



THE PENTATEUCH

Biblical Basis of Christian Education in the Pentateuch

CHAMBERS'S TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY

Defines Pentateuch as “the first five books of the Old Testament.”

Pentateuch is from the Greek words *penta*, meaning **five**, and *teuchos*, meaning a **volume, a book**.



Authors William LaSor, David Hubbard and Frederic Bush in their textbook *Old Testament Survey* state:

“The ‘Pentateuch’ is made up of the first five books of the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. This word derives from Gk. Pentateuchos, ‘five-volume (book).’



Jews call the books the 'Torah'
(i.e., 'instruction')



Traditionally, the Hebrew Bible has **been divided into three parts, the Law (Torah), the Prophets and the Writings.** Evidence for this can be found in the New Testament and, in particular, the teachings of Jesus Christ after His resurrection.



First five books of the Old Testament, became known as the **Pentateuch**.



The five books of the Pentateuch (the Law)



GENESIS

The name Genesis is translated from the Greek Septuagint and means “**beginning**” or “**origin.**” Genesis introduces God as the Creator and then proceeds to tell the origin and purpose of all He created. The Hebrew title for the book is based on the first words of the book, “In the beginning,” which also includes an emphasis on origins.



EXODUS

Like the rest of the Pentateuch, the name comes from the Greek Septuagint. **Exodus means “departure” or “a going out,”** with an obvious reference to the departure of the nation of Israel from Egypt. The prominent person in the book is Moses, whose name means “*drawn* out” (from the river Nile). Through Moses, Israel was drawn out of Egypt, symbolically “baptized” in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).



LEVITICUS

The English name comes from the Latin Vulgate version, which derived it from the title in the Septuagint. It basically means “**the book pertaining to the Levites.**” Aaron and his sons were set apart for the priesthood, but God chose the entire tribe of Levi to assist the priests with the service of the tabernacle. It was the duty of the Levites to transport the tabernacle and its furnishings when God ordered the camp to move to a different location.



NUMBERS

- The Hebrew Scriptures name the book from its first words, **“In the wilderness” (Numbers 1:1)**; but its English name originates from the Septuagint. Numbers is so named because a census of Israel is taken twice: first at Sinai, then at the end of the years of wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 1 and 26).
- Numbers can be thought of as a **book of testing and faith**. After witnessing God bringing them out of Egypt by the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the people still lacked the faith necessary to enter the Promised Land.



DEUTERONOMY

- Deuteronomy is the last of the books of the Pentateuch and means “**second telling of the law**” or “**repetition of the law.**” The book begins with Moses’ discourse at the plains of Moab in the 11th month of the 40th year after the Exodus, and ends with the death of Moses and mourning for him that same year. The book is a restatement of previous laws, along with further instructions to the generation about to leave the wilderness and enter their home in the Promised Land.
- Since the people were well acquainted with God’s law, **the major emphasis is *to remember His instructions and obey them.*** They were to “**carefully observe**” the commandments (Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-6, 9, 14; 5:1), including the Sabbath (Deuteronomy 5:13-15).





EDUCATION IN BIBLE TIMES
OF PENTATEUCH

The primary purpose of education among the Jews was the learning of and obedience to the law of God, the Torah. Whereas the word torah can be used to refer to all Jewish beliefs, it generally refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.



The secondary purpose in education was to teach about the practical aspects of everyday life: a trade for the boy and the care of the house, application of dietary laws and how to be a good wife for the girl.



The home was considered the first and most effective agency in the education process, and parents were considered the first and most effective teachers of their children. **This responsibility is expressed in Genesis 18:19 where God states his expectation that Abraham will train his children and his household to walk in the ways of the Lord.**



Deuteronomy 6:7 gives an **interesting insight into how parents were to teach their children about God**: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”



References:

- <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/holy-bible/old-testament/the-pentateuch/>
- <https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hbd/e/education-in-bible-times.html>

