

Old Testament # 1:

Pentateuch

This lesson introduces the story of Scripture by focusing on the God who reveals Himself through creation, covenant, and redemption.

The word Pentateuch means "five scrolls" and refers to the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

1. These books are traditionally attributed to Moses, who compiled them as both narrative and instruction for the people of Israel before they entered the Promised Land.
2. These books are theological history—not just records of events, but revelations of who God is and how He relates to His creation and His people.
 - We will see not just laws and lineage, but a God who desires relationship and goes to great lengths to establish it.

GENESIS - FOUNDATIONS

“Before there was a beginning there was God.”

OVERVIEW

1. Genesis shows us that everything begins with God—creation, humanity, and the plan of salvation.
 - While sin is introduced in Genesis, it’s important to note that sin does not begin with God. Rather, it enters the human story through humanity’s choice to rebel against God.
 - Genesis helps us understand both the goodness of God's original design and the gravity of human disobedience.”
2. Genesis is divided into: Primeval History (Gen. 1–11): Universal scope—Creation, Fall, Flood, Tower of Babel. Patriarchal Narratives (Gen. 12–50): Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. A family chosen to bless all nations.

THEMES

1. Creation: God is the sovereign Creator of all (Gen. 1:1). Everything begins with Him.
2. Image of God: Humanity is created in God's image, designed for a relationship with Him and stewardship over creation.

3. The Fall: Sin fractures that relationship, bringing curse and separation.
4. Covenant: God chooses Abraham and makes a promise to bless all nations through him. "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:3) Abraham is considered the father of the **faith** for both Jews and Christians—a model of trust in God's promises. God chose Abraham not because of status or merit, but to begin a relationship of blessing that would extend to the whole world through faith. Abraham's response—believing God even when the promise seemed impossible—sets the foundation for understanding righteousness by faith (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4).

EXODUS - REDEMPTION AND PRESENCE

"Exodus is about a God who rescues—and then stays."

OVERVIEW

1. Exodus continues the story from Genesis. It begins with the death of Joseph and ends with the Israelites at Mount Sinai.
 - Three months after leaving Egypt, Israel arrived at Mount Sinai. They spent over a year in this location. The rest of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and the first part of Numbers take place at this location.
2. Exodus is divided into three sections. God hears, remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and acts by raising up Moses to deliver them.
 - Chs. 1–18: Deliverance from Egypt
 - Chs. 19–24: Covenant at Sinai
 - Chs. 25–40: Instructions and construction of the Tabernacle

THEMES

1. Deliverance: God breaks Pharaoh's power and sets His people free (Passover).

The Exodus reveals that salvation is not earned—it is God's act of deliverance for those in bondage. Through the Passover, God protected His people by the blood of a lamb, pointing forward to Christ, our ultimate Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). The Exodus becomes the foundational picture of salvation: God rescues, redeems, and leads His people into freedom for relationship with Him.

2. Covenant Renewal: At Sinai, God gives the Law to guide His people into holy living.

3. Presence: God commands a Tabernacle to dwell among His people—He’s not a distant deity. “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.” (Exodus 6:7)

LEVITICUS - HOLINESS AND WORSHIP

“Leviticus teaches us how to live near a holy God.”

OVERVIEW

1. Leviticus is God’s instruction manual for life in His presence.
2. Only a small part of Leviticus is narrative. The rest of the book is legal literature in two forms.
 - Chapters 1-7 are legal literature that focus on sacrificial laws – forming the foundation of Israel’s worship system.
 - The three narrative sections are: The consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests to the Lord in chapters 8-9. 2. The rebellion of Aaron’s sons in chapter 10. 3. The stoning of the blasphemer in chapter 24.

THEMES:

1. Israel’s theocracy. It covers issues as diverse as labor, capital, property, marriage, and land ownership. Leviticus provided the basis for Israel’s theocracy. It also provides the first principles whereby any nation can order their civil life after the law of God.
2. Holiness: God is holy, and His people must reflect that in every area of life (Lev. 19:2). A key word is “holy.” Priesthood, sacrifices, purity laws, feasts—all are about forming a holy people.
3. Sacrifice and Atonement: The sacrificial system points to the seriousness of sin and the mercy of God.
 - Leviticus outlines five key offerings that shape Israel’s worship and relationship with God. The burnt offering symbolized full consecration, while the grain offering expressed gratitude and devotion. The peace offering celebrated fellowship with God and others. The sin offering atoned for unintentional sin, and the guilt offering addressed sin requiring restitution. Together, these offerings show how God provides a way for His people to draw near, be made clean, and live in restored relationship with Him.
 - Day of Atonement in chapter 16: The high priest enters the Holy of Holies once a year to offer atonement for himself, the priests, and the people. Two goats are used. One is sacrificed for sin. The other (scapegoat) is sent into the wilderness, symbolically carrying away Israel’s sins.

4. Worship and Community: Laws for purity, priesthood, feasts, and offerings shape a community centered on God's presence.

- Leviticus contains an abundance of foreshadowing to Christ, especially in reference to Day of Atonement and the three annual feasts of the Lord: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.
 - Passover (Lev. 23:5) – Jesus is our Lamb
Leviticus recounts Israel's redemption through a lamb's blood.
Jesus is the true Passover Lamb who frees us from sin and death (1 Cor. 5:7).
 - Pentecost (Feast of Weeks – Lev. 23:15–22) – Jesus sends the Spirit
This feast celebrated the harvest and God's provision.
At Pentecost, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower His people (Acts 2).
 - Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–43) – Jesus dwells with us
Israel remembered living in tents with God's presence among them.
Jesus "tabernacled" among us, and we await His eternal presence (John 1:14; Rev. 21:3).
 - Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) – Jesus is our sacrifice and scapegoat
The high priest offered blood and released a scapegoat to carry sin away.
Jesus fulfilled both roles—He atoned for sin once for all (Heb. 9–10).

NUMBERS - REBELLION AND FAITHFULNESS

"Numbers reminds us that God is faithful, even when we are not."

OVERVIEW

1. Numbers records Israel's 40 years in the wilderness. What should have been an 11-day journey turned into decades because of unbelief.

- First generation fails to trust God.
- Second generation prepares to enter the land.

2. The Hebrew name for this book is: "In the Wilderness." This term is an appropriate metaphor for the judgment that fell on the people who refused to enter the land of rest.

THEMES

1. Testing in the Wilderness: The people repeatedly grumble and rebel. (Numbers 11:1-6; 14:2-3)

2. Fear vs. Faith: The refusal to enter Canaan brings God's judgment. Example: Caleb & Joshua vs. Israel. (Numbers 14: 6-10) When the twelve spies returned from scouting Canaan, ten were overwhelmed by fear, focusing on the giants in the land. But Caleb and Joshua stood apart—they tore their clothes and urged the people to trust in God's promise. Their faith wasn't

rooted in the size of the opposition but in the power and presence of the Lord. While the rest of Israel gave in to fear and faced judgment, Caleb and Joshua became examples of faith-filled obedience. They remind us that entering into God's promises requires courage to trust, even when circumstances are intimidating.

3. Leadership and Discipline: Even Moses and Aaron face consequences. "Not one of the men who saw my glory... will ever see the land." (Numbers 14:22–23)

DEUTERONOMY: RENEWAL AND READINESS

Deuteronomy is Moses' final sermon: don't forget who God is and what He's done."

OVERVIEW

1. Deuteronomy means "second law." It's Moses' farewell address to the new generation about to enter the land.

- It consists of three sermons Moses gave before the people entered the land, and before he entered eternity. He urges them to remember God's faithfulness and renew their commitment to Him. Reflects on the past, commands for the future, and calls for wholehearted obedience.

2. Deuteronomy is a booked reference by the Prophets for understanding God's blessings and curses, apply its covenantal truths to their own generation. It is referred to over eighty times in the New Testament and was Jesus' most frequently cited book, especially during times of testing.

THEMES

1. The purpose of Deuteronomy is to prepare Israel for God's gift of the Promised Land. (Deuteronomy 1:8) "See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore He would give to your fathers." (Deuteronomy 1:8)

2. Remembrance: Remembering keeps them rooted; forgetting leads to destruction. "Hear, O Israel... Love the Lord your God with all your heart..." (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)

3. Covenant Renewal: A fresh call to obedience for a new generation. (Deuteronomy 27 – 30)

- Moses, on the plains of Moab, reaffirms God's covenant with a new generation of Israelites before they enter the Promised Land. The blessings and curses form the consequences of covenant obedience or disobedience.
 - Six tribes stood on Mount Gerizim symbolically representing blessings. Six tribes stood on Mount Ebal symbolically representing curses. This act visually and communally reinforced the seriousness of covenant choices. Chapter 27

- o Blessings include prosperity in the land, victory over enemies, abundant crops, livestock, and rain, leadership among nations, God’s presence and favor. Curses include diseases, drought, famine, defeat by enemies, economic loss, exile and dispersion among nations. Chapter 28
- Covenant obedience is not just law; it’s about choosing life, rooted in love for God.
 - o Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Deuteronomy 30: 19 -20.

FINAL REFLECTION

The Pentateuch is not just a prologue to the rest of the Bible; it is the heartbeat of God revealed in story form. God creates, redeems, instructs, disciplines, and dwells among His people—all because of His covenant love. He is not just the God of the Bible. He is the God who longs to be known.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does God's desire to make covenants (with Noah, Abraham, and Israel) reveal about His character?
How does that shape how we approach Him today?
2. Why do you think God spent so much time shaping Israel’s identity through laws and rituals?
How might these practices have formed their character, values, and relationship with God over time?

HOMEWORK (30 minutes)

Part A: Read Genesis 12:1–3 and Deuteronomy 6:1–9.

Write a short paragraph (5–6 sentences) answering:

- What does God promise?
- What does God desire from His people?
- How do these passages help you understand God's heart?

Part B: Personal Reflection (1–2 paragraphs)

Reflect on this question:

"Do I relate to God more as a rule-giver or a relationship-maker? Why?"

Be honest with yourself, and consider what might help you grow in viewing God as a covenant-making Father.