

Notes for an Understanding of Pentateuch Course
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1. The structure of the Jewish Bible: Genesis to Chronicles

Creation/divine presence in Eden followed by Exile with promise of “salvation”

“Salvation” is divine presence, restored relationship, forgiveness of sins

But *felix culpa, Deus semper maior*, Rom 5:12-21: in Christ God does much more than could have been hoped or imagined

2. “Exodus” refers to the end of slavery, captivity, exile

The goal of the Exodus is the divine presence in the Temple; thus ends Chronicles

Jesus is the one who really “went up” and built God’s House, Exod 15:17; 2 Chr 36:23

He himself is the Temple, John 2:13-22; the vine, John 15:1-10; he goes to prepare a Place for us, John 14:1-4

With Jesus as the Head, we are his Body and also the Temple of God: 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; Eph 2:19-22; Col 1:18

3. The Torah: Five Books. Creation to the waiting room in Moab; points to a future end of Exile

Gen ends with a coffin in Egypt

Exod ends with the building of the sanctuary/tabernacle of God’s presence

Lev, the central book, regards what to do, how to live with God in the midst

Purity, a particularly P concern, dominates Lev 1-15

Lev 16, on Yom Kippur, is neither P nor H; on that day there is full forgiveness

Lev 17-26 is the “Holiness (School) Code;” it regards other obligations, including love for neighbor and resident alien (Lev 19:18, 34)

Lev 25 concerns the Jubilee, the end of exile and debt, with full forgiveness (it takes place on Yom Kippur)

Lev 26 has curses just like Deut 28, and reference to Israel’s breaking the covenant; among the blessings is a promise of return to Eden, Lev 26:12; Gen 3:8.

4. Numbers (“in the desert”). Everything is fine as long as they are in God’s presence in Sinai. After they leave in Num 10, chaos begins to increase, until the final rebellion in Moab (Num 25); they spend a long time (40 years, a whole generation) “in the desert”

5. Deuteronomy. Moses goes over all that has happened “in the desert.” It is a wasted time, but in the final redactions, God saves that time, it “educated” Israel. But the whole old generation must die. Only the new one (without Moses or Aaron) will enter the Promised Land.

There are covenant obligations and curses for not keeping them. But in the end, it will be God himself who will take the initiative and circumcise their hearts and establish a separate covenant (Deut 28:69 [29:1]. The new generation who will finally enter the Promised Land will thus participate in the New Exodus (Second Isaiah in the late Babylonian Exile speaks a lot about this).

We Christians believe it is Jesus who proclaimed the Good News of the New, or really, Final Exodus, and accomplished it himself, Luke 9:31 (Greek or NAB translation).