

Knowing the Old Testament I¹

Part 1

General Introduction

I. Why Study the Old Testament

- a. The OT was Jesus' Scripture
- b. The OT makes up ¾ of our Bible (75.55%)
- c. All of Scripture is God's Word (2 Tim 3:16)
- d. The OT provides important truths about God
- e. The OT provides the framework for understanding the NT

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4)

“Now these things happened to them [the wilderness generation] as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11)

“We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus” (Acts 13:32–33)

f. The OT helps us understand Christ

“Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. ... Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:27; 44-47)

“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:46–47)

II. The Protestant Order of the Canonical Books

Protestant tradition has generally divided the books of our canon in this fashion.

Protestant Canon

Law (Pentateuch)	Poetry
1. Genesis	18. Job
2. Exodus	19. Psalms
3. Leviticus	20. Proverbs
4. Numbers	21. Ecclesiastes

¹These notes are an edited version of notes developed by Dr. Robert McCabe and Dr. Mark Snoeberger

5. Deuteronomy	22. Song of Solomon	
History	Prophecy	
6. Joshua	<i>Major Prophets</i>	<i>Minor Prophets</i>
7. Judges	23. Isaiah	28. Hosea
8. Ruth	24. Jeremiah	29. Joel
9. 1 Samuel	25. Lamentations	30. Amos
10. 2 Samuel	26. Ezekiel	31. Obadiah
11. 1 Kings	27. Daniel	32. Jonah
12. 2 Kings		33. Micah
13. 1 Chronicles		34. Nahum
14. 2 Chronicles		35. Habakkuk
15. Ezra		36. Zephaniah
16. Nehemiah		37. Haggai
17. Esther		38. Zechariah
		39. Malachi

The Protestant order for the canonical books has a fourfold division of our 39 books into Law, History, Poetry and Prophecy. The Protestant arrangement of the books follows the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament referred to as the Septuagint. The various translators of the Septuagint added some additional books called the Apocrypha. We do not have these books in our canon. The reason for this is that the books of the Apocrypha were never considered inspired by the Jews and were therefore never added to the Jewish collection of inspired writings.

III. An Overview of Israel's History

Pentateuch	Joshua, Judges, Ruth	Samuel, Kings, Chronicles	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
Israel's Period of Growth	The Conquest and Era of Judges	The United and Divided Kingdom	Babylonian Captivity and Resettlement as a Vassal State
2165 B.C.	1405 B.C.	1050 B.C.	586 B.C.
760 years	355 years	464 years	186 years
			400 B.C.

The Pentateuch

The first five books of the Bible are known variously as the *Torah* (Heb. for “law”) and the *Pentateuch* (Grk. for “five books”). These five books are fundamental to the Christian faith, answering many fundamental questions about the nature, character, and expectations of God; the origin, purpose, and basic responsibilities of man; the origin and extent of sin; the ideas of national and personal election; and at least preliminary information on the means by which God and mankind may be reconciled.

The fact of progressive revelation means that not *all* of this information has been given, and the idea of dispensations means that while there are some *basic* responsibilities of man that do not change, there are also changes in human responsibility as God’s plan unfolds.

The Pentateuch is best regarded as a unitary document. That is, while the Torah appears as five books (originally five rolls) and has identifiable section breaks, there is a continuity of theme, a univocacy of message, and a distinctiveness of authorship that are undeniable. It is for this reason that the present seminar is an introduction not only to *what the Pentateuch says*, but also *how* and *why* the Pentateuch says what it says, and, most significantly, *how it all fits together into the coherent whole of Scripture*.

Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch

Until the rise of 17th century rationalism, Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was universally assumed. It is only as the pre-modern world expired (together with its tolerance of the supernatural) that doubt has been cast on Mosaic authorship. The following presents a case for Mosaic authorship.

I. Internal Evidence

a. Specific statement that Moses is the author of certain sections

Exodus 17:14—Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered...

Exodus 24:4–8—Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.... Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people.

Exodus 34:27—The LORD said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”... And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant

Numbers 33:1–2—At the LORD’s command Moses recorded the stages in their journey.

Deuteronomy 31:9, 24—Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests.... Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end.

- b. 2. This is reinforced by the expression “God spoke to Moses” (Lev 1:1, 16:1; Num 1:1; 7:89; 9:1; 11:25).

II. External Evidence

- a. Mosaic Authorship is affirmed by other OT books.

Joshua 1:7—Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you.

1 Kings 2:3—Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses.

2 Kings 14:6—He did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the LORD commanded: “Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins” (from Deut 24:16).

2 Kings 21:8—I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them.

2 Chronicles 25:4—what is written in the Law...the Book of Moses (cf. 35:12)

Ezra 6:18—...according to what is written in the Book of Moses.

Nehemiah 13:1—On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people.

Daniel 9:11–13—The the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.... Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.

Malachi 4:4—Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

- b. This is affirmed in the NT.

Matthew 19:8—“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard.”

John 5:46–47—Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

John 7:22–23—Because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath.... A child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses

may not be broken.

Acts 3:22—Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people” (from Deut 18:15, 18–19).

Romans 10:5—Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.” (from Lev 18:5).

c. This is affirmed by the history of Jews and Christians alike.

This is asserted in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Palestinian Talmud, the Babylonian Talmud, the Apocrypha (Ecclus 45:5; 2 Macc 7:30) and the writings of Josephus and Philo.

d. No one would have been better qualified to write the book.

“Since ‘Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians’ (Acts 7:22), his literary skills would have enabled him to collect Israel’s traditions and records and to compose the work. His communion with God at Horeb and throughout his life would have given him direction for this task” (Ross, “Genesis,” p. 15).

Date of the Pentateuch

I. The Direct Testimony of Scripture

a. 1 Kings 6:1

“In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.”

966 B.C. 4th yr. of Solomon’s rule when he began to build the temple
+480 length of time since Israel left Egypt

1446 B.C. +/- 1 yr. on either side, the yr. when Israel left Egypt.

-40 -40 yrs., length of time Israel wandered in the wilderness.

1406 B.C. *terminus ad quem* for the writing of the Pentateuch

b. Judges 11:26

“For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon.”

In this passage Jephthah reminds the Ammonite invaders that since the Israelites had possessed the contested land of Heshbon for such a long period of time (300 years), they (the Ammonites) had no right to challenge their (the Israelites’) legal rights.

- 1050 B.C.** Saul's reign began about this time
+50 Jephthah's day was earlier than Saul's, allow c. 50 yrs.
1100 B.C. conservative estimate of the difference in time
+300 approximate length of time that Israel held Heshbon
1400 B.C. approximate time when Israel first controlled Heshbon

Genesis

I. Introduction

a. Title

MT: *b^erēšît*, “in the beginning”

LXX: *genesis*, “beginning”

V: *Liber Genesis*, “book of beginnings”

b. The Nature of Genesis

The true nature of the Genesis account is that of theological history. It *is* history, but it is not history for the sake of history (i.e., a chronicle of events). It is God’s theological interpretation/explanation of selected records from the fathers of the Israelites. What has been preserved in the Torah, both in its tradition and interpretation, has been inspired by God and is therefore accurate.

c. The Literary Composition of Genesis

i. Purpose

Genesis informs Israel about her origin, purpose, and destiny. It informs Israel that God brought Abraham and his seed into existence in order to bring to pass God’s kingdom program for the world as had been declared in Genesis 1:26–28. Genesis thus provides a theological and historical foundation explaining how God’s covenant nation Israel emerged as a vehicle for establishing God’s kingdom on earth.

ii. Theme

1. Blessing

The Hebrew term *barak* means to “enrich.” All of God’s creation was good and was endowed by him with certain benefits. In this sense all of creation is “blessed.” But Genesis seems to be punctuated at key intervals with instances of special or supernatural enrichment that results in fertility, wealth, protection, and other forms of special favor not afforded to all.

2. Cursing

The Hebrew word *'arar* means to “implore a ban.” It is the antithesis of blessing, and seems to denote supernatural disfavor for opposition to the kingdom program of God.

iii. Structure

The Hebrew term *tôlêdôt* (“generations” [KJV], “account,” “history”), serves as a key rhetorical marker in the Genesis account, and is used to introduce every section in Genesis except the first one, Genesis 1:1–2:3.

Tôlê dôl is a feminine noun from the Hebrew verb *yalad* which means to “give birth to.” This is from the causative form of the verb. It denotes what is brought forth. Traditionally, this term has been seen as a heading for the material that follows, though some have viewed these as colophons referencing the *preceding* material. The former idea does the most justice to all the data.

Based on this data, we can see Moses’ structural outline for this as the following chart reflects:

Primeval History	1:1–2:3	The Creation
	2:4–4:26	The Succession from the Creation of the Heavens and Earth
	5:1–6:8	The Succession from Adam
	6:9–9:29	The Succession from Noah
	10:1–11:9	The Succession from the Sons of Noah
	11:10–26	The Succession from Shem
Patriarchal History	11:27–25:11	The Succession from Terah
	25:12–18	The Succession from Ishmael
	25:19–35:29	The Succession from Isaac
	36:1–8	The Succession from Esau
	36:9–37:1	The Succession from Esau, the Father of the Edomites
	37:2–50:26	The Succession from Jacob

Exodus

I. Introduction

A. Title

MT: *šēmôt w'ēlleh*, “Now these are the names” (the first two words of the Heb. text)

LXX: *exodus*, “Departure”

V: *Liber Exodus*, “Book of departure”

B. The Literary Composition of Exodus

a. Purpose

To show how God was partially fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant by making Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation via the Mosaic Covenant (Gen 12:2; 17:6; Exod 19:6).

b. Motifs

- i. Exodus
- ii. Divine Sovereignty
- iii. Wilderness wandering
- iv. Mosaic Covenant
- v. God's place of worship

C. The Date of the Exodus

As we have examined earlier, 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 indicate the Pentateuch was completed by 1405/6 B.C. This supports the Exodus taking place at 1445/6 B.C.

D. Genre

The first 19 chapters of Exodus are to be regarded as a continuation of the Genesis narrative, and should be viewed as theological history. The second half of the book (chaps 20–40) also contains some historical detail, but is in the main legal/covenantal in nature, providing the “constitution” for the Jewish community.

II. Analysis

A. Israel in Egypt, 1:1–12:30

a. Pharaoh Persecutes Israel, 1:1–22

This chapter covers approximately 350 years.

b. God Prepares Moses, 2:1–4:31

c. God Confronts Pharaoh, 5:1–12:30

- B. Egypt to Sinai, 12:31–18:27
 - a. Exodus and Passover, 12:31–13:16
 - b. Miracle at the Red Sea, 13:17–15:21
 - c. From the Red Sea to Sinai, 15:22–18:27
- C. Israel at Sinai, 19:1–40:38
 - a. Covenant and Law, 19:1–31:18
 - i. Preparation for covenant, 19:1–25
 - ii. The Ten Commandments, 20:1–17
 - iii. The book of the covenant, 20:22–23:33
 - iv. The covenant ratified, 24:1–18
 - v. Covenant worship, 25:1–31:18
 - b. Rebellion and Renewal, 32:1–34:35
 - i. Rebellion and atonement, 32:1–33:23
 - ii. Covenant renewal, 34:1–35
 - c. Execution of God’s Commands, 35:1–39:43
 - i. Preparations for carrying out the work, 35:1–36:7
 - ii. Building the tabernacle, 36:8–38
 - iii. The furnishings for the tabernacle, 37:1–38:20
 - iv. Summary of the offerings, 38:21–31
 - v. The priestly garments, 39:1–31
 - vi. Presentation of the work to Moses, vv. 39:32–43
 - d. Consecration of the Tent, 40:1–38

Note: The outline for this section of material is a concatenation from Cole (p. 52), Huey, (*Exodus* [pp. 10–15]), Youngblood (pp. 17–18) and segments from sections of Hamilton.

Leviticus

I. Introduction

A. Title

MT: *wayyiqrā'*, “And he called” (the first word of Heb. text—points to unity of Pentateuch)

LXX: *levitikon* (λεβιτικον), “relating to the Levites”

V: *Liber Leviticus*, “Book of [issues] relating to the Levites”

B. The Purpose

How to maintain a proper covenant relationship with the God of the covenant, Yahweh.

C. The Theme: Holiness unto the Lord

a. The Terms

i. Holy v. Common

1. *Holiness* (*qādaš*) at its root implies “consecration.” It is a concept that is both declarative and active. Some 20% of all uses of the *qādaš* word group used in Scripture appear in Leviticus.
2. *Commonness* (*hōl*), the opposite of holiness, does not necessarily carry negative connotations. It simply means unconsecrated or ordinary, and prob. derives from an Akkadian term that means “allowable.” This term is rare in Scripture, and appears in Leviticus only in 10:10.

ii. Clean v. Unclean

1. *Clean* (*tāhōr*) is a broad term that has at its root “purity.” However, it refers more broadly to things that are “normal.” It refers to something or someone that is functioning normally as God intended. Some 35% of all uses of *tāhōr* used in Scripture appear in Leviticus.
2. *Unclean* (*tāmē'*) is likewise a broad term that has as its root “impurity.” But like cleanness, it refers more broadly to things that are “abnormal.” It can have reference to profane things, but can also have simple reference to things functioning improperly. For instance, a diseased person or one with a bodily discharge is not evil, but is abnormal and thus unfit for certain religious functions. Some 42% of all uses of *tāmē'* used in Scripture appear in Leviticus.

b. The Significance

Holiness is a theme that unites both Testaments (Lev 11:44–45 cf. 1 Pet 1:15–16). It suggests that believers are not only to be “clean” but substantively *set apart* from the world. The covenant setting in Leviticus differs from the Christian setting, of course, but the suggestion seems to be that the “worldliness” we seek to avoid involves more than the world’s *sins*. It is a general call to antithetical living.

II. Analysis

- A. The Laws of Sacrifice, 1:1–7:38
 - a. Individual Regulations, 1:1–6:7
 - i. Burnt Offering, 1:1–17
 - ii. Grain Offering, 2:1–16
 - iii. Peace/Fellowship Offering, 3:1–17
 - iv. Sin/Purification Offering, 4:1–5:13
 - v. Trespass (or Reparation) Offering, 5:14–6:7
 - b. Priestly Regulations, 6:8–7:38
- B. Institution of the Priesthood, 8:1–10:20
 - a. Consecration of Aaron and His Sons, 8:1–36
 - b. Installation of the Priests, 9:1–24
 - c. Necessity of Careful Observance of God’s Word, 10:1–20
- C. Laws of Purification, 11:1–15:33
 - a. Unclean Animals, 11:1–47
 - b. Childbirth and Uncleanness, 12:1–8
 - c. Leprosy and Uncleanness, 13:1–14:47
 - d. Discharges and Uncleanness, 15:1–33
- D. The Day of Atonement, 16:1–34
- E. Blood and the Sacrificial System, 17:1–16
- F. Covenantal Obligations and Results, 18:1–27:34
 - a. Laws of Morality, 18:1–20:27
 - b. Laws Pertaining to Priesthood Functions, 21:1–22:33
 - c. The Sacred Days, 23:1–44
 - d. The Lampstand and the Memorial Bread, 24:1–9
 - e. The Example of One Who Blasphemed, 24:10–23
 - f. The Laws Pertaining to the Land and Social Circumstances within the Land, 25:1–55
 - g. Covenantal Blessings and Curses, 26:1–46
 - h. The Laws on Vows and Tithes, 27:1–34

Note: The outline for this section of material is a concatenation from Averbeck, “Leviticus,” pp. 24–27; Goldberg, pp. 12–14; and Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 4.

Numbers

I. Introduction

A. Title

MT: *b' midbar*, “In the wilderness of”

LXX: *Arithmoi*, “Numbers”

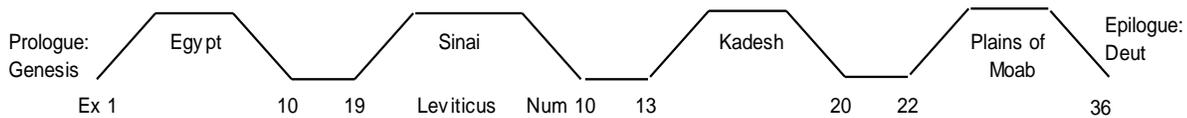
V: *Liber Numeri*, “Book of Numbers”

B. Purpose

Israel’s lack of holiness (unbelief) forces God to postpone their occupation of the land. Numbers is an account of this wilderness period and it reflects God’s holy demands upon his covenant people and their failure to be loyal to the covenant.

C. Structure

a. The Chronological Structure of the Pentateuch



(This chart has been taken from Wenham, *Numbers*, p. 14.)

b. The Chronological Structure of Numbers

The book of numbers has a threefold structure, with three important eras of revelation: Sinai (1:1–10:10), Kadesh (13:1–19:22), and the Plains of Moab (22:2–36:13).

Two transitions describe trips from Sinai to Kadesh (10:1–12:16) and from Kadesh to the plains of Moab (20:1–22:1).

Analysis

- A. The People of God Prepare to Enter the Promised Land, 1:1–10:10
 - a. Censuses, 1:1–4:49
 - b. Cleansing the Camp, 5:1–6:27
 - c. Tabernacle Service, 7:1–8:26
 - d. Passover Instructions, 9:1–14
 - e. The Accompaniment of the Lord, 9:15–10:10
- B. From Sinai to Kadesh, 10:11–12:16
 - a. The Departure from Sinai, 10:11–36
 - b. Complaints of the People, 11:1–12:16
- C. Forty Years Near Kadesh, 13:1–19:22
 - a. Spying out the Promised Land, 13:1–14:45
 - b. The Rehearsal of the Covenant Statutes, 15:1–41
 - c. Prerogatives of the Priests, 16:1–18:32
 - d. The Laws of Purification, 19:1–22
- D. From Kadesh to the Plains of Moab, 20:1–22:1
 - a. The Journey in the Desert of Zin, 20:1–29
 - b. The Journey to Moab, 21:1–22:1
- E. Israel in the Plains of Moab, 22:2–36:13
 - a. The Moabites and Balaam, 22:2–25:18
 - b. The Final Preparations for Entering Canaan, 26:1–36:13

Note: The outline for this section of material is a concatenation from Huey, *Numbers*, pp. 11-16; Merrill, pp. 215-58; and Wenham, *Numbers*, p. 54.

Deuteronomy

I. Introduction

A. Title

MT: *hadd^ebārîm 'ēlleh*, “These are the words” (the first two words of Heb. text)

LXX: *Deuteronomion*, “second law”

V: *Liber Deuteronomium*, “Book of the second law”

B. The Literary Composition of Deuteronomy

a. Purpose

The purpose of Deuteronomy is covenant renewal in commitment to Yahweh. This commitment to Yahweh and to his covenant was necessary before Israel entered the land (there are over 200 references to the land in the book).

b. Structure

In examining the structural arrangement of this book, there are two basic approaches. One approach has the book being divided around a speech format and the second has the book following the pattern of an ancient Near Eastern covenant document. A third alternative is to see a combination of the first two: a series of addresses by Moses using the covenant metaphor for the purpose of covenant renewal

Moses has purposely used with some obvious theological modifications a legal metaphor that was common in his day such as the Hittite treaty. This would explain the similarities shared between the two sources. The sermonic format is best taken as part of Moses’ rhetorical technique to reflect his various sermons. Consequently, we might say that Moses had a series of sermons dealing with covenant renewal. The outline that I follow in the remainder of this material reflects my understanding of this material (see Deere, pp. 260–61).

II. Analysis

A. Introduction: The Historical Setting of Moses’ Speeches, 1:1–5

B. Moses’ First Address: Historical Prologue, 1:6–4:43

a. The Experience of God in History, 1:6–3:29

b. An Exhortation to Obey the Law, 4:1–43

C. Moses’ Second Address: The Law, 4:44–26:19

a. Recapitulation of the Law at Horeb, 4:44–5:33

b. The General Commands and Warnings, 6:1–11:32

c. The Specific Legislation, 12:1–26:15

i. Laws regulating the worship of a holy people, 12:1–16:17

ii. The officials of the theocracy, 16:18–18:22

- iii. The cities of refuge and legal procedure, 19:1–21
 - iv. Regulations for war, 20:1–20
 - v. Miscellaneous laws, 21:1–25:19
 - d. Concluding Exhortation, 26:16–19
- D. Moses' Third Address: Blessings and Curses, 27:1–29:1
 - a. The Renewal of the Covenant Commanded, 27:1–26
 - b. The Blessings and Curses Pronounced in Moab, 28:1–29:1
- E. Moses' Fourth Address: A Concluding Charge, 29:2–30:20
 - a. An Appeal for Covenant Faithfulness, 29:2–29
 - b. The Call to Decision: Life and Blessing or Death and Cursing, 30:1–20
- F. The Continuity of the Covenant from Moses to Joshua, 31:1–34:12
 - a. Deposition of the Law and the Appointment of Joshua, 31:1–29
 - b. The Song of Moses, 31:30–32:43
 - c. The Impending Death of Moses, 32:44–52
 - d. The Blessing of Moses, 33:1–29
 - e. The Death of Moses, 34:1–12

Note: This outline is based upon Craigie (pp. 67–69), Deere (pp. 259–324), Ridderbos, and Thompson.