

The Law The First Five Books

By: [J. Hampton Keathley, III](#)  

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Pentateuch which means “five books.” They are also known as the books of the law because they contain the laws and instruction given by the Lord through Moses to the people of Israel. These books were written by Moses, except for the last portion of Deuteronomy because it tells about the death of Moses. These five books lay the foundation for the coming of Christ in that here God chooses and brings into being the nation of Israel. As God’s chosen people, Israel became the custodians of the Old Testament, the recipients of the covenants of promise, and the channel of Messiah ([Rom. 3:2; 9:1-5](#)).

GENESIS (The Book of Beginnings)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

The name *Genesis* is taken from the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Theme and Purpose:

Even a casual reading of the Book of Genesis reveals the prominence of the theme of blessing and cursing. For obedience and faith, there is blessing as in the Garden of Eden, but for disobedience, there is cursing. The entire book turns on this theme and its antithetical opposite, cursing. But perhaps the main theme is the choice of a nation through Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant. Through Abraham God promised to bless the nations ([Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21](#)).

Key Words:

“Generations” or “account.”

A key word or phrase is “these are the *generations* of” or “this is the *account* of.” It is used some eleven times to introduce the reader to the next section which gives the narrative about what happened in connection with the key events and persons of the book from the creation of the heavens and the earth to all the patriarchs of Israel.

Key Idea:

Beginnings: Genesis not only means ‘beginning’, but it is the book of beginnings. The book of Genesis gives us our historical point of reference, from which all subsequent revelation proceeds. In the book of Genesis all the major themes of the Bible have their origin. It is a book of many

beginnings: in it we see the beginning of the universe, of man and woman, of human sin and the fall of the race, the beginning of God's promises of salvation, and the beginning of the nation Israel as the chosen people of God because of God's special purpose for them as the channel for Messiah and Savior. In Genesis we learn about Adam and Eve, about Satan the tempter, about Noah, the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers. But here we also have the beginning of marriage, family, work, sin, murder, capital punishment, sacrifice, races, languages, civilization, Sabbath, the first attempt at a united nations, and Babylonianism. The Bible is, through and through, a historical revelation. It is the account of God's activity in history.

Key Chapters:

Since the call of Abraham and the promises of blessing to the nations through his seed is the prominent message of Genesis, the key chapters are those relating to the Abrahamic covenant and its reiteration, 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9.

Key People:

Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, Rachel, Joseph.

Christ as Seen in Genesis:

Prophetically: Immediately after the fall, the promise of salvation is given in the seed of the woman (3:15), but then the Messianic links are made clear throughout Genesis: the line of Seth (4:25), the offspring of Shem (9:26), the family of Abraham (12:3), the seed of Isaac (26:3), the sons of Jacob (46:3), and the tribe of Judah (49:10).

Typologically: There are several key types that portray the Savior in Genesis.

(1) **Adam** is a type of Christ ([Rom. 5:14](#)). As Adam is the head of the old creation, so Christ is the head of the new spiritual creation.

(2) **Abel's** offering of a blood sacrifice points to Christ who would die for us. Abel's murder by Cain may also illustrate Christ's death.

(3) **Melchizedek** is also a type of Christ (see [Heb. 7:3](#)).

(4) **Joseph**, who was loved dearly by his father, betrayed by his brothers, and yet became the means of their deliverance typifies Christ.

Outline:

The book easily falls into two major sections: Four Events and Four People

I. Four Events ([Gen. 1-11](#)).

- A. The creation of the world and man (1-2)
- B. The corruption of man, the fall (3-5)
- C. The destruction of man, the flood (6-9)

D. The dispersion of man, the nations (10-11)

II. Four People: the election of a nation and the preparation for the redeemer (Gen. 12-50)

A. Abraham (the father of faith and of the nation Israel) (12-23)

B. Isaac (the beloved son of promise) (24-26)

C. Jacob (scheming and chastening) (27-36)

D. Joseph (suffering and glory) (37-50)

EXODUS (The Book of Redemption)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

“Exodus” is a Latin word derived from the Greek *exodos*, the name given to the book by those who translated it into the Greek Septuagint (LXX). The word means “exit,” “departure.”

Theme and Purpose:

Two themes prevail in Exodus: (1) Redemption as pictured in the Passover, and (2) deliverance from the bondage of Egypt as seen in the Exodus out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea.

Key Word:

“Redeem,” used nine times (6:6; 13:13; 15:13; 21:8; 34:20).

After nearly four hundreds years of growth in Egypt, Exodus continues the history of God’s chosen people, the nation of Israel, and describes their deliverance out of Egypt and their development as a nation, actually, a theocracy under God. It describes the birth, history, and call of Moses by God to lead the people out of their Egyptian bondage and into the promised land, the land of Canaan. Through the Passover lamb, the sparing of the firstborn, along with the miracles of the ten plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea, God showed His people that He was not only more powerful than any Egyptian Pharaoh, but was the sovereign Lord, *Yahweh*, the God of redemption and revelation.

Once the people had crossed the Red Sea and arrived in the wilderness or desert, God gave them His righteous law and declared that they were a treasured possession to Him and were to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation as a testimony to the nations (Ex. 19:4-7). This holy law, including the Ten Commandments, demonstrated God’s holiness, taught them how to love God and one another, but in the process, it also demonstrated how all fall short of the holiness of God

and need a way of access to God that provides forgiveness. This was provided for in the tabernacle, the sacrifices, and the levitical priesthood.

Key Chapters:

Chapters 12-14 record the redemption of Israel from slavery in fulfillment of God's promises; delivered from slavery by blood (the Passover lamb) and by power (the parting of the Red Sea).

Key Verses:

6:6 Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgment' (see also 20:2).

19:5-6 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

Key People:

Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh.

Christ as Seen in Exodus:

While Exodus contains no direct prophecy of Christ, there are a number of beautiful types of the Savior.

(1) In many ways, **Moses** is a type of Christ. [Deuteronomy 18:15](#) shows that Moses, as a prophet, anticipates Christ. Both are kinsman-redeemers who were endangered in infancy, renounced their power to serve others, and functioned as mediators, lawgivers, and deliverers.

(2) The **Passover** is a very specific type of Christ as the sinless Lamb of God ([John 1:29, 36](#); [1 Cor. 5:7](#)).

(3) The **Seven Feasts**, each of which portray some aspect of the Savior.

(4) The **Exodus**, which Paul connects with baptism, pictures our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection ([1 Cor. 10:1-2](#); [Rom. 6:2-3](#)).

(5) The **Manna and Water** are both portrayed as pictures of Christ ([John 6:31-35](#), 48-63; [1 Cor. 10:3-4](#)).

(6) The **Tabernacle** portrays the Savior in its material, colors, furniture, arrangement, and the offerings sacrificed there ([Heb. 9:1-10:18](#)).

(7) The **High Priest** quite clearly foreshadows the person and ministry of Christ ([Heb. 4:14-16](#); [9:11-12](#), 24-28).

Outline:

Exodus easily divides into two sections: Redemption and Revelation

I. Redemption From Egypt (1-18)

A. In Bondage (Subjection) (1-12)

B. Out of Bondage (Redemption by blood and power) (12-14)

C. Journeying to Sinai (Education) (15-18)

II. Revelation From God (19-40)

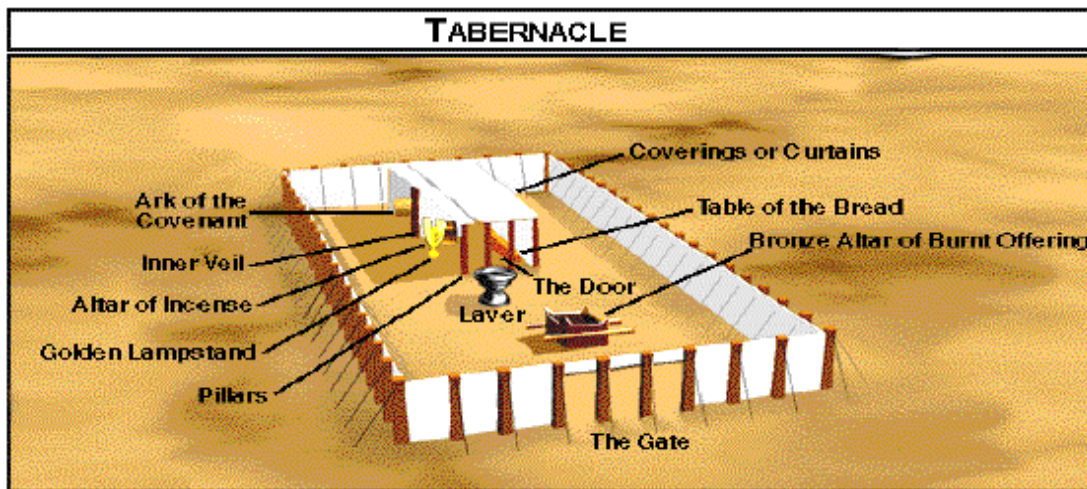
A. The Giving of the Law (19-24)

B. The Institution of the Tabernacle (25-31)

C. The Breaking of the Law (32-34)

D. The Construction of the Tabernacle (35-40)

Figure 1²



LEVITICUS (The Book of Holiness)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

Leviticus receives its name from the Septuagint and means “relating to the Levites.” The Levites were the priests who were chosen of God to minister to the nation. The book of Leviticus contains many of the laws given by God to direct them in their work as priests for the worship of God.

Theme and Purpose:

Leviticus 11:45 says, “Be holy, because I am holy.” The directives given in the book of Leviticus showed Israel was to walk before God as a holy people. Leviticus was designed to teach Israel (1) how to worship and walk with God and (2) how the nation was to fulfill its calling as a nation of priests. The great theme of Leviticus is **holiness**. A holy God can only be approached on the basis of sacrifice through the mediation of a priest.

Key Word:

“Holiness.”

Key Verses:

17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.

20:7-8 You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. 8 And you shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you (see also 11:45).

Key Chapter:

Chapter 16 deals with the Day of Atonement, which became the most important day in the Hebrew calendar because it was the only day the high priest was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies in order to make atonement for the people. “... for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (16:30).

Key People:

Moses and Aaron.

Christ as Seen in Leviticus:

Similar to Exodus, a number of types of Christ are evident in Leviticus.

(1) The **Five Offerings** all typify the person and work of Christ in His sinless life, submission to the Father that we might have fellowship with God.

(2) The **High Priest** as mentioned above is a very prominent type of Christ in Leviticus.

(3) The **Seven Feasts**, again, as mentioned, also form a type of the Savior.

Outline:

Leviticus falls into two clear divisions: Sacrifice and Sanctification

I. Sacrifice (1-17)

- A. The Laws of Sacrifice for Approach to God (1-7)
- B. The Laws of the Priests (8-10)
- C. The Laws Regarding Purity (11-15)
- D. The Laws of National Atonement (16-17)

II. Sanctification (18-27)

- A. The Laws of Sanctification for God's People (18-20)
- B. The Laws of Sanctification for God's Priests (21-22)
- C. The Laws of Sanctification in Worship (23-24)
- D. The Laws of Sanctification in the Land of Canaan (25-26)
- E. The Laws of Sanctification and Vows (27)

NUMBERS (Wilderness Wanderings)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

Numbers gets its name from the two accounts in chapters 1 and 26 of the numbering or counting of the people of Israel first at Mount Sinai and second on the plains of Moab.

Theme and Purpose:

Though Numbers gets its name from the numbering of the people, it is primarily concerned with nearly 40 years of wandering in the desert. A journey which should have only lasted eleven days became a 38-year agony of defeat simply because of the disbelief and disobedience of the people. Numbers, then, shows the consequence of failing to mix faith with the promises of God (see [Heb. 3:16-4:2](#)). Further, Numbers teaches us that while life does have its wilderness experiences, God's people do not have to stay in those conditions. Joshua will illustrate this later.

Another important theme shown throughout the book of Numbers is found in God's continual care for his people. Over and over again, regardless of their rebellion and unbelief, He miraculously supplied their needs. He provided them with water, manna, and quail. He continued to love and forgive the people even when they complained, grumbled, and rebelled against Him.

Key Word:

“Wanderings.”

Key Verses:

14:22-23 Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.

20:12. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”

Key Chapters:

Chapters 13-14 stand as the key chapters because these chapters record a critical turning point for the nation. Here, at Kadesh-Barnea (32:8), after receiving the evil report from 10 of the 12 spies whom Moses sent to spy out the land, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb Israel focused on the giants in the land, failed to believe God, and refused to enter to possess and conquer the land, a Land that flowed with milk and honey.

Key People:

Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb, Balak

Christ as Seen in Numbers:

(1) Perhaps no place is there a clearer portrait of Christ and His crucifixion than in the **serpent lifted up** on the standard (cf. [Num. 21:4-9](#) with [John 3:14](#)).

(2) The **rock that quenched the thirst** of the people is a type of Christ ([1 Cor. 10:4](#)).

(3) The daily **manna** pictures Christ as the bread come down from heaven ([John 6:31-33](#)).

(4) The **pillar of cloud** and **fire** portray the guidance of Christ and the cities of refuge certainly portray Christ as our refuge from judgment.

(5) Finally, the **red heifer** is also a type of Christ (ch. 19).

Outline:

Numbers divides into three sections: Preparation at Sinai, Failure of the Old Generation, Preparation of the New Generation.

I. Preparation at Sinai (Old Generation) (1-10)

A. The Position and Numbering of the People (1-4)

B. The Precepts of God and Sanctification of the People (5:1-9:14)

- C. The Pilgrimage Toward the Promised Land (9:15-10:36)
- II. Failure of the Old Generation (11-25)
 - A. Discontent Along the Way (11-12)
 - B. Disbelief at Kadesh-Barnea (13-14)
 - C. Discipline from the Lord (15-25)
- III. Preparation of the New Generation (26-36)
 - A. Reorganization of Israel (26-27)
 - B. Regulation of Offerings and Vows (28-30)
 - C. Regionalization of the Land (31-36)

The figures below illustrate the position of the tribes in camp and on the march:

Figure 2³

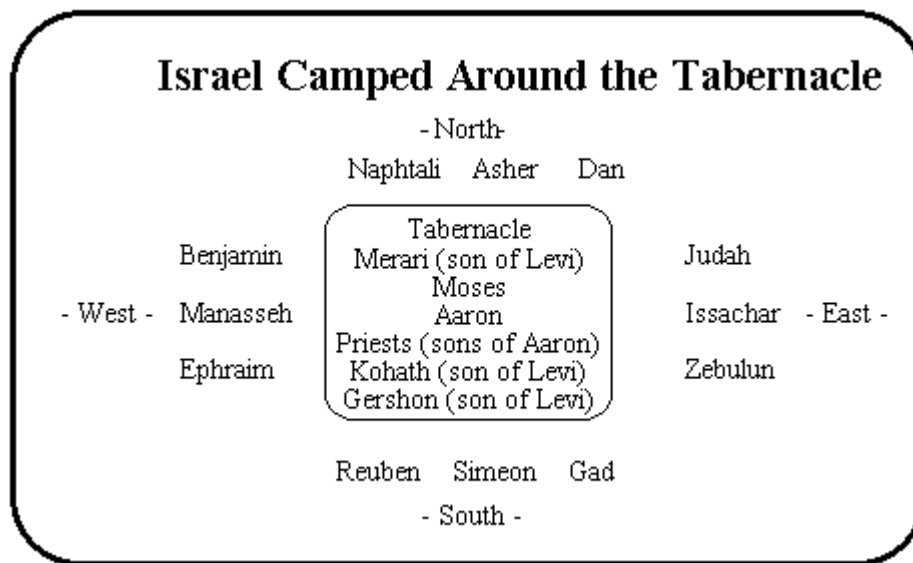
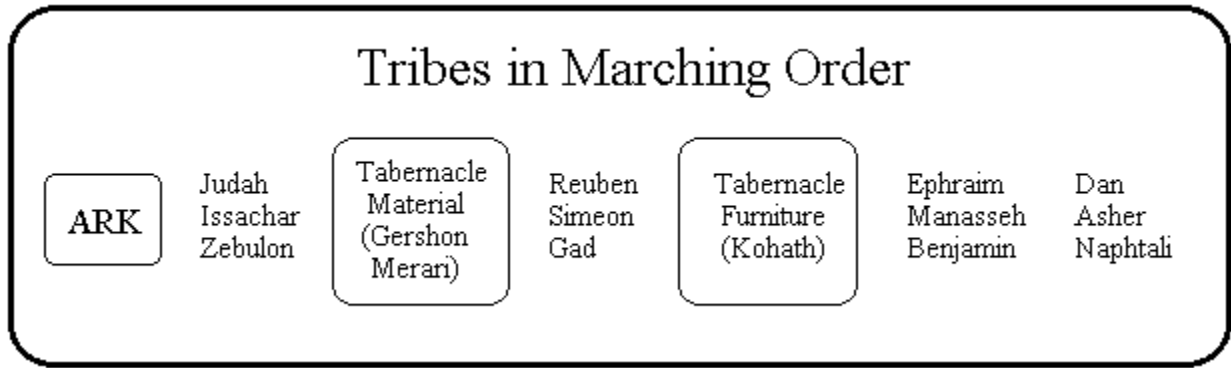


Figure 3



DEUTERONOMY (Reiteration and Reviewing)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

The English title, which comes from the Septuagint, means “second law-giving” and comes from the mistranslation of 17:18, which actually says “a copy of this law.” Deuteronomy is a not a second law, but rather a review, expansion, and reiteration of the original law given at Sinai.

Theme and Purpose:

Watch yourself lest you forget. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were on the eve of entering the promised land. Before they did, it was necessary (lest they forget what God had done and who they were) that they be reminded about all that God had done for them and about God’s holy law which was so vital to their ability to remain in the land and function as God’s holy nation and as a kingdom of priests to the nations ([Deut. 4:1-8](#)). As a part of this theme or purpose, the book also emphasizes the vital necessity of teaching children to love and obey God. Deuteronomy ends with the renewal of God’s covenant with Israel (chapter 29), Joshua’s appointment as the new leader (chapter 31), and Moses’ death (chapter 34).

Key Word:

“Covenant” (occurring some 27 times)

Key Verses:

4:9, 23 Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. **23** So watch yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything *against* which the Lord your God has commanded you.

4:31 For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

10:12-14 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ *and* to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? ¹⁴ Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.

30:19-20 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 27 is key because in it there is a formal ratification of Israel's covenant as Moses and the levitical priests call upon all Israel to take heed and listen, for in verses 9-10 it is declared, "This day you have become a people for the Lord your God. You shall therefore obey the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

Chapters 28-30 are also key because of the promises regarding Israel's near and distant future as it pertains to blessing for obedience or cursing for disobedience.

Key People:

Moses and Joshua.

Christ as Seen in Deuteronomy:

The statement about Moses in 18:15 is one of the clearest portraits of Christ. It reads, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." Further, Moses, as a type of Christ, is the only figure other than Christ to fill all three of the offices of prophet (34:10-12), priest ([Ex. 32:31-35](#)), and king (although Moses was not king, he functioned as ruler of Israel; 33:4-5).⁴

Outline:

Deuteronomy divides into three sections:

- I. Preamble (1:1-5)
- II. Review of Israel's Wanderings—Historical (1:6-4:43)
- III. Rehearsal of Israel's Law—Legal (4:44-26:19)
- IV. Ratification of Israel's Covenant—Motivational (27:1-30:20)
- V. Conclusion (31:1-34:12)

Summary: Key Words and Themes to Remember

Genesis	Beginnings	Election of the nation
Exodus	Redemption	Redemption of the nation
Leviticus	Holiness	Sanctification of the nation
Numbers	Wandering	Direction of the nation
Deuteronomy	Review	Instruction of the Nation

2 Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1995, electronic edition.

3 Ryrie Study Bible.

4 Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Old Testament*, Vol. I, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, p. 39.