

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

"The [believer] who studies the Pentateuch is committed to an inspired Biblical text that originally came from the pen of God's chosen servant. A method or procedure that illumines that text to the mind and heart of the reader will be warmly welcomed. Whatever undermines the truth and application of the text must be firmly rejected."

—L. Thomas Holdcroft, *The Pentateuch*

"An Introduction to the Torah"

The Hebrew OT:

Comprised of three sections:

The _____ [Torah] – Also known as 'the Pentateuch' because it is comprised of the first five books (Gen.–Deut.) of the Hebrew Bible.

The _____ [Nebiim] – The Nebiim is divided into two sections: the Former Prophets (Josh., Judg., 1-2 Sam., and 1-2 Kgs.) and the Latter Prophets (Isa., Jer., Ezek., Hos., Joel, Amos, Obad., Jonah, Mic., Nah., Hab., Zeph., Hag., Zech., and Mal.).

The _____ [Kethubim] – The books in the Kethubim are usually found in this order: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra–Nehemiah, and 1-2 Chronicles.

The Contents of the Pentateuch:

Genesis– Primeval history and the history of Israel's Patriarchs.

Exodus– The history of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt as well as their establishment as a nation.

Leviticus– The instructions as to how Israel was to properly live and worship Yahweh.

Numbers– The history of Israel's journey to the Promised land, their failure to enter it, and their 40 years of wandering.

Deuteronomy– The recounting of Israel's history and God's Law as they prepared to enter the Promised Land.

The Authorship of the Pentateuch:

- The books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy seem to have been written by an eye-witness (Ex. 15:27).
- Later OT books claim that Moses was the author (Josh. 1:7-8; 2 Chron. 25:4).
- The NT (Jesus in particular) attests that Moses wrote these books (Matt. 19:7-9; Mk. 7:9-10; Jn. 1:17, 5:46).
- Despite this evidence, some still reject Mosaic authorship.

Alleged Problem: Moses is never identified in the Pentateuch as its author.

⇒ The author is almost _____ identified in ancient Near Eastern literature.

Alleged Problem: There are some words, names, or phrases that seem awkward or impossible for Moses to have written.

⇒ Our doctrines of _____ and _____ do not fall apart with the presence of certain edits or additions.

Understanding & Interpreting the Pentateuch:

1. The Biblical writing of history is _____.
2. Biblical history is factual but is not always _____.
3. The biblical writing of history is primarily _____.

Understanding 'Torah'

- The Torah is the _____ of Yahweh.
 - ⇒ This includes the totality of God's specific instructions and commands both to Israel as a nation (Ex. 20-31, 34-39; Lev. 1-27; Num. 1-Deut. 34) as well as the Patriarchs (Gen. 18:19; 26:5).

Deut. 11:1—"You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always."

- The Torah is the _____ of Yahweh.
 - ⇒ The Torah was God's loving instruction to His people so that they might live lives of honorable worship in the midst of a crooked and fallen world.

Deut. 10:12-17—"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.

- The Torah is the _____ of Yahweh's powerful works.
 - ⇒ Large sections of the Torah are narrative that convey the history of His powerful, redemptive actions.

Deut. 31:10-13—And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." (See also Deut. 6:20-25)

The Significance of the Pentateuch

- The Pentateuch is our _____ !

1 Cor. 10:1-6—For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

Eph. 2:11-13—Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

- The Pentateuch teaches us the importance of God's _____ .

Deut. 32:45-47—And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, he said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

- The Pentateuch is a polemic against God's _____ .

⇒ The gods of the Ancient Near East

Ex. 12:12—For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.

⇒ Sinful Humanity

Gen. 3:23-24—therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

- The trajectory of the Pentateuch is ultimately _____ .

Gen. 3:15—I will put enmity between...your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Deut. 33:26-27—"There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty. The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms."