



The Pentateuch

I. Names and Authorship of These Books

- The name “Pentateuch” comes from the Greek word: *penateuchos*
 - *penta* = five
 - *teuchos* = book, vessel, tool
 - *penateuchos* = “five-volume work”
- First 5 books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy.
- Hebrew Organization of OT Books (see Luke 24:44):
 - Torah “The Law”
 - Neviim “The Prophets”
 - Ketuvim “The Writings”
- But ... “Law” is not the primary meaning of “*torah*.”
 - It can also be translated as “instruction.” See Deut. 17:11 & Prov. 1:8. There is much in the Pentateuch that is not law.
- Alternative Name: “The Book of Moses” or “The Book of the Law of Moses”
 - **Exodus** referred to as “the Book of Moses” in Mark 12:26
 - **Leviticus** referred to as “the Book of Moses” in 2 Chr. 35:12
 - **Numbers** referred to as “the Book of Moses” in Ezra 6:18
 - **Deuteronomy** referred to as “the Book of Moses” in 2 Chr. 25:4, and Neh. 13:1
 - **Deuteronomy** referred to as “the Book of the Law of Moses” in 2 Kgs. 14:6
 - Other examples: Josh. 8:31, 23:6; 2 Chr. 34:14; Neh. 8:1; Mark 12:26.
 - Implies that Moses is the author of Exodus through Deuteronomy
- Mosaic authorship of **Genesis** confirmed in Acts 26:22-23 (cf. Gen. 3:15).
 - Additional Support: Luke 24:27 “And beginning with **Moses** and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (See also Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:3-5; Luke 16:29-31; 20:37; John 1:45; 5:45-46; 7:19-23; etc.)

II. The Plot of The Pentateuch

Adapted from T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 113-118.

- Humans were created to enjoy an intimate relationship with God and exercise authority over the earth on his behalf (Gen. 1-2). Man and woman were created to experience God's blessings.
- This was ruined by mankind's fall into sin. Instead of experiencing God's blessings, mankind is cursed by God (Gen. 3).
- Mankind goes from bad to worse, eventually experiencing God's judgment in the Flood (Gen 6-9) and God's discipline at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11).
- God initiates a plan to bring reconciliation and blessings to mankind by making promises to a man named Abraham (Gen 12, 15, 17, & 22).
 - God's initial promise:
 - Genesis 12:1-3 "Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will **bless** you and make your name great, so that you will be a **blessing**. I will **bless** those who **bless** you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be **blessed**."
 - "The importance of these [promises] should not be underestimated: they set the agenda for all that follows in the rest of the Pentateuch and beyond."
 - Two main dimensions of these divine promises:
 - Promise that the nations will be blessed through the "seed" of Abraham.
 - Promise that Abraham will become a great nation. Involves:
 1. Descendants
 2. Land
 - The first promise (to bless the nations) is dependent on the second (to make Abraham a great nation). That is why the rest of the Pentateuch focuses so much on how Abraham's family became a great nation. It focuses on Israel so much that the promise to bless the nations is overshadowed.
 - Which promise was God's bigger objective?
 - The promise to bless the nations.
 - This eventually lead to the gospel going to "all nations" and "the ends of the earth" in the New Testament.
 - Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
 - Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and **to the end of the earth.**"

- o Galatians 3:8 “And the Scripture, foreseeing that **God would justify the Gentiles by faith**, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’”
 - But God’s promise to bless the nations was dependent on keeping his promise to Abraham and his descendants. So Exodus through Deuteronomy focuses on how Israel is set apart as a nation like no other.
 - Israel enjoys God’s presence (example: the Tabernacle).
 - Israel is called to live righteously (example: the Law).
 - Israel is called to exercise trust/faith in God.
 - Faith leads to obedience which leads to blessings (example: Passover).
 - Lack of faith leads to disobedience which leads to disobedience (example: Wilderness Wanderings).
 - “The divine promises of blessing and nationhood, which are so important to the development of the plot, remain unfulfilled by the end of Deuteronomy. As a result, the Pentateuch is oriented toward the future. What will become of these promises? To answer this we must look beyond the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy. As it stands, the Pentateuch is an unfinished story.”
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A couple things to keep in mind ...

As you read the OT, it is important to keep in mind that the OT believers were similar to Christians today, but also different.

- OT believers and NT believers are both part of the people of God, but the term “Christian” only applies to NT believers.
 - The first time the followers of God were called “Christians” is in Acts 11:26.
- The Bible makes a distinction between “Jews” and “Gentiles.” Both Jews and Gentiles can be believers of the One True God, but ethnically they are distinct groups.
 - “Jews” are the biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would include ethnic Israelites.
 - “Gentiles” are non-Jews, people from outside that ethnic group.