

one level, we pity the lives of the animals who must be sacrificed in the process. Looking at ourselves, we can’t help asking whether we are worthy of their lives, given in exchange for our lives. Many times, we can’t help answering “no.”

Not by accident does the text command each individual bringing an offering to kill the victim personally, before handing it off to the priest. Our sin requires our hands be laid on an innocent victim. The hands-on aspect of Leviticus puts the impact of our callousness in sharp relief. If we, in our modern heedlessness, had a more accurate sense of this, perhaps we would live more thoughtfully.

Those of us who eat meat are the beneficiaries every day of the death of animals. The difference is that we don’t take part in the slaughter. We prefer to benefit from it without having to consider the animal’s perspective. Leviticus encourages us to be mindful of the cost of our lives in the suffering and death of other lives around us.

Yet the text also tells us God’s answer to the question of whether we deserve this. God’s answer, obviously, is yes. We are created in God’s own image, however unworthy of it we may seem in our own eyes. God calls us into His very presence through His prophets and messengers. He shows us the way that leads inside the Tabernacle. As an animal lover, it’s humbling to realize how important a human being is in God’s eyes. Whether I deserve it or not, it is what God has revealed in scripture.

Leviticus, then, reminds us of several things: God’s holiness, our own sinfulness, God’s enduring call to us, and the value we have in

God's eyes. Let thoughtful readers of Leviticus take these things to heart. Sometimes someone else's high view of us can make us better people. God certainly has such a view. Will we take it to heart?

Equally, sometimes the love someone we respect has for someone we may not respect can make us see that other person differently. God has the same high view of all those He calls, regardless of how we see them. Maybe understanding God's love even for those we disdain will cause us to act more compassionately toward them.

Leviticus humbles our human arrogance, our ignorant sense of our own rightness apart from God. In the same breath, though, it reminds of our genuine value before God, one that is established by God's image within us – not by our own misguided ego. As a Christian, I must add that the sacrifices offered in the Levitical law point me in the direction of Jesus Christ.

After all, Israel's Tabernacle no longer stands. Its sacrifices are no longer offered. The means it provided of covering sin and allowing us into the Lord's presence have come to an end. Jesus Christ, through His sacrifice on the cross, now opens the door for us into the Lord's presence.

The pattern of Leviticus still remains. We come to God humbly, our sin atoned for by sacrificial blood. The blood is not that of a calf or a goat, but of a man, Jesus – a man whose actions lead us to acknowledge Him as divine. That atoning sacrifice has been offered now once for all. It becomes ours through faith.

Standing outside the tabernacle, looking on it

from a distance, we all have our own perspectives, our own opinions. Coming into the tent, though, seeking the presence of this holy God directly, requires us to surrender our opinions and perspectives. The way inside is one God has ordained, not one we have figured out on our own. We cannot jump the fence and come in by the back door.

The way into the Tabernacle is as old as Leviticus, yet as new as each person's struggle to find meaning in a difficult life. Read Leviticus, then, only when your heart is prepared. Read it

- only when you are humbled,
- aware of the immeasurable grace that burns inside the Tabernacle,
- conscious of His invitation to you – yes, even you, as you are – to come inside and be with Him,
- clear as to the cost of your entry,
- grateful beyond words that the cost has been paid on your behalf.

Introduction to Numbers

Numbers is the pivot of Torah.

The book opens with the people on Mount Sinai. The Lord commands Moses to take a census, which he does. The census taken, Israel's line of march is determined, and each of the tribes brings gifts for the work of the sanctuary. The people then celebrate the second Passover, marking the first full year of their freedom.

The Lord orders them to leave Mount Sinai, preparatory to entering the land of Canaan. Trouble begins almost immediately. The people complain about their hardships, remembering fondly the food they ate as slaves in Egypt. In response, God gives them quail in such abundance they must dry it and store it for future use.

Thereafter, Moses' own family complains. Mary, his sister, and Aaron, his brother, criticize Moses because of his wife. "Hasn't the Lord spoken to us, too," they ask.

The Lord summons all three to the Tabernacle, reaffirming Moses' leadership and rebuking Mary and Aaron's presumption. When the divine presence ascends, Mary is left leprous. Moses pleads with God on her behalf, and the Lord allows her to return to Israel's camps after a week of exile.

Commanded then to go up and take the promised land, Moses sends twelve spies, one from each tribe, to describe the land. Though they come back with glowing reports of the land's bounty, ten of the twelve also tell tales of huge inhabitants and impossibly large fortifications. Despite the pleas of two of the spies, Joshua the Ephraimite and Caleb the

Jew, the people rebel against God's command and refuse to go up.

Then, when the Lord commands Moses to lead them back into the wasteland, they rebel again, changing their minds and deciding to invade Canaan after all. Having refused to go up under God's promise, they try to go up against it and meet a crushing defeat. Thus, Israel's thirty-eight years of wandering in Sinai begin.

The series of rebellions continues. Core, a Levite, rejects Moses' leadership, claiming that the entire people is holy. At the same time, Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites, lead a sedition against Moses among the people. God rebukes both, destroying Core and his two hundred fifty compatriots at the altar, and causing the ground to swallow Dathan and Abiram alive.

The frustrations continue. As the people wander through the wilderness, even Moses and Aaron lose patience with obeying God's Word. Aaron's death follows thereafter, and Moses is told he will not enter the promised land.

Through it all, though, the Lord continues to both guide and teach His people. The adventure isn't over until His sovereign will chooses.

Somewhere in that sequence of suffering, they begin to catch on. The Lord indeed has taken them as His people, transmitting through them His holy Word.

Defeated yet again in battle, they call on the Lord. This time, He gives them victory.

They move on toward the children of ancient Jacob's brother, Esau. Feared and refused, they go around.

They come similarly to the children of ancient Abraham's nephew, Lot. These people are the Moabites and Ammonites. Israel goes around again.

So panicked is Moab's king, though, that he hires Balaam, a Syrian holy man, to curse Israel. Balaam can't help blessing them, much to Balak's fury.

Yet Balaam pays for his blessing with his life. Apparently settling among the Midianites, he is killed in the war that ensues between Midian and Israel. Balak, ironically, lives on.

The end of the story tells us of a second census, some forty years out from the Exodus. The numbers are substantially the same. The Lord has indeed sustained His people in a trackless wasteland.

The stages of the journey are recounted, in the hand of an ancient chronicler.

The stage is set for Deuteronomy.

Introduction to Deuteronomy

(From The Jagged Edge of Forever: Deuteronomy, Daniel, The Minor Prophets)

If gods are something we humans choose for ourselves, we'd be hard-pressed to choose Deuteronomy's God on our own. He isn't a nice, tame god, the kind we want to build our self-esteem. We'd prefer a god more agreeable to our lifestyles, no doubt, if it were a matter of choice. Failing that, we might decide we could get along without a god at all.

Religion, according to the Latin, is "that which binds us together." Our "god" is whatever we are most concerned with in life. Most of us have many "gods" driving us through life, even if we've never considered them as such. As Deuteronomy itself teaches, we can't help serving something. Something holds that highest place in our life. We worship something, whether we ever darken the door of a church.

Our freedom may extend to the point of deciding whom we will serve. Not serving, though, isn't an option, even if we end up serving something futile and unimportant. The sad thing is, most of us choose what we will serve quite casually, drawn along by tides of opinion and necessity. We live as if by accident. Is anyone's life long enough for that?

Being human is being religious, in some sense. Being human means serving some "god," however big or small, whatever name we call it. George Rupp, former President of Rice University, described three faces of God to a clergy gathering in Fort Worth many years ago. We live in a psychological universe, Rupp said, with "God the Father,

God the Enemy, or God the void."

How do we tell whether the god we serve is worth serving? Jesus put it this way in Matthew 7:20: *igitur ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*. "Therefore, you will know them by their fruits."

If what we serve produces primarily "bile and bitterness," to use Deuteronomy's phrase, we may be serving the wrong things. It seems like life would be easier if we kept the "bile and bitterness" to a minimum, even if we can't avoid it all together.

Any casual reading shows that Deuteronomy's God detests idolatry. Idolatry is worshiping something or someone other than God. The first and second of the vaunted Ten Commandments address the issue. Why does God despise it so?

Is God insecure? Is He a needy, greedy character, who isn't satisfied until we fawn over Him? Most of us have known people like that. They aren't always our favorites, are they? Is God like that? Is that how we should understand the whole "jealous God" idea?

Is God bothered by images themselves? Should we make no images at all? Is idolatry the act of bowing down to a statue? Do people still believe that statues have divine essences? Did they ever?

I would say probably none of the above is true. God's jealousy isn't petty. It isn't rooted in His need. It's rooted in ours, even if we don't know it. Neither is God anti-art. It

isn't the statue that's dangerous. What is dangerous is the notion of worshiping our own hands' works.

If idolatry is worshiping something other than God, it doesn't matter so much which particular idol we worship. According to Deuteronomy the consequences of not worshiping God are grave – not to God but to us. How does that work? Let's look at some examples.

Many worship and serve the great god money. They live and die with the progress of their net worth: stock markets, mutual funds, bank accounts, and such. As their money goes, so they go. Is there bile and bitterness in that?

Others worship and serve self. As we see our self, so we see life. If people are nice and things break our way, everything is fine. Unfortunately, people aren't always nice and life isn't a bed of roses. Is there bile and bitterness there?

Sometimes our god is anxiety. Sometimes we serve some insatiable thirst inside. Sometimes we worship and serve things that are truly revolting. Even we know it. But we humans will worship and serve something. There's no way off that ladder. We will be bound to the world around us somehow.

Is there anything we can serve wholeheartedly, that won't ultimately disappoint? How often we despair of finding something worth giving ourselves for! And yet we give a little bit of ourselves away with every passing second.

Deuteronomy suggests that there is, in fact, One who worth serving. This One has spoken decisively through Israel's history. He

commands fairness and mercy, in communion with others and Himself. He is the reason behind all that is. According to Deuteronomy, terrible things come when we don't serve this Holy One. Life without Him proves impossible. He is our freedom, our purpose, our hope. He can be trusted totally, since He is indeed God.

If this is true, it is very, very important! If it is true, then life itself is transformed. We have the opportunity to live not in fear and death, but in life and hope. How can we find out whether it's true or not? The proof is in the living. Live the way Deuteronomy calls you, and you will find out.

This is no casual endeavor. Deuteronomy's God doesn't give suggestions. He makes commandments. You have to invest the only commodity you truly have – yourself. You'll often have to get beneath the surface of things, too. Often, God's reasons remain hidden from us. Sometimes we do have to obey first, and figure things out later. That's called "living by faith."

(One way or the other, though, don't we all live by faith in something?)

Eventually, though, we will figure out enough of God's reasons to know whether God has a reason in everything – even in us. Eventually, we know God well enough to know if we can trust Him, whether we understand completely or not.

We get tempted to give up along the way, too. That's why having friends on the journey with us is so important. Faith can't just be thought. It has to be lived, and that happens best when others are living it with us. (Deuteronomy even has some ideas about how that works.)

Deuteronomy insists that Israel's Lord not only has our well-being in mind – He is our well-being. If you want to find out if it's true, give Deuteronomy a chance. Live it for awhile. Pray over it. Reflect on it. Look at your own life, your own community, through its eyes. It may be your oasis of promise too.

How to Understand Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy often frightens readers. What are we to do with a book that commands what we would call genocide? How are we to understand a scripture that seems to sanction polygamy and slavery?

There are a variety of responses. Some respond by rejecting Deuteronomy and its faith traditions out of hand. Others overlook the offending passages, focusing instead on the ones that seem more agreeable. Unfortunately, most never consider Deuteronomy at all.

I believe we need to take the entire text seriously, perhaps especially those things that offend us. Vulgate Psalm 118 speaks often of God's "reasons." We need to look for the reason, even in places that bother us. Can God teach us even through what seems terrible from our perspective? Let us pray so.

When you read Deuteronomy, consider what the text implies and assumes, as well as what it says.

What does the text say about

- what was important to the society it describes;

- what they assumed was harmful;
- what they assumed was beneficial;
- what they wanted to avoid;
- what they wanted to accomplish.

Consider the spiritual lesson being taught, even when the original context conflicts with our current values. For example,

- in the texts commanding genocide against Canaanite neighbors.
- in the texts related to sexual behavior.

What point might God be making in such texts?

- maintaining the relationship with the Lord takes precedence over anything that interferes with it.
- some sins, particularly Canaanite rituals that debased women and children, were especially harmful to humans and hateful to God.
- are we to model our lives in light of this?

Christian monastics through the centuries have understood the references to enemies in Deuteronomy as references to our own, inner struggles on the path of faith. Consider that perspective too, as you read. Perhaps it will give you a clearer understanding of what God wants you to do in the life of spirit.

How to Study the Bible

Sometimes people ask me, “How do I study the Bible?”

It’s a good question. If, for instance, you pick up your Bible and it opens randomly to Leviticus 2, you may be forgiven for wondering about the relevance to you of instructions on offering a live animal as a sacrifice to the Lord.

Nevertheless, the first part of the answer to “How do I study the Bible” is simple: read it!

I know that sounds sarcastic, but it isn’t. So many of the arguments in the culture about the Bible come from people who don’t bother to read it. Their minds are full of what they think it says, of what other people have told them it says. But they haven’t taken the time to find out for themselves what it actually says.

Some talk as if the “original” Bible had some hidden meaning that has been obscured by translators. A conspiracy exists, they think, that keeps scripture from saying what their uninformed opinion tells them it ought to say. I hate to say it isn’t so, but it isn’t so.

In fact, the meaning of scripture has been spelled out with great accuracy over the millennia. We can lay various translations side-by-side and see that with our own eyes. As my grandfather used to say, “It’s not the part of the Bible I don’t understand that bothers me. It’s the part I do!”

So, read the Bible. Read it from beginning to end, at least once, so you can get an idea of its unity. Read it end to end so you’ll have a sense that the Bible tells one story, through

sixty-six books, rather than sixty-six different stories. Read it so you will know its central character, the Lord God. Then you can decide for yourself whether He is merely a character from literature, or something more.

As you read it, ask yourself the five W Questions from journalism: Who, What, When, Where, and Why (I always thought How should be in there, but apparently it’s included under What). Answer these question both from inside the text and outside it. The internal Who, for instance, may be “Who is speaking,” “to whom are they speaking,” etc. The external Who would be “Who wrote this book.”

Let me give a brief answer to those questions, as they relate to The Latin Torah .

Who: The first Bible’s five books are often called the “books of Moses.” Scoffers point out that Moses would have had a hard time writing the story of his own death. Yet that isn’t the point of calling these the “books of Moses.” Moses is a central figure of the last four of the books. He wrote some of it, caused other parts of it to be written, and is the subject of still other parts. They are “books of Moses” in this sense.

In another sense, Israel itself is the author. Through *Torah* , Israel tells us who it is, where it came from, and what its vocation is. No doubt we have family stories too that tell us and others who we are and where we came from.

In yet another sense, God is the author. Through the book, God introduces Himself to us. He tells us who He is, how He relates to

us, and what His expectations are of us.

What: There are two aspects to this question, as well. When you answer it, consider what the text is not, as well as what it is. To hear those on either side of the creation vs. evolution battle tell it, you might think this is a biology text. It isn't. I took biology in high school and college. On occasion I opened the text books. *Torah* is not a biology text, whatever the partisans on either side may claim.

It is a work of law. There are two types of law, at least in Texas (my home State): statute law, and case law. Statute law is the kind of law that a lawmaking body makes. Case law is an account that illustrates legal principles. *Torah* contains both. The stories of Genesis establish the principles by which God relates to us, and by which we are to relate to each other. The statute law in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, spells out many of these legal principles and makes them specific.

Torah also contains genealogies, hymns, sermons, and prayers. Each type of writing communicates truth in different ways. We need to be sensitive to the differences in our study.

When: Again, we face the issue of the "internal When" and the "external When." Internally, *Torah* begins with creation and ends with Israel on the edge of the Promised Land. According to the Jewish calendar, this sweep of time took roughly 3000 years.

Externally, the question of when this document was written has been controversial for a long time. Some insist it was written in its entirety by Moses, prior to Israel's

conquest of Canaan. Others say the books as we know them didn't take shape until after Jerusalem's destruction and Judah's exile, in 587 BCE.

My view is something of a hybrid. Different portions of the book were almost certainly written at different times. We know from a copyist's note in Genesis 36:31 that at least one portion of it was written after "Israel's children began to have kings." This is helpful. Israel's children began to have kings under Saul, in the 11th Century before Christ. They stopped having kings as a united nation after the death of Solomon, late in the 10th Century before Christ. So, by deduction, that particular copyist was writing in that time span.

To this we add the fact that scripture begins making reference to "the book of the law" in Joshua. Assuming that Israel didn't have two "books of the law," this document must have existed, in some form at least, from Joshua's time on. The "book of the law" is also referred to in 1 and 2 Samuel, when Israel became a united kingdom under Saul and David.

I can only conclude, on this basis, that *Torah* existed in book form prior to Israel's division, which took place around 931 BCE. We have evidence of this book having existed, pretty much in its present form, since the reign of Solomon. Portions of it were far older. The document's great age makes it the oldest continuously studied book in human history.

Where: Internally, the where stretches from Eden (whose location is a bit fuzzy), to Babylon, to the mountains of Armenia (where Noah's Ark comes to rest), to Ur, to Egypt. It encompasses the ancient Fertile Crescent

between Mesopotamia and Egypt, plus a little more. This area saw the flowering of the earliest human civilizations, followed in short order by Indian and Chinese civilizations as well. Externally, the book comes from the land of Canaan, where Israel settled following the Exodus.

Why: In much of life, there doesn't seem to be any "Why," any reason, at all. This is not true of *Torah*. The God of *Torah* always has a why, always has a reason. We may not particularly like the reason, but it's there nonetheless. *Torah* exists to tell us who God is, who we are, and how we are to live. Through its story, it gives us principles by which we can uncover the reasons why things happen in our lives as well.

As the biblical story of Job illustrates, sometimes this why is troubling, painful. Yet it is always there. As we get to know the God of *Torah* through this book, our spirits will no doubt testify to us as to whether His why's are relevant to us.

In conclusion then, study this book by reading it in its entirety. Open your understanding further by asking of it (and of any portion within it) who, what, when, where, and why. But above all, dedicate to it the time and attention it deserves.

If, in the end, you can't bring yourself to believe in its God, you will at least be familiar with a document that is at the heart of so much of our history, law, and literature. If, in reading it, its God becomes more than just a literary character to you, you will have discovered the pearl without price, the greatest treasure this earth affords.

Is This a Literal Translation of the Bible? (From Beginnings: A Fresh Translation of Genesis)

I am often asked as I make my way around the churches whether this is a “literal” translation of the Bible. While I appreciate the spirit behind the question, I realize there are several issues to address before answering it. Any time we translate from an ancient language into a modern one, some things must be added to the text. How much we can add while still translating “literally” remains a mystery to me.

If you happen to be looking at a Latin-English edition of this book, you’ll notice that the Latin text has no punctuation and very little capitalization. This is true in all the most ancient manuscripts of scripture, whether in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. Since the punctuation is lacking and since modern readers need it to read comfortably, one of the translator’s first tasks is to decide where the punctuation goes in the text. Doing this involves deciding where sentences begin and end, which clauses go with which sentences, and the like. Doing so adds something to the text that wasn’t there to begin with and is, at least to some degree, a matter of interpretation.

In Roger Gryson’s masterful 1994 edition of *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, there are at least spaces between the words, though punctuation is lacking. In the most ancient manuscripts, again in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, there was no such space between words. In other words, not only must the punctuation be added, but at some point someone had to decide which letters go with which words. This, too, must be added to the modern text. Again, the very act of making such divisions is to some degree a matter of interpretation.

The ancient languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, often left out words that English requires for correct usage. Forms of the “to be” verbs, especially the word “is”, were often left out. Latin, unlike Hebrew and Greek, has no articles (the words “a”, “an”, and “the”). Where these

exist in the translation, they have always been added to the original.

The translator encounters works, then, with no punctuation or spaces between words and many words as well that are missing, at least from our perspective. Reading was much more labor intensive in the ancient world, apparently. In fact, one Roman writer tells the story of coming into camp to see Julius Caesar. The writer decided Caesar must have been a genius because he found him reading a book in Greek, but not moving his lips.

The lack of punctuation, spacing, and certain words, though, isn’t the end of the differences. The original Hebrew lacked vowels. These were added by the Masoretes in and around the 10th Century CE. Translators before that, such as Jerome, had to put them in to make sense of the texts for their readers.

As a way of pointing out the challenges in this, consider the consonant string b-t-t-r. Depending on which vowels we add, the word could be batter, bitter, better, or butter. Since we have no punctuation, it could also be divided into two words, like ‘bite tear’ or ‘boat tire.’ A translator would have to depend on context and tradition to determine which was correct.

That different vowels were associated with different words over time becomes clear when one compares the Greek and Latin translations with the Masoretic text. This is most evident in place and person names. What the Masoretic vowel systems termed the land of “Goshen,” for instance, was called “Gesem” in both Greek and Latin. Whether the Masoretes or Jerome had the correct pronunciation is something we can only conjecture. And while differences in place names are relatively unimportant, undoubtedly other variant vowel constructions were more so. That is an issue for better scholars both of Latin and of

Hebrew to discuss, though.

Translation occurs on a continuum between word-for-word on one end and paraphrase on the other. A word-for-word translation attempts to render each ancient word into its contemporary equivalent. While that goal is admirable, the differing structures between ancient and modern language sometimes make a word-for-word translation meaningless.

A paraphrase, on the other hand, takes the underlying idea in a particular text and renders it in the translator's own words. A middle position, dynamic equivalency, attempts to translate thought-for-thought, rather than word-for-word. A thought-for-thought translator pays attention to each individual word, yet does not feel constrained to put each into the translation if the overall idea can be communicated readily otherwise.

Obviously, where one comes down on this spectrum is a matter of taste, training, and, to some extent, theological conviction. Though I prefer to translate word-for-word, there are times that to do so does not produce intelligible English. Going too far in the other direction, though, risks imposing too overtly my theological and historical assumptions on the text itself.

As in all things, we need a balance. In most instances, I translate word-for-word, even in places where it produces less-than-elegant English. For instance, where Douay-Rheims often rendered a subjunctive clause with an infinitive, I have chosen to translate the clause itself. An example of this is found in Genesis 38:16, where Tamar asks Judah, *quid mihi dabis ut fruaris concubitu meo*

Douay-Rheims renders the subjunctive clause with the infinitive, and replaces the rather earthy *concubito meo* with a euphemism: "What wilt thou give me to enjoy my company?"

I have translated the clause directly, in addition to rendering the phrase *concubito meo* more closely to its original sense: "What will you give me so you can enjoy having sex with me?"

I have also held myself as strictly as I could to translating the exact mood, person, and tense of verbs, even when it does not make exact grammatical sense in English. If the original contains rough spots, it isn't my place as a translator to smooth them over unduly.

One of the reasons I was won over to Jerome's translation to start with was that he seems to have done the same things. Passages that were difficult textually in Greek were also difficult in Latin. Jerome did not feel the need to smooth them over, which I appreciate. A Bible with all its rough linguistic edges buffed off is perhaps not much of a Bible.

In answer to the question, 'Is this a literal translation,' I have to answer 'yes' . . . except for all those vowels.

Occurrences of “Book” in The Latin Torah

Genesis

5:1 Book of Adam’s Generation

This is *the* book of Adam’s generation. In *the* day which God created man, He made him in God’s likeness.

Exodus

17:14 The Lord Promises to Destroy Amalek

But the Lord said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book, and hand it over into Joshua’s ears, for I will destroy Amalek’s memory under *the* sky.”

24:7 Moses Reads “the Book of the Covenant” on Sinai

And taking up *the* Book of *the* Covenant, he read it, *the* people hearing, who said, “All that *the* Lord has spoken we will do. And we will be obedient.”

(“Book of the Covenant”

Refers to Exodus XX-XXIII?)

32:32ff Moses Pleads with God to Erase Him from His Book

The Lord Answers that “He will erase the one who sinned . . .”

And turning back to *the* Lord, he said, “I pray, this people sinned a great sin and made themselves golden gods. Either forgive them this injury or, if you won’t do it, erase me from Your book which You have written!”

32:33 *The* Lord answered him, “I will erase *the* one who sinned against Me from My book.

Numbers

5:23 Priest Will Write These Curses in a Book

“And *the* priest will write these curses in a book, and erase them by *the* bitterest waters,

in which he has amassed curses.

21:14 Book of the Lord’s Wars from which it is said in *the* book of *the* Lord’s wars,

“As He did at *the* Red Sea,

o He will do in Arnon’s brooks.

21:15 “The torrents’ rocks bent down so they could rest in Ar and lie down in *the* Moabites’ borders.”

Deuteronomy

17:18 King to Copy a Restatement of the Law

But after he has sat down on his royal throne, he will write out for himself *the* restatement of this law in a book, accepting *the* copy of *the* Levitical tribe’s priests.

28:61 Curses beyond This Law’s Book

And in addition, *the* Lord will lead in against you all *the* weaknesses and wounds which are not written in this law’s book, until He destroys you.

29:21 God Will Work According to Covenant

And He may consume him in loss out of all Israel’s tribes, according to *the* curses which are contained in *the* book of this law and agreement.

31:26 Book to Be Inside Covenant Box

“Take this book and put it inside *the* Lord your God’s covenant box, so it may be there as witness against you.

**References to Writing, “writ”,
in The Latin Torah**

Exodus

11:10 But Moses and Aaron did before Pharaoh all *the* wonders which were written. And *the* Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, nor did he release Israel’s children from his land.

17:14 But the Lord said to Moses, “Write this as *a* memorial in *a* book, and hand it over into Joshua’s ears, for I will destroy Amalek’s memory under *the* sky.”

24:12 But *the* Lord said to Moses, “Climb up to me on *the* mountain and be there. And I will give you stone tables and *the* law and commandments which I have written, so you may teach them.”

31:18 Likewise, *when* these words *were* completed, He gave Moses on Mount Sinai two stone tables of testimony, written by God’s finger.

32:15 And Moses turned back from *the* mountain, carrying *the* two tables of testimony, written on either side,

32:16 and made by God’s work. God’s writing was also in *the* tables.

32:31 And turning back to *the* Lord, he said, “I pray, this people sinned *a* great sin and made themselves golden gods. Either forgive them this injury **32:32** or, if you won’t do it, erase me from Your book which You have written!”

34:1 And then He said, “Cut out two stone tables, like *the* prior ones, and I will write on them *the* words which *the* tables you broke had.

34:27 And the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words for yourself, by which I have struck an agreement with you and with Israel!”

34:28 So he did *it* there with *the* Lord, forty days and forty nights. He did not eat bread and did not drink water. And he wrote on tables *the* ten words of *the* covenant.

Numbers

5:23 “And *the* priest will write these curses in *a* book, and erase them by *the* bitterest waters, in which he has amassed curses.

5:29 ““This is *the* law of jealousy, if *a* woman has turned aside from her husband, and if she is polluted, **5:30** and *the* husband, struck by *a* jealous spirit, will bring her into *the* Lord’s sight, and *the* priest will do to her according to all *the* words that are written.

17:2 “Speak to Israel’s children, and accept rods from them for each of their clans, from all *the* tribes’ princes – twelve rods. And you will write each one’s name on his rod.

Deuteronomy

6:9 And you will write them on your house’s entry and doorposts.

9:10 And *the* Lord gave me two stone tables, written by God’s finger and containing all *the* words which He spoke to you on *the* mountain from *the* fire’s midst, when *the* people’s assembly was gathered.

10:1 At that time, *the* Lord said to me, “Cut out two stone tables, as were before, and climb up to Me on *the* mountain. And you

will make *a* wooden box. **10:2** And I will write on *the* tables *the* words which were on those which you broke before. And you will put them in *the* box . . . **10:4** And He wrote on *the* tables according to what He had written before – ten words which *the* Lord spoke to you on *the* mountain, from *the* fire's midst, when *the* people was gathered. And He gave them to me.

11:20 Write them on your houses' posts and doors, **11:21** so your days and your children's may be multiplied in *the* land which *the* Lord swore to your fathers that He would give them, as long as sky hangs over land!

17:18 But after he has sat down on his royal throne, he will write out for himself *the* restatement of this law in *a* book, accepting *the* copy of *the* Levitical tribe's priests.

What does The Latin Torah Say About Sex?

Biblical sexual mores . . . were not complicated.

Expectations were simple, built on an unambiguous principle:

the act of intercourse created marriage.

Genesis 2:24 From which thing man will leave

his father and mother,
and will cling to his wife,
and they will be
two in one flesh.

2:25 But both of them

were naked –
Adam, certainly,
and his wife –
and they were not ashamed.

How many wives have you had?

How many husbands have you had?

Intercourse was sacramental, a wonder, a holy act.

Life began through it.

If God can take an act that is so often ungodly
and bring beautiful, if flawed, children
to life through it,
what can He do when we treat the act
as the sacrament it is?

According to Rev. Joseph Harker, the biblical ideal is:

Prior to marriage, **chastity**, holy purity;
In marriage, **fidelity**, faithfulness to the spouse.

After marriage, **continence**.

Interesting word, continence. As I've always heard it used, someone who is "incontinent" cannot control the need to void urine or defecate.

The sex act is considered alongside other lower body, physical functions.

As other body eliminations give the sense of being unclean, so this one.

Are there times when you just can't help yourself?

Yet this ethic was not out of touch with the reality of sexual desire.

Uncleanness from sexual secretions lasted till sunset, assuming one washed afterwards.

A young man who frequented prostitutes is described as "a whore's customer".

Deuteronomy 23:17 *There* will be no female prostitute among Israel's daughters, nor *a* whore's customer among Israel's sons.

A male prostitute was "a dog", as in Deuteronomy 23:18.

You will not offer *a* prostitute's pay or *a* dog's price in *the* Lord your God's house, whatever it is that they have promised, because either is disgusting to *the* Lord your God.

An unmarried woman was either a virgin or a prostitute. Intercourse, outside the intent to marry, was prostitution. It involved selling the sacred for a price: to gratify lust; to serve pagan ideals; to gain secular advantage.

This seems harsh to our ears because we have severed the sex act from procreation. We are accustomed to selling our sex acts to secular pursuits.

Heterosexual sex alone was not singled out.

Male homosexual intercourse was regarded as an abomination, following the precedent of

Sodom and the angels.

Leviticus 18:22 You will not be mixed together with *a* male as if having intercourse with *a* woman, because *it* is detestable.

Its condemnation received an exclamation point a few verses later.

Leviticus 20:13 Who sleeps with *a* male as if having intercourse with *a* woman, both have worked *a* violation of divine law. They will die by execution. Their blood be on them!

As always, I caution us not to make the text seem to say either more, or less, than it does on these issues.

Torah recognizes that sexual desires exist.

It does not make sexual satisfaction illicit, except when the act takes place in specified ways.

It by no means condemns love, or intimacy, or delight, or sensuality.

What do we give up by abandoning the biblical sexual ethic?

The World's Oldest Diet Book References in The Latin Torah .

Genesis The Vegan Creation

1:29 And God said,
“Look, I have given you
every seed -bearing herb
on land,
and all woods
which have in themselves
seed of their type,
that they may be food
to you,
1:30 “and to all land’s
living *beings*;
and to every winged
being of sky,
and to all *beings*
which move on land,
and in which is *a* living soul,
that they may have them
for food.”

Foods: Fruit, Grain, Nuts

From the story of Noah and the Ark

6:19 And from all living *beings*, you will bring two of all flesh into *the* ark, so they may live with you – male sex and female: **6:20** from birds according to their type, and from cattle in their type, and from all *the* land’s reptiles according to their type – two from all will go in with you, so they can live. **6:21** You will take with you, therefore, some of every food which can be eaten, and you will carry *it* with you. And *it* will be food to you and to them.

New Food Sources after the Flood

9:3 And everything that moves and lives will be to you as food, like I gave you every green plant –
9:4 except that you will not eat flesh with blood.

Foods: Flesh

9:20 Noah, *a* farmer, began to work *the* land, and planted *a* vineyard. **9:21** And, drinking wine, he was drunk and naked in his tent.

Foods: Grapes, Wine.

Food Fit for an Angel

18:6 Abraham hurried into *the* tent to Sarah and said to her, “Hurry! Mix together three measures of finest flour and make loaves beneath *the* ashes!”

18:7 He indeed ran to *the* herd and took from it *the* most tender and choice calf. And he gave it to *the* boy, who hurried and cooked it. **18:8** He took likewise butter and milk and *the* calf which he had cooked, and he placed *all* before them. He, indeed, stood beside them under *the* tree.

Foods: Bread, Beef, Butter, Milk

Feasting Includes Food and Drink

26:30 He made, therefore, a feast for them, and after food and drink, **26:31** getting up early, they swore among themselves mutually. And Isaac led them go peacefully to their place.

Isaac’s Taste in Food

27:2 *The* father said to him, “You see that I have gotten old, and I do not know *the* day of my death.
27:3 Take your arms, quiver and bow, and go outside, and when you have taken some by hunting, **27:4** make me from it food like you know I like, and bring it, so I can eat! And my soul may bless you before I die.”

27:5 When Rebecca heard that, and he had gone into *the* field so he could fulfill *his* father’s order, **27:6** she said to her son Jacob, “I heard your father talking to Esau your brother and saying to him, **27:7** ‘Bring me your game and make food so I can eat! And I will bless you before *the* Lord, before I die.’

27:8 “Now, then, my son, agree to my counsels
27:9 and, going to *the* flock, bring me two choice young goats, so I can make from them *the* food that your father eats gladly.

27:17 She gave *him* *the* meat and handed him *the*

bread which she had cooked.

Foods: Goat, Fresh-baked Bread

The Wheat Harvest

30:14 But Reuben, going out into *the* field at wheat harvest time, found mandrakes which he took to his mother Lia. And Rachel said, “Give me part of your son’s mandrakes!”

Foods: Wheat, Mandrakes

The Baker’s Art

40:16 *The* chief baker, seeing that he had explained *the* dream prudently, said, “I saw *a* dream too, that I had three baskets of flour on my head. **40:17** And in one of *the* baskets I carried, which was highest, were all *the* foods which are made by *the* baker’s art, and *the* birds eating from it.”

Choice Food

43:11 So Israel their father said to them, “If it has to be so, do what you want. Take from *the* land’s best fruits in your vessels and give *the* man gifts: *a* little resin and honey and fragrant gum and myrrh and terebinth and almonds.

Foods: Honey, Almonds

49:11 . . . He will wash his garment in wine and his covering in the grape’s blood. **49:12** His eyes *are* more beautiful than wine, and *his* teeth whiter than milk.

Foods: Wine, Grapes, Milk

Exodus

Flowing with Milk and Honey

3:8 And, knowing his pain, I have come down so I can free *him* from *the* Egyptians’ hands, and lead *him* from that land into *a* good and spacious land, into *a* land that flows with milk and honey, to *the* place of Canaanites and Hittites and Amorites, Ferezites and Hivites and Jebusites.

Foods: Milk, Honey

Grains in Egypt

9:31 *The* flax and *the* barley, therefore, was struck, because *the* barley was green and *the* flax had already germinated pods. **9:32** But *the* wheat and spelt were not struck, because they were late in coming.

Foods: Barley, Wheat, Spelt

Unleavened Bread

12:39 And they baked flour which recently was strewn from Egypt. They took and made unleavened bread under ashes, for they couldn’t be leavened. *They were* compelled to leave by *the* Egyptians, and no one allowed to make delay, nor had they happened to prepare any food.

Limitations

23:18 “You will not offer My victim’s blood over yeast, nor will My solemnity’s fat remain until morning.

23:19 “You will bring your land’s first fruits into *the* Lord your God’s house, nor will you cook *a* goat in its mother’s milk.

Prohibition: Milk with Meat of the same species

Leviticus

Don’t Eat Fat or Blood

7:22 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **7:23** “Say to Israel’s children, ‘You will not eat *the* fat of cattle or sheep or goat. **7:24** You will have for various uses *the* fat of *a* body that died of itself, and *of an* animal that *a* wild beast has taken. **7:25** If one who ought to offer fat as *the* Lord’s incense should eat it, he will perish from his people.

7:26 “Likewise, you will not take up *the* blood of any animal as food, whether of birds or of beasts. **7:27** Every soul that eats blood will perish from his people.”

Divided Hoof, Chewing Cud

Leviticus 11:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **11:2** “Say to Israel’s children, ‘These are *the* animals which you must eat, from

all *the* land's animals. **11:3** You will eat all that has a divided hoof and chews cud among the animals.

11:4 “But anything that chews cud, for instance, and has a hoof, yet doesn't divide it, like *the* camel and others, you will not eat it. And you will consider it among *the* unclean. **11:5** A coney, which chews cud and doesn't divide *the* hoof is unclean; **11:6** a rabbit, as well, for it also chews cud but doesn't divide *the* hoof; **11:7** and swine, with *the* hoof divided, does not chew cud.

11:8 “You will not eat of their flesh or touch their dead bodies, because they are unclean to you.

Foods: Cattle, Sheep, Goat, Deer

Concerning Fish

11:9 “These are those giving birth in waters and which it is permitted to eat: everything that has fins and scales, whether in *the* sea or in rivers and ponds, you will eat. **11:10** But whatever does not have fins and scales of those that move in waters and live *is* detestable to you, **11:11** and their flesh will be refused. You will not eat *them* and will avoid those that died of themselves. **11:12** All that do not have fins and scales in *the* waters will be polluted.

Foods: Fish with Fins and Scales

Concerning Birds

11:13 “These are those among birds you must not eat and are to be avoided by you: eagle and griffin and osprey; **11:14** kite and vulture, according to their species; **11:15** and every species of crow, in its likeness; **11:16** ostrich and owl and gull and hawk, according to their species; **11:17** horned owl and small gull and ibis; **11:18** swan and pelican and coot; **11:19** heron and yellow charadriid, according to their species; hoopoe as well, and bat.

Foods: Poultry

Among Insects

11:20 “Everything among flying *things* that goes

on four feet will be detestable to you. **11:21** But whatever walks, of course, on four legs but has longer legs behind by which it jumps on the ground **11:22** you may eat, as is wingless locust and cricket and larger locust, each according to its species.

Foods: Locusts, Grasshoppers

11:23 “But whatever from flying *things* has only four feet will be detestable to you. **11:24** And anyone who touches their dead bodies will be polluted, and will be unclean until *the* evening. **11:25** And if it is necessary that he carry any of their dead bodies, he will wash his clothes and will be unclean until sunset.

General Restrictions

11:26 “Each animal that has, of course, a hoof, but doesn't divide it, nor chews cud, will be unclean. And whoever touches it will be contaminated. **11:27** What walks on hands from all animals that go on four legs will be unclean. Who touches their dead bodies will be polluted until evening. **11:28** And who carries such dead bodies will wash his clothes, and will be unclean until evening, because all these are unclean to you.

11:29 “This, likewise, will be considered among *the* polluted, from those that move on land: weasel and mouse and crocodile, each according to its species; **11:30** shrew and chameleon and gecko and lizard and mole. **11:31** All these are unclean. Who touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

11:43 “Don't contaminate your souls or touch anything of theirs, so you not be unclean, **11:44** “for I am *the* Lord your God. Be holy, because I also am holy. Do not pollute your souls in any crawling *thing* that moves over *the* ground. **11:45** I am *the* Lord, who led you from Egypt's land so I might be as God to you. You will be holy because I am holy.

11:46 “This is *the* law of animals and flying *things* and all living souls that move on water or crawl on land, **11:47** so you may know *the*

difference between clean and unclean, and understand what to eat and what you must refuse.”

22:8 “They will not eat what died of itself or was taken by a wild animal, nor will they be polluted in them. I am *the* Lord.

Numbers

Foods Which Were Eaten in Egypt

11:4 *The* common mob, of course, which had come up with them, burned with desire, sitting and weeping, joined together with Israel’s children. And they said, “Who will give us meat to eat?”

11:5 We remember *the fish* which we ate for free in Egypt. Cucumbers and melons and leeks and onions and others come into our minds. **11:6** Our soul is dry. Our eyes see nothing except manna!”

Foods: Fish, Cucumbers, Melons, Leeks, Onions

11:7 But manna was like coriander seed, *the* gum tree’s color. **11:8** And *the* people walked around and *were* gathering it, crushing at *the* millstone or grinding in small mortars, cooking in *an* oven and making small cakes from it tasting like bread with oil. **11:9** And when night came,

Food: Coriander Seed.

Deuteronomy

8:8 a land of grain, barley, and vines, in which fig and pomegranate and olive are born, a land of oil and honey . . .

Foods: Barley, Fig, Pomegranate, Olive, Honey.

12:15 But if you want to eat and eating meat delights you, kill and eat according to *the* Lord your God’s blessing, which He gave you in your towns: whether unclean (this may *mean* flawed and weak), or whether clean (this may *mean* whole and without spot, what it is permitted to offer, like goats and deer), you will eat – **12:16** without eating blood to this extent, that you pour it out over *the* ground like water.

(What Is “Fat” in The Latin Torah ?)

Earliest Mention

Genesis 4:4 Abel likewise offered from his flock’s firstborn and from their fat. And *the* Lord respected Abel and his offerings.

Cattle

Exodus 29:13 “You will also take all *the* fat that covers *the* intestines, and *the* liver’s covering, and *the* two kidneys, and *the* fat that is over them, and you will offer *as* incense over *the* altar.

Leviticus 3:2 “And they will offer from *the* peace sacrifice, as *the* Lord’s offering, *the* fat which covers *the* vital organs and whatever fatness is inside, **3:4** *the* two kidneys with *the* fat that covers them, *the* loins and *the* liver’s covering, with *the* smaller organs.

Sheep

Leviticus 3:9 “And they will offer *the* Lord from *the* peace victim a sacrifice of *the* fat and all *the* tail, **3:10** “with *the* kidneys and *the* fat that covers *the* gut, and all *the* vital organs, and *the* small kidney with *the* fat which is beside *the* loins, and *the* liver’s covering with *the* small organs.

Goat

Leviticus 3:14 “And they will take from it as food for *the* Lord’s fire *the* fat that covers *the* gut and that touches all *the* vital organs, **3:15** *the* two kidneys with *the* covering that is over them, alongside *the* loins, and *the* liver’s suet with *the* smaller organs.

Summary

General Approved Foods

Original: Fruit, Grain, Nuts

Post-Flood: Flesh

(Sense of “clean” and “unclean” was implied, but not yet specified. See Genesis 7:2 regarding “clean” and “unclean” animals, though rules for such had yet to be spelled out.)

Specific Approved Foods

Grains: Wheat, Barley, Spelt

Fruit: Grapes*, Cucumbers, Melons, Leeks, Onions, Figs, Pomegranates, Olives

Nuts: Almonds

Flesh: Beef, Goat, Sheep, Deer, Fish (with Fins and Scales), Poultry, Locusts

Animal Products: Butter, Milk, Honey

Prohibitions in Foods and Preparation

Blood

Meat cooked in milk from the same species

Fat (certain organ meats, visible fat, intestines, etc.)

Semi-Prohibited Food

Yeast

(Cannot be eaten on holy days.)

***Grapes**

(Cannot be consumed in any form during times we consecrate to the Lord.)

Use of the word “gods” in The Latin Torah

Genesis

The Snake Deceives the Woman

3:4 But *the* snake said to *the* woman, “By no means will you die by death! **3:5** For God knows that in whatever day you will eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and harm.”

There are “gods,” who know the difference between “good and harm.”

The snake entices the woman by telling her she can be like these “gods.”

Laban and Jacob Confront One Another

31:26 And he said to Jacob, “Why have you done so, that unknown to me, you’ve stolen my daughters like *the* sword’s captives?”

31:27 Why did you want to flee, me not knowing, nor tell me, so I might have sent you off with joy and songs and tympanies and guitars? **31:28** You haven’t allowed that I kiss my sons and daughters. You’ve worked foolishly, and now **31:29** my hand is strong enough at least to repay harm to you. But your father’s God said to me yesterday, ‘Take care that you not say anything stern with Jacob!’

31:30 “You wanted to go, to be with yours, and your father’s house was desire to you. Why have you stolen my gods?”

31:31 Jacob responded, “That I set out without you knowing *was* because I was afraid you would take your daughters away violently. **31:32** But that you charge theft, let anyone with whom you find your gods be killed before our brothers. Look for anything of yours! If you find it with me, take it!”

Saying this, he did not know that Rachel had stolen *the* idols.

31:33 So Laban, going into *the* tents of Jacob and Lia and both handmaids, did not find *them*. And when he came into Rachel’s tent, **31:34** she quickly hid *the* idols under *the* camel’s saddle and sat on *them*, and *her* father searching *the* whole tent and finding nothing.

31:35 She said, “Don’t let my lord be mad that I cannot get up before you, because now it falls on me according to *the* manner of women.”

So deceived, he searched anxiously.

Laban’s “gods” are carved objects, which Rachel can steal from him.

Laban has a superstitious attachment to these “gods.”

Jacob Leads the First Revival

35:2 Jacob indeed, gathering all his house, said, “Throw out *the* alien gods who are in your midst, and be clean, and change your clothes! **35:3** Get up, and we will go up to Bethel, so we can build *an* altar there to God, who heard me in my trouble’s day and was *a* Companion on my journey.”

35:4 They gave him, therefore, all *the* strange gods which they had, and *the* earrings which were in their ears. And he buried them under *the* terebinth tree which is behind *the* city of Shechem. **35:5** And when they had set out, God’s terror invaded all peoples from *the* surrounding cities, and they did not dare to pursue them, pulling back.

Strange “gods” are no longer

*acceptable in Israel.
One can either keep the old “gods” or
have a relationship with the Lord, but
not both.*

Exodus

12:12 “And I will pass through Egypt’s land that night, and I will strike every firstborn in Egypt’s land – from men even to cattle. And I will work judgment among all Egypt’s gods. I am the Lord.

*Egypt’s “gods” are judged and struck
down.
Society’s “gods” are under the Lord’s
judgment as well.*

Jethro Blesses the Lord

18:10 He said, “The Lord is blessed, who freed you from the Egyptians’ hands and from Pharaoh’s hands, who rescued His people from Egypt’s hand! **18:11** Now I have known that the Lord is great over all gods, because they acted proudly against them.”

*The comparison between “gods” and
the Lord is inevitable.
The Lord always wins the comparison.*

The Holiness Code

20:3 “You will not have alien gods before Me.

This is the First Commandment.

20:22 The Lord said to Moses thereafter, “You will say this to Israel’s children: ‘You have seen that I have spoken to you from the sky. **20:23** You will not make silver gods with Me, nor will you make yourselves golden gods.”

The Lord invokes Israel’s experience

*to warn them away from “gods” of
silver and gold.*

22:7 “If someone should entrust property or a vessel in care to a friend, and it be taken by theft from the one who received it, if the thief is found, he will repay double. **22:8** If he remains hidden, the house’s owner will be taken to the gods, and he will swear that he did not stretch out his hand against his neighbor in the matter **22:9** to working a fraud, either in ox or in donkey, in sheep or clothing or anything that can bring damage. Each one’s cause will come to the judges and, if they judge, he will pay his neighbor back double.

*In this instance, “gods” seem to be
human judges.*

*This capacity of judging recalls the
temptation in Genesis 3:4.*

22:20 “One who sacrifices to gods, except to the Lord alone, will be killed.

*Death is the inevitable consequence of
idolatry.*

23:13 “Keep all that I have said to you! And you will not swear by the name of alien gods, nor let them be heard from your mouth.

*Believers aren’t to use the gods’
names.*

23:24 “You will not worship their gods or serve them. You will not do their works, but you will destroy them and smash their statues.

*The Lord considered certain acts done
in honor of “gods” disgusting.
Israel is not to practice such things.*

23:32 “You will not enter into *a* pact with them, or with their gods. **23:33** They may not live in your land, unless perhaps they make you sin against me if you serve their gods, which certainly will be to you as *a* stumbling block.

We can make no compromises with idolatry.

We need to structure our lives to be aware of the risks and to avoid temptations.

The Golden Calf

32:1 But *the* people, seeing that Moses made *a* delay coming down from *the* mountain, gathered against Aaron. It said, “Get up! Make us gods who can go before us! For we don’t know what happened to this man Moses who led us out of Egypt’s land.”

32:2 And Aaron said to them, “Take *the* gold earrings from your wives, sons, and daughters’ ears, and bring them to me!”

32:3 *The* people did what he commanded, bringing *the* earrings to Aaron. **32:4** When he had received them, he formed *them* by *the* metal worker’s craft, and made from them *a* molded calf. And they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who led you out of Egypt’s land” . . .

32:7 But *the* Lord said to Moses, “Go! Climb down! Your people, whom you led out of Egypt’s land, has sinned. **32:8** They turned away quickly from *the* way that you showed them, and made themselves *a* molded calf. And they worshiped and, burning offerings to it, they said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who led you out of Egypt’s land’” . . .

32:21 And he said to Aaron, “What did *the*

people do to you here that you led *the* greatest sin over him?”

32:22 He answered him, “Don’t be mad, my lord, for you know this people – that it is prone to evil. **32:23** They said to me, ‘Make us gods who can go before us, because we don’t know what happened to this Moses who led us out of Egypt’s land.’

32:24 “I said to them, ‘Who of you has gold?’

“They took *it* and gave *it* to me, and I threw it into fire, and this calf came out” . . .

32:31 And turning back to *the* Lord, he said, “I pray, this people sinned *a* great sin and made themselves golden gods. Either forgive them this injury **32:32** or, if you won’t do it, erase me from Your book which You have written!”

Human beings need “gods” and feel lost without them.

We will worship and serve something.

The question is not, “If” but “Who”?
Stressed leaders deceive people into believing in other “gods.”

God knows what Israel is up to, even though Moses still doesn’t.

Aaron tries to explain away the idolatry.

Moses asks the Lord to forgive Israel.

Commandments Warning of Danger

34:14 “You will not bow down before *an* alien god. *The Zealous Lord is His name. He is a jealous God.* **34:15** You may not enter *a* pact with that region’s men, unless, when they have fornicated with their gods and worshiped their images, somebody call you and you eat from *the* offerings. **34:16** You will not accept *a* wife for your sons from their daughters,

unless, after they have fornicated, they make your sons fornicate to their gods also. **34:17** You will not make gods of cast metal.

Leviticus

19:4 “Do not be turned to idols or make yourselves cast-metal gods! *I am the* Lord your God.

Numbers

Fornicating with Moab’s Daughters

25:1 But Israel lived at that time in Setthim. And *the* people fornicated with Moab’s daughters, **25:2** who called them to their sacrifices. And they ate and worshiped their gods. **25:3** And Israel was initiated at Beelphegor.

And *the* Lord, angry, **25:4** said to Moses, “Take all *the* people’s princes and hang them toward *the* sun on gibbets, so My fury may be turned away from Israel.”

25:5 And Moses said to Israel’s judges, “Let each one kill his neighbors who were initiated at Beelphegor!”

Recounting the Exodus

33:3 Setting out, therefore, from Ramesses, *the* first month, fifteenth day of *the* first month, *the* day after Passover, Israel’s children, under *a* lifted up hand, all *the* Egyptians seeing, **33:4** and burying *the* firstborn, whom *the* Lord had struck down, for he had enforced revenge also against *their* gods, **33:5** camped in Socoth.

No Other Nation

4:7 Nor is another nation so great, which has gods close to itself, like *the* Lord our God is near to all our acts of prayer. **4:6** For what is another nation so celebrated, that it has ceremonies, rights, judgments, and *the* whole

law, which I today set forth before your eyes?

Deuteronomy

Consequences of Idolatry

4:27 And He will scatter *you* among all nations, and you will remain few among *the* nations to which the Lord will lead you. **4:28** And you will serve there gods of wood and stone, whom human hands have made – who cannot see or hear or eat or smell.

More Commandments

5:7 “You will not have alien gods in My sight.

6:14 You will not go after *the* alien gods of all *the* nations who are around you, **6:15** for *the* Lord your God *is a* jealous God among you, unless *the* Lord your God’s fury be angered against you, and He take you away from *the* land’s face!

Dangers of Intermarriage

7:3 And you will not join with them. You will not give your daughter in marriage to his son, or accept his daughter for your son. **7:4** For she will seduce your son, so he won’t follow Me, and that he serve alien gods more. And *the* Lord’s fury will be enraged and He will destroy you quickly.

Further Warnings

7:16 You will devour all *the* peoples whom *the* Lord your God is giving you. Your eye will not spare them, nor will you serve their gods, so they may not be your ruin.

8:19 But if, forgetting *the* Lord your God, you follow alien gods and serve them and worship, look! I tell you now that you will be destroyed completely.

The Lord is “the gods’ God”

10:17 For *the* Lord your God, He is *the* gods’

God and *the* lords' Lord, *a* great and mighty and terrifying God, who favors neither person nor bribes.

Take Care Not to Be Deceived

11:16 Take care, unless perhaps your heart be deceived and you turn away from *the* Lord, and you serve alien gods and adore them – **11:17** and *the* Lord, angry, may close *the* sky and *the* rain not fall, nor *the* land give its bud, and you perish quickly from *the* choice land which *the* Lord will give you!

Blessing and Curse

11:26 Look! I am placing today blessing and curse in your sight – **11:27** blessing if you obey *the* Lord your God's commandments which I am teaching you; **11:28** curse, if you won't hear *the* Lord your God's commandments, but turn back from *the* way which I am showing you now, and walk after strange gods whom you haven't known.

Tear Down the Idols

12:2 Overturn every place in which *the* nations which you will possess served their gods – on mountains' heights and hills and under every leafing tree! **12:2** Scatter their altars and smash statues! Burn groves with fire and break up their idols! Destroy their names from that place!

12:29 When *the* Lord has destroyed nations before your face, whom you are going in to possess, and you take them over and live in their land, **12:30** Take care that you not imitate them, after they have been overthrown by your entry, and you seek their ceremonies, saying, 'As these nations served their gods, so also I will serve.'

12:31 You will not do that to *the* Lord your God, for all *the* abominations which *the* Lord

turns away from in disgust they have done for their gods – offering sons and daughters and burning them with fire. **12:32** What I am commanding you, this much you will do for *the* Lord. You will neither add anything nor take away.

Beware Those Who Draw You Away

13:1 If *a* prophet, or one who sees dreams, should rise up among you, who tells or predicts *a* sign or wonder, **13:2** and what he said should happen, and he should say to you, "Let us go and follow strange gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them," **13:3** do not listen to that prophet or dreamer's words, because *the* Lord your God is testing you, that it may be made plain whether you will delight in Him or not in all your heart and in all your soul!

13:6 If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, whether *the* wife who is in your breast, or *a* friend whom you love like your soul, says secretly, "Let us go and serve alien gods, whom you or your fathers have not known, **13:7** from all *the* nations around which are near or far, from *the* land's beginning even to *its* end," **13:8** do not give in to him or listen! And do not let your eye spare him, so you can have pity or hide him!

13:12 If you should hear someone saying, in one of your towns which *the* Lord your God will give you to live in, **13:13** "Baal's children have gone out from among you, and have turned your town's inhabitants away, and they say, 'Let us go and serve strange gods whom you do not know,'" **13:14** investigate *the* thing anxiously and diligently, by truthful evidence. If you find it true what is said, and this abomination was carried through, **13:15** strike that town's inhabitants down immediately by *the* sword's mouth, and

destroy it and all that are in it, even to cattle!

How to Deal with Those Who Turn Away

17:2 When men or women who do harm in *the* Lord your God's sight and violate His pact are found among you, in one of your gates which the Lord your God will give you, **17:3** so they go and serve alien gods and adore them – sun and moon and all *the* sky's soldiers, which I have not commanded – **17:4** and this is told you, and, hearing, you inquire carefully and find *it* to be true, and *an* abomination has happened in Israel, **17:5** you will lead *the* man or woman who perpetrated this most criminal act to your city's gates, and crush them *with* stones.

18:20 But *a* prophet who arrogantly wants to speak depravity in My name, which I did not command him that he say, or in *the* name of strange gods, will be killed

20:16 But from those cities which will be given you, you will permit nothing at all to live. **20:17** But you will kill by *the* sword's mouth *the* Hittite, clearly, and Amorite and Canaanites, Perezite and Hivite and Jebusite, as *the* Lord your God has commanded you, **20:18** unless, perhaps, they teach you to do all *the* abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against *the* Lord your God.

Consequences of Faithfulness

28:13 *The* Lord will place you at *the* head and not at *the* tail, and you will always be above and not below, if you will listen to *the* Lord your God's commandments which I am teaching you today, so you keep and do *them*. **28:14** And you will not turn away from them either to *the* right or left, nor will you follow strange gods or serve them.

Curses of Disobedience

28:36 May *the* Lord lead you and *the* king whom you will set up over you *to* a nation whom you and your fathers do not know! And you will serve alien gods of wood and stone there. **28:37** And you will be ruined, *a* proverb and fable for all *the* peoples to whom *the* Lord will bring you.

28:64 *The* Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from *the* land's height even to its limits. And you will serve alien gods there, whom neither you nor your fathers know, *gods* of wood and stone.

Handmade Objects Which People Worship

29:17 You have seen their abominations and filth – that is, their idols of wood and stone, silver and gold, which they worshiped – **29:18** unless perhaps *there* be among you *a* man or woman, family or tribe, whose heart is turned away today from *the* Lord your God, that it go and serve those nations' gods, and *there* be among you *a* root sprouting up bile and bitterness.

Why Israel Will Suffer

29:25 And they will answer, “Because they abandoned *the* Lord's agreement which He made with their fathers, when He led them from Egypt's land. **29:26** And they served alien gods and adored them, whom they didn't know, and to whom they had not been subjected.

We Worship “gods” When We Refuse to Listen

30:17 But if your heart will be turned back, and you don't want to listen and, deceived by error, you adore strange gods and serve them, **30:18** I tell you beforehand today that you will perish, and will live *only a* little time in

that land which, *the* Jordan crossed, you will go in to possess.

The Lord Anticipates Israel's Rebellion

31:16 And *the* Lord said to Moses, "Look, you will sleep with your fathers, and this people, rising up, will fornicate after strange gods in *the* land to which it is going in. And he will live in it. He will abandon Me there, and will make *the* covenant which I agreed on with him void.

31:20 For I will bring him into *the* land for which I swore to his fathers – flowing with milk and honey. And when they have eaten and, filled, become fat, they will turn aside to strange gods, and will serve them and abandon Me. And they will make My pact void.

What Others Will Say Over Israel's Ruins

32:16 They provoked Him in alien gods, and stirred Him up to anger in abominations.

32:17 They sacrificed to demons and not God, gods whom they didn't know, new and recent. They came to those their fathers did not serve.

The Bitter Aftertaste of Idolatry

32:37 "And he will say, 'Where are their gods, in whom they had faith, **32:38** from whose offerings they ate fat and drank first fruits' wine? Let them rise up and bring you help, and protect you in need!

Only One God Exists

32:39 "See that I only exist, and *there* will be no other god beside me! I will kill and cause to live. I will strike and I will heal. And there is no one who can rescue from My hand.

32:40 I will raise My hand to *the* sky and say, 'I live in eternity.'

According to The Latin Torah, "gods" are,

an intermediate order of beings;
earthly judges;
earthly modes of judgment;
objects of value and worship.

The contrast between God and "gods" is ongoing, throughout the book.

Godly Leadership from The Latin Torah
Principles for Leaders
Principles for Those Being Led

From Genesis

In Paradise

3:9 And *the* Lord God called Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

Leader: God

Principle: God initiates leadership. God seeks us.

2:19b-20a For what Adam called every living soul, that is its name. And Adam called by name all living *things*, and all sky’s birds and all earth’s beasts.

Leader: Adam

Principle: A leader names his work, and knows those he is called to lead.

To Noah

7:5 Therefore, Noah did all that *the* Lord had commanded him. **7:6** And he was six hundred years old when *the* waters’ floods inundated *the* land.

Leader: Noah

Principle: A leader obeys the Lord completely, however impossible it may seem.

To Abraham

12:1 But *the* Lord said to Abram, “Go out from your land and from your kin and from your father’s house, into *a* land which I will show you!

Leader: Abram

Principle: A leader responds to God’s call, even when he doesn’t know the destination, because it is God’s call.

12:2 “And I will make you into *a* great nation, and will bless you, and magnify your name.

And you will be blessed. **12:3** I will bless those blessing you and curse those cursing you. And all *the* land’s families will be blessed in you.”

Leader: Abram

Principle: A leader brings blessing to his people. A leader also brings a curse to those who curse.

From Jacob

35:1 Meanwhile, God said to Jacob, “Get up and go up to Bethel and live there. Build *an* altar to God, who appeared to you when you fled from Esau your brother!”

35:2 Jacob indeed, gathering all his house, said, “Throw out *the* alien gods who are in your midst, and be clean, and change your clothes! **35:3** “Get up, and we will go up to Bethel, so we can build *an* altar there to God, who heard me in my trouble’s day and was *a* Companion on my journey.

Leader: Jacob

Principle: A leader leads people to repentance and guides them to God.

Joseph’s Example

39:21 But *the* Lord was with Joseph and *had* compassion for him. He gave him grace in *the* chief jailor’s sight, **39:22** who handed all *the* captives who were kept in custody over into his hand. And anything that happened was under him, **39:23** nor was *the* jailor concerned with anything of all *that* was entrusted to him, for *the* Lord was with *Joseph* and guided all his hands’ works.

Leader: Joseph

Principle: A leader stays focused on God’s call, even when circumstances seem terrible.

41:15 *Pharaoh* said to him, “I saw dreams, nor is there anyone who can unlock what *I saw*. I have heard that you can interpret most prudently.”

41:16 Joseph answered, “Apart from me God will respond with favor to Pharaoh.”

Leader: Joseph

Principle: A godly leader always gives glory to God, not himself.

41:33 “Now then, let *the* king provide *a* wise and industrious man, and make him first in Egypt’s land, **41:34** who will appoint overseers in each of *the* regions. And let *a* fifth part of *the* fruit of *the* seven fertile years, **41:35** which already now are coming, be gathered into storehouses. And let all *the* grain be stored under Pharaoh’s power, and guarded in cities. **41:36** And let it be prepared for *the* seven future years of famine which will pressure Egypt. And let *the* land not be consumed by poverty.”

Leader: Joseph

Principle: A godly leader anticipates the future and plans for it.

42:9 And remembering *the* dreams which he had seen once, *Joseph* said, “You are spies. You came so you could see *the* land’s weaknesses.”

Leader: Joseph

Principle: A godly leader tests those who come before him to find out what is in their hearts.

44:32 [Judah said to Joseph] “I, especially, *will be* your slave, who received this one into my trust and promised saying, ‘If I don’t bring him back, I will be guilty of sin against my father through all time.’”

Leader: Judah

Principle: A godly leader sacrifices his own good for the good of those he serves.

From Exodus

28:3 [The Lord said to Moses,] “And you will speak to all *the* wise in heart, whom I have filled by *a* prudent spirit, so they may make Aaron’s robes, in which, made holy, he will minister to Me.

Leader: Israel’s skilled leaders

Principle: A godly leader is wise and prudent.

A godly leader knows what the work is.

From Numbers

9:23 At *the* Lord’s word they pitched tents, and at His word they set out. And they were in *the* Lord’s vigil, according to His command by Moses’ hand.

Leader: Moses

Principle: A godly leader follows wherever the Lord leads.

14:6 And indeed Joshua, Nun’s son, and Caleb, Iepphone’s son, who also had walked around *the* land, tore their clothes **14:7** and said to all Israel’s children’s multitude, “*The* land we walked around is very good! **14:8** If *the* Lord is favorably inclined, He will lead us into it and hand over soil flowing with milk and honey. **14:9** Don’t be rebels against *the* Lord, or fear that land’s people, because we can eat them up like bread is eaten up! *The* Lord takes away every protection from them. He is with us. Don’t be afraid!”

Leaders: Caleb and Joshua

Principle: Godly leaders stand up for what is true, not for what the majority opinion may be.

Principles for Selecting Leaders

From Deuteronomy

1:12 “I am not able to bear your business, and weight, and arguments alone. **1:13** “Give from among yourselves wise, experienced men, whose conversation is approved among your tribes, so you can appoint them as leaders for yourselves.”

Leader: Moses

Principle: Godly people need to discern who genuinely can lead.

Wise, Experienced, Prudent, Self-controlled.

Public Ordination

11:16 And *the* Lord said to Moses, “Gather to Me seventy men from Israel’s elders, whom you know that are *the* people’s elders and teachers! And you will lead them to *the* opening of *the* Covenant Tabernacle, and will make them stand there with you, **11:17** “so I will come down and speak to You. And I will take from your spirit and will give it to them, so they can sustain *the* people’s burden with you and you won’t be weighed down alone . . .

11:24 So Moses came and told *the* people *the* Lord’s words, gathering seventy men from Israel’s elders, who he made stand around *the* tabernacle. **11:25** And *the* Lord came down in *the* cloud and spoke to him, taking from *the* spirit that was in Moses and giving it to *the* seventy men. And when *the* spirit had rested in them, they prophesied, nor did they cease further.

Leader: Moses

Principle: Godly leaders are consecrated in front of those they will lead.

Joshua’s Ordination

27:15 Moses answered Him, **27:16** “May *the* Lord, God of *the* spirits of all flesh, provide a man who may be over this multitude, **27:17** and may go out and come in before them, and lead them or bring them in – so *the* Lord’s people may not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

27:18 And *the* Lord said to him, “Take Joshua, Nun’s son, a man in whom is spirit, and place your hand on him – **27:19** “who will stand before Eleazar *the* priest and all *the*

multitude. **27:20** “And you will give him commandments, all seeing, and part of your glory, so all Israel’s children’s gathering may listen to him. **27:21** Whatever must be done, Eleazar *the* priest will consult *the* Lord for him. At his word, he, and all Israel’s children with him, and *the* rest of *the* multitude will go out and come in.”

27:22 Moses did as *the* Lord had commanded. And when he had taken Joshua, he stood him before Eleazar *the* priest and all *the* people’s crowd. **27:23** And, laying hands on his head, he repeated all that *the* Lord had commanded.

Leader: Moses

Principle: Leaders receive their instructions before those they are to lead.

Clean and Unclean in The Latin Torah

From Genesis Noah Knows

7:2 Take seven from all clean animals, seven male and female. But from unclean, *take* two – two male and female. **7:3** Yet *take* also seven from all sky's birds, seven male and female, so *the* seed will be saved over all land's face.

7:8 Likewise, from clean and unclean animals, and from birds, and from all that moves on land, **7:9** two by two they went in to Noah in *the* ark – male and female, like God had commanded Noah.

8:20 But Noah built *an* altar to *the* Lord and, taking from all clean cattle and birds, he offered *a* burnt offering on *the* altar. **8:21** And *the* Lord smelled *the* odor in smoothness, and He said to him, "I will never again curse *the* land because of men. For man's heart's sense and thought are prone to harm from his youth. Therefore, I will not strike further every animal, like I did. **8:22** and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, will not end."

Cleanness = Not Guilty of Sin

20:4 But Abimelech had not touched her, and he said, "Lord, will you kill *an* unknowing and fair nation? **20:5** Didn't he say to me, 'She is my sister?' And she said, 'He is my brother'? I did this in *the* simplicity of my heart and *the* cleanness of my hands."

Alien Gods Make Us Unclean

35:2 Jacob indeed, gathering all his house, said, "Throw out *the* alien gods who are in your midst, and be clean, and change your clothes!

From Exodus

Even the Altar Needs Cleansing

29:36 And you will offer *a* calf for sin each day, for atonement. And you will cleanse *the* altar when you burn *the* atonement offerings, and anoint it in holiness.

From Leviticus

Clean and Unclean Places

4:8 "And he will take away for sin *the* calf's fat – that which covers the vital organs and all that are inside, **4:9** *the* two kidneys and *the* covering that is over them beside *the* loins, and *the* liver's fat with *the* little organs – **4:10** as is taken away from *the* calf of *the* peace victim, and he will burn them over *the* altar of burnt offerings. **4:11** And *the* hide and all *the* meat, with *the* head and feet and intestines and dung **4:12** and *the* rest of the body, he will take outside *the* camp into *a* clean place, where they are accustomed to pour out ashes. And he will burn them over piled wood, that they may be cremated in *the* place of poured out ashes.

Touching Something Unclean

5:2 "A soul that touches something unclean, whether that be *a* killed animal, or *one* that died of itself, or any sort of crawling thing, and forgets his uncleanness, is guilty and falls short. **5:3** And if he should touch something from human uncleanness, according to every impurity by which it is customary to be polluted, and forgetting, afterwards recognizes *it*, he will be subject to penalty.

A Most Clean Place

6:8 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **6:9** "Command Aaron and his sons, 'This is *the* law of burnt offering. It will be burned on *the* altar all night, until morning. *The* fire will be

from *the* same altar. **6:10** *The* priest will be dressed in *the* tunic and linen thigh coverings. And he will take *the* ashes which *the* devouring fire burned up and, placing *them* beside *the* altar, **6:11** he will take off *the* prior garments and, dressing in others, will take them outside *the* camp into *a* most clean place. And he will cause them to be consumed to ashes.

Peace Offerings

7:18 “If one should eat from *the* peace offering’s flesh *the* third day, *the* gift will be made void, nor will it benefit *the* one offering. But rather whatever soul should eat so will contaminate himself. He will be guilty of transgressing. **7:19** Flesh that anything unclean touches will not be eaten, but burned in fire. One who will be clean will eat it.

7:20 “*A* polluted soul that eats from *the* peace offering’s flesh, which is offered to *the* Lord, will perish from his people. **7:21** And who will touch uncleanness, whether of men or cattle or anything that can be polluted, and will eat from such meat, will die from his people.”

Discern Between Clean and Unclean

10:8 *The* Lord also said to Aaron, **10:9** “You and your sons will not drink wine and all that can make drunk when you enter testimony’s tabernacle, so you won’t die, because it is commanded forever in your generations – **10:10** and so you may have understanding to discern between holy and profane, between polluted and clean, **10:11** and you may teach Israel’s children all My laws, which *the* Lord has spoken to them through Moses’ hand” . . .

10:14 “Likewise, you and your sons and your daughters with you will eat *the* breast that is offered and *the* forequarter that is separated in *a* most clean place, for they are reserved for you and your children from *the* offerings for Israel’s children’s well-being – **10:15** because they have lifted up before *the* Lord *the* forequarter and breast and *the* fat portions which are burned on *the* altar, and they belong to you and your sons by *a* perpetual law, as *the* Lord commanded.”

Clean and Unclean Foods

Chapter 11

Summary

11:43 “Don’t contaminate your souls or touch anything of theirs, so you not be unclean, **11:44** “for I am *the* Lord your God. Be holy, because I also am holy. Do not pollute your souls in any crawling *thing* that moves over *the* ground. **11:45** I am *the* Lord, who led you from Egypt’s land so I might be as God to you. You will be holy because I am holy.

11:46 “This is *the* law of animals and flying *things* and all living souls that move on water or crawl on land, **11:47** so you may know *the* difference between clean and unclean, and understand what to eat and what you must refuse.”

Clean and Unclean After Childbirth

12:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **12:2** “Speak to Israel’s children, and you will say to them, ‘If *a* woman, receiving seed, births *a* male, she will be unclean seven days according to *the* days of menstrual separation. **12:3** And *the* infant will be circumcised *the* eighth day. **12:4** She indeed will remain in her blood purification thirty-three days. She

will not touch anything holy or go into *the* sanctuary until her days of purification are completed.

12:5 ““But if she births *a* female, she will be unclean two weeks, according to *the* rite of menstrual flux. And she will remain sixty-six days in her purification’s blood. **12:6** And when her purification’s days are completed, whether for son or for daughter, she will bring *a* yearling lamb as *a* burnt offering and *a* young pigeon or dove for sin to *the* entrance of testimony’s tabernacle. And she will give it to *the* priest, **12:7** who will offer them before *the* Lord and pray for her. And so she will be cleansed from her flowing forth of blood. This is *the* law for birthing male and female.

12:8 But if her hand can’t find or can’t offer *a* lamb, she will take two doves or two young pigeons, one as *a* burnt offering and *the* other for sin. And *the* priest will pray for her and so she will be cleansed.

Leprosy

Chapters 13 and 14

Male Discharges

Menstruation

Chapter 15

On the Day of Atonement

16:16 And he will make atonement for *the* sanctuary from all *the* uncleanness of Israel’s children, and from all their transgressions and their sins.

16:17 “No man may be in *the* tabernacle when *the* high priest goes into *the* sanctuary until he comes out, so he can pray for himself, and for his house, and for *the* whole gathering of Israel. **16:18** But when he has gone out to

the altar that is before *the* Lord, he will pray for himself and, taking *the* blood of *the* calf and he-goat, he will pour *it* over its horns all around. **16:19** And, sprinkling by finger seven *times*, he will atone for and make it holy from *the* uncleanness of Israel’s children.

Confessing Israel’s Sins

16:20 “After he has made *the* sanctuary and tabernacle and altar clean, then he may offer *the* living goat.

Atonement and Cleansing from the Lord

16:29 “And this will be *an* everlasting law to you. *The* seventh month, *the* tenth day of *the* month, you will afflict your souls. And you will do no work, whether *the* native-born or *the* stranger who sojourns among you. **16:30** Atonement and cleansing will be yours on that day from all your sins. You will be made clean before *the* Lord, **16:31** for *it* is *a* Sabbath of rest, and you will afflict your souls as *a* perpetual observance.

Touching Dead Bodies

17:15 ““*A* soul that eats from *a* beast that died of itself or was taken, whether *he is* native born or stranger, will wash his clothes and himself with water, and will be contaminated until evening. And by this order he will be made clean. **17:16** But if he does not wash his clothes or body, he will carry his treachery.

Planting Fruit Trees

19:23 ““When you have gone into *the* land and you plant fruit trees in it, you will take away their foreskin. *The* fruits which germinate will be unclean to you, nor will you eat from them. **19:24** In *the* fourth year, all their fruit will be sanctified, praiseworthy to *the* Lord. **19:25** But *the* fifth year you will eat *the* produce, gathering *the* fruits which are put

forth. I *am the* Lord your God.

Separate Yourselves

20:25 “Therefore, you also separate clean cattle from unclean, and clean birds from unclean, unless you pollute your souls in cattle and in birds and in all that moves on *the* land, and which I have shown you to be polluted! **20:26** You will be holy to Me, because I, *the* Lord, am holy. And I separated you from other peoples, so you might be Mine.

Priests Must Avoid Uncleaness Chapter 22

Defective = Unclean

27:11 “If someone should promise *an unclean* animal that cannot be offered to *the* Lord, it will be led before *the* priest, **27:12** who, judging whether *it* is good and bad, will set *the* price, **27:13** to which, if he who is offering wants to give it, he will add *a* fifth part over *the* estimation.

Buying Back an Unclean Animal

27:27 But if *an* animal is unclean, he who offered *it* will buy *it* back according to its estimation, and he will add *a* fifth part to *the* price. If he doesn’t want to buy it back, it will be sold to another, and for whatever *the* estimation will be by you.

From Numbers Caathite Duties

4:13 “But they will clean *the* altar of ashes and wrap it in *a* purple vestment.

Cleansing as Part of Consecration

8:5 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **8:6** “Take *the* Levites from among Israel’s children! And you will purify them **8:7** according to this rite. Let them be sprinkled

by cleansing’s water, and let them shave all their flesh’s hair. And when they have washed their clothes and are clean, **8:8** let them take *an* ox from *the* herd and its libation, wheat flour sprinkled with oil.

Question of Those

Unclean for Passover

9:6 But look, some *who were unclean* over a man’s soul, who couldn’t make *the* Passover on that day, coming to Moses and Aaron, **9:7** said to them, “We are unclean over *a* man’s soul. Why are we cheated so we can’t offer *the* Lord *the* oblation at its time among Israel’s children?”

9:8 Moses answered them, “Stand here, so I can take counsel what *the* Lord may command about you.”

9:9 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **9:10** “Speak to Israel’s children: *a* man who is unclean concerning a soul or on *the* road far away among your people may make *the* Passover to *the* Lord. **9:11** They will eat it *the* second month, *the* fourteenth day, at evening, with unleavened bread and wild leaves . . .

9:13 “But if someone is both clean and was not on *the* road and, nevertheless, did not make *the* Passover, that soul will be exterminated from his people, because he did not offer sacrifice to *the* Lord at its time. He will carry his sin.

Ritual Purity Required to Eat the Offerings

18:11 “But I have given you and your sons and daughters *the* first fruits, which Israel’s children pay back and offer Me, as *a* perpetual law. Who is clean in your house will eat them. **18:12** Every essence of oil and wine

and grain – whatever they offer as first fruits to *the* Lord – I have given you. **18:13** All *the* first ripe fruit that *the* soil bears and they carry to *the* Lord will go to your uses. Who is clean in your house will eat them. **18:14** Everything that Israel’s children pay back from *a* promise will be yours.

18:15 “Whatever breaks forth first from *the* vulva of all flesh they offer to *the* Lord – whether from men or animals – is yours, to this extent so: that you will receive *the* price for firstborn men; and every animal that is unclean, you will cause to be bought back – **18:16** whose redemption will be five silver shekels after one month, by the sanctuary’s weight. (*A* shekel has twenty obolos.)

The Ceremony of the Red Heifer Dealing with the Dead Chapter 19

Cleansing by Conquest

33:49 And they camped there from Bethsimon even to Belsattim, in *the* Moabites’ flat places, **33:50** where *the* Lord said to Moses, **33:51** “Command Israel’s children and say to them, ‘When you have crossed *the* Jordan, entering Canaan’s land, **33:52** destroy all that region’s inhabitants! Break down their titles, and smash their statues, and lay waste all *the* high *places*, **33:53** cleansing *the* land and living in it! For I have given it to you as *a* possession, **33:54** which you will divide among yourselves by lot.

Cleansing from Murder

35:30 “*A* murderer will be punished under witnesses. No one will be condemned at *the* testimony of one. **35:31** You will not accept *a* price from him who is guilty of blood. He also will die immediately. **35:32** Exiles and

fugitives by no means may go back to their cities before *the* high priest’s death. **35:33** You may not pollute your habitation’s land, which is stained by innocent murder; nor can it be atoned for otherwise, except by his blood who shed *the* other’s blood. **35:34** And so your possession will be made clean, *Me* living with you, for I am *the* Lord, who lives among Israel’s children.

From Deuteronomy

Clean and Unclean Animals

12:15 But if you want to eat and eating meat delights you, kill and eat according to *the* Lord your God’s blessing, which He gave you in your towns: whether unclean (this may *mean* flawed and weak), or whether clean (this may *mean* whole and without spot, what it is permitted to offer, like goats and deer), you will eat – **12:16** without eating blood to this extent, that you pour it out over *the* ground like water . . .

12:20 When *the* Lord your God has broadened your borders, as He has spoken to you, and you want to eat *the* meat which your soul desires, **12:21** but *the* place is far away which *the* Lord your God has chosen that His name may be, kill from your herds and flocks which you have, as I have taught you, and eat in your towns what pleases you. **12:22** As goat and deer are eaten, so you will eat them. And clean and unclean alike you will eat.

12:23 This only take care: that you not eat blood. For their blood is for *the* soul, and therefore, you must not eat it with *the* meat, **12:24** but pour it on *the* ground like water – **12:25** that it may be well with you and your children after you, when you do what is pleasing in *the* Lord’s sight.

Restatement of Dietary Laws

Chapter 14:3-21

What May Be Offered to the Lord

15:21 But if one should have *a* blemish, or be lame, or blind, or in some part deformed or weak, you will not offer it to *the* Lord your God. **15:22** But you will eat it inside your city's gates. clean and unclean alike will be eaten by them, like goat and deer. **15:23** You will observe this only, that you not eat their blood, but you pour *it* out on *the* ground like water.

Priests to Judge What is Clean or Unclean

21:5 And priests, Levi's children, will come, whom *the* Lord your God has chosen so they can minister to Him and bless in His name, and every affair and whatever is clean or unclean will be judged by their word.

What Is Set Aside to the Lord Is Whole

26:14 "I have not eaten from it in my grief, or divided it in whatever uncleanness, or spent anything from it in *a* matter of funeral rites. I have obeyed *the* Lord my God's voice, and done all that You commanded me.

Was Moses a Jew?

The word “Jews” is first mentioned in context of the political crisis leading to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel, ca 722 BCE. Jews were residents of the southern kingdom, Judah.

2 Kings 16:6 ⁶ At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

The second mention comes in the aftermath of Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem, ca 587 BCE.

2 Kings 25:25 ²⁵ But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

After that time, the designation of “Jews” as survivors of Judah became commonplace.

Moses was an Israelite, a descendant of the patriarch Jacob. He was also a Levite, a member of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. (See Exodus 2:1-10)

Judah was Levi’s brother, one of Jacob’s twelve sons and the forefather of one of its tribes.

Genesis 35:23 ²³ The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

Israel divided after Solomon’s death.

1 Kings 12:16-17 ¹⁶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not

unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. ¹⁷ But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

1 Kings 12:19-20 ¹⁹ So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. ²⁰ And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

Jews, meaning members of the tribe of Judah, with a sprinkling of Benjamites and Levites, were almost the entirety of the survivors of the older tradition of Israel.

(See **Luke 2:36** for the exception of “Anna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser . . .”; and **Revelation 7:1-8** for the tribes’ restoration in the future.)

Eventually, the words “Jew” and “Judaism” came to be applied to the entire Old Testament tradition. Factually, though, calling Moses a “Jew” and his law “Jewish” are anachronisms.

“Book of the Law” and “Law of Moses” in Joshua through 2 Kings

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

According to this passage, the “book of the law” existed in teachable form, prior to Israel’s entry into Canaan. Observance of it is considered key to success in what lies ahead.

Joshua 1:12-13 ¹² And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, ¹³ Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

In this passage, Joshua references instructions given in Numbers 32:20-28, and reiterated in Deuteronomy 3:18.

Joshua 8:30-35 ³⁰ Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, ³¹ As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up *any* iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³² And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. ³³ And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that

Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

In this passage, Joshua appears to act according to specific instructions from what we know today as *Torah* .

“Altar of uncut stones”

Exodus 20:24-25
(Book of the Covenant)

Referencing Blessings and Curses

Lv 26
Dt 27:14-26,
28:1-68,
29:20-21,
30:15-20

Referencing the ritual of blessing and curse to be performed on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim

Dt 11:26-32

Joshua 13:14 ¹⁴ Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, as he said unto them.

This verse references commandments given in Numbers 18:20-24, and reiterated in Deuteronomy 10:9 and 18:2.

Joshua 22:23-29 ²³ That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require *it*; ²⁴ And if we have not *rather* done it for fear of *this* thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel? ²⁵ For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of

Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD. ²⁶ Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: ²⁷ But *that it may be* a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD. ²⁸ Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should *so* say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say *again*, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between us and you. ²⁹ God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that *is* before his tabernacle.

This verse references commandments given concerning the Tabernacle and its furnishings, found in Exodus 25:40 and following.

It also references the prohibition against making offerings on any altar other than the one the Lord will choose, in Deuteronomy 12:13-14.

Joshua 23:6 ⁶ Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom *to* the right hand or *to* the left . . .

Joshua 24:25-26 ²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. ²⁶ And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.

The “book of the law” as Joshua seems to have known it contained demonstrable elements from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

It fades from Israel’s consciousness til the end of King David’s reign. Thereafter, it seems to play an ongoing role in their national life.

1 Kings 2:1-3 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, ² I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; ³ And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself . . .”

2 Kings 14:6 ⁶ But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

This passage cites a commandment in Deuteronomy 24:16.

Its “rediscovery in 2 Kings 22:8 sets off a national revival.

2 Kings 22:8-13 ⁸ And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. ⁹ And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. ¹⁰ And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. ¹¹ And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. ¹² And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, ¹³ Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book,

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to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

I had the same response when I was working through Deuteronomy.

Interestingly, Hilkiyah goes to inquire of a woman, Huldah, who then passes on the Lord's word to the nation.

Occurrences of “Christ” in the Vulgate Old Testament

From Nevi'im

Hannah's Prayer:

1 Samuel 2:10 His adversaries will fear *the* Lord above them. *The* Lord will thunder in *the* skies. He will judge *the* land's ends, and give dominion to His king, and lift up His Christ's horn.

1 Samuel 2:35 And I will stir up *a* faithful priest to Me, who will work according to My heart and My soul. And I will build *a* faithful house for him, and he will walk before My Christ all days.

Samuel's Farewell

1 Samuel 12:3 “Speak to me before *the* Lord and before His Christ, whether I have taken anyone's ox or donkey, if I have falsely accused anyone, if I have oppressed someone, if I have accepted *a* bribe from anyone's hand and scorned it, and today, I will make restitution.”

1 Samuel 12:5 And he said to them, “*The* Lord be witness against you, and His Christ be witness on this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.”

And they said, “Witness.”

David's Anointing by Samuel

1 Samuel 16:6 And when they had gone in, he saw Heliab and said, “Isn't His Christ before *the* Lord?”

David Spares Saul's Life

1 Samuel 24:7 And he said to his men, “*The* Lord be propitiated with me, that I may not do this thing to my lord, to *the* Lord's Christ, that I stretch my hand against him, for he is *the* Lord's Christ.”

David and Abishai Spare Saul's Life

1 Samuel 26:9 And David said to Abisai, “Do not kill him, for who stretches out his

hand against *the* Lord's Christ, and will be innocent?

1 Samuel 26:11 “May *the* Lord be propitiated toward me, that I may not stretch out my hand against *the* Lord's Christ. Now, therefore, take *the* spear that is at his head, and *the* water cup, and let us go away!”

David Rebukes Saul's Careless Watchmen

1 Samuel 26:16 “This that you have done is not good. *The* Lord lives, for you are death's sons, who have not guarded your lord, *the* Lord's Christ! Now, therefore, see! Where *is the* king's spear, and where *is the* water cup that was at his head!”

David Hears of Saul's Death

2 Samuel 1:14 And David said to him, “How were you not afraid to send out your hand, that you might kill *the* Lord's Christ?”

2 Samuel 1:16 And David said to him, “Your blood be on your head, for your mouth has spoken against you, saying, ‘I killed *the* Lord's Christ.’”

Simei, Saul's Son, Curses David

2 Samuel 19:21 Responding, indeed, Abisai, Sarviah's son, said, “Shouldn't Semei be killed for these words, because he has cursed *the* Lord's Christ?”

David's Song of Thanksgiving

2 Samuel 22:51 . . . lifting up His king's security, and making mercy to His Christ, David, and his seed, in everlasting years.

David's Death

2 Samuel 23:1 But these are *the* last words that David, Jesse's son, spoke. *The* man who was appointed from *the* Christ of Jacob's God, Israel's distinguished musician, spoke

Habakkuk's Prayer

Habakkuk 3:13 You came out in Your people's security, with Your Christ in security. You struck *the* lawless house's head. You stripped *the* foundation, even to *the* throat, always.

Isaiah Describes Cyrus

Isaiah 45:1 *The* Lord says this to Cyrus, my Christ, whose right hand I have taken, that I may subjugate nations before his face, and turn *the* backs of kings, and open doors before him – and the gates will not be closed:

From Kethuvim

David's Psalm of Thanksgiving

1 Chronicles 16:22 Don't touch My Christs, and don't work harm against My prophets!

Solomon's Prayer

at the Temple's Dedication

2 Chronicles 6:42 Lord God, do not turn away from Your Christ's face! Remember the mercies of David, your slave!

Miscellaneous Psalms

(From The Audacity of Prayer)

Psalm 2:2 *The* land's kings stood together and princes gathered as one – against *the* Lord and against His Christ.

Psalm 17:51 . . . magnifying His King's well-being, and making mercy to David, His Christ, and to his seed in *the* age.

Psalm 19:7 May *the* Lord fulfill all your requests.

Now I have known that *the* Lord made His Christ secure. He will hear him from His holy sky. God's right hand's safety *is* in might.

Psalm 27:8 *The* Lord *is* His people's strength. He is *the* protector of His Christ's well-being.

Psalm 83:10 God, our protector, look on and consider, in Your Christ's face!

Psalm 88:39 Yet You

have rejected and despised. You put off Your Christ.

Psalm 88:52 what Your enemies have cursed, Lord – what they have cursed in exchange for Your Christ!

Psalm 104:15 “Do not touch my Christs! Do not seek harm among my prophets!” (*Same verse in Latin as 1 Chronicles 16:22*)

Psalm 131:10 For David, Your slave's, sake, do not turn Your Christ's face away!

Psalm 131:17 “There I will bring out David's strength. I have prepared *a* lamp for Christ's light.

Jeremiah's Lament

Over Jerusalem's Destruction

Lamentations 4:20 RES: Our mouth's spirit, the Lord's Christ, is captured in our sins, to whom we have said, "We will live in your shadow among nations."

An Angel Explains Daniel's Vision

Daniel 9:25 "Know, therefore, and pay attention from *the* words' going forth, that Jerusalem will again be built, even to Christ, *the* leader, *in* seven weeks. And sixty-two weeks will be, and again *the* street and wall will be built, in *the* times' anguish. **9:26** And after sixty-two weeks, Christ will be killed, and his *own* will not be. And *the* city and *the* holy place will be destroyed. And *a* people with *a* leader *will* come, and its end *will be* devastation. And after *the* war's end, desolation *will be* set up.

The Serpent's Method and the Humans' Error

A Wise God's Provision

2:9 And *the* Lord God produced from soil every tree beautiful to sight and sweet for eating – even *a* tree of life in paradise's midst, and *a* tree of knowledge of good and evil . . .

2:15 Therefore *the* Lord God took man and placed him in pleasure's paradise, that he might cultivate and keep it. **2:16** And he commanded him, saying, "Eat from every tree of Paradise, 2:17 "but do not eat from *the* tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil. For in whatever day you eat from it, you will die by death."

Method and Error

Genesis 3:1 Yet *the* snake also was more clever than all *the* land's animals which *the* Lord God had made. *It* said to *the* woman, "Why did God command you that you not eat from every tree of paradise?"

Method: Exaggeration of the Commandment

3:2 *The* woman answered him, "We will eat from *the* trees' fruit which are in paradise.

3:3 "But from *the* tree's fruit which is in *the* middle of paradise, God commanded us *that* we may not eat and we may not touch it, unless perhaps we die."

Error: Exaggeration of the Commandment

3:4 But *the* snake said to *the* woman, "By no means will you die by death!

Method: Direct Contradiction

3:5 "For God knows that in whatever day you will eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and harm."

Method: Insinuation

- that God is envious of His creatures.
- that Eve lacks something.
- that God is keeping Eve from filling up what is lacking in her.

3:6 Therefore, *the* woman saw that *the* tree

was good to eat and beautiful to *the* eyes, and delicious looking. And she took its fruit and ate, and gave *it* to her man, who ate.

Error: Direct Contradiction

Breaking the Commandment

Sharing Our Sin, Not Repenting of It

3:7 And both their eyes were open. And when they understood themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves coverings.

What changed for them at that moment?

Why did Eve share the fruit without Adam?

Why did Adam accept it from her?

Is It Coincidental that the Snake's Method Fits So Comfortably with Human Error?

Would God Have Forgiven Them, Had They Repented?

Of course he would.

Governing Passage is 1 John 1:9-10

The Real Cost of Failing to Repent Genesis 3

Genesis 3:8 And when they heard *the* Lord God's voice, walking in paradise to *the* afternoon breeze, Adam hid himself and his wife from *the* Lord God's face, among paradise's trees. **3:9** And *the* Lord God called Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

God knows perfectly well where Adam is. God calls so Adam will understand.

3:10 *Adam* said, "I heard Your voice in paradise and I was afraid, because I was naked. And I hid myself."

Adam hides, rather than face the truth about himself.

3:11 To whom He said, "So, who told you that you were naked, unless you ate from *the* tree from which I commanded you that you might not eat?"

God Tells Adam What Adam's Conscience Cannot Deny

3:12 And Adam said, "Woman, whom You gave me as *a* companion, gave to me from *the* tree, and I ate."

Adam Blames His Heart's Companion, rather than taking responsibility for his actions.

3:13 And *the* Lord God said to *the* woman, "Why did you do this?"

She answered, "*The* snake tricked me, and I ate."

The Woman, Likewise, Blames Another, rather than taking responsibility for her actions.

Would the Lord have forgiven them, had they repented?

Of course.

1 John 1:8-10 ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (AV)

Conspiracy Theories About the Bible

We Americans love our conspiracies: JFK, 9-11, Barack Obama's Birth Certificate. Say the word "conspiracy" and lots of us take notice.

I've discovered a conspiracy theory about the Bible, too. The best illustration of it is a story. Back in college I knew a lovely young woman from the Midwest, raised in a Catholic environment and pulling as far away from it as she possibly could. (That happens, sometimes, parents. It's not necessarily a bad thing, either.)

I've always been a Bible geek, in my own whacked-out way, and she gave me her reason for distrusting scripture. "Those medieval popes," she said, "could have changed it to make it say anything."

She's right, of course. They could have. Lots of folks think the Bible's true meaning has been distorted to serve particular interests. Often, it has. There are always translation projects underway, motivated by a desire to unmask the errors of earlier translation projects. A healthy suspicion is . . . well . . . healthy.

That said, there's a point past which such suspicion becomes unhealthy, if not ridiculous. If we catch ourselves believing that the Bible would say just what we believe it should, if it weren't for all those people distorting it, maybe we ought to look deeper.

I'm a translator, working from a masterful early interpretation of the Hebrew original. I compare, correct, and correlate my work to a half dozen other Bible texts. Do I see a conspiracy by translators to skew the Bible's

meanings?

No, I don't.

We can lay translations from all types of languages, nations, churches, and people side-by-side. We can compare. What often surprises me is how close they all are. Differences are differences of wording and, occasionally, nuance. It isn't often that the translations differ strikingly.

There is no conspiracy to distort the Bible, at least not one that an intelligent reader, looking at more than one translation, can't debunk.

In the sales world, the "Conspiracy Theory of Scripture" would be called an objection, something customers throw out there to protect themselves from being sold something they don't believe they want.

The problem, as I see it, is not that someone has twisted scripture, and therefore we can't believe what it says. The problem is that we don't like what it says.

We don't want to know about a holy, awesome God, who is sovereign over all, who judges between right and wrong, who holds us accountable without being accountable to us. We object, because such a God may rightly crimp our lifestyle.

As Mark Twain reportedly said, "It's not those parts of scripture I don't understand that bother me. It's those parts I do!"

In What Sense Is The Old Testament “True?”

(From The Jagged Edge of Forever: Deuteronomy, Daniel, The Minor Prophets)

First of all, let’s start with a definition.

Truth is what is real.

Truth corresponds to what is. This includes what we wish could be, but is not limited by it.

Truth includes us, but is not limited to us.

The best humans can do on their own is build models of truth.

Some of those models are powerful, indeed. It took a powerful model of truth, something corresponding with great precision to what actually is, to build the atomic bomb.

Yet not even the atomic bomb exhausts truth, even if it may someday destroy us.

The Bible is true in the sense that it reflects what is.

It provides a picture of the universe, corresponding to reality.

The Bible communicates that truth through literature: written words.

Human understanding is not perfect. At times we misunderstand, sometimes with terrible consequences. The Bible is well-aware of that.

The Bible’s truth is communicated through various types of literature. These types include:

- **law**, both case law and statute law.

- **saga**: tales of events and people, communicating God’s presence.
- **poetry**
- **preaching**, more commonly known as prophecy
- **reflection**
- **apocalypse**
- **devotion**, public prayer.

Literary genres, types, ways of writing, communicate truth in various ways. The “truth” of Psalm 23 is as “true” as $e=mc^2$.

Yet each tells its truth in different forms. Sensible readers understand the difference, realizing that truth remains true, wherever it is found.

God is truth, scripture says.

That’s not all God is, but God is at least what is real and true.

The Bible reveals truth, yet does not exhaust it.

True as it is, its truth is under God, not in place of Him.

Read the Bible, sensitive to the way different types of human activities communicate truth.

God's Precedents in Genesis 1

God creates:

Genesis 1:1 In beginning
God created sky and land.

God considers:

1:2c And God's Spirit considered,
above waters.

God speaks:

1:3 And God said,
"Let light be!"
And light came to be.

God judges:

1:4a And God saw light,
that it was good,

God distinguishes:

1:4b ". . . and divided light
from shadows.

God names:

1:5 And He
called light "Day,"
and shadows "Night."

God blesses:

1:22 And God blessed them,
saying, "Grow and multiply,
and fill sea's waters!"

God provides:

1:29 And God said,
"Look, I have given you
every seed -bearing herb
on land,
and all woods
which have in themselves
seed of their type,
that they may be food

to you

God perfects:

Genesis 2:1 Therefore,
sky and land
and all their adornments
were perfected.

God completes:

2:2a And God completed
on *the* seventh day
His work which He made . . .

God rests:

2:2b . . . and rested on *the* seventh day
from every work
which He had brought
to completion.

God hallows:

2:3 And He blessed
the seventh day,
and made it holy,
because in it He ceased
from all His work,
which God created,
that it be made.

Creation and Trinity Genesis 1:1-3

Genesis 1:1 “In beginning . . .

Note that an article is absent in both the Latin and the Hebrew original. It is not “In the beginning,” but simply, “In beginning.”

“God . . .

The Hebrew word, אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, is a plural form of אֱל, *El*, “God”. *Elohim* can be translated as “gods”, though the word is used most often in scripture to indicate a singular entity.

“created . . .

The Hebrew verb בָּרָא *bara*, meaning “to create, shape, form,” is only used with God as its subject

“skies . . .”

The Hebrew word שָׁמַיִם, *shamayim*, is a plural form, translated as “heaven” in the AV. I have avoided translating the word as “heaven” because the word has accumulated many layers of meaning beyond what the original in all likelihood intended. The words “sky” or “skies” have fewer such accretions.

“and land.”

The Hebrew word אֶרֶץ *eretz*, is translated as “earth” in the AV. For the generations living after the beginning of space exploration, the word “earth” has come to mean far more than the original probably signified. I have chosen “land” to try to focus on the concrete nature of the reference.

1:2 “But land was empty and vacant,

Hebrew: תְּהוֹ וְבוּהוּ, *tohu wuvohu*,

“formless and emptiness”

“and shadows *were* . . . over abyss’s face.

Hebrew: תְּהוֹם *tehom*, “deep, depths, abyss”

Cappadocian Fathers: “the abyss” of God the Father.

“And God’s Spirit considered, above waters.”

This verse indicates that the physical universe is shaped by God’s superintending Spirit, which orders it according to God’s consideration.

The Hebrew word רוּחַ *ruah*, can mean “breath” and “wind,” as well as “spirit.”

1:3 “And God said, “Let light be!”

And light came to be.”

This verse introduces God’s Word, which, being spoken, becomes the agent of revealing God’s purposes. Thus, by verse 3, the three Persons of the Trinity have been made manifest: the Father, the “abyss” in Whom all things exist, the Spirit, who considers all, and the Word, which voices the Father’s hidden will and brings it into being.

Addresses to Aaron in The Latin Torah

Addresses to Aaron

The Lord Prepares to Rescue Israel from Slavery.

Exodus 4:27 But *the* Lord said to Aaron, “Go to meet Moses in *the* desert!”

Addresses to Moses and Aaron

In the Struggle to Free Israel

Exodus 6:13 *The* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave *a* commandment to Israel’s children and to Pharaoh, Egypt’s king, that they lead Israel’s children from Egypt’s land.

Exodus 7:8 And *the* Lord said to Moses and Aaron, **7:9** “When Pharaoh has said to you, ‘Show signs!’ you will say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh!’ And it will turn into *a* snake.”

Exodus 9:8 And *the* Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of ashes from *a* furnace, and let Moses scatter them in *the* sky before Pharaoh. **9:9** And let *the* dust be over all Egypt’s land, for wounds will be in men and in cattle, and swelling sores in all Egypt’s land.”

In Commanding Future Observance

Exodus 12:1-3 *The* Lord likewise said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt’s land, **12:2** “This month will be *the* beginning of months for you. It will be first among *the* year’s months. **12:3** Speak to all *the* gathering of Israel’s children and say to them, ‘*The* tenth day of this month, let each one take *a* lamb for his families and houses.

Exodus 12:43 And *the* Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is *the* Passover obligation. No foreigner may eat from it. **12:44** But every bought slave will be circumcised, and

so he will eat. **12:45** Newcomer and hired soldier will not eat from it. **12:46** It will be eaten in one house, nor will you take any of its meat outside, nor will you break its bones.

In Distinguishing Between Clean and Unclean

Leviticus 11:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **11:2** “Say to Israel’s children, ‘These are *the* animals which you must eat, from all *the* land’s animals. **11:3** You will eat all that has *a* divided hoof and chews cud among *the* animals.

In Diagnosing Leprosy

Leviticus 13:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **13:2** “*A* man in whose flesh and skin *a* strange color rises, whether *an* inflamed sore or something like light, it is *the* plague of leprosy. He will be brought to Aaron *the* priest or to any of his sons, **13:3** who, when he sees *the* leprosy in *the* skin, and *the* hairs turned *the* color white, and *the* same place of leprosy lower than *the* skin and remaining flesh, it is *the* plague of leprosy and, at his judgment, he will be separated.

Leviticus 14:33 *The* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **14:34** “When you have come into Canaan’s land which I will give you as *a* possession, if leprosy’s plague is in houses, **14:35** *the* one whose house it is will go, telling *the* priest. And he will say, ‘Something like *the* plague of leprosy seems to me to be in my house.’

In Diagnosing Male Discharges

Leviticus 15:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **15:2** “Speak to Israel’s children and say to them, ‘*A* man who suffers *a* flow of semen will be unclean. **15:3** And

then he will be judged to be under this vice when, at each moment, this foul liquid sticks to his flesh and thickens.

In Arranging Israel's Order of Camp

Numbers 2:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **2:2** “Each of Israel’s children will make camp around *the* Covenant Tabernacle by their clans’ companies, signs and banners and houses.”

In Preparing the Tabernacle's Service

Numbers 4:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **4:2** “Take *the* sum of Caath’s children from *the* Levites’ midst, by their houses and families, **4:3** from *the* thirtieth year and above, until *the* fiftieth year, of all who go in so they may stand and minister in *the* Covenant Tabernacle.

In Announcing Judgment

Numbers 14:26-31 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **14:27** “How long will this dismal multitude gripe against Me? I have heard Israel’s children’s complaints. **14:28** Therefore, say to them, ‘I live,’ *the* Lord says. ‘As you have spoken, Me hearing, so I will do to you. **14:29** They will lay down your dead bodies in this wasteland, all of you who were numbered – from twenty years old and above – and who griped against Me. **14:30** You will not go into *the* land over which I lifted up My hand that I would make you live there, except Caleb, Iepphone’s son, and Joshua, Nun’s son.

Numbers 14:31 ““But your little ones, about whom you said that they would be *the* enemies’ prey, I will bring them in, that they may see *the* land that you despised. **14:32** They will lay down your dead bodies in *the* wasteland.

In Inciting Prayer

Numbers 16:20-22 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, **16:21** “Move away from among this crowd, so I can quickly destroy them!”

Numbers 16:22 *They* fell face down and said, “Mightiest God of all flesh’s spirits, will Your anger rage, one sinning against all?”

In Purification Rituals

Numbers 19:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **19:2** “This is *the* victim’s religion which *the* Lord appointed. Command Israel’s children that they bring you *a* red cow, of full age, in which is no defect, nor has it carried *a* yoke.

In Being Judged

Numbers 20:12 And *the* Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, so you might sanctify Me before Israel’s children, you will not lead these peoples into *the* land which I will give them.”

Further Addresses to Aaron

Conditions of Service

Leviticus 10:8-11 *The* Lord also said to Aaron, **10:9** “You and your sons will not drink wine and all that can make drunk when you enter testimony’s tabernacle, so you won’t die, because it is commanded forever in your generations – **10:10** and so you may have understanding to discern between holy and profane, between polluted and clean, **10:11** and you may teach Israel’s children all My laws, which *the* Lord has spoken to them through Moses’ hand.”

Grace-Filled Nature of Service

Numbers 18:1 And *the* Lord said to Aaron, “You and your sons and your father’s house with you will carry *the* sanctuary’s treachery, and you and your sons together will bear your priests’ sins. **18:2** Yet take up with you also your brothers from Levi’s tribe and, by your father’s scepter, let them be available, and let them minister to you. But you and your sons will minister in testimony’s tabernacle.

The Lord Is Your Portion

18:20 And *the* Lord said to Aaron, “You will possess nothing in their land, nor have *a*

portion among them. I *will be* your portion and inheritance among Israel’s children.

18:21 But I have given Levi’s children all Israel’s tithes as *a* possession for ministry, for those who serve Me in *the* Covenant Tabernacle, **18:22** so Israel’s children may not come near *the* tabernacle further, nor commit *a* death-dealing sin – **18:23** Levi’s children alone serving Me in *the* tabernacle, and carrying *the* people’s sins. *It* will be an everlasting law in your generations. They will possess nothing else, **18:24** content in *the* offering’s tithes, which I have separated in their use and necessities.

Speak to Israel's Children

Instances in which God addresses "Israel's children" directly, through Moses.

From Exodus

The Lord Appoints an Offering

Exodus 25:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **25:2** "Speak to Israel's children, so they bring Me first fruits. From all *the* people who bring voluntary *offerings*, you will accept them.

Spiritual Principle: Bring God the first of what He gives you, not the last.

Sabbath Keeping

Exodus 31:12 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **31:13** "Speak to Israel's children and say to them, 'See that you keep My Sabbath, because it is *a* sign between Me and you in your generations, so you may know that I *am the* Lord who sanctifies you.

Spiritual Principle: Be aware of the holy at all times. Set aside specific times for the holy.

Israel's Adornment

Exodus 33:5 And *the* Lord said to Moses, "Speak to Israel's children: 'You are hard-necked people. I will go up once among you and destroy you. Now already, put off your adornment, so I may know what I will do with you.'"

Exodus 33:6 So Israel's children put off its adornment at Mount Horeb.

Spiritual Principle: Our possessions do not give us value in God's sight.

From Leviticus

A Burnt Offering From Cattle

Leviticus 1:1 But *the* Lord called Moses and spoke to him from testimony's tabernacle, saying, **1:2** Speak to Israel's children and say to them, 'A man from you who will offer *a* sacrifice to *the* Lord from animals – that is, offering victims from bulls and sheep – **1:3** if his offering will be *a* burnt offering and from *the* herd, he will offer *a* spotless male at *the* entrance to testimony's tabernacle, to placating *the* Lord with himself.

Spiritual Principle: Offer the best you have to the Lord, not the worst.

A Priest's Sin Offering

Leviticus 4:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **4:2** "Speak to Israel's children, 'When *a* soul sins through ignorance, and from all *the* Lord's precepts which He commanded, so he does anything that may not be done – **4:3** if *a* priest who is anointed sins, making *the* people offend, he will offer *the* Lord for his sin *a* calf without defect. **4:4** And he will lead it to *the* entrance of testimony's tabernacle before *the* Lord, and lay hands on its head, and kill it to *the* Lord.

Spiritual Principle: Even godly people need both to repent and be forgiven.

The Libations with the Peace Offering

7:28 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **7:29** "Speak to Israel's children, 'Who offers *the* Lord *a* peace offering will offer at *the* same time also *a* sacrifice – that is, his libations. **7:30** He will have in hands *the* victim's fat and breast. And when each offering is consecrated to *the* Lord, he will hand them to *the* priest, **7:31** who will burn *the* fat on *the* altar. But *the* breast will be for Aaron and his

sons.

Spiritual Principle: Don't take shortcuts when you give to the Lord.

Purification After Childbirth

Leviticus 12:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **12:2** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them, 'If *a* woman, receiving seed, births *a* male, she will be unclean seven days according to *the* days of menstrual separation. **12:3** And *the* infant will be circumcised *the* eighth day. **12:4** She indeed will remain in her blood purification thirty-three days. She will not touch anything holy or go into *the* sanctuary until her days of purification are completed.

Spiritual Principle: All aspects of bearing children matter to the Lord.

Male Discharges

Leviticus 15:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **15:2** "Speak to Israel's children and say to them, 'A man who suffers *a* flow of semen will be unclean. **15:3** And then he will be judged to be under this vice when, at each moment, this foul liquid sticks to his flesh and thickens.

Spiritual Principles: Don't pollute God's holiness with your own unholiness.

Keep the Lord's Commandments

Leviticus 18:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **18:2** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them, 'I *am the* Lord your God. **18:3** You will not do according to *the* custom of Egypt's land in which you lived, and you will not act according to *the* manner of Canaan's region, into which I will bring you, nor will you walk in their laws. **18:4** You will do My judgments, and serve *the*

commandments, and walk in them. I *am the* Lord your God. **18:5** Keep My laws and judgments, working which, man will live in them! I *am the* Lord.

Spiritual Principle: Don't compromise with an idolatrous culture.

The Lord's Festivals

Leviticus 23:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **23:2** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them, 'These are *the* Lord's festivals, which you will call holy.

Spiritual Principle: Set aside time with the Lord.

The Festival of First Fruits

Leviticus 23:9 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **23:10** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them, 'When you have come into *the* land which I will give you, and you harvest crops, you will bring bundles of grain, first fruits of your harvest, to *the* priest. **23:11** *The* priest will lift up *the* bundle before *the* Lord *the* day after *the* Sabbath, so it may be acceptable for you, and he will sanctify it.

Spiritual Principle: All you have comes as a gift from God.

The Festival of Sounding Trumpets

Leviticus 23:23 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **23:24** "Speak to Israel's children: *the* seventh month, *the* first day of *the* month, will be *a* Sabbath of remembrance, with sounding trumpets. And it will be called holy. **23:25** You will not do any servile work in it. And you will offer *the* Lord *a* burnt offering.'"

Spiritual Principle: Set aside time to remember what God has done for us.

The Festival of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:33 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **23:34** “Speak to Israel’s children: ‘*The* festivals of tabernacles will be from *the* fifteenth day of that seventh month, seven days to *the* Lord. **23:35** *The* first day will be called most observed and most holy. You will not do any servile work. **23:36** And you will offer *the* Lord burnt offerings for seven days. Likewise, *the* eighth day will be most observed and most holy. And you will offer *the* Lord a burnt offering, for *it is the* gathering and contribution. You will not do any servile work in it.

Spiritual Principle: Remember that God is our true home, not any dwelling place on earth.

The Sabbath Year

Leviticus 25:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, **25:2** “Speak to Israel’s children, and you will say to them: ‘When you have come into *the* land which I will give you, you will observe *the* Lord’s Sabbath.

Spiritual Principle: Remember the Lord, even in your prosperity.

The Price of One’s Soul

Leviticus 27:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **27:2** “Speak to Israel’s children, and you will say to them, ‘*A* man who made a promise and pledged his soul to God will give *the* price according to *the* estimation.

Spiritual Principle: Don’t make idle promises you don’t intend to keep.

From Numbers

Confessing and Being Forgiven

Numbers 5:5 *The* Lord spoke to Moses,

saying, **5:6** “Speak to Israel’s children, whether man or woman, when they do any of all *the* sins which humans are accustomed to do, and by negligence violate *the* Lord’s command and fall short, **5:7** they will confess their sins, and will repay *the* head itself, and a fifth part above to him in whom they have sinned.

Spiritual Principle: Sin is serious business.

The Test of Infidelity

Numbers 5:11 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **5:12** “Speak to Israel’s children, and you will say to them, ‘*A* man whose wife wanders and, condemning *the* husband, **5:13** sleeps with another man, and this husband can not catch them, but she hides *the* adultery, and it cannot be proven by witnesses, because she is not found in *the* act of illicit sex; **5:14** if a jealous spirit agitates a man against his wife, who, whether she is polluted or is grasped by false suspicion, **5:15** he will lead her to *the* priest. And he will offer as *an* oblation for her a tenth portion of flour of sown barley. He will not pour oil over it and put incense on *it*, because *it is a* sacrifice of jealousy, and *an* offering investigating adultery.

Spiritual Principle: Don’t give in to irrational jealousy.

Rules for Consecrating Oneself to the Lord

Numbers 6:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **6:2** “Speak to Israel’s children, and you will say to them, ‘Whether a man or a woman makes a promise that they may be sanctified, and they want to consecrate themselves to *the* Lord, **6:3** they will abstain from wine and all that can inebriate, vinegar from wine, and from whatever other drink. And they will not drink whatever is squeezed

from grapes, and will not eat fresh or dried grapes, **6:4** all *the* days which they are consecrated to *the* Lord by promise. They will not eat whatever can be from *the* vineyard, from grape spread even to seed.

Spiritual Principle: Don't take lightly the privilege of coming close to the Lord.

Concerning Those Unclean During Passover's Observance

Numbers 9:9 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **9:10** "Speak to Israel's children: a man who is unclean concerning a soul or on *the* road far away among your people may make *the* Passover to *the* Lord. **9:11** They will eat it *the* second month, *the* fourteenth day, at evening, with unleavened bread and wild leaves. **9:12** They will not leave anything from it until morning, and they will not break its bones. They will observe every rite.

Spiritual Principle: The Lord is concerned even for those who aren't with us.

Rules for Offerings

Numbers 15:1 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **15:2** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them, 'When you come into your habitation's land which I will give you, **15:3** and you make *an* offering to *the* Lord, as *a* holocaust. or *a* victim releasing *a* promise, or offering *a* gift freely, or in your solemnities – burning *an* odor of smoothness to *the* Lord, whether from bulls or from sheep – **15:4** whoever will offer *it*, will kill *the* sacrificial victim *along* with *a* tenth part of *an* ephah of wheat flour, sprinkled with oil, which will have *the* measure of *a* quarter part of *a* hin. **15:5** And he will give wine as *a* libation poured out in *the* same measure, whether for *a* burnt offering or for *a* *peace* victim, for

each of *the* lambs.

Spiritual Principle: Worship God in your prosperity, remembering it is His gift.

Instructions on First Fruits

Numbers 15:16 *The* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **15:17** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them, **15:18** 'When you come into *the* land which I will give you, **15:19** and you eat from those regions' loaves, you will separate first fruits to *the* Lord **15:20** from your food. As you will separate first fruits from your threshing floors, **15:21** so also you will give *the* Lord first fruits of your meals.

Spiritual Principle: Joyfully give the first you have to the Lord.

Fringes on Garments

Numbers 15:37 *The* Lord likewise said to Moses, **15:38** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them that they should make themselves fringes on their coverings' corners, putting violet threads inside them. **15:39** When they see them, they may remember all *the* Lord's commandments, nor follow their thoughts and eyes, fornicating through various affairs. **15:40** But, remembering rather *the* Lord's precepts, they may do them and be holy to their God. **15:41** I *am* *the* Lord your God, who led you out of Egypt's land so I could be your God."

Spiritual Principle: Let yourself and others see reminders that you belong to the Lord.

Israel's Tribes' Rods Before the Lord

Numbers 17:1 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **17:2** "Speak to Israel's children, and accept rods from them for each of their clans, from all *the* tribes' princes – twelve rods. And you will write each one's name on his

rod. **17:3** But Aaron's name will be on *that of* Levi's tribe, and one rod will contain all their families. **17:4** And you will place them in *the* Covenant Tabernacle, before *the* testimony, where I speak to you. **17:5** *The* one whom I choose from among them, his staff will germinate. And I will curb Israel's children's complaints, by which they gripe against you."

Spiritual Principle: God is the one who calls us to serve. We don't call ourselves.

Cities of Refuge

Numbers 35:9 *The* Lord said to Moses, **35:10** "Speak to Israel's children, and you will say to them: 'When you have crossed *the* Jordan into Canaan's land, **35:11** decide which cities must be for *the* protection of fugitives who shed blood unwillingly. **35:12** When *a* fugitive is in them, *the* killed one's kin cannot kill him until he stands in *the* multitude's sight and his cause is judged.

Spiritual Principle: God takes justice between humans with utmost seriousness.

Mentions of Mary (Miriam), Sister of Moses and Aaron

Her name is Miriam in the AV

(In Exodus 2:3-8, we are not told the name of Moses' sister.)

Moses Abandoned in the Basket

2:3 And when [*Moses' mother*] could no longer hide him, she took *a* large woven basket of bulrushes and lined it with pitch and tar. And she put *the* baby inside and exposed him in *the* rushes on *the* river bank. **2:4** His sister *was* standing at *a* distance and watching *the* thing's outcome.

Pharaoh's Daughter Saves the Baby

2:5 But, look, Pharaoh's daughter came down so she could wash in *the* river. And her servant girls walked along *the* bath's retaining wall. *She*, when she saw *the* basket in *the* papyrus bushes, sent one of her servants. And *the* basket brought, **2:6** opening and seeing *the* little one in it crying, she said, pitying him, "He is one of *the* Hebrews' babies."

2:7 *The* boy's sister said to her, "Do you want that I go and call you *a* Hebrew woman who can nurse *the* baby?"

2:8 She answered, "Go!"

The girl went out and called her mother, **2:9** speaking to whom Pharaoh's daughter said, "Take this boy and nurse him for me. I will give you your pay."

The woman took and nursed *the* boy, and gave him grown up to Pharaoh's daughter, **2:10** whom she adopted in place of *a* son. And she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I took him from water."

(Moses, hv,mo *Moshe*, in Hebrew, means "drawn.")

(After the Exodus, Mary is called by name.)

Mary and the Women Sing and Celebrate

Exodus 15:20 Therefore, Mary *the* prophet, Aaron's sister, took *a* tympani in her hand. All *the* women went out after her with tympanies and dancers, **15:21** to whom she prophesied, saying,

"Let us sing
to *the* Lord,
for He is
gloriously lifted up!
He threw horse
and its rider
down into *the* sea."

Mary and Aaron Criticize Moses

Numbers 12:1-15 And Mary and Aaron spoke against Moses because of his wife, *an* Ethiopian. **12:2** And they said, "Has *the* Lord only spoken through Moses? Hasn't he also spoken to us as well?"

When *the* Lord had heard that, **12:3** (for Moses was *the* most humble man of all *the* men who lived on earth) **12:4** He immediately said to him, and to Aaron and Mary, "You three alone go out to *the* Covenant Tabernacle!"

And when they had gone out, **12:5** *the* Lord came down in *a* column of cloud and stood at *the* tabernacle's entrance, calling Aaron and Mary, who, when they had come, **12:6** He said to them, "Listen to My words! If someone is *the* Lord's prophet among you, I will appear to him in *a* vision, or speak to him through *a* dream. **12:7** Yet *it is* not so with My slave Moses, who is most faithful in all

My house. **12:8** For I speak to him mouth to mouth, and he sees *the* Lord clearly, not by enigmas and figures. How, then, were you not afraid to tear down My slave Moses?"

12:9 And, angry with them, He went away.

12:10 Likewise, *the* cloud which was over *the* tabernacle withdrew and, look, Mary appeared white with leprosy, like snow. And when Aaron had looked at her and seen *the* leprosy overspread, **12:11** he said to Moses, "I pray, my lord, do not place this sin on us, which we committed foolishly, **12:12** so she may not be like *the* dead, or like *an* abortion that is thrown away from her mother's vulva! Look, already half her flesh is eaten up by leprosy!"

12:13 And Moses cried out to *the* Lord, saying, "God, I pray, heal her!"

12:14 *The* Lord answered him, "If her father had spit in her face, wouldn't she at least have been covered with shame seven days? Let her be separated seven days outside *the* camps, and afterwards she will be called back."

12:15 And so Mary was excluded seven days outside *the* camps. And *the* people was not moved from that place until Mary was called back.

Mary, Moses' Sister, Dies in Kadesh

Numbers 20:1 And Israel's children and all *the* multitude came into Sin's desert *the* first month, and *the* people stayed in Kadesh. And Mary died there, and *was* buried in *the* same place.

See Numbers 12:1ff, 20:1, 26:59; Deuteronomy 24:9; 1 Chronicles 4:17, 6:3; Micah 6:4.

Understanding Scripture on Multiple Levels

According to the saints, scripture can be understood at many different levels.

Pay attention, first, to literary genre. One interprets different literary types in different ways.

Let's take **Deuteronomy 7:1-6** as an example.

No Mercy in Conquering Canaan
Deuteronomy 7:1 When *the* Lord your God has brought you into *the* land which you are entering to possess, and has destroyed many nations before you – Hittites and Girgashites and Amorites, Canaanites and Pherezites and Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations much larger in number than you and mightier than you – **7:2** and *the* Lord your God has handed them over to you, strike them down even to extermination! You will not enter into agreements with them or have pity on them.

7:3 And you will not join with them. You will not give your daughter in marriage to his son, or accept his daughter for your son. **7:4** For she will seduce your son, so he won't follow Me, and that he serve alien gods more. And *the* Lord's fury will be enraged and He will destroy you quickly.

7:5 Rather, do this to them – overthrow their altars, smash to pieces *their* statues, cut down *their* sacred groves, and burn *their* idols. **7:6** For you are holy people to *the* Lord your God. *The* Lord your God chose you, so you could be for Him a peculiar people from among all *the* peoples who are on *the* land's face.

It was a literal commandment at one point.

How can you plant a people in a real world long enough to communicate to them who you are, without conquest?

Was the conquest unfair, then?

Not according to the text. The Lord clearly tells Moses that the Canaanites were being destroyed for their sins. Archaeology has shown how genuinely diabolical some such practices were. How much more twisted can it be to burn children alive to appease your god?

We kill babies for the mere crime of being conceived. I guess we're not ones to call God unfair. Perhaps even now God is taking what we thought was ours, and giving it to those who deserve it more.

On another level, the text is an exhortation. It exhorts, urges, Israel to put nothing at all before their allegiance to the Lord.

On yet another level, it exhorts us to surrender, totally and complete, to the Lord. Let nothing, literally nothing, keep you from coming to Him. Follow Him wherever He leads. Live lives of radical obedience, rooted already in His saving grace.

Law does not earn us salvation. That was the Galatian error.

(See **Galatians 3:1-3** O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? ² This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of

faith? ³ Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?)

The Galatians were in error because they misunderstood the chronology. God, by sheer grace, freed Israel from slavery. Only then did He give them the law, so they might maintain their freedom. The law pointed so exactly at Jesus it sometimes takes the breath away. For instance, the type of wood used in building the Ark of the Covenant, *acacia*, is, according to an ancient account, the same species of thorn tree from which the Crown of Thorns was plaited.

On one level, the tabernacle no longer exists. Abraham's descendants, both physical and spiritual, live on. What no longer exists in the flesh remains to teach us how to live. Through His law, we learn how to live in the freedom he bought for us.

Don't make an idol of law. Don't presume your opinion of it is its equal, though. Study it prayerfully, in light of the One by whose mercy we are allowed to approach it.

We obey Him joyfully. Thereby, according to the sages, He delights, and one dark corner of our world is illumined by His wonder.

Names of the Patriarchs

Transliterations and definitions courtesy of Strong's Concordance.

From Genesis 2:19

אָדָם *Adam, Adam* “human/humanity”

From Genesis 3:20

חַוְוָה *Chavvah, Eve* “living”
(The “Ch” sound in Hebrew words is a guttural H, rather than a hard Ch.)

From Genesis 5

שֵׁת *Sheth, Seth* “compensation”

אֵנוֹשׁ *'Enowsh, Enos* “Man”

קַיִן *Qeynan, Cainan, (Kenan in the AV)* “possession”

מַהֲלֵלֵל *Mahalal'el, Malalehel* “praise of God”
(Mahalaleel in the AV)

יָרֵד *Yered, Jared* “descent”

חֲנוּךְ *Chanowk, Enoch* “dedicated”

מֶתוּשֶׁלַח *Methuwshelach, Methuselah* “man of the javelin”

לֶמֶךְ *Lemek, Lamech* “powerful”

נֹחַ *Noach, Noah* “rest”

שֵׁם *Shem, Shem* “name”

חָם *Cham, Ham* “hot”

יָפֶת׃ *Yepheth, Japheth* “opened”

From Genesis 11

אַבְרָם *'Abram, Abram* “exalted father”

נָחוֹר *Nachowr, Nahor* “snorting”

הָרָן *Haran, Haran* “mountaineer”

לוֹט *Lowt, Lot* “covering”

סָרַי *Saray, Sarai* “princess”

מִלְכָּה *Milkah, Melcha (Milkah in the AV)* “queen”

יִסְכָּה *Yickah, Jeschah (Iscah in the AV)* “one who looks forward”

From Genesis 16

הָגָר *Hagar {haw-gawr'}, Hagar* “flight”

יִשְׁמַעֵאל Yishma`el {yish-maw-ale'}, Ishmael “God will hear”

From Genesis 17

אַבְרָהָם *Abraham*, Abraham “father of a multitude”

שָׂרָה *Sarah* {saw-raw'}, Sarah “noblewoman”

יִצְחָק *Yitschaq* {yits-khawk'}, Isaac “he laughs”

From Genesis 22

רִבְקָה *Ribqah* {rib-kaw'}, Rebecca “ensnarer”
(Rebekah in the AV)

From Genesis 25

עֵשָׂו *Esav*, {ay-sawv'}, Esau “hairy”

יַעֲקֹב *Ya`aqob*, {yah-ak-obe'}, Jacob “heel holder, or supplanter”

From Genesis 32

יִשְׂרָאֵל *Yisra'el*, {yis-raw-ale'}, Israel “God prevails”

**Jacob's Wives,
Their Children,
and the Meaning of Their Names**
In Chronological Order

The story of Jacob and his wives begins at Genesis 29

Mother: Lia

לֵאָה <i>Le'ah</i> , Leah in the AV	“Weary”
Reuben	"Behold, a son!"
Simeon	"Heard"
Levi	"Joined to"
Judah	"Praised"

Mother: Balah (Rachel's slave)

בִּלְהָה <i>Bilhah</i> , Bilhah in the AV	“Troubled”
(For evidence of her troubles, see Genesis 35:22)	
Dan	"Judge"
Naphthali	"Wrestling"

Mother: Zelpha (Lia's slave)

זִלְפָּה <i>Zilpah</i> , Zilpah in the AV	“A trickling ”
Gad	"Troop"
Asher	"Blessed"

Mother: Lia

Lia began to give birth again after buying Jacob for a night from Rachel. This part of the story begins at Genesis 30:14.

Issachar	"There is recompense"
Zebulon	"Exalted"
Dinah	"Judge" (feminine form of the name Dan)

Mother: Rachel

רָחֵל <i>Rachel</i> , (The “Ch” sound in Hebrew words is a guttural H, rather than a hard Ch.)	“Female sheep, ewe”
Joseph	"The Lord has added"
Benjamin	"The right hand's son" (His mother named him Ben-oni, “My suffering’s son.”)

For the Hebrew names of Jacob's children,
see *Names and Name Meanings of Those with Moses at Sinai

Names and Name Meanings: Those Named with Moses at Sinai

Tribe names capitalized.

Transliterations and definitions courtesy of Strong's Concordance.

Numbers 1:1 And *the Lord* spoke to *Moses* in *the Sinai* desert, in *the Covenant Tabernacle*, *the* first day of *the* second month, *the* year after their going out of Egypt, saying . . .

יְהוָה *Yehovah*, {yeh-ho-vaw'} "the existing one"

This name was considered so holy that the original vowel pointings were never written down. Instead, the vowel pointings for the word *Adonai*, which was commonly substituted among Jewish scholars and their Christian descendants for the divine name, were used. This combination of vowels and consonants gave rise to the name "Jehovah," used throughout the AV but derided by many contemporary scholars. In fact, no one knows for sure how the divine name was pronounced, which is exactly what the author of it seems to have intended.

מֹשֶׁה *Mosheh*, {mo-sheh'} "drawn"

סִינַי *Cinyay*, {see-nah'-ee} "thorny"

מִצְרַיִם *Mitsrayim*, {mits-rah'-yim} "land of the Copts"

1:3b . . . And you and *Aaron* will number them by their companies.

אֶהְרֵן *Aharown*, {a-har-one'} "light bringer"

1:4 "And *the* princes of tribes and houses and clans will be with you, **1:5** whose names are these: from **Reuben**, *Elisur*, *Sedeur*'s son;

רְאוּבֵן *Reuben*, {reh-oo-bane'} "Look, a son"

אֵלִיעֶזֶר *Eleytsuwr*, {el-ee-tsoor'} "my God is a rock"

(Elizer in the AV)

שְׁדֵיאוּר *Shedey'uur*, {shed-ay-oor'} "darter of light"

(Shedeur in the AV)

1:6 from **Simeon**, *Salamiel*, *Surisaddai*'s son;

שִׁמְעוֹן *Shim`own*, {shim-one'} "heard"

שֶׁלִּמְיֵאל *Shelumiy'el*, {shel-oo-mee-ale'} "friend of God"

(Shelumiel in the AV)

צוּרִישַׁדַּי *Tsuwriyshadday*, {tsoo-ree-shad-dah'-ee} "my rock is almighty"

(Zurishaddae in the AV)

1:7 from **Judah**, *Naasson*, *Aminadab*'s son;

יְהוּדָה *Yehuwdah*, {yeh-hoo-daw'} "praised"

נַחֲשׁוֹן <i>Nachshown</i> , {nakh-shone'} (Nahson in the AV)	“enchanter”
עַמִּינָדָב <i>`Ammiynadab</i> , {am-mee-naw-dawb'} (Amminadab in the AV)	“my kinsman is noble”
1:8 from Issachar , <u>Nathanael</u> , <u>Suar</u> ’s son;	
יִשָּׂשְׁכָר <i>Yissaskar</i> , {yis-saw-kawr'}	“there is recompense”
נֹתָנָאֵל <i>Nethane'l</i> {neth-an-ale'} (Nathaneel in the AV)	“given of God”
צוּעָר <i>Tsaw`ar</i> {tsoo-awr'} (Zuar in the AV)	“to go out”
1:9 from Zebulon , <u>Heliab</u> , <u>Helon</u> ’s son;	
זְבוּלוֹן <i>Zebuwlun</i> {zeb-oo-loon'}	“exalted”
אֵלִיָּאָב <i>'Eliy'ab</i> {el-ee-awb'} (Eliab in the AV)	“God is father”
חֵלֹן <i>Chelon</i> {khay-lone'}	“strength”
1:10 but of <u>Joseph</u> ’s children,	
יוֹסֵף <i>Yowceph</i> {yo-safe'}	“the Lord has added”
from Ephraim , <u>Helisama</u> , <u>Amniud</u> ’s son;	
אֶפְרַיִם <i>'Ephrayim</i> {ef-rah'-yim}	“I shall be doubly fruitful”
אֵלִישָׁמָע <i>'Eliyshama`</i> {el-ee-shaw-maw'} (Elishama in the AV)	“my God has heard”
עַמִּיחֻד <i>`Ammiyhuwd</i> {am-mee-hood'} (Ammihud in the AV)	“my kinsman is majesty”
from Manasseh , <u>Gamaliel</u> , <u>Phadassur</u> ’s son;	
מְנַשֶּׁה <i>Menashsheh</i> {men-ash-sheh'}	“causing to forget”
גַּמְלִי'אֵל <i>Gamliy'el</i> {gam-lee-ale'}	“reward of God”
פְּדָה-צוּר <i>Pedahtsuwr</i> {ped-aw-tsoor'} (Pedahzur in the AV)	“the Rock has ransomed”
1:11 from Benjamin , <u>Abidan</u> , <u>Gideon</u> ’s son;	
בִּנְיָמִן <i>Binyamiyn</i> {bin-yaw-mene'}	“the right hand’s son”
אֲבִידָן <i>'Abiydan</i> {ab-ee-dawn'}	“my father is judge”
גִּדְעוֹנִי <i>Gid'oniy</i> {ghid-o-nee'}	“my hewer” (“the one cutting me down”)

(Gideoni in the AV)

1:12 from **Dan**, Ahiezer, Amisaddai's son;

דָּן Dan {dawn}	“judge”
אֲחִיעֶזֶר 'Achiy'ezer {akh-ee-eh'-zer}	“my brother is help”
עַמִּישַׁדַּי `Ammiyshadday {am-mee-shad-dah'ee}	“my kinsman is Almighty”

1:13 from **Asher**, Phegiel, Ochran's son;

אָשֶׁר 'Asher {aw-share'}	“happy”
פַּגְעִיֵּאל Pag'iy'el {pag-ee-ale'}	“act of God”
(Pagiel in the AV)	
עֹכְרָן `Okran {ok-rawn'}	“troubled”
(Ocran in the AV)	

1:14 from **Gad**, Heliasaph, Duel's son;

גָּד Gad {gawd}	“troop”
אֵלִיָּסָפ 'Elyacaph {el-yaw-sawf'}	“God has added”
(Eliasoph in the AV)	
דְּעוּאֵל De`uw'el {deh-oo-ale'}	“they know God”

1:15 from **Naphtali**, Ahira, Henan's son.”

נַפְתָּלִי Naphtaliy {naf-taw-lee'}	“wrestling”
(Naphtali in the AV)	
אֲחִירָע 'Achiyra` {akh-ee-rah'}	“my brother is evil”
עֵינָן `Eynan {ay-nawn'}	“having eyes”
(Enan in the AV)	

1:16 These are *the* multitude's noblest princes, by their tribes and clans, and *the* heads of Israel's army, **1:17** whom Moses and Aaron took with all *the* multitude of common people. **1:18** And they gathered together *the* first day of *the* second month, counting them by clans and houses and families and heads and *the* names of each, from twenty years old and up, **1:19** as *the* Lord had commanded Moses. And they were numbered in *the* Sinai desert.

First Fruits and Tithing in *Torah*

Genesis 4:3

Cain and Abel

But it happened after many days that Cain offered *the* Lord gifts, from *the* land's fruits.

4:4 Abel likewise offered from his flock's firstborn and from their fat. And *the* Lord respected Abel and his offerings. **4:5** but He did not respect Cain and his offerings. And Cain was fiercely angry, and his face fell.

Context: The first family and the first murder.

Lesson: What sort of gift does God accept?

What are the consequences of a wrong-hearted gift?
What are you giving God?

Genesis 14:18-24

Melchisedek Blesses Abram

And Melchisedech, Salem's king, *came out* also, offering bread and wine, for he was God Most High's priest. **14:19** He blessed him and said, "Abram *be* blessed by God Most High, who created sky and land! **14:20** And blessed *be* God Most High, by whose protection enemies *are* in your hands!"

And he gave him tenths from all *things*.

14:21 But *the* Sodomites' king said to Abram, "Give me *the* souls, but take *the* rest for yourself."

14:22 Abram said to him, "I lift up my hand to *the* Lord God Most High, possessor of sky and land, **14:23** that I will not accept *anything* – from *a* loom's string even to *a* soldier's shoelace – of all that is yours, so you cannot say, 'I made Abram rich' – **14:24** except what *the* youths have eaten, and *the* portions of *the* men who came with me, Aner, Eschol, and Mambre. These will accept their portions."

Context: Abram returns from rescuing Lot, his nephew.

Lessons: Who is paying, who is receiving, in verse 20?

Abram takes care whose gift he accepts.

Abram refuses Sodom's wealth

Details:

The Hebrew name מֶלְכִּי־צֶדֶק, *Melchizedek* in the AV, means "My King *is* righteousness." See Psalm 76:2;

Hebrews 7:1-2. The Hebrew root צִדִּיק *tsedechah*, means "Righteousness."

Salem, Melchisedek's city, is identified with Jerusalem. See also Psalm 76:2; Hebrews 7:1-2.

"The souls" are the surviving captives. Give the Sodomites' king his possessions, and he has a heap of lifeless stuff. Give him the souls, and they can rebuild all they had before.

Genesis 28:20-22

Jacob Sees God at Bethel

So *Jacob* swore *a* vow, saying, "If God will be with me and guard me in *the* way by which I walk, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, **28:21** and returning, I come back prosperously to my father's house, *the* Lord will be as God to me, **28:22** and this stone which I set up as *a* memorial will be called God's House. And I will offer You tithes of all which You give me.

Context: Jacob flees his brother.

Lesson: Test and see.

How does God guard us?

To whom do we pay tithes?

Exodus 13:1-3

More Instructions Concerning Passover

And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **13:2** "Make holy to Me every firstborn who opens *the* vulva among Israel's children, whether from men or from cattle, for all are Mine." And Moses said to *the* people, "Remember

this day in which you came out of Egypt and out of slavery's house, that you will not eat leavened bread, for *the* Lord led you out by a mighty hand from that place. **13:4** Today you go out, in *the* month of first fruits.

Context: Moses and Israel prepare to leave Egypt.

Lessons: God gives first fruits before Israel ever does. We only return what He first gives us.

Membership in Israel was determined by a willingness to obey the Lord's command.

Details:

That which is offered to God belongs to God. All Egypt's firstborn had been offered to God at the Passover. Only by obedience to God, demonstrated in the lamb's blood on their doorposts and lintels, had Israel's firstborn been spared. Thereafter, Israel's firstborn belonged to God, who had spared them.

Exodus 22:29-31

Tithes and Offerings

"You will not delay in offering your tithes and first fruits. You will give *the* firstborn of your sons to Me, **22:30** You will do *the* same from bulls and sheep as well. Let it be with its mother seven days. *The* eighth day, you will offer it to Me.

22:31 "You will be holy men to Me. You will not eat meat which was tasted in advance by wild animals, but will throw it to dogs.

Context: The Lord Speaks to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Lessons: Don't put off your giving.

Precious things are God's, not vile things.

Numbers 18:20-32

The Lord Is Aaron's Portion

And *the* Lord said to Aaron, "You will possess nothing in their land, nor have *a* portion among them. I *will be* your portion and inheritance among Israel's children. **18:21** But I have given Levi's children all Israel's tithes as *a* possession for ministry, for those who serve Me in *the* Covenant Tabernacle,

18:22 so Israel's children may not come near *the* tabernacle further, nor commit *a* death-dealing sin – **18:23** Levi's children alone serving Me in *the* tabernacle, and carrying *the* people's sins. *It* will be an everlasting law in your generations. They will possess nothing else, **18:24** content in *the* offering's tithes, which I have separated in their use and necessities.

18:25 And *the* Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **18:26** "Command *the* Levites and tell them, 'When you receive tithes from Israel's children, which I have given you, you will offer their first fruits to *the* Lord – that is, *a* tenth part of *a* tenth – **18:27** so it may be reputed to you as *an* oblation of first fruits, whether from rams or from *the* winepresses.

18:28 And of all *things* from which you receive, offer first fruits to *the* Lord, and give *them* to Aaron *the* priest!

18:29 "You will separate all *the* best of *the* *things* that are offered as *the* Lord's tithes and gifts, and they will be chosen. **18:30** And you will say to them, 'If whatever you offer from *the* tithes is splendid and superior, it will be reputed to you as if you have given first fruits from *the* threshing floor and winepress. **18:31** And you will eat them in all of your places, whether you or your families, because *it is the* price of your ministry, by which you serve in testimony's tabernacle. **18:32** And you will not sin over this, reserving *the* superior and fat ones for yourselves, so you do not pollute Israel's children's offerings, and you die."

Context: After a series of challenges and rebellions, the Lord affirms Aaron's possession of the priesthood.

Lessons: A priest is to have no possession, apart from the Lord.

The Lord's people set aside the tenth to sustain themselves, as well as the priests and Levites.

Priests and Levites too are to give the tithes.

Give your best, not your worst.

Deuteronomy 12:1-7

Dealing with Idols

These are *the* precepts and judgments which you must do in *the* land which *the* Lord God of your fathers will give you, so you may possess it all *the* days which you live on *the* soil. **12:2** Overturn every place in which *the* nations which you will possess served their gods – on mountains' heights and hills and under every leafing tree! **12:2** Scatter their altars and smash statues! Burn groves with fire and break up their idols! Destroy their names from that place!

12:4 You will not do so for *the* Lord your God. **12:5** But you will come to *the* place which *the* Lord your God chooses from all your tribes, to put His name there and live in it. **12:6** And you will offer in that place your burnt offerings and victims, tithes and your hands' first fruits and vows, and gifts of firstborn oxen and sheep. **12:7** And you will eat there in *the* Lord your God's sight, and will be happy in all your hand and your house will send out, in which *the* Lord your God has blessed you.

Context: Moses' farewell message to Israel.

Lessons: God distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable offerings.

We must offer gifts that God chooses.

Deuteronomy 12:17-19

Coming Before the Lord

You cannot eat in your towns *the* tithe of grain and wine and oil, *the* first fruits of your cattle and sheep, and all that you promise, and *the* free-will offerings you want, and your hands' first fruits. **12:18** But you will eat it before *the* Lord your God, in *the* place which *the* Lord your God will choose – you and your son and your daughter, male and female slaves, and Levites who stay in your towns. And you will be happy and be restored before

the Lord your God in all things to which you extend your hand. **12:19** Take care that you not abandon *the* Levites all *the* time that you move about in *the* land!

Context: Moses' farewell message to Israel.

Lessons: We come together to give our gifts.

We are responsible for God's ministry and ministers, not just ourselves.

Deuteronomy 14:22-29

Giving a Tenth

You will set aside *a* tenth part of all your crops, which will grow in *the* land each year.

14:23 And you will eat *it* in *the* Lord your God's sight, in *the* place which He will choose, that His name may be invoked in it – *a* tenth of your grain and wine and oil, and first fruits of your cattle and sheep, so you may learn to fear *the* Lord your God at all times.

14:24 But when *the* way is long, and He has blessed you, and you aren't able to carry all these things to *the* place which *the* Lord your God has chosen, **14:25** you will sell all *of it*, and reduce *it* to money, and take *it* in your hand. And you will set out for *the* place which *the* Lord your God has chosen. **14:26** And you will buy from it for money whatever pleases you, whether from cattle or from sheep, wine likewise and liquor, and all that you soul wants. And you will eat before *the* Lord your God, and you will feast and your house, **14:27** and *the* Levite who is in your gates. Take care that you not neglect him, for he has no other portion in your possession.

Every Third Year for the Poor

14:28 *The* third year you will separate another tenth from all that grows for you at that time, and you will store *it* inside your doors. **14:29** And *the* Levite will come, who has no other portion or possession with you,

and *the* stranger and orphan and widow who are in your gates. And they will eat and be filled, so *the* Lord your God can bless you in all *the* works which your hands will do.

Context: Moses' farewell message to Israel.

Lessons: God cares about the poor.

God provides for priests and Levites.

We will eat our tithes in the Lord's sight.

Details:

To whom do we pay the tithe? To ourselves and to God's ministry. We are to lay back a tenth of our increase to eat before the Lord "in the place He will show us." Part of that tenth goes to the priests and Levites, who are His ministers, as God's instrument to sustain them.

Tithing is about economic empowerment, not ecclesiastical enrichment.

We lay aside the tithe prudently, to provide necessities.

We remember the pastor and shepherd as we do so, providing for them as we provide for us.

Set it aside. Use it prudently. Remember what it's there for.

Who Is Israel?

First Four Instances the Word Is Used in *Torah*

Genesis 32:28 And He said, “Your name won’t be called Jacob any longer, but Israel, because if you were mighty against God, how much more will you prevail against men!”

Context: Jacob, returning to Canaan from Laban, facing Esau, wrestles all night with an Angel.

Lessons: God changes Jacob’s name.
We all wrestle with angels.
Angels are beings with one purpose.

Details: Israel, **יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Yisra'el in Hebrew, means “God prevails.”

(Latin *angelus*; Greek *aggelos*; from the Hebrew for "one going" or "one sent"; messenger). The word is used in Hebrew to denote indifferently either a divine or human messenger. The Septuagint renders it by *aggelos* which also has both significations. The Latin version, however, distinguishes the divine or spirit-messenger from the human, rendering the original in the one case by *angelus* and in the other by *legatus* or more generally by *nuntius*. In a few passages the Latin version is misleading, the word *angelus* being used where *nuntius* would have better expressed the meaning, e.g. Isaiah 18:2; 33:3-6
From CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Angels.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01476d.htm>

Genesis 33:19-20 And he bought part of *the* field in which he fixed his tent from Emor’s sons, Shechem’s father, for one hundred lambs. **33:20** And building *an* altar there, he invoked over it Israel’s Most Mighty God.

Context: Jacob has successfully returned from Syria to Canaan, with four wives and twelve children.

Lessons: God has answered Jacob’s prayer (Genesis 28:20-22)
Israel has accepted his new identity.

Details: Emor is known as “Hamor” in the

AV.

Genesis 34:6-7

But *when* Emor, Shechem’s father, *had* come out so he could speak to Jacob, **34:7** look, his sons came from *the* field. And hearing what had happened, they were furious because he had done *a* loathsome thing in Israel, and Jacob’s daughter raped, had perpetrated *an* unlawful act.

Context: Shechem Rapes Dinah

Lesson: Harming one member of Israel is an offense to all.

Exodus 12:5

“But *the* lamb will be without defect, *a* yearling male, according to which rite you will take also *a* young goat. **12:6** And you will keep it even to *the* fourteenth day of this month. And all Israel’s children’s multitude will offer it at sunset. **12:7** And they will take from *the* blood and put it on each doorpost and on *the* houses’ lintels in which they will eat it.

Context: The Lord works his final sign in Egypt.

Lessons: An Israelite is one who hears and obeys Him.

Those who believe and obey are spared and set free.

The Tower of Babel Genesis 11:1-8

Who: The survivors of the flood, as they regain their footing and begin to multiply.

What: A story of man’s adversarial relationship with divinity. God wins.

When: Between the Flood and Abram’s entry into Canaan, between 1,556 and 1,921 years after the creation.

Where: In “Sennaar’s land,” southern Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq.

Why: Man builds the tower in an attempt to touch the sky, with a sense of foreboding in his heart.

He knows harm will come. Experience has taught him that too well. Those who survived the flood are still alive.

They develop the ability to cook bricks and make durable dwellings. Prior to this, the only things built have been altars and the ark. They channel this new technology into building a tower that will touch the sky.

At that point, the Lord descends to see what is going on. He turns them aside, causing them to cease listening to each other.

The Text

(From The Latin Torah, Cunyus)

Genesis 11:1 But *the* land was of one tongue and *the* same thought. **11:2** And when they set out from *the* east, they found *a* field in Sennaar’s land and lived in it. **11:3** And each one said to his neighbor, “Come, let us make bricks, and cook them in fire. And they had bricks for stones and pitch for cement.

This verse reflects the emergence of the earliest urban culture of ancient Iraq, with the people archaeologists refer to as Sumerians. It reflects a technological leap in construction as well.

11:4 And they said, “Come, let us make ourselves *a* city and tower, whose height can touch *the* sky. And we can celebrate our name before we are divided into all *the* lands.”

This is the first instance of collective foreboding in scripture. Many times, what seems to be great collective accomplishment is driven by inner anxiety. Ecclesiastes addresses the issue of “great collective accomplishment.”

11:5 But *the* Lord came down so He could see *the* city and tower which Adam’s children were building. **11:6** And He said, “Look, *the* people is one, and *there is* one language to all of them. They have begun to do this, nor will they turn aside from their schemes until they have completed them in work.

Why this unity of human purpose is disturbing to the Lord is not explicitly stated. Presumably, the human purpose being pursued was destructive and vain, and for this reason God thwarted it. Does God have a right to redirect our course in life? Of course – He is our creator!

11:7 “Come, then, let us go down and confuse their language there, so each one cannot hear his neighbor’s voice.”

This is as much an inability to understand, as to hear. Sometimes we hear only what we want to hear, tuning out the rest. The story is not so much about not understanding different languages, as about no longer knowing how to listen and understand.

11:8 And so *the* Lord divided them in such manner from that place into all *the* lands. And they ceased to build *the* city. **11:9** And therefore its name is called Babel, because *the* tongue of all *the* land was confused there. And from there *the* Lord dispersed them over all *the* region’s face.

Babel, בבל means “confusion, by mixing.”

**Before and After
The Two Censuses in Numbers**

Reuben

1:21 forty-six thousand, five hundred.
26:7 forty-three thousand, seven hundred thirty.
46,500 – 43,730

Simeon

1:23 fifty-nine thousand, three hundred.
26:14 twenty-two thousand, two hundred.
59,300 – 22,200

Gad

1:25 forty-five thousand, six hundred fifty.
26:18 forty thousand, five hundred.
45,650 – 40,500

Judah

1:27 seventy-four thousand, six hundred were counted.
26:22 seventy thousand, five hundred.
74,600 – 70,500

Issachar

1:29 forty-four thousand, four hundred were counted.
26:25 sixty-four thousand, three hundred.
44,400 – 64,300

Zebulon

1:31 fifty-seven thousand, four hundred.
26:27 sixty thousand, five hundred.
57,400 – 60,500

Ephraim

1:33 forty-four thousand, five hundred.
26:37 thirty-two thousand, five hundred.
44,500 – 32,500

Manasseh

1:35 thirty-two thousand, two hundred.
26:34 fifty-two thousand, seven hundred.
32,200 – 52,799

(Ephraim and Manasseh are inverted in the two censuses. They are listed Ephraim-Manasseh in the first census, and Manasseh-Ephraim in the second.)

Benjamin

1:37 thirty-five thousand, four hundred.
26:41 forty-five thousand, six hundred.
35,400 – 45,600

Dan

1:39 sixty-two thousand, seven hundred.
26:43 sixty-four thousand, four hundred.
62,700 – 64,400

Asher

1:41 forty-one thousand, five hundred.
26:47 fifty-three thousand, four hundred.
41,500 – 53,400

Naphthali

1:43 fifty-three thousand, four hundred.
26:50 . . . forty-five thousand, four hundred.
53,400 – 45,400

**Statistical Points of Interest
in The Latin Torah**

10930 locations in Latin Torah, according to Kindle.

Pi Point:

$10930 / 22/7 = 3478$

Pharaoh Pursues Israel

Exodus 14:5 And it was told to *the* Egyptians' king that *the* people had fled. And Pharaoh's heart was changed and that of his slaves concerning *the* people. And they said, "What did we want to do that we released Israel, so he not serve us?"

14:6 So he yoked *the* chariot and took all his people with him.

Halfway Point:

$10930 / 3 = 5465$

from: **Preparation for the Lord's Appearance**

Leviticus 9:4c " . . . [*Bring*] an ox and ram for peace offerings, and kill them before *the* Lord as a sacrifice, offering wheat flour sprinkled with oil with each one. For today *the* Lord will appear to you."

Golden Mean:

$10930 \times 2/3 = 7287$

From: **Purify the Levites**

Numbers 8:21 And they were purified and washed their clothes, and Aaron lifted them up in *the* Lord's sight. And he prayed for them, **8:22** that, purified, they could go into their office in *the* Covenant Tabernacle before Aaron and his sons. As *the* Lord had commanded Moses concerning *the* Levites, so it was done.

About the Latin Old Testament Project
(From The Audacity of Prayer: A Fresh Translation of the Book of Psalms)
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In 2008, John Cunyus and Searchlight Press began the process of translating the Latin Old Testament into contemporary English.

The first books translated in the series were Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. These were published by Searchlight Press as The Way of Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, in both an English and a Latin-English edition.

The next book translated was Psalms, using Jerome's Septuagint translation. This volume appeared as English and Latin-English versions of The Audacity of Prayer: A Fresh Translation of the Book of Psalms.

Next in line was The Jagged Edge of Forever: Deuteronomy, Daniel, and the Minor Prophets. This book was published in an English-only edition in September 2009.

Beginnings: A Fresh Translation of Genesis appeared as a Latin-English interlinear translation in December 2009.

The Latin Torah : Fresh Translation of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, appeared as a Latin-English edition in January 2010.

John funds his ongoing work through book sales and individual contributions. Please take a look at his books online at www.JohnCunyus.com. You may contact him to arrange a visit to your church through john@johncunyus.com.

Why On Earth Would Anyone Want To Do that?

That was the question from a longtime Episcopal rector, on hearing about this Latin Bible translation project. It's a good question. Why Latin, rather than Hebrew? Why a new translation, when there are already others out there?

Here are a few answers in a nutshell:

1. Latin is a different textual tradition. As we struggle to realize all the time, "different" does not mean "worse," "wrong," or "defective." The Latin text is ancient, voluminously attested, and critically studied, as are the others.

It is something of a "road less traveled" now, given the almost exclusive interest in Hebrew and Greek among contemporary scholars. In addition to the translator's profound respect for Patristic Christianity, we also like to take "roads less traveled." You see the unexpected more readily on them.

2. The Latin text makes the Christological aspects of the Old Testament clearer. The Latin text itself is the root of much Western theology and church practice. As a historical document alone, it warrants study. When the Latin text was constructed, scholars like Jerome still had access to many texts and traditions that were lost in the aftermath of Rome's fall, the Muslim conquests, the Crusades, and other subsequent upheavals.

3. The oldest extant Latin Bible, containing all the books we know in our Bibles today (plus a few extras) predates the oldest Masoretic (Hebrew) text by three centuries. *Codex Amiatinus*, produced in Northumbria, England, in the 7th Century CE, is now in a library in Florence, Italy.

4. New translations matter because our language changes. Since Latin is such a terse language, it offers us the opportunity to compress English into something similar. As the *Tao Te Ching* says, "More words count less." Jerome certainly understood that.

None of these reasons takes anything away at all from other textual traditions. Working from the Latin can make something very old seem new, which interests many. And, of course, the Bible remains the Bible, whatever the language.

The most important reason is this:

5. It's a way of "glorifying the One who speaks through the words of scripture." Whether anyone else ever gets anything out of this project or not, we hope that's what this project does.

Quotable Quotes

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“This is the kind of book that, had it been on a shelf in Hogwart’s Library, all the other books would have been face-down in front of it.”

“Did you ever stop and consider how lucky you are that you, just as much as that dead raccoon you just passed on the road, are a creature of the moment. And yet in this mortal flesh you can know the Lord? Lucky, lucky, lucky!”

– John Cunyus

The Way of Wisdom:

Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon

(A New Translation of the Latin Old Testament)

English Version:
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Searchlight Press, 2008, 264 pages.

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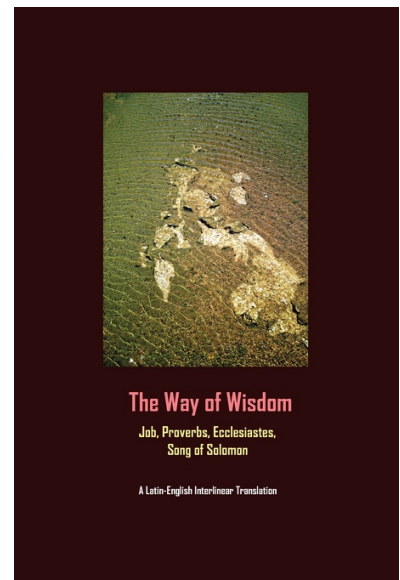
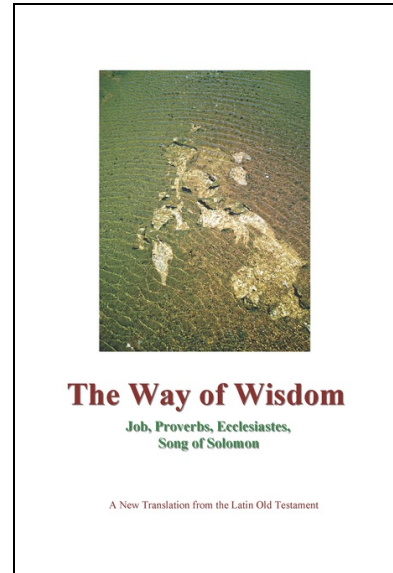
Book Description

Tired of *Christianity Lite*?

In a hard world, we need real answers. **The Way of Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon** is a fresh translation of the Bible's Wisdom books, the deepest truth there is. Long before TV, psychologists or the internet, God's Word spoke to the deepest longings of our heart. God showed us how to succeed in life.

The Way of Wisdom has nothing to do with fads or theories. There is nothing "pop" about it. Instead, God shows us through it who we are, what life is about, and how we can live it well.

These four works from **The Bible – Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon** – offer us better advice than any other source could ever hope to. **Job** shows us what a human being is and where our comfort comes from. **Proverbs** teaches us how to succeed, whatever our path may be. **Ecclesiastes** teaches us what lasts and what doesn't. **The Song of Solomon** shows us what true love is all about.



FAQs

Who: John Cunyus, an ordained Disciples of Christ minister, is translating the Old Testament from *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, The Vulgate, the Latin-language Bible, into contemporary English. John, a graduate of Rice, Texas Christian, and Pacific Western Universities, is the author of several books. He publishes the website, www.JohnCunyus.com.

What: The Way of Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon is a translation of the wisdom literature from the Bible, shared in common by Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox.

When: Saint Jerome translated the Bible into Latin from the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, between 382 and 405 of the Common Era.

Where: Jerome's translation, done in Jerusalem, became The Bible of Western Christianity for over 1,000 years.

Why: *ad maiorem dei gloriam*.
"To the greater glory of God."

How to Use The Material

Groups/Classes: One approach for groups using the material is to read the books aloud, several chapters at a time, over a period of several sessions. This allows those present to hear them the way Jesus and his contemporaries would have, orally and in their entirety. Classes would include informal sharing, an opening prayer, twenty to thirty minutes of reading, then discussion. The

class could then close with a prayer.

Comments So Far

"What really pleases me as I read your translation is the way you have set it up and the beautiful way in which you have caught the essence of each verse with elegant English (simple and understandable)."

– **Rev. Dr. Robert Gartman, Retired Minister, Dallas, Texas.**

"I welcome the translation of the Vulgate and the emphasis on Wisdom Literature. The Latin language and particularly the Vulgate have had an enormous impact on the Christian Church and our liturgical and theological formation. Be assured that I will forward the second copy to the Holy Father."

– **Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston**

As I've said before, you've always been the consummate scholar and an incredibly rich thinker. The books that you're authoring are welcomed additions to the ongoing world of biblical studies – thanks for using your considerable gifts and talents to continue pointing people toward a fuller understanding of God's Eternal Word!

– **Major Stephen George, Chaplain, US Army, Afghanistan**

John visited our church as part of a book signing tour. He met with our adult Sunday school classes to explain why someone should be translating the Bible from the Vulgate. I was wondering that myself. His reasons are compelling. His translations are fresh and lacking the characteristic "stained glass voice" one often finds in reading the

scriptures. I encourage John's materials for study and devotional use, and commend him as an interesting and compelling speaker.

Rev. Steven C. Digby
Minister, Odessa, Texas

I want to express my gratitude for this translation. My wife Alicia brought it home in October, but we were in the midst of moving to the Metroplex. As 'fate' would have it, my daily Bible reading took me into Proverbs this January. Reading it in English had been difficult for me, because my mind seemed to wander. But when I picked up this interlinear translation, it was breathtaking!

My Latin is not very good, but somehow reading a familiar text in an unfamiliar tongue uses a part of my mind that wasn't engaged previously. Particularly since some of the Latin words are such close cognates to English---yet just different enough that I have to think about what the Latin is really communicating.

It sounds odd, but this book is helping me engage scripture because it takes what was once familiar and turns it into something strange---yet comprehensible. And I am grateful.

– **Joseph Harker**
Minister, Richardson, Texas

Learner's Guide
The Way of Wisdom:
Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Outline of Program One

Opening Prayer

Introduction of the Translation Project.

What the project is. Who I am. How this project got started.

See <http://www.johncunyus.com/files/WoWPublicity.pdf>

Brief description of the book/s:

Consensus Wisdom Literature from what my religious community calls the **Old Testament**.

Four major religious groups have a version of what we call the Old Testament:

1) Jews; 2) Orthodox Christians; 3) Catholics; and 4) Protestants.

Orthodox and Catholics have more wisdom books in their Old Testament than Protestants and Jews.

These four books – Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, are the consensus books, the books all four consider canonical.

Job – why do bad things happen to good people? Where is God in this?

Proverbs – how to succeed, whatever the endeavor.

Ecclesiastes – what lasts and what doesn't.

Song of Solomon – what does true love look like?

Dates of Composition

As Facebook would put it, "It's complicated."

Job – internal evidence suggests when the story took place. When it was actually written is more difficult to discern. Couldn't have been later than the Septuagint translations.

Internal aspects pointing to date of story setting, if not composition:

1) Omissions: temple, Jew, Israel, centralized worship, Jerusalem, Kings of Israel and Judah.

2) Semi-nomadic way of life; similar to the way Abraham is described as living. Predates Israel's entry into Canaan.

3) Interior of Near East, fertile crescent locations: Yemen; Northwest Arabia, near present day Eilat; present day Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia. These places remain well-known to us today, obviously.

Dialogue format may suggest a later date: format made famous by Plato, 5th Century BCE; standard form of philosophical discourse among the Greeks.

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon – unlikely to have been earlier than Solomon's era; could not have been later than Septuagint translation, 3rd Century BCE.

How does a book come to be considered canonical?

How long does it take for a book to be accepted as canonical? Paul's letters as

examples: between date of composition and 100 years, depending on the source.
Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon written sometime between 1000 and 300 BCE.

Authors

Job – unknown.

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon – traditionally, Solomon.

Many modern scholars disagree with the tradition.

Whether he was or not, his life story helps us understand what wisdom is.

Solomon's life as backdrop to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

David and Bathsheba as parents.

Amnon rapes Tamar.

Absalom kills Amnon.

Absalom's exile, restoration, rebellion, and death.

David's failures as "home front" ruler and as father

The perils of royal succession in ancient societies.

Cases in point: Solomon's brother, Adonijah, and his uncle, Joab.

Wisdom tradition grows out of the age-old human desire to make things easier for our children. Solomon gave this impulse a literary boost, if nothing else. In Israel's wisest king, a deep, questioning trust in God deepened the already existing spring of the Wisdom tradition.

In some views, God is the author, having inspired writers to say exactly what God needed them to say.

Original language and transmission

Hebrew

Copied by hand.

Scholars were conscious of the perils of manuscript transmission by at least the 3rd Century CE.

Books could be lost or destroyed.

Books could be miscopied.

In the 3rd Century CE, **the great Christian scholar Origen**, created the *Hexapla*.

Six column, carefully compared and written version of scripture, as Origen knew it, in a variety of languages: Hebrew, Greek, phonetic Hebrew in Greek characters, among them.

Hexapla was eventually lost, as were many other ancient texts (including all the "autograph" manuscripts of the Bible.).

Jerome used it as starting point for much of his work.

Translations

Septuagint, 3rd Century BCE.

Hebrew and Aramaic into **Greek**, commissioned by one of the Ptolemies in Egypt; executed by rabbis in Alexandria, Egypt.

Vulgate, late 4th Century, CE.

Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into Latin.

Who was Jerome?

What is “The Vulgate”?

See www.JohnCunyus.com/vulgatetranslations.html

Vulgate, from “vulgar”, or “common” Latin, as opposed to literary Latin.

Jerome translated the Bible into the common language of his day.

Why Work from the Latin text?

I don’t mean to denigrate in the least the power of the work in the original languages!

Much Protestant hostility toward the Latin text; residual, left over from the Reformation; perhaps we have thrown part of the baby out with the bath-water.

Douay Rheims Bible (New Testament, 1582; Old Testament, 1609-1610), for English-speaking Catholics.

Authorized, “King James,” Version (1611), for English-speaking Protestants.

There are some reasons for studying the Vulgate, as well.

Textual Reasons:

The Vulgate is an ancient textual tradition, rigorously translated, studiously compared and updated.

“Different” does not mean “worse.”

Jerome worked in the Late Roman era.

Prior to Rome’s fall, Muslim conquests, Crusades, and other upheavals.

He had access to texts and traditions that have been lost, like Origen’s *Hexapla*.

Oldest extant Bible, containing all the books in our Bibles (with a few extras) **is in Latin.**

Codex Amiatinus, 7th Century CE, vs *Codex Aleppo*, 10th Century CE.

Historical Reasons:

The Bible in Latin shaped Western Christianity more than any other version.

Theological Reasons

Makes some things clearer: Christological emphasis of the Book of Psalms, for instance.

Question: which version of the Word is the “real” Word?

Principles of Translation

Accuracy

Words must be translated according to commonly-accepted definitions; no esoteric translations.

Readability

Those words need to be intelligible to contemporary readers; avoid “stained-glass language,” meaningful to some, but incomprehensible to most.

Example: see “Word List.”

Am I “making up my own Bible?”

Some have expressed concerns that I might be “making up my own Bible.”

I make every effort to avoid that, using the following guidelines.

I use **Alexander Campbell’s “fair, stipulated, and well-established” rule:**

The words of the Bible contain all the ideas in it. These words, then, rightly understood, and the ideas are clearly perceived. The words and sentences of the Bible are to be translated, interpreted, and understood according to the same code of laws and principles of interpretation by which other ancient writings are translated and understood; for, when God spoke to man in his own language, he spoke as one person converses with another – in the fair, stipulated, and well-established meaning of the terms.¹

I translate with **dictionary in hand.**

I check my translation using the **1899 Douay-Rheims** translation of the Vulgate, which was officially authorized by the Roman Catholic Church.

I add **footnotes clarifying persons and events** cited in the biblical text, where possible.

I add **footnotes containing wording from the Revised Standard Version**, where the Latin translation is difficult to understand.

Is This a “Literal” Translation

Several issues to speak to in answering:

Punctuation: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew lacked it during the ancient era; must be added by a modern translator to make sense of the text for a modern reader.

Spacing between words: lacking in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts of the ancient era; must be added to make sense.

Lack of certain words: often, “to be” verbs; articles (definite and indefinite) in Latin; all must be added to make sense.

Lack of vowels: unpointed Hebrew original. Must be added to make sense of the original.

Example: consonant string: **b t t r**

How “literal” do you want it? Do you mind if I use vowels?

I have followed the King James Version in italicizing words in the English translation that are not present in the Latin text.

Why New Translations?

“You know, they’ve been translated already.”

¹ Alexander Campbell, The Christian System in Reference to the UNION OF CHRISTIANS and a Restoration of PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY as Plead in the Current Reformation, Fourth Edition, Ayer Company Publishers, Salem, New Hampshire, Reprint Edition, 1988, pg 15.

Originals don't change, but our language does.

Meaning of words in modern languages changes: “suffer,” “prevent,” and “gay.”

Shades of meaning of words found in the ancient texts:

Example from The Lord's Prayer: give us this day our daily bread:

Matthew 6:11 τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον

Luke 11: 3 τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν

ἐπιούσιον appears twice in Greek New Testament.

Jerome translates ἐπιούσιον with two different words:

Matthew 6:11: *supersubstantialem*

Luke 11:3: *cotidie*

This gives us the range of meanings of the word, in the understanding of a late 4th Century CE scholar.

Why the Wisdom books?

These books will never be the favored scriptures of those who consistently win.

These books become priceless for those who know about loss, pain, grief, and unfairness.

Outline of Program Two

Opening Prayer

Key Words

Discuss each word; find contexts; explore understandings;
consider how word applies to the present.

aeternum – eternity, without beginning or end.
Compare to *sempiternum*, everlasting, lasting forever.

Deus – God; translates Hebrew words *El* and, more frequently, *Elohim*, meaning “God.” *Elohim* is the plural of *El*, yet is most often translated as the singular, God. Christian Tradition understands the plural as an acknowledgment of God’s Triune nature.

Dominus – the Lord; substituted for formal, Hebrew given name; God’s proper name, Y-H-W-H, was considered too holy to speak aloud by the time the Septuagint was translated.

homo – man, human being, humanity, an individual man.
When used generically, is understood to include *mulier*, woman.

impius – lawless; those with an insufficient reverence for God or gods. Compare to *iustus* (see below.)

infernus – “below”; destination of all who die, in Book of Job.

iniquitas – treachery, betrayal, iniquity, wickedness.

insipiens – empty-headed, fool; a stupid person.

iustitia – fairness, justice. Combined with *misericordia* (see below) as fundamental attributes of God in relationship to human affairs.

iustus – fair, just, law-abiding; merciful and fair.

malum – disaster, misfortune, calamity, harm, evil.

misericordia – mercy.

parabola – comparison.

rectus – right, upright, unashamed, not guilty.

saeculum – time, age, generation, people born during one period of time. Often appears as *saeculum saeculi*, “age of age,” or, more frequently, “age of ages.”

sapiens – wise, understanding.

sapientia – wisdom.

Satanas – Satan, adversary, accuser, in Book of Job.

simplex – simple, straightforward, truthful, honest.

stultus – fool; someone who is unteachable; stubbornly ignorant, despite obvious lessons.

vanitas – pointlessness, vanity; action that serves no lasting purpose.

Outline of Program Three

Opening Prayer

Readings from Job

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Outline of Program Four

Opening Prayer

Readings from Proverbs

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Outline of Program Five

Opening Prayer

Readings from Ecclesiastes

Discussion

Closing Prayer

Outline of Program Six

Opening Prayer

Readings from Song of Solomon

Discussion

Closing Prayer

How Did This Translation Come About?

I spent twenty years as a Protestant minister, serving congregations in Texas. When that ended in July, 2005, I was so hurt and so angry I almost lost my faith entirely. I felt cut off, abandoned, cast out by the church. During that period, I passed “*through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none,*” as Jesus said in Luke 11:24.

Looking back, I suppose there were only two reasons I didn’t give up on faith and church entirely. My Sunday School class, the Sojourners at Central Christian Church in Dallas, was so relentlessly accepting and loving toward me that I couldn’t let them go. My dear friend since college, Myles Hall, wouldn’t let me let go of the Christian commitments I’d had since childhood. I can’t say I appreciated either of them for it at the time.

In late 2007, still struggling to hold on, I began writing a book on Buddhism. Buddha’s words kept reminding me of Ecclesiastes, a difficult little book from what Christians call “The Old Testament.” As I worked, I thought to myself (often sarcastically), What would Christian faith look like if it started with Ecclesiastes, instead of Genesis?

When I finished [A Path Beyond Suffering: Working the Buddhist Method](#), I felt compelled to find out. I began working my way laboriously through the Latin version of Ecclesiastes. I chose the Latin, in part, because I hadn’t studied Hebrew since seminary in the mid 1980s. I considered working through it in Greek, as I often had done with New Testament texts. But I wanted the fresh perspective of a language that was new, to me at least.

As I translated, I felt an increasingly heavy burden on my heart. I would have said, during my former life as a minister, that God was calling me back to Himself. But I didn’t want to go back. I was still angry. I had come to see so much of Protestant church life as self-centered, a cult of personality around pastors and buildings, bearing little resemblance to the biblical faith.

Yet a contrarian little voice in my head was insisting ever more loudly that, yes, one’s faith could begin with Ecclesiastes.

A turning point in my journey came when my interest in Latin led me to a Latin-language Tridentine Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, the parish in my neighborhood. I’d known about the service for years and told myself for years that one day I would attend. I hadn’t, because they insisted on holding it at 6:30 in the mornings!

One night, in the midst of translating Ecclesiastes, with family out of the country visiting other family, I told myself I would go the following morning, if I woke up in time. I woke up early, tried to roll back over and go back to sleep, and found I couldn’t. Lying there, I said to myself, ‘Well, I can stay in bed, or I can take a shower and go to church.’

I grumbled, got out of bed and went to church. I understood perhaps four words of the entire liturgy. The priest, as is customary in the Latin rite, said the service facing away from the congregation, toward the altar and crucifix. Yet one thought hit me like Job’s tornado: this service wasn’t about the worshipers! The service wasn’t about the priest, the congregation, the preaching, or anything else. It was about God. That realization rushed over me like a flood. I found myself praying, pouring out my heart to God, as I hadn’t been able to in years. I experienced peace, a rootedness in God, that I had sorely missed during my time in the *waterless places, seeking rest and finding none*.

I have been working on translations of the Latin Old Testament since. Whether they ever touch anyone else, they have already touched my heart beyond description.

John Cunyus
August 10, 2008