

The Pentateuch

1. What is the Pentateuch?

The First Mention of the Bible in the Bible

Exodus 17:14 and Exodus 24:4

- Torah as narrative, recording the deeds of God
- Contextualising of the Old Testament Law
- Importance of the Pentateuch in the NT

Jesus' use of the Pentateuch
Matthew's Gospel
Patterns and Themes

2. The Vocation of God's people

Leviticus and Deuteronomy

Not everyone's favourites!?!

"Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard." (Lev 19:27)

"Put tassels on the four corners of the cloaks you wear..." (Deut. 22:12)

"When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof..." (Duet. 22:8)

"If the offering to the Lord is a burnt offering, bring a dove or a young pigeon" (Lev 1:14)

But....

"I believe it is more important for you and me to read Leviticus than it is for us to read the best Christian book ever published, because Leviticus has a quality and produces an effect that no book in the Christian marketplace can compete with." (Platt, *Radical...*, p.192)

"No Old Testament book has exerted a greater influence on the formation and development of both Jewish and Christian thought and practice than Deuteronomy." Raymond Brown (BST, p. 13)

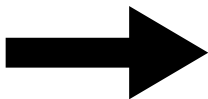
"Deuteronomy is often regarded as the centre of the OT and of OT theology" James Robson (*Honey From the Rock* p.19)

"I remain convinced that Leviticus is fundamental to our understanding of God and of the Christian faith. Without it so much else in the Bible simply makes no sense. It is, therefore, essential that we encourage people to study it and hear its message. I am also convinced that Leviticus does not deserve its bad reputation and that if Christians would overcome their prejudices against it they would soon find it yielding rich spiritual fruit." Derek Tidball (p.9, BST)

"Leviticus is good news. It is good news for sinners who seek pardon, for priests who need empowering, for women who are vulnerable, for the unclean who covet cleansing, for the poor who yearn for freedom, for the marginalised who seek dignity, for animals that demand protection, for families that require strengthening, for communities that want fortifying, and for creation that stands in need of care. All these issues, and more, are addressed in a positive way in Leviticus." Tidball (p. 17, BST)

3. Three simple initial hermeneutic principles: read forward, read backwards, ask why.

A. Read forwards



What comes before? Context?

Exodus 19:4 "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to myself."

The ways of grace proceed the Law.
The ways of the Law are given to a people who have
experienced first hand the love and grace of God.
All within communion and relationship.

Lev 1:1 The Lord speaking out of the tent of meeting, communion, being with his people

"Law and grace have become pitted against one another when in fact they are friends"

(Jen Wilkin, p.13)

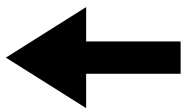
under the direction of the word he speaks. The Israelites had been redeemed by the blood of the lamb, and now the Lord had brought them, as the primary destination of their pilgrimage, to the place where they could hear his voice and learn his law for their lives (cf. Deut. 4:34, 36–37, 40).¹

The law of God is essentially his instructions on how to live a life pleasing to him, and it has this meaning not only in the Old Testament but throughout the Bible. God's law is not a 'ladder of merit' by which we try to climb, by grim obedience, into his 'good books'; it is a way of life revealed to those who are already by redemption in his good books. He brings us to himself and then requires us to live so as to please him (19:4–5).

The grace of God precedes the law of God. His grace reaches out to save, and it is to those whom he has saved that he reveals his law. The first characteristic of the saved is that they

Motyer

B. Read backwards



Reading through the lens of Jesus, and the whole of the biblical witness.

Hebrews 9:11-15

C) Ask why



Why was this written?

Is there a question that the original author was trying to answer for the original hearers?

4. Israel loved the law

Why all the love?

Exodus 19:1-6, Deut 6:20-25, Psalm 119, Josiah

- It enabled relationship with God (Exodus 19:9, Lev 1:1)
 - They knew grace proceeds law (and law is gracious) (Exodus 19:4-6, Deut. 5, 6, Lev 1:1)
-

Leviticus

Composition, purpose, vision, why

Composition

Genre? Like an ANE legal document

When was it written? Spoken to the 1st and 2nd generation of Israelites in the wilderness at Sinai

Structure

Ch 1-7 sacrifices that address sin

Ch 8-10 priests who will intercede

Ch 11-15 laws of impurity

Ch 16 yearly ceremony

Ch 17-27 other laws to help them live holy

Purpose and vision

In Leviticus, God lives exactly where Exodus 40:34-35 places him-right among his people. (Tidball)

Exodus 19:5-6 "Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation."

Leviticus: a return to God's purposes in creation		
	Creation	Leviticus
Separating things into their proper place and bringing order to the world	Gen. 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18	Lev. 10:10; 11:46-47; 20:24-26
Blessing humanity: • Fruitfulness • A lush land where physical needs are met • Sabbath rest • Walking with them as their God	• Gen. 1:28 • Gen. 2:8-25 • Gen. 2:3 • Gen. 3:8	• Lev. 26:9 • Lev. 26:4-5, 10 • Lev. 23:3; 25:1-7 • Lev. 26:11-12
A calling: to reflect God's image in the world	Gen. 1:26-28	Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26

(Jay Sklar, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary)

INTRODUCTION					
	I Very holy	II Holy	III Clean	IV Unclean	V Very unclean
<i>Spatial</i>	Most Holy Place	Holy Place	Court	Camp	Outside
<i>Personal</i>	High priest	Priests	Levites and clean Israelites	Minor impurities	Major impurities
<i>Ritual</i>	Sacrifices (not eaten)	Sacrifices (priests eat)	Sacrifices (non-priests eat)	Purification (1 day)	Purification (7 days)
<i>Temporal</i>	Day of Atonement	Festivals, Sabbath	Ordinary days		

Table 2. The geography of holiness.

The geography of holiness affects people, ceremonies and even the concept of time. This leads Jensen to produce a revised form of our earlier table (see Table 2).³² The geography of holiness provided Israel with a graphic visual aid for their faith and enabled it to be expressed in concrete terms.

"How to live as the holy priestly kingdom of the holy and heavenly King" (Sklar, p. 30)

"Conceive of an ideal society where, because it is ideal, certain things are done and certain things are avoided." (Tidball, p. 21)

Asking Why

How can a holy God commune with unholy people?

Q: How does some of this already make Leviticus more accessible for us today?

Holiness

Kadosh (adj) kodesh (n) 1. Holy, commanding respect, awesome, treated with respect 2. Removed from profane usage, singled out, consecrated for

Kadash (v) state or transition into/move towards a particular state of holiness or to dedicate use before God

Lev. 10:10 "you must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean"

"More about a status indicating that a person or object is dedicated to the service of God" p. 27

Ch 11 Unclean animals

Ch 14 Disease, cleansing houses

Ch 15 Bodily discharges, cleansing

Blood

Ch 12 regulations following childbirth,

Ch 15 laws around menstruation,

Ch 17 eating only well- done meat

Ch 16: 15 "then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins".

Sacrifice

Ch 16 and ch 17

Q: Begin to think about Jesus. Why does He make a difference to all this stuff about blood/unclean etc etc? Which Bible references help us here?

Deuteronomy

Composition, purpose, vision, why

When was it written?

James Robson: Ultimate context is Israel in exile-entering the land a second time. Moses' words are re-stated for this context.

Structure

Prologue ch 1:1-5

Moses first speech ch 1:6-4:40

Second Speech ch 5:1-ch 26 (commandment of 'love' and other ways to live)

Others (Leviticus Priests and elders) join Moses in speaking ch 27:1-12

Third Speech of Moses ch 27:12-28 (blessings and curses)

Final speech ch 29:2-30 (covenant in plains of Moab)

Narrative context chapter ch 31

Moses song ch 32:1-43

Moses' final blessing ch 33

Moses' death ch 34

Purpose and vision

Deuteronomy 30: Choose life

James Robson "their 'today' is linked to the past...and their 'today' is linked to the future..."

ch 4:9-10 and ch 5:3 "Not with our fathers did Yahweh make this covenant, but with us, we, these, here, today, all of us, alive".

Moses talking to second generation Exodus Israelites

ch 29:14-15 "it is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, but with whoever is standing here with us today before the Lord our God, and with whoever is not here with us today."

ch 31:9-13 "Then Moses write this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi....."write it down for those that follow afterwards

Ch 5 and 6

"Obedience, therefore, like faith, is the means of appropriating God's grace and blessing, not the means of deserving it." Christopher J. H Wright, (Deuteronomy pp. 280-281)

"How and why would God rescue the Israelites from the burdensome and death-dealing slavery of Egypt (Exodus 20:2) only to impose on them an even heavier burden of the Law, which they were unable to keep and which would sentence them to an even more horrible fate- damnation under His own wrath?" Daniel Block, (Grace of Torah p. 7)

"Moses knows that his fellow-travellers will soon be on Canaanite soil, immediately confronted with religious teaching about Baal, an agricultural deity who gives rewards to those who will do what he requires." Raymond Brown (p. 23, BST)

"..calling Israel to an act of corporate, imaginative remembrance as the insights of the past are brought to bear on the decisions of the present and future." J. Gary Millar, (Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy, p. 77)

The call of Leviticus and Deuteronomy today

Discuss: Civic (just for Israel), Ceremonial (abolished in Jesus), Moral (continue to have authority)

Galatians 3:21 "Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!"

Romans 3:31 "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary we uphold the law"

Romans 7:12 "the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."

"BE SET APART and GET STUCK IN"

Be Set Apart

As above on separation, holiness etc.

1 Peter 1: 13-16, 1 Peter 2:9-12

Get Stuck In

"A holy society should be marked by justice and compassion (especially towards the poor and vulnerable). "The emulation of God's holiness demands following the ethics associated with his nature." J. Milgrom

-Language of "brother" (17:15, 18:2, 15:12), the needy are included in this (1:16, 18:15, 15:3, 7)

-Even enemy love in Deut. 22:1- where the rule about an enemy's straying donkey in Exodus 23 is referred to as BROTHER'S donkey.

-Lev. ch 19:9-10 "When you reap the harvest of your land , you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God."

Attitude towards women captives Deut. 21:10-14; 23:16

Warning against excessive flogging Deut. 25:1-3, Lev. 24:20 'eye for eye'

Safety measure in roof construction Deut. 22:8

Redemption of property Lev. 25

Attitude to the poor Deut.15:1-11, Lev. 35-55

Command to assist the stranger, orphan, the widow eg Deut. 14:29, Deut. 24:19-21, Lev. 25:6

Send slaves away with plenty Deut. 15:14

Animal welfare Deut. 25:4, no muzzling ox when treading grain, not taking mother and fledglings from a nest Deut. 22:6-7, Lev. 25:7

The work of Christ and the Spirit

*Christ fulfils the law (He is our righteousness)
and the Spirit empowers us (to live as the people of God)*

The ritual cleansing laws, the clean and unclean categories = for a limited time only

God has come in the flesh.
Christ has died for sins and been raised.
The Spirit has been poured out on all believers.
(No need to bring a pigeon)
Hebrews 10

Acts 10:15 Peter and Cornelius "what God has made clean, do not call common".

Jesus gets right to the heart of the matter brings out the essence of the law (what the pharisees fail to do)

Matthew 5: 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them."

"You've heard it said don't even...."

Galatians 3:21 "Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!"

Romans 3:31 "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary we uphold the law"

Romans 7:12 "the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."

The Spirit enables us to become more like Christ

Romans 8:5-11

Eph. 2:22

2 Thess. 2:13

2 Corinthians 3:18 (//Exodus) "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit"

Reading

- *Honey From the Rock* James Robson
- *Leviticus* Sklar
- *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* Christopher JH Wright
- *Ten Words to Live By* Jen Wilkin