

BIB103 OT1: Creation and Covenants

Unit 1a Introduction of the Old Testament

Presented by the



For Use by the

Blue Letter Bible Institute

[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)

A Ministry of the

Blue Letter Bible

[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)

So as you look at the overview of what the Old Testament is all about, let's talk a little bit about what entails that overview. There are 39 different books that make up the whole Old Testament, with 35 different authors which was written over a span of a thousand years. And it's amazing how God took this big overview with all these different authors, all these different books, sharing on lots of different topics, and how He wove it all in together so that we could be able to understand the theme of Scripture and the theme of the gospel that we're going to be talking about as we go through this.

Now, when we think about words, it's important that we understand what those words really mean. So I want to make sure we take some time to explain exactly what some of the words we're talking about mean. So when we say the word Bible, the word Bible really means book, and it's taken from the Greek word or Hebrew *biblios* in there, which is papyrus or read. And what they would do during the times of the biblical era, in that section, they would have an opportunity to take scrolls that would be made from trees and reel those out, and they would write everything that they could on there that would explain to them the story of what was taking place. The scrolls became the sources for which not only the Scriptures were written, but for most of the history of the Old Testament the way that we'll see it was laid out there. Sometimes they're referred to even as writings, which comes from the word *graphe*. And that word *graphe*, which you'll be able to see referenced in the New Testament in 2 Timothy 3:15, as well as you could look up Matthew 21:42, it gives you the concept of the tie-in even with the Old Testament and the New Testament as you see similar language talking about the sacredness of the writings as well as the connectivity of the writings. And the beautiful thing is again to see how God took these spans of time that, humanly speaking, would not make sense to work together and yet God puts them all in this amazing fabric that becomes what is the Holy Scriptures or all 66 books of the Bible.

Now, what primarily we see in the Old Testament is that the Old Testament is divided into five sections. The first section is Genesis through Deuteronomy, and that covers the law and the Pentateuch, which we'll be coming back and talking about the Pentateuch in just a couple of minutes. And then it breaks down into Joshua through Esther, which gives us a lot of the history of that time period and that era. Then we go into Job through Song of Solomon, which is the poetry and the wisdom or literature aspect of it. Beautiful scrolls that were laid out with the story of what David went through and the songs that they used and the different aspects of their history that were put together in this poetic aspect of things. And then we see Isaiah through Daniel, which is...that's your major prophets. That gives you the chunk of the length and breadth of the history of the Old Testament. And then lastly, Hosea through Malachi,

often forgotten, frequently books that are overlooked, but a significant aspect of some of the slices of the history of the Israeli nation, and in particular, what we call the minor prophets.

Now, the language that was used in this writing of the Scriptures was primarily Hebrew in the Old Testament. Now, there were a few sections with the language that's called Aramaic. Most scholars believe that the three books that were primarily, if not completely, Aramaic was the books of Daniel and Jeremiah and then also Ezra. The dates are what we want to kind of pull back and look at because when you see again the sections in the way that they're laid out, it's important that we understand exactly what those sections played out in the goal of the whole of history.

Now, Genesis 1 through 11 is very interesting because that really covers a 2000-year span. Now, we said earlier that there's a thousand years in the whole Old Testament. Now, the whole Old Testament begins from that aspect of creation, but when you see the way that creation is laid out, you're going to see the large chunk of time that's covered there in those first 11 chapters. And when you consider what all takes place in that period of time, it's amazing to see the breadth and the depth of the information that we'd be talking about because then from Genesis 12 all the way through Matthew 1 is 2000 years. So first 11 chapters of Genesis, 2000 years. And then it takes us from chapter 12 all the way through Matthew 1, another 2000 years. So there's a lot that happens in the Book of Genesis, and we'll be talking a lot about that a little bit later.

Now, around 4000 BC was when creation was. Best guess is probably 4113 is what scholars would refer to, but give or take a few years there. Then you see around 2500 BC. And when you look at BC, that's before Christ, so we're kind of backing into things until the point of Christ's death, and that's the AD that then moves forward. We're going to be talking about the before Christ time period. So that 4000 leads then to the 2500 BC, and that's when the flood took place. Then as you move a little bit further 500 more years, you're going to see that Abraham, one of the patriarchs (we'll be spending some time talking about him), a significant character in the Old Testament. Then we drop another thousand years down to 1000 BC and you see David and his reign and what takes place there. And really, although Saul was before David, that really kicks off the majority of the kings that we'll be talking about from that point forward.

Now, our specific focus in this section is going to be talking about the Pentateuch. I had mentioned that a little earlier. Remember those were the Books of Genesis through Numbers that we talked about? And Pentateuch is the combination of the word five and book. Easy to see how that is. Five books that are

there. The first five books of the Bible. So let's talk about the authorship of the Pentateuch, the first five books there. There's the view that Moses is the sole writer of that, as directed by God. And we're going to be talking a little bit more about that aspect in just a minute. But then there's a different view that we wouldn't ascribe to, but that you are going to possibly hear about that we want to make you aware of, and it's called the JEDP.

Now, what is JEDP? What that's saying is there were four different authors that wrote different aspects of the Pentateuch that then later on, they kind of wove them all in together to come up with the first five books of the Bible. The reason they call it JEDP is because when you see certain words in there, that would represent certain authors and how they put together those first five books of the Bible. Now, J was the first one. E is the second one. D and then P comes up with the JEDP. The first of them, you would see the word Jehovah. That would then indicate that whoever wrote in that aspect of Jehovah, as you scroll through those first five books, that he was one author. The second author being Elohim, and you'll see again that that is a different author is the way that they would state that. D being Deuteronomy and then P being the priestly code.

So let's just pull back on that a little bit and understand it a little bit better. So the J, usually they're saying that author was writing between 950 and 850 BC. And then when you see that Jehovah, again in the record, they're saying within that hundred years, that as he wrote that out, that's the keyword that reflects the authorship of that section of the Pentateuch. Then that E, that Elohim, stands at 750 BC, so a more limited period of time. And again, that's where they're saying that that author was writing on that section of Scripture. The D is that Deuteronomist. Hard word, but you'll see a lot of that focused in on the Book of Deuteronomy, but you'll see it in a few other places as well. And that was around 620 BC when you'll find that that was again the core writer of that book. But again, that's that period of time. And then that priestly code. Now, that was around 500 BC, which would have been the one furthest down the line. And it was the work of priests, they're even saying. Maybe there's one author, but priests together that were compiling during the Babylonian captivity that section of the Pentateuch.

So the question had to be asked. Well, then why would we say Moses is the primary author there? And we think there's some strong biblical proofs on how we know that Moses was the author of the five books of the Bible. Now, if you look in your Bible to Exodus 17:14 or Exodus 33:1-2, the Pentateuch itself claims and says there that Moses is the author of those books of the Bible. And then you'll also find that the Old Testament states that Moses is the author in other sections of the Old Testament outside of the Pentateuch: 1 Kings 2:3 and 11 as well as 1 Kings 14:6, and then Malachi 4:4. And then not only do we

have again the Pentateuch now. We mentioned that section of Scripture. Other aspects of the Old Testament that talk about Moses' authorship in the Pentateuch. But now let's move even further to the New Testament and you'll see again there that there's authorship there that was done by Moses, the New Testament authors would say. The testimony, first of all, of Christ which is in Mark 7:10, Mark 12:26, and then John 5:46-47; the testimony of Paul, 1 Corinthians 9:9; and then lastly the testimony of Peter, Acts 3:22. So there's a lot of overall aspects of Scripture that point back to Moses being the author of those first five books of the Bible.

Now, one other thing we want to talk about in relationship to the Pentateuch is the core aspects then of what those five books of the Bible were really talking about because they were a central aspect to the whole of Scripture. Now, Genesis is a book that points us to creation, the origin and history of Israel. It's the centerpiece of how it all began. Exodus talks about the deliverance of Israel. The Israelites have been taken into captivity by the Egyptian nation, the pharaohs that ruled that. And then we see where God comes along in the Book of Exodus, in the deliverance of his people. Leviticus then leads us to the core aspects of the worship of Israel and what they did, how they were supposed to worship God. A lot of the nuances and particulars sometimes we would probably even think are a little bit too stringent, but it's going to be exciting as we'd be able to see what the Book of Leviticus shares with us with the way that they were supposed to live and do daily life amongst each other. Numbers gets with the organization of Israel, and it deals a lot, you'll see, with some of the religious things they were supposed to do, talking about some of the sacrifices and so on. And then Deuteronomy is the second giving of the law that we'll see there. And we're going to be able to see all those books tied in together, see their individual focuses, but we're also going to be able to pull back and see the way that they all tie in.

Now, again, one thing that I want to encourage you as we go through this is many times we fail to recognize that the Old Testament is still a part of the overall gospel story. In Genesis 3:15, we see where the Bible clearly says that the heel of Christ, the son of God, is going to bruise the head of the serpent which represents the devil. The beginning of the story of how Jesus Christ will be our redeemer, how Jesus Christ will redeem not only the nation of Israel but larger, the Gentiles, which incorporates the whole world. And we're going to see the theme of the gospel even in this section of the Scriptures, these first five books of the Bible. So it's going to be exciting to see different aspects of that theme as we go through these five books as well.