

THE PENTATEUCH:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

As we dive into this amazing Book, let's see what a few of history's leading figures have had to say about it.

Abraham Lincoln: "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book."

George Washington: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

Napoleon: "The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it."

Daniel Webster: "If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

Patrick Henry: "The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed."

Horace Greeley: "It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

Charles Dickens: "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world."

John Quincy Adams: "So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year."

Sir Isaac Newton: “There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.”

The Bible has two main sections. The Old Testament is the account of the nation of Israel. The New Testament is the account of the God/Man, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that God founded, nurtured and protected the Jewish nation to bring that Man into the world.

God Himself *became* a Man to give us living proof of what God is like. According to the Bible, Jesus was God in human form.

His coming to earth is the central event in all of history. The most important single statement in the Bible is that CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD! The O.T. sets the stage for it; the N.T. describes it.

The Bible was written over at least 1,500 years by at least 35 human authors, a few of whom are still unknown to this day. Nor do we know exactly how God directed them to write, but we know that He did. The Bible is God’s Word in the sense that NO OTHER BOOK in the world is God’s Word!

The first five books of the Bible, written by Moses, are referred to as the Pentateuch (from the Greek, meaning “five-roll.”) -- an early, abbreviated form of “With five you get egg roll.”

- **Genesis** is a book of beginnings. It’s the story of the Creation of the universe -- and the founding of the Hebrew nation. This is probably the world’s most controversial book, and chapter one is its most controversial chapter. There God *speaks* order into chaos. It’s a picture of God intervening to save the Jews from their bondage and oppression to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even today God reaches into the chaos of our world and our lives, speaking to us through His Living Word, His Son Jesus Christ, saving us from our bondage to sin. Jesus said, “Whoever sins is a slave to sin.”

In the Garden of Eden God spoke (Gen. 3:15) to satan (who was, at the time, inhabiting the body of the tempter-serpent) and predicted that Eve’s Seed (Jesus) would someday smash satan’s head, even though satan would bruise Jesus’ heel. In other words, although He’d suffer death on the cross, it’d only be a temporary “bruise” since He’d rise from the dead, guaranteeing victory over death and sin to those who’d accept His extreme payment for the sins of all humanity.

Down through the centuries satan tried to eradicate the Jews since their bloodline would produce the Messiah who one day will send him to “the lake of fire” to be in eternal torment.

- **Exodus** tells of God's breaking His self-imposed, 430-year silence by sending ten horrific plagues to jettison His people from slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses. While wandering through the Arabian wilderness for forty years, the Israelites receive God's Law, the Ten Commandments (or, as they're regarded today, The Ten Suggestions).

- **Leviticus** lists various laws and ordinances the Jews were to keep.

- **Numbers** tells of the Jews' desert wanderings from Sinai to the Promised Land of Canaan.

- **Deuteronomy** (which, incidentally, is a killer Scrabble word!) contains the final statements of that great leader, Moses, about God's laws and regulations.

These five books of the Hebrew Bible were handed down as the Torah (referred to as “The Law”) and became the guidebook for Hebrew religion and life.

Author

Numerous references to Moses as writer/lawgiver lead to the conclusion that he's the author of these five books. No biblical writer or early church father disputes this. There have been numerous challenges over the centuries, but the traditional view holds firm that Moses gets the byline. Historians place Moses' 120-year life from 1571-1451 B.C. when Egypt, the land of his birth, ruled the East. When Moses was about 15 years old, Cecrops of Egypt founded Athens. By this time the Pyramids were already 1,000 years old!

Moses was educated in Pharaoh's palace and probably knew more about history than anyone now knows. To write Genesis, he undoubtedly used records handed down from previous generations. To write the other four books, he drew upon his life content, either writing them personally or directing the writing.

The Pentateuch could have been written in archaic Hebrew on leather rolls or papyrus. Or in the language of Palestine and Syria on clay tablets, then translated into Hebrew.

If the original manuscripts were on leather or papyrus, they wore out with use and were replaced by new copies. If on clay tablets, they may have been destroyed by some of Israel's wicked kings.

For centuries there was little tangible evidence to corroborate the original sources of these manuscripts. But historical and archaeological research and discoveries now made almost daily in Palestine, Mesopotamia and throughout the Near East affirm the validity of the Pentateuch.

The faith and the writings of Moses have become the common denominator among the various factions of Hebrew religion.

Deuteronomy

It means "Second Law" or "Repetition of the Law."

In Moses' earlier books the laws had been presented. Now, on the eve of crossing the Jordan River and entering Canaan, these laws are rehearsed and expounded in anticipation of settling down to a new life in the Promised Land.

The Ten Commandments are given in chapter 5 (also in Exodus 20).

Today we focus on chapters 29 and 30. Here we find Moses' last words as he envisions the fearful consequences of Israel's imminent slide away from God. In essence, his warning to his people is simply: serve God and live -- or serve idols and die.

Let's read Deuteronomy 29:1-29.

Now let's read Deuteronomy 30:1-20

Let's contrast this with what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome in the New Testament:

Please turn to Romans 4:1-25.

Now let's read Romans 5:1-21.

Let's conclude our Romans rabbit trail by reading 6:1-23

Moses and Paul are writing about the same thing. Life comes down to making the most important choice you'll ever make: the choice to choose Life over death.

His Deal

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www.HisDeal.org

george@HisDeal.org

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