

The Book of Leviticus: Why It Matters to Christians

**“Introduction to the
Book of Leviticus”**



Leviticus

Week	Date	Topic
1	Oct 1	Leviticus Introduction
2	Oct 8	Sacrifices: Leviticus 1-7
3	Oct 15	Priesthood of Aaron: Leviticus 8-10
4	Oct 22	Ritual Cleanliness: Leviticus 11-15
5	Oct 29	Day of Atonement: Leviticus 16
6	Nov 5	Holiness of Conduct: Leviticus 17-20
7	Nov 12	Holiness of Priests: Leviticus 21-22
8	Nov 19	Sabbath and Feasts: Leviticus 23
9	Nov 26	Preparation and Punishments: Leviticus 24
10	Dec 3	Sanctification of the Land: Leviticus 25
11	Dec 10	Promises and Warnings: Leviticus 26
12	Dec 17	Vows and Redemption of Tithes: Leviticus 27
13	Dec 24	Summary class

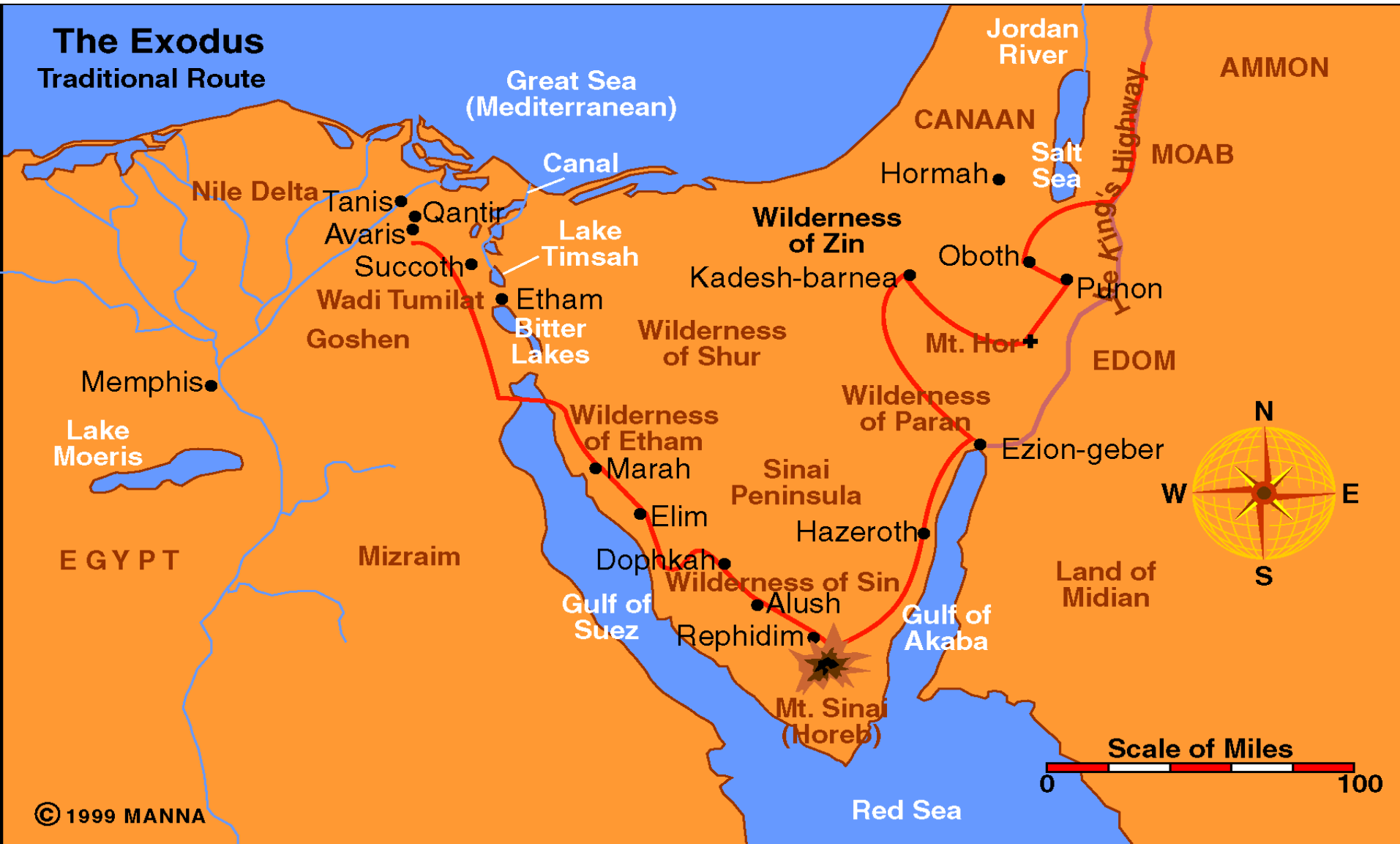
Today's Objectives

- Provide a summary of events leading up to the book of Leviticus
- Provide an overview of Leviticus
- Study significant geopolitical events that may have impacted upon the Jewish people of the time
- Review the Leviticus timeline
- Review historical maps of the region
- Lay the foundation for the importance of the book of Leviticus to present day Christians
 - What should Leviticus mean to me?

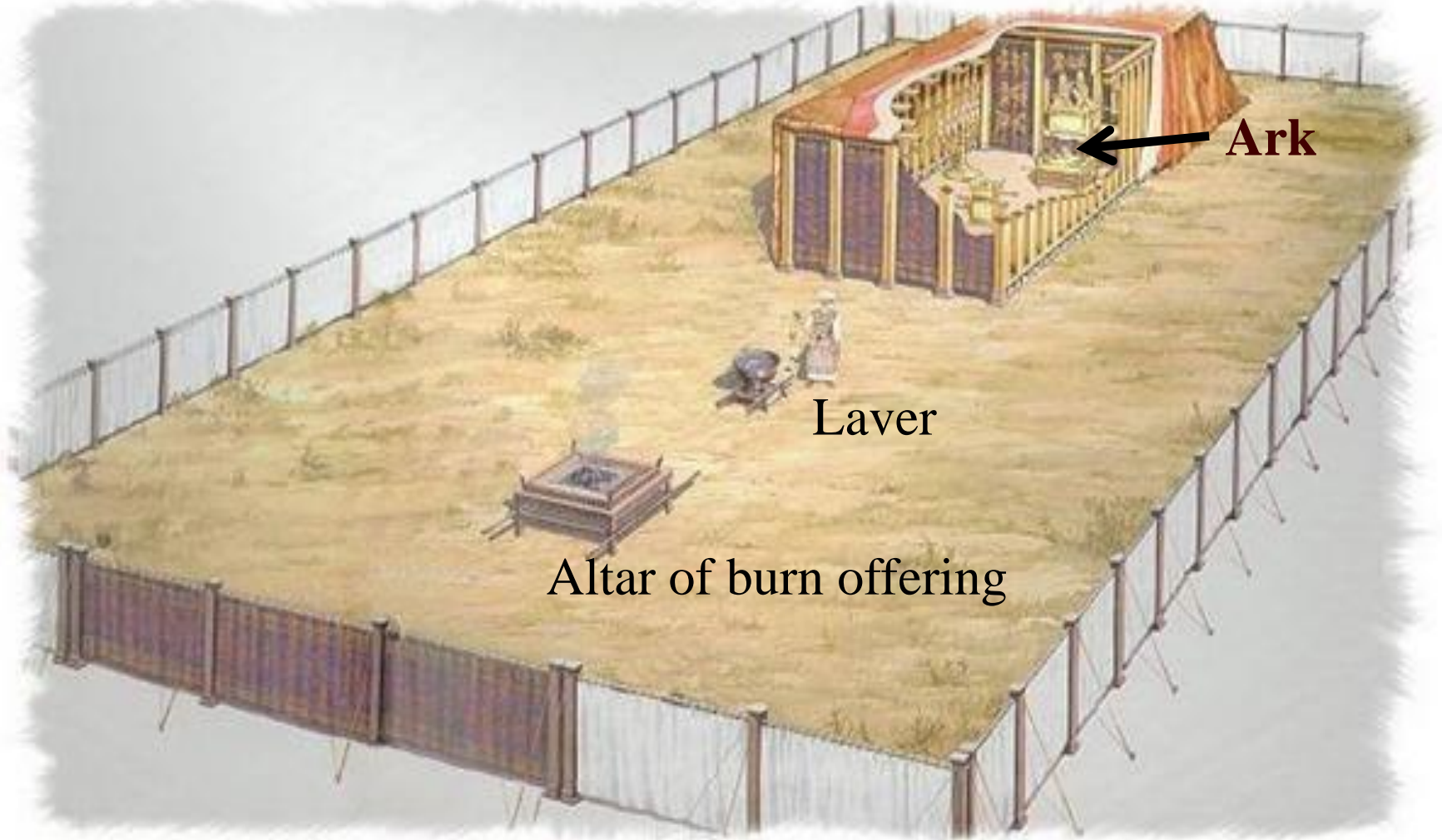
Review of Exodus

- God's miraculous rescue of Israel from Egypt through Moses
- Covenant law given at Mount Sinai.
- The tabernacle as the place of God's presence and Israel's proper worship
- God's revelation of Himself and His character
- Israel's tendency to complain and rebel against God
- God's judgment and mercy toward his people when they rebel
- Exodus narrates the very crucial matters that define Israel as a people in relationship to God

Exodus Route



Tabernacle



Ark

Laver

Altar of burn offering

Introduction Part 1

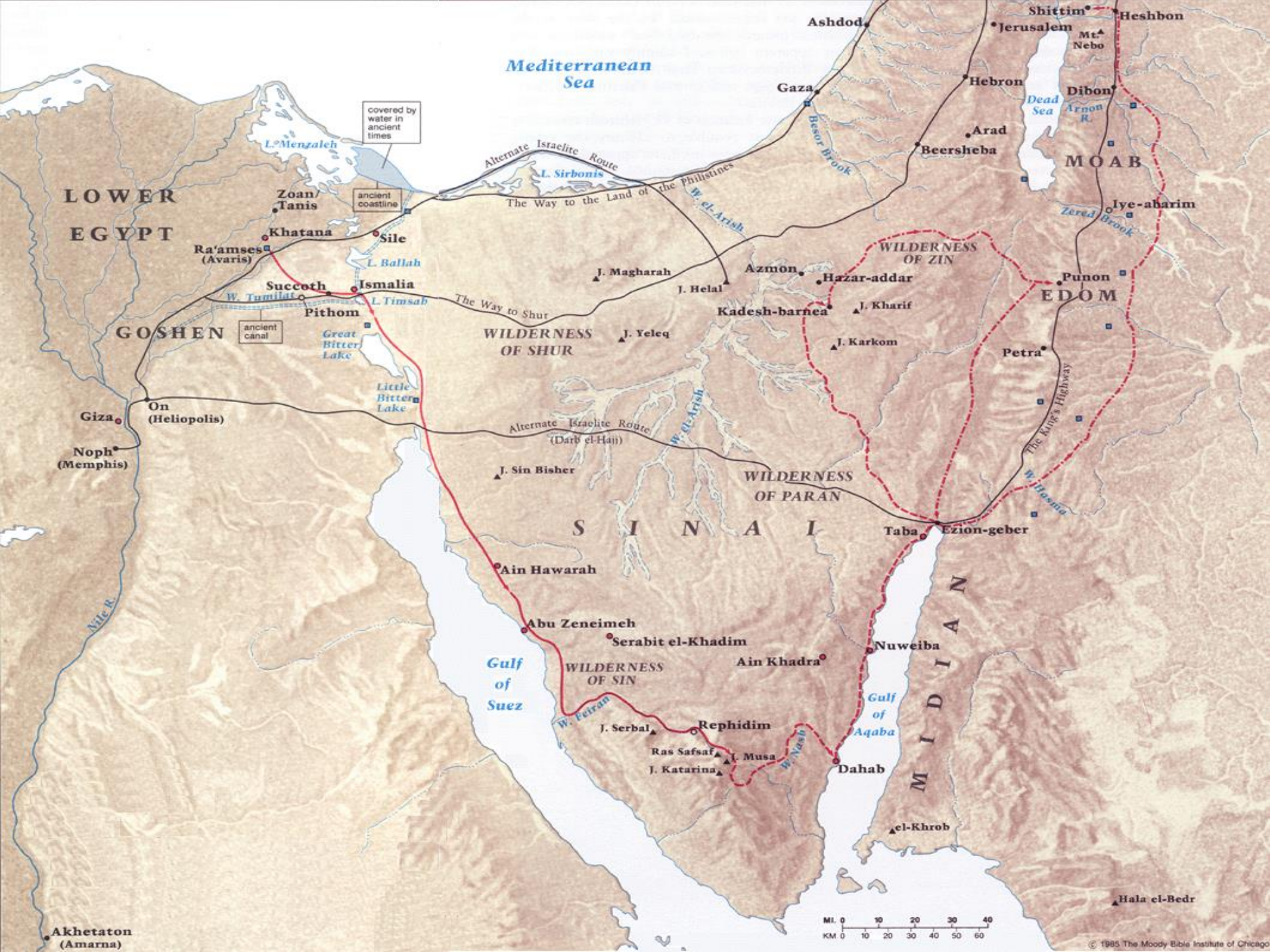
- Hebrew title is *wayyiqra*’ or “And He [the Lord] called”
 - It is a continuation of the Exodus narrative
 - English title comes from the Latin title *Liber Leviticus* or the *relating to the Levites*
- Third book of the Torah (the law)
- Described as a manual for priests, but also describes requirements for all Israelites
- Moses is regarded as the author
- Recorded after God renews the covenant with Israel (Ex 34:1-28)

Introduction Part 2

- Chronological movement forward from Exodus, Leviticus, to Numbers
- Historically, the book records the one month between God's occupation of the tabernacle (Ex 40:17, 34-38) and taking of the census (Num 1:1-3)
- Remember, the covenant relationship required the Israel to appear before God on stated occasions
- Moses, then the priesthood, served as mediators

Geopolitical Atmosphere

- Egypt is still a major power
 - Conquered Nubia and the Levant
 - Successive rulers of Egypt from the same family
 - Period of the greatest Egyptian expansion
- Kassites overrun Babylonia
 - Dynasty lasts 576 years, later conquered by Elamites
- Joshua leads the tribal federation of Israel leads the conquest of Canaan, which is part of the Levant
- New Hittite kingdom established, 300 years
- Ugarit – important city of historical significance
 - Ultimately destroyed by “Sea People”



LOWER EGYPT

GOSHEN

Mediterranean Sea

Alternate Israelite Route
The Way to the Land of the Philistines

The Way to Shur

Alternate Israelite Route
(Darb el-Hai)

S I N A I

WILDERNESS OF SIN

Gulf of Suez

Ashdod

Gaza

MOAB

EDOM

WILDERNESS OF PARAN

M I D I A N

covered by water in ancient times

L. Menzaleh

L. Sirbonis

ancient coastline

Zaan/Tanis

Khatana

Ra'amases (Avaris)

Succoth

Pithom

L. Ballah

L. Timsah

ancient canal

Great Bitter Lake

Little Bitter Lake

J. Magharah

J. Helal

J. Yeleq

J. Sin Bisher

Ain Hawarah

Abu Zeneimeh

Serabit el-Khadim

Ain Khadra

J. Serbal

Rephidim

Ras Safsaf

J. Katarina

J. Musa

Dahab

el-Khrob

Hala el-Bedr

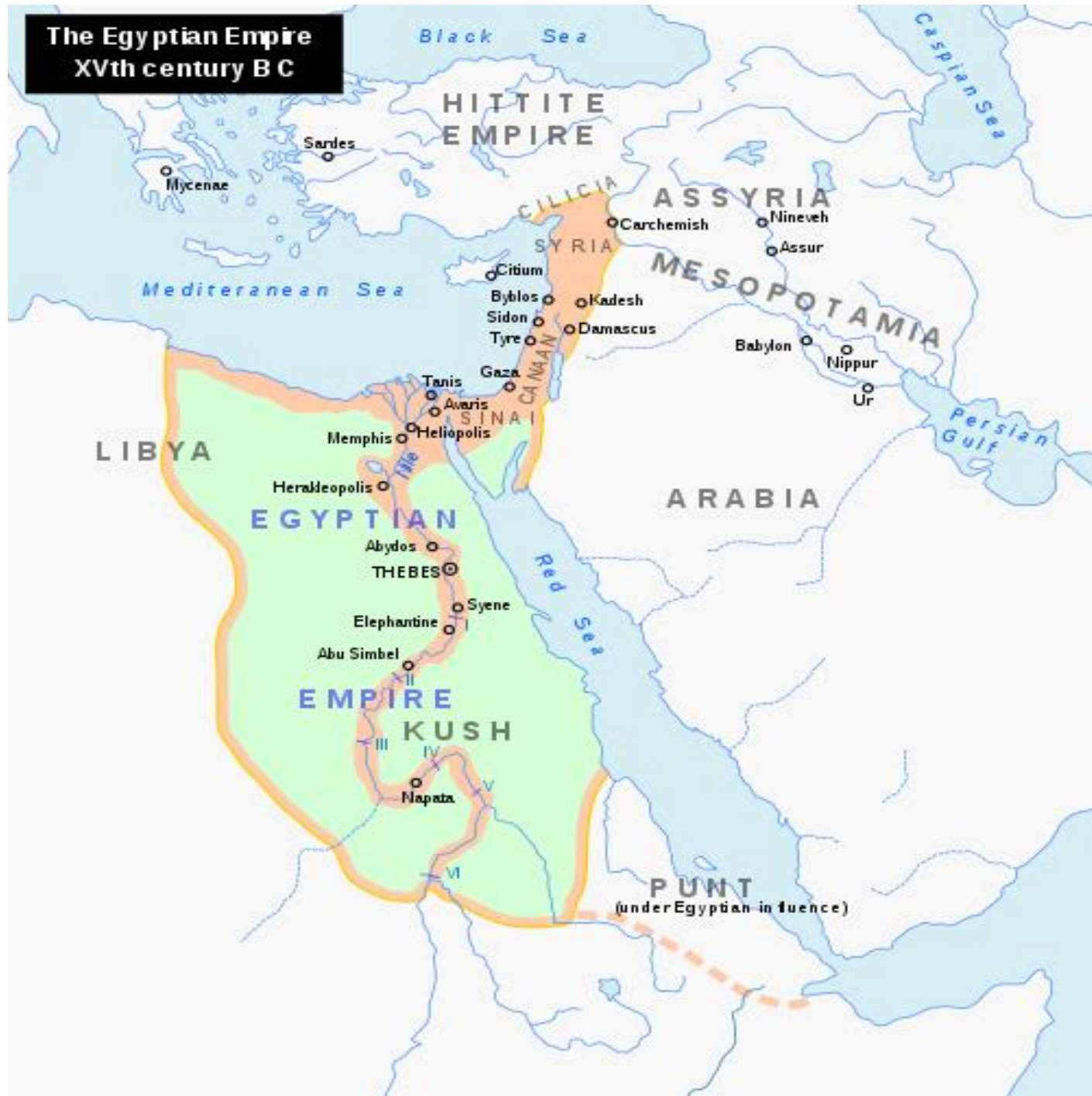
WILDERNESS OF ZIN

Petra

The King's Highway

MI. 0 10 20 30 40
KM 0 10 20 30 40 50 60

**The Egyptian Empire
XVth century B C**





NUBIA



The LEVANT

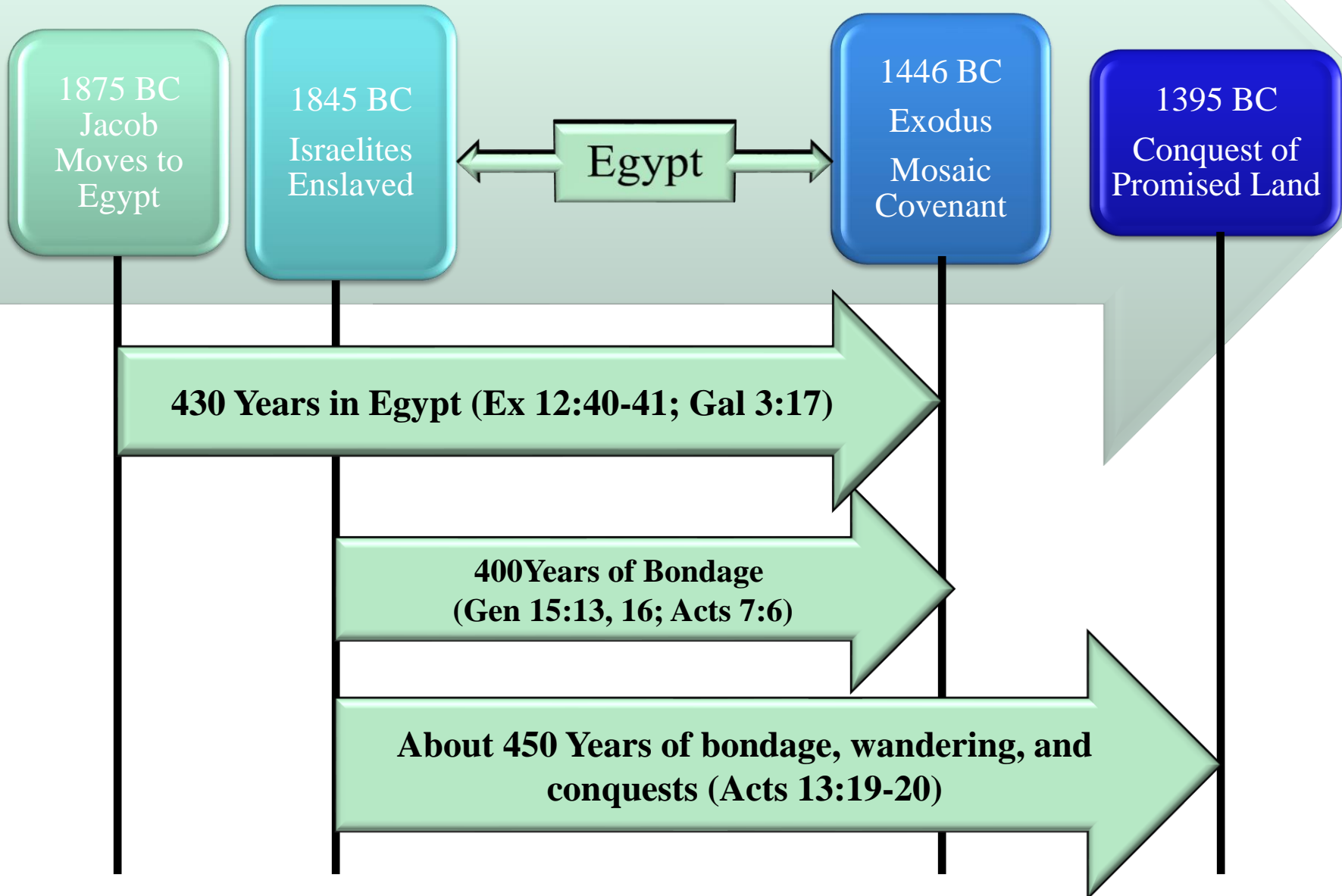
Timeline

- Moses lived from approximately 1525-1405 BC
 - Completed writing of Exodus after 1445 BC
 - Exodus covers approximately 431 years of history
 - Arrival of Jacob and his family in Egypt to the construction of the Tabernacle in Sinai in 1445 BC
- Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years (Gen 12:40)
 - Time of oppression was 400 years (Gen 15:13)
 - Transition time in Egypt
 - Egyptians had expelled the Hyskos rulers of the time
 - Egyptians formed a world power of which there was no match

Ruler of Egypt

- Amenhotep II (1450-1425)
 - Seventh pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty
 - Son of Thutmose III
 - Successful military campaigns
 - Considered to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus
 - Firstborn slain in the last plague (Ex 12:29)
 - His eldest son did not follow him to throne.
- Notes
 - Archaeologists give us great detail on the Pharaohs of Moses' time
 - Mummies have been found for each of the Pharaohs

Early Israelite Timeline



Why Study Leviticus?

- Leviticus provides context for the events surrounding Christ's crucifixion
 - What does context mean?
 - The set of facts or circumstances that surround a situation or event
- Gives us perspectives into the mind of the Apostles as they lay the foundation for the early church
- Origen, "...but begin from the principle that 'the law is spiritual' if we are to understand and explain all the lessons that are read."

Paul and Galatians 3:24

- So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith
 - For centuries God was teaching people important theological aspects about His eternal plan
 - Christ fulfilled His plan
 - The people of the time knew what God meant by sacrifices, atonement, purification, and consecration
 - They had lived out these rituals for 1500 years
- If we wish to walk in Christ's steps and think His thoughts after him, we must understand the sacrificial system of Leviticus - Schultz

Three Major Components of Leviticus

- God is holy
 - God's holiness constitutes his deepest and innermost nature, His holiness must never be compromised
- Be holy because God is holy
 - If we wish to be God's holy people today, we must acknowledge the wide-ranging claims of holiness more than we often do
- He is the Lord who makes us holy
 - Christians, like the Israelites, are called to be holy
 - We are called to pursue holiness in our lives
 - Like Israel, we have been set free by Christ

Key To Studying Leviticus

- We must examine the messages and determine what the passage represents in order to see the riches God has for us
- Does the passage provide a spiritual truth?
 - Is this passage or verse a picture of New Testament spiritual truth that we obey today?
 - If it is, is that its only importance?
 - If this answer is yes, once we have determined the meaning of the picture, our interpretation is finished
 - If not, then we ask if it is a moral or physical command

Key To Studying Leviticus

- Is it a moral or physical command:
 - Why did God give this verse/passage to the Israelites?
 - Is the command reflective of God's moral nature, and therefore one we need to follow, even today?
 - Did he want them to be different from the people around them?
 - If so, is the specific command relevant for us today, so that we might be different?
 - Did God give the command to them for health reasons? If so, is it relevant today? If we conclude that the specific command is not relevant for us, we must ask, What is the principle behind the commands of God? How does the principle apply to us?

Chapter Overview

- Chapters 1-7 describe the five different types of offerings. These offerings are God's plan for dealing with our needs
 - Our need for love, our need for joy, our need for peace, our need for forgiveness, and our need for restoration of relationships. In each case, the picture helps us to see how Jesus Christ fills those needs.
- Chapters 8-10 describe the priesthood
 - We need helpers in the midst of life's difficulties, and the priests play that role. This section tells us the necessary qualifications of those helpers, giving us a picture both of the role of Jesus in our lives

Chapter Overview

- Chapters 11-15 describe different aspects of holiness, while chapter 16 lays out regulations for celebrating Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement
- Chapters 17 to 27 then constitute the second major section of the book, detailing God's standard for our performance
 - Note the order here: God's provision always precedes God's commands! God never gives us as Christians a command without providing us with the resources necessary to carry out the command.

Review

- Provided a summary of events leading up to the book of Leviticus
- Provided an overview of Leviticus
- Reviewed geopolitical events that may have impacted upon the Jewish people of the time
- Reviewed the timeline of Leviticus
- Reviewed historical maps of the region
- Provided the foundation for the importance of the book of Leviticus to present day Christians