

BAC Podcast Notes

Episode 4: “The Pentateuch”

The Structure of the Old Testament (17-5-17)

- 17 Historical Books (Genesis–Esther): history/storyline of the Old Testament
- 5 Poetical Books (Job–Song of Songs): man’s response to the story of the Old Testament
- 17 Prophetical Books (Isaiah–Malachi): God’s commentary on the story of the Old Testament

The Pentateuch: Pentateuch” means “five books” and refers to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—also called the “Law” or the “Law of Moses”

Genesis:

- “Genesis” means “beginning”
- Chapters 1–11 serve as an introduction to the rest of Scripture and introduce its main themes, including:
 - **The sovereignty of God**—God has absolute authority and is in control
 - **The sinfulness of man**—the human heart is evil (Genesis 6:5)
 - **The promise of redemption** (Genesis 3:15)
- Chapters 12–50 introduce the major plot of the Old Testament story—God’s gracious covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites
 - Chapters 12–25: The story of Abraham and God’s promises to him
 - God promises Abraham countless descendants, land, and to bring a worldwide blessing through him
 - Chapters 26: The promises made to Abraham extend to his son, Isaac
 - Chapters 27–36: God’s promises extend to Isaac’s son, Jacob, who is renamed “Israel” (meaning “stves with God”) and who has 12 sons
 - Chapters 37–50: The story of Joseph (one of Jacob’s son) and God’s providential care of Israel
- Notes on reading Genesis:
 - Genesis wasn’t written to answer every question we have about science and history—it was written primarily to reveal who God is and show us his plan of redemption
 - The characters in the narratives aren’t primarily for us to emulate
 - The Bible records real stories about real people
 - These stories show the sinfulness of man and remind us that God is the true hero of the story—he is the One we are to emulate

Exodus:

- “Exodus” means “departure”
- Describes Israel’s rescue from bondage and slavery (chapters 1–18)
- Key chapter: Exodus 12—describes the “Passover” (Israel saved from bondage by the blood of lambs—see the symbolism looking ahead to Jesus)
- Israel leaves Egypt and comes to Mt. Sinai, where they receive the law from God and enter a covenant with him (chapters 19-40)
 - If Israel is faithful to the covenant, God will dwell in their midst in the Promised Land, and they will be blessed as they show the surrounding nations what it looks like to live under God’s rule
 - If they aren’t faithful to the covenant, they will face judgment
 - Israel’s faithfulness (or lack of faithfulness) to the covenant will drive the rest of the story of the Old Testament

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Leviticus

- Gives more details about the law that Israel received on Mt. Sinai
- Doesn't advance the story—it gives more details about the story
- Answers the question: How can a Holy God dwell amongst sinful people?
- Chapters 1–17: Fellowship with God through ritual offerings and sacrifices
- Chapters 18–27: Fellowship with God through righteous living
- Key Chapter: Leviticus 16—the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
 - "Atonement" means "to cover"
 - For sinful people to have a relationship with God, our sins must be "covered"
- Applications:
 - Sin is serious
 - God is holy
 - God is gracious—God has made a way for us to atone our sins (ultimately fulfilled in Jesus)

Numbers:

- Called "Numbers" because of the census accounts in chapters 1–4 and 26–27
- Overarching theme: God honors faith and punishes unbelief
- Key event: rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (chapters 13–14)
 - Israel sends 12 spies into the Promised Land for 40 days
 - 10 come back with a negative report, and Israel loses trust in God
 - God punishes Israel by causing them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, until the entire older generation dies off
- Six main failures of the Israelites, all stemming from a lack of faith and trust:
 - Complaining (chapters 10–12)
 - Rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (chapters 13–14)
 - Rebellion against Moses and Aaron (chapters 15–19)
 - Moses' disobedience (chapter 20)
 - Complaining again (chapter 21)
 - Adultery and immorality (chapter 25)

Deuteronomy:

- "Deuteronomy" means "second law"
- Moses gives the law to the younger generation
- Doesn't advance the story of the Old Testament significantly
- Key Ideas
 - Feel the challenge facing Israel
 - A new generation
 - About to be under new leadership (Joshua)
 - About to enter a new land
 - God calls the Israelites not just to external obedience and rituals, but love
 - Deuteronomy 6:4–5: "Listen Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."
 - Read Deuteronomy carefully
 - Most quoted book in the Bible
 - Quoted 356 times total, including 190 times in the New Testament