

# The Pentateuch

The first five books of the Bible written by Moses are known as “The Law”, “The Torah” (Hebrew word for “Law”), the “Law of Moses”, the “Five-Fifths of the Law,” and the “Pentateuch.” The word “Pentateuch” is derived from the Greek words *penta* (five) and *teuchos* (scroll or book).

Each book smoothly picks up where the previous book left off. There is a completeness about the Pentateuch not only in its consecutive history but also in its progressive spiritual development.

BOOK	KEY IDEA	THE NATION	THE PEOPLE	GOD'S CHARACTER	GOD'S ROLE	GOD'S COMMAND
GENESIS	Beginnings	Chosen	Prepared	Sovereign	Creator	“Let there be!”
EXODUS	Redemption	Delivered	Redeemed	Merciful	Deliverer	“Let my people go!”
LEVITICUS	Worship	Set Apart	Taught	Holy	Sanctifier	“Be holy!”
NUMBERS	Wandering	Directed	Tested	Just	Sustainer	“Go!”
DEUTERONOMY	Covenant	Made Ready	Retaught	Loving	Rewarder	“Obey!”

## GENESIS

This book provides the foundation for the entire Bible in its history and theology. Its first eleven chapters give a sweeping survey of God’s work of creation, the fall of man, the judgment of the Flood, and the scattering of the nations. There is a sudden shift in chapter 12 as God singles out one man (Abraham) through whom He would bring salvation and bless all nations. The remainder of Genesis traces the story of Abraham and his descendants Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

## EXODUS

Jacob’s descendants have moved from Canaan to Egypt and are suffering under the bondage of a new pharaoh. After a period of four hundred years they cry to God for deliverance. God responds by empowering Moses to stand before Pharaoh and create the ten devastating plagues. After their redemption in the Passover, the Israelites leave Egypt, cross the sea, and journey to Mount Sinai. There God reveals His covenant law and gives them the pattern for the building of the tabernacle.

## LEVITICUS

Now that the people have been redeemed and delivered, they must be set apart to God to live holy lives. God gives them instructions for the sacrificial system and the priesthood. The remainder of Leviticus teaches the people how to become ceremonially and morally pure. The emphasis is on sanctification, service, and obedience.

## NUMBERS

Still at Mount Sinai, the people receive additional directions before proceeding to the promised land of Canaan. When they are on the verge of entering the land, their faith crumbles and God disciplines them by making them wander in the wilderness until the disbelieving generation dies out. The new generation then reaches Moab, the doorway to the land of Canaan. It is here that God begins to instruct the people who are about to inherit the land.

## DEUTERONOMY

Moses is at the end of his life and Joshua has been appointed as his successor. In his farewell messages to the generation that grew up in the wilderness, Moses reminds them of God’s dealings in the past, reviews the need for righteousness and integrity in the present, and reveals what will happen in the near and distant future. Moses then blesses the people and views the Promised Land from Mount Nebo before his death.