

PENTATEUCH READING GUIDE AND ASSIGNMENTS

"There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books...if the average student wants to find out something about Platonism, the very last thing he thinks of doing is to take a translation of Plato off the library shelf and read the Symposium."

-- C.S. Lewis

Contrary to what the experts may tell you, there is nothing quite as good as doing your own reading. That is especially true with the Bible, a book that God uses to speak to His people in very personal ways.

Suggestions for Reading:

- ▶ Read in outlined "chunks"
- ▶ Read quickly for overview (187 chapters in Pentateuch!)
- ▶ Skim certain sections, e.g., Ex. 25-31 or 35-40

GENESIS

OUTLINE:

Chapters 1-11 Prologue

- 1:1-2:3 Creation Hymn
- 2:4-4:26 Eden and the Fall
- 5:1-32 Patriarchs before the Flood
- 6:1-11:9 The Flood and its Aftermath
- 11:10-26 Patriarchs after the Flood

Chapters 12-50 Patriarchal History

Genesis, meaning "beginning", covers the times from creation to the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt. The primary purpose of the book seems to be to narrate God's dealings with humankind and, in particular, to interpret Israel's special role in His historical plan.

"The call of Abraham (12:1-3) is the great turning point. God's creation had been marred by man's persistent wickedness which not even the flood erased. Out of this fallible human material, however, God gradually separated one family line and eventually chose one man, Abraham, promising that he and his people would have a great historical destiny and would be instrumental in bringing divine blessing upon all the dispersed families of mankind."

-- Oxford Study Bible

ASSIGNMENT:

1. In five sentences, summarize the content of Gen. 1-11.
2. In five sentences, summarize the content of Gen. 12-50.
3. In five sentences, contrast the tone and feel of Gen. 1-11 with Gen. 12-50.
4. List five outstanding impressions left by a reading of Gen. 1.
5. From Gen. 3, list five consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience.

EXODUS

OUTLINE:

Chapters 1-18 Deliverance of Egypt and Journey to Sinai

- 1:1-22 Oppression
- 2:1-6:27 Moses and his Mission
- 6:28-13:16 Plagues and Passover
- 13:17-15:21 Exodus and Deliverance at Red Sea
- 15:22-18:27 Journey to Sinai

Chapters 19-24 Covenant at Sinai

- 19:1-25 Appearance of Yahweh
- 20:1-21 Granting of Covenant
- 20:22-23:33 Book of the Covenant
- 24:1-18 Ratification of Covenant

Chapters 25-31 Instructions for Tabernacle and Worship

Chapters 31-34 Breaking and Renewal of Covenant

- 32:1-35 Golden Calf

Chapters 35-40 Building of Tabernacle

In Egypt after following Joseph there, the sons of Jacob ("Israel") began to multiply (1:7) so as to pose a bit of a security threat. In order to keep them in check, Pharaoh instituted a massive building program using the Hebrews as slave labor, appointing "taskmasters" over them who "afflicted" them with "heavy burdens". (1:11)

The Book of Exodus, meaning "The Way Out", bears witness to the Lord's actions to deliver His people "out" of oppressive slavery in a foreign land and bind them to Himself in a "covenant", or agreement. Herein is contained the record of Moses, the greatest leader in the Old Testament, the first "Passover", the great deliverance at the Red Sea, and the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

ASSIGNMENT:

1. In one sentence, citing chapter(s) and verse(s), what does the Book of Exodus say is/are the reason(s) the Lord delivered Israel out of Egypt?
2. Break Moses' life up into three or four periods. Simply label them.
3. In one sentence, where does the term "Passover" come from?
4. In one or two sentences, why did the Lord give Israel the Law?
5. List the plagues.

LEVITICUS

OUTLINE:

- 1-7 Laws Dealing with Sacrifices**
- 8-10 Consecration of the Priests to Their Office**
- 11-15 Laws Distinguishing Clean and Unclean**
- 16 Ceremony for Annual Day of Atonement**
- 17-26 Laws to Govern Israeli Life as a Holy People**
- 27 An Appendix on Religious Vows**

Centering on the theme of holiness, the Book of Leviticus answers a couple of questions: First, how can sin be removed so people may become holy? Secondly, how can people maintain the holiness essential to fellowship with a holy God? Lev. 1-16 deals essentially with the first question while the remainder of the book addresses the second.

ASSIGNMENT:

1. On a half sheet of paper, record a few of your observations on the so-called "Holiness Code" in chapters 17-25.
2. In three sentences, describe what Israel did on the Day of Atonement.

The following page is a copy of "The Offerings in Leviticus" from La Sor, Hubbard and Bush, Old Testament Survey, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982) pp. 154-155.

The Offerings in Leviticus

Name of Offering	Purpose	Kind of Offering	Nature of Offering	Actions of Offerer	Actions of Priest	
<i>Ola</i> Holocaust or burnt offering 1:3-17 6:8-13	To atone for unwitting sin in general	Male without blemish from herd or flock or two birds	Completely burned	Brings offering Places hand on head Slays, skins, cuts in pieces	Accepts offering Throws blood against altar Places pieces on fire Washes entrails, legs	
<i>Hatta't</i> Sin offering 4:1-5:13 6:24-30	To atone for specific unwitting sin	Priest: bull Whole congregation: young bull Ruler: male goat One of people: female goat or sheep Poor person: two birds; very poor: flour	Fatty portions burned Remainder eaten	Brings offering (Elders do so for congregation)	Accepts offering Throws blood against altar Burns fat, etc., eats meat If own sin is included, burns portion outside of camp	
<i>Asam</i> Guilt or trespass offering 5:14-6:7 7:1-10	To atone for unwitting sin requiring restitution	Like sin offering (plus restitution)	Like sin offering	Makes restitution first, then same as sin offering	Like sin offering	
<i>Minha</i> Cereal offering 2:1-16 6:14-23	To secure or retain good will	Fin flour or cakes or wafers or firstfruits with oil, frankincense, salt, but no leaven or honey Usually accompanied by animal sacrifice	Token (<i>azkara</i>) burned	Brings offering Takes handful	Burns handful Priests and sons eat remainder	
<i>S^elamim</i> Peace offerings 3:1-17 7:11-21, 28-36	To render thanks to Yahweh...			Brings offering Places hand on head Slays, skins, cuts in pieces	Accepts, Throws blood on altar Burns fatty portions	
<i>Toda</i> Thank offering	For a blessing received		Male or female from herd or flock without blemish	Fatty portions burned Remainder eaten	Eats of remainder* (same day or next)	Eats of remainder* (same day or next)
<i>Neder</i> Vow offering	Upon completion of a vow					
<i>N^edaba</i> Freewill offering	From a glad heart				*note the communion nature of the thank offerings	

NUMBERS

OUTLINE:

The Hebrew title, "In the Wilderness" is probably more appropriate than "Numbers", which refers to the numbering of the people recorded at the beginning of the Book.

1:1-10:10 At Sinai: Preparations for Departure

10:11-12:16 Journey from Sinai to Kadesh

12:1-20:13 At Kadesh: In the Wilderness of Paran

(From Kadesh an abortive attack on Southern Canaan was made)

20:14-22:1 Journey from Kadesh to Plains of Moab

(For the purpose of approaching Canaan from the east)

22:2-32:42 On the Plains of Moab

33:1-36:13 Miscellaneous Matters

"Of the traditional forty years in the wilderness (33:38, Amos 5:25), the greatest part was spent at the oasis known as Kadesh-Barnea. According to the priestly chronology, one year elapsed from the Exodus to the erection of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:2); the legislation of Leviticus covered one month (Num. 1:1); nineteen days after the census, Israel left Sinai (10:11). Moses' farewell address was given at the end of the fortieth year (Dt. 1:3). With time allowed for the march from Kadesh to the plains of Moab, this means that Israel spent over thirty-five years at Kadesh."

-- Oxford

Study Bible

The wilderness episode in the history of Israel is a very significant one that characterizes a dilemma in the Lord's relationship to His people: His faithfulness and longsuffering and their stubborn, fearful unbelief. The Lord's gracious and holy presence (9:15-23) is manifest in surprising, serious ways. The people's faith generally falters, although a remnant believes.

ASSIGNMENT:

1. From the section 10:11-22:1, citing examples, list three negative characteristics or attitudes the people exhibited. How did Joshua and Caleb contrast with these?
2. In four or five sentences, explain how the dynamic described in 9:15-23 applies to you personally.

DEUTERONOMY

OUTLINE:

- 1:1-5 Introduction
- 1:6-4:40 First Address: Acts of Yahweh**
1:6-3:29 Historical Summary
4:1-40 Israel's Obligations
- 4:41-43 Appointing of Cities of Refuge
- 4:4-26:19 Second Address: Law of Yahweh**
Covenant: 4:44-49 Introduction
5:1-21 10 Commandments
5:22-33 Encounter with Yahweh
6:1-25 Great Commandment
7:1-26 Land of Promise and its Problems
8:1-11:25 Lessons
11:26-32 The Choice
Law: 12:1-16:17 Worship
16:18-18:22 Officials
19:1-32 Criminals
20:1-20 Holy War
21:1-25:19 Misc. Laws
26:1-15 Liturgical Confessions
26:16-19 Conclusion
- 27:1-28:68 Ceremony to be instituted at Shechem
- 29:1-30:20 Third Address: Covenant of Yahweh**
29:1-29 Purpose of Revelation
30:1-14 Nearness of Word
30:15-20 Choice
- 31:1-34:12 Moses' Closing Words, Song and Death

Deuteronomy, meaning "second law", is about renewing the covenant between the Lord and His people. It does not simply reiterate the legal code of Exodus but rather interprets it and applies it to every Israelite. It is preachy and personal.

The setting for these three addresses of Moses is the plains of Moab where a new generation of Israelites was encamped, thirty-eight years after the former unbelieving generation had refused to enter Canaan, awaiting final instructions to go over and possess the land. It is an awesome moment of reflection at the border.

ASSIGNMENT:

1. Express the essential message of Deuteronomy in five or six sentences.
2. List four great themes or emphases found in Deuteronomy.
3. In five and six sentences, express the message of Chapter 6 in your own words.

PENTATEUCH DISCUSSION

THE PENTATEUCH

HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

1. Traditional View

Division into unit based on other Scriptural references, e.g., Ez. 6:18; Neh. 13:1; 2 Chron. 25:4.

Authorship attributed to Moses on basis of references to Moses' literary activity

- ▶ Ex. 24:4, 34:27; Dt. 1:1, 4:44-45, 22:45

Supported by Talmud and New Testament

2. Questions from Modern Scholars

e.g., Ibn Ezra d.1167 re. Gen. 12:6. Must have been written in period when Canaanites were out of land, i.e., considerably later than Moses.

e.g., Carlstadt c.1520 Moses writing the account of his own death

Other repetitions, inconsistencies, and literary defects

3. Classic Documentary Hypothesis (JEDP, Wellhausen, late 19th Century)

Attempting to identify and characterize various sources that lay behind the final form.

4. Albright and The "Historical" School

Conservatives attempting to use archeology and New Eastern parallels to defend historicity of Israel's early traditions. Pinnacle = John Bright's "A History of Israel". Attempting to defend the authority of Scripture.

5. A "Canonical" Approach (Brevard Childs, "The Old Testament as Scripture",

Fortress, 1979)

Acknowledges the likelihood of sources and editorial handling of text.

But anxious to move beyond the ultimately uncertain enterprise of historical reconstruction.

Respective of and interested in function of final form as Scripture.

- Goal is not to attempt historical reconstruction, but to discern the function of the final form for the community of faith.

This is a view of inspiration that gives weight to the Holy Spirit's continued activity in the Community.

We'll run into this same issue in the Gospels.

- It is good/helpful to be sensitive to literary units, their theological thrust and their relationship to surrounding units; but the final, "edited" (?) form is constructed so as to convey a message. What is that message?

Examples of probable "editorial" shaping:

▶ Obvious differences in style

But not just two parallel accounts. Now, the history of humankind is seen as the intended offspring of the creation of the heavens and the earth. The purpose of the creation in Chapter 1 points to humankind and its history.

- Scriptural and traditional acknowledgement of Mosaic "authorship" has theological function.

GENESIS

1. Genealogies

A. Bishop James Usher. Computed history of the world by means of Old Testament genealogies. Creation 4004 B.C. Genesis period = 2368 years.

B. Function of genealogies in structure of Genesis

Toledoth Heb. "These are the generations of..."

2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 37:2

Followed either by genealogy or narrative

"Vertical" lists (5:1ff, 11:10ff, 25:19, 37:2) trace unbroken line of descendents from Adam through Jacob to provide framework for narratives of the patriarchs.

"Horizontal" lists are tangential and secondary (10:1ff, 25:12ff, 36:1)

Everyone in these lists becomes a carrier of the promise

Significance of decreasing longevity? (cp. Ps. 90:10)

2. Important Passages

GEN.1 The Beginning

-- Nature of the passage

-- Theology of the passage (message)

Lordship/Worship

Goodness

Order/Purpose

Man (Unique, Important, Purpose/Function)

"Rest"/Sabbath

GEN. 2:4-3:24 Original Design to Fall

-- Original Design Creation...Good, Good!

-- Original Design Man

Dependency (2:7), Purpose (2:15), Parameters (2:16-17), Partnership (2:18-26), Innocence (2:25), Harmony

-- Temptation and Decision

-- Results and Judgments

GEN: 4:1-11:9 Sin In The World

-- The growth of sin or variety and scope of sin?

Must do justice both to God's universal relationship with mankind and His special purpose for Israel in redemption.

GEN. 11:29-12:4 Promises To The Patriarchs

-- Elements in the Promise

Land

Posterity

Mediating Blessing to Other Peoples

This promise is repeated to Abraham several times, and repeated to Isaac and Jacob, carriers of the promise. Joseph is the first character to whom the promise is not given but instead reiterated. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are distinct, indicating the importance of the formation of Israel.

This promise is the basis of and essence of the Pentateuch.

-- Patriarchal Themes

Word of Promise

Covenant Chapters 15, 17: A covenant is a means to establish a relationship (not naturally existing) which is sanctioned by an oath sworn in a ceremony of ratification. Cp. Ex. 19:3-8

Acceptance By Faith, in spite of complicating, even contradictory circumstances

Land inhabited by Canaanites and Sarah is barren

Paul talks a lot about the nature of Abraham's faith

Obedience, including forsaking and sacrifice

Imperfect obedience underlines God's sovereign commitment

-- The larger scope of patriarchal promise

Gen. 15:13 Already we see ourselves beyond imminent fulfillment

Heb. 1:39-40 The cosmic scope of the promises

EXODUS

1:1-17 Establishes connection with Genesis

12:41 Fixes period of slavery in Egypt at 430 years, but Chapters 1-12 are telescoped, relating events within a very short period before the exodus.

Great Theological Themes:

SLAVERY: Chapter 1

A people, but enslaved with no land of their own. Oppression, frustration, pain.

DELIVERANCE: Chapters 2-15

Deliverer

Warfare/Struggle

Blood, Ch. 12

Water, Chs. 14-15

WILDERNESS: Chapters 16-18

COVENANT AND LAW AT SINAI: Chapters 19-20

19:3-8 Articulation of Covenant

20:1-17 Demands of Covenant

24:3-8 Ceremony Ratifying Covenant

NOTE: The Purpose Of The Law

The purpose of the Law was to maintain the covenant already established by grace. Relationship was not achieved by obedience to the Law; it had already been established by election and grace. Obedience to the Law was a means to maintain that relationship. The election of Israel was not conditional on obedience to the Law, but derived solely from mercy and kindness.

Present Uses Of The Law (Examples)

1. Guide for the unrighteous (1Tim.1)
2. Helps us to know what is sin and drives us to grace (Paul)
3. Picture of Christ
4. Character of God
5. Guidance for life

TABERNACLE

The role of the tabernacle was to extend the Sinai experience into a permanent institution Cp. 25:8 "let them make Me a tabernacle THAT I MAY DWELL N THEIR MIDST". The localization of God's presence with His people Israel was

to worship and atone for breaches of covenant stipulations. Here, by means of the imagery and sacrificial system, a holy God could yet be present with His people.

Levels of typology:

- ▶ Jesus -- Jn 1:14 (Gk. *eskenosen*, "tabernacled" among us)
- ▶ Heavenly tabernacle atonement work -- Heb. 8:2,5; 9:22
- ▶ The Church -- Amos 9:11-12 quoted at the Jerusalem Council Ac. 15:13-21
- ▶ Heavenly Fulfillment -- Rev. 21:3 New Jerusalem, "The tabernacle of God is with men..."

Note the effect of Chapters 32-34 (Broken and Restored Covenant) on Tabernacle material.

Positioning of Chapters 32-34 places the institution of Israel's worship immediately within the theological context of sin and forgiveness. The foundation of covenant is divine mercy and forgiveness.

LEVITICUS

Again, concerned with how to maintain covenant relationship.

The word "holy" (Heb. *qadosh*)

- Originally = "set apart"

Distinguish cp. 10:10 Certain people or things were set apart for religious purposes

Opposite = "profane", i.e., common. "Profanity" then is to take something holy and use it in a profane or common way.

- Derived or Biblical meaning adds to it the idea of morality

i.e., God is "holy" in the sense that He is separate; but specifically, He is separate from sin and sinful humanity.

The book of Leviticus is essential background for Ezekiel, Hebrews, Romans, and the crucifixion.

The sacrifices in Leviticus as "types"

A "type" is where a symbol is replaced by the reality it symbolizes

e.g., Heb. 10:1, 11-14, where the author presents the annual Day of Atonement sacrifice (ch.16) - as a type of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. Cp. Jn 1:29 Jesus as "scapegoat"

e.g., Phil. 2 Paul's life as a drink offering

NUMBERS

More Wilderness Theology
e.g, Presence in 9:15 ff

While Exodus' wilderness accounts emphasize God's initiative and faithful action, the accounts in Numbers focus more on Israel's response -- or lack thereof!

Num. 13-14 is the critical section, with the contrast between Joshua and Caleb and the rest of the spies and people.

DEUTERONOMY

Structure

Three Addresses with concluding acts

Purpose

To "explain" the law of Moses to the present (and future) generation(s). 1:5

The Issue Of The Generations:

Problem: How to actualize Sinai and covenant for present generation and for future generations?

Three Generations Mentioned In Deuteronomy.

Old "evil" generation that refused to enter the land (1:34)

Present generation that would possess the land (1:39)

Future generation that would become corrupt in the land and call for divine judgment of exile (4:25ff.)

The historical review and exhortation in Chapters 1-4 moves toward this, but the one in 5-12 develops this thrust even more emphatically. Cp 5:3!

Note How The Law Adapts To The New Situation

e.g., Tithing law adjusted 14:24ff

e.g., Enlarged land

Future Situations anticipated

13:1 "If a prophet arises..."

17:18 "When you get a king..."

By implication, this is all a model for how future generations should approach the Law.

Nature:

Preachy, Exhorting

Message:

1. REMEMBER!
 - The Lord Ch. 8:11 et al.
 - The Lord's Acts Historical Reviews in Chs. 1-4 and 5-12
 - The Lord's Word Ch. 6:1ff.
 - "Forgetting the Lord" is done by not doing His commandments Ch. 8:11ff.

NOTE: THE LAND AS GIFT AND TEMPTATION

Ch. 8:1-20 Memory overcomes temptation

2. CHOOSE! (Blessing and Curse)

Memory makes possible a choice of obedience.

The historical reviews in Chapters 1-4 and in 5-12 lead up to an exhortation to respond with obedient choice.

Ch. 30:15-18

The Shechem Ceremony 27:11ff: Where half the tribes stood on Mt. Gerizim and blessed the people and the other half on Mt. Ebal with the Levites declaring curses.

Ch. 28:1-14 "If you obey the voice of the Lord...all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you..."

28:15ff. "But if you will not obey...all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you."

3. CLING (LOVE)

Word "cling" or "cleave".

6:5 The summing up of the Law in terms of love is a check against sterile legalism.