

**The Pentateuch**  
Series: The Bible  
May 1, 2022

Today, we begin a new series. “The Bible” will be a series on the entirety of the Canon, recognizing the overarching themes and message of Scripture.

This is a huge contrast in the way I preach. Never before have I even thought of, let alone been tempted to preach such a series.

You see, on occasion, I will dive deep into a single verse of Scripture, like looking at an ant. That is helpful for seeing the minute details of the Word of God. Often, that is what my Sunday School class does: get deep into singular verses.

The vast majority of my sermons take larger passages. I can see a broader picture of what the Lord is wanting to teach us. So, I will preach from many verses.

But what I am attempting to do is something completely different.

About six months ago, I heard on the radio the middle of a sermon by Erwin Lutzer on The Moody Church Hour. He was doing a series of messages where he went through the entirety of the Bible. Now, I initially thought, “That’s crazy.” But over the 10 minutes it took to drive home from the church, I found that I was intrigued by the idea. I never heard any more of that series, but it got my mind to thinking: what would it look like to see Scripture from 30,000 feet or from space?

You know, when you do that literally, there is incredible beauty, a different kind of beauty at each level. I believe it is with the Bible.

So many people fail to have an even basic understanding of the Bible. It’s just a big book like the one up here, a family Bible, kept in a safe place, with more value placed on the important family names and dates than the words of life contained within the book. We see the preacher has a Bible, maybe 2, on his little table, and if you look on my bookshelves, you would find 19 different Bibles there, plus 28 different translations in my Bible software. But many people know little to nothing about the Bible.

A collector of rare books ran into an acquaintance who told him he had just thrown away an old Bible that he found in a dusty, old box. He happened to mention that Guten-somebody-or-other had printed it.

“Not Gutenberg?” gasped the collector.

“Yes, that was it!”

“You idiot! You’ve thrown away one of the first books ever printed. A copy recently sold at auction for half a million dollars!”

“Oh, I don’t think this book would have been worth anything close to that much,” replied the man. “It was scribbled all over in the margins by some guy named Martin Luther.”

During our series, I want to help you learn about the priceless treasure of the Bible, and we are going to do it in only 9 weeks. Now, I know what you are thinking. You guys know me. Back in 2019, we spent 11 weeks in the Book of Revelation, and only scratched the surface. Now, we’re going to devote only 9 weeks to do the entire Bible?

You don’t think I can do it! Well, here’s how we’re going to do it. We are going to take a 30,000 foot look at the Bible and ask three questions: What are the mega themes of the section? What is the key verse of that section? And how does it point to Jesus, the Son of God? I am so glad you have joined us on this spectacular journey!

I invite you to turn to page 4 in your bulletin, or in you are online, grab your Bible and spiritual notebook.

Now, the Bible is not like any other book. In fact, the word “Bible” comes from the Greek word *bib-lee’-on*<sup>1</sup> which means “books.” The Bible is a collection of books – 66 of them – written in ancient Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic by 35 known authors.<sup>2</sup>

On page 4 is a graphic representation of the Bible. Like a bookshelf, the Bible has many sections: Law, History, Poetry, the Prophets (both Major and Minor) are in the Old Testament. In the New Testament are the Gospels, a single book on Church History, then the Letters written by Paul, followed by General Letters, and concluding with the Book of Revelation.

Today, we are going to take a 30,000 foot look at the opening section, the Law, or what is commonly called the Pentateuch.

Pentateuch in Greek simply means “five books.” Jews call it the Torah. This section contain the oldest and most famous stories in the Bible, including those of Adam and Eve, Abraham and his descendants, Moses and the people of Israel, as well as some of the oldest codes of law known, including the Ten Commandments. It encompasses the time from the Creation to just before the former slaves of Egypt, the Hebrews, entered the Promised Land.

Traditionally, Moses is considered the human author of the Pentateuch, being inspired by the Holy Spirit and the oral traditions passed down through the generations.

The Pentateuch consists of the first 5 books of the Bible

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, is the founding of the Hebrew nation. It contains the account of Creation, then the Flood, followed by the introduction of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ends when his descendants moved to Egypt.

The second book is Exodus, which chronicles the enslavement of the Hebrew people, then their deliverance from Egypt with Moses, the parting of the Red Sea, the receiving of the Ten Commandments, along with guidelines for worship. Exodus is the Covenant with the Hebrew nation.

Next is Leviticus. The English name Leviticus comes from the Latin, which is in turn from the Greek *Leuitikon*, referring to the priestly tribe of the Israelites, “Levi”. The book lists the law of the priests, or what we might call the Law of Moses or the Law of the Hebrew nation.

The fourth book is Numbers, which summarizes the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. It is the journey to the Promised Land.

The final book of the Pentateuch is Deuteronomy, which comes from the Greek *Duo* meaning “two” and *Nominos* which means “law.” It is the second recounting of the law to people before they entered the Promised Land.

There are four mega themes I want to highlight in the Pentateuch:

**First, God created all things.**

Without equivocation, the Bible begins with this verse:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*<sup>3</sup>

This simple statement is one of the most challenging concepts confronting the modern mind. Our Milky Way galaxy is spinning at the incredible speed of 490,000

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<sup>1</sup> βιβλίον

<sup>2</sup> For some books, the author is not known.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:1 (NLT2)

miles an hour. But even at this breakneck speed, our galaxy still needs 200 million years to make one rotation. And there are over one billion other galaxies just like ours in the universe... To say that the universe “just happened” or “evolved” requires more faith than to believe that God is behind these amazing statistics. God truly did create a wonderful universe.<sup>4</sup>

Now, here is the mind blowing thing: God did not need to create the universe; He chose to create it. Why? God is love, and love is best expressed toward something or someone else—so God created the world and people as an expression of His love. God created the universe so that He could create you so that He could love you.

If you get nothing more out of this sermon or this series, get that. God created it all so that He could love you.

### **Second, Humanity sinned and fell from what God designed us to be.**

Within three chapters of Holy Scripture, Adam and Eve decided the perfect experience of the Garden of Eden was not enough. They sinned and disobeyed God before the paint was hardly dry. Then, before a single generation had come and gone, murder was added to the list of humanity’s crimes.

There are some who believe that humanity is basically good. Clearly, they have never been the parent of a toddler or a teenager. They believe that if you leave people alone, they will do the right thing.

Now, I may work in Jerusalem, but I am married to a woman who works in Sodom and Gomorrah. I read the news, and I read the Bible, and it tells me that humanity is utterly and completely corrupted by sin.

*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.<sup>5</sup>*

The Pentateuch shows story after story of humanity’s capacity to sin against God and one another. Murder, lies, worshipping idols, war. Some are too gruesome to share in this G-rated setting.

The Pentateuch is clear: humanity sinned and fell from what God designed us to be.

### **Third, God inaugurated a plan for our ultimate redemption and recreation through:**

#### **First, Abraham.**

Genesis 12 begins the story of Abraham and God’s covenant to him:

*The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”<sup>6</sup>*

This promise was fulfilled, and continues to be fulfilled even to this day.

#### **Next, The Exodus:**

For 400 years, the Hebrews were enslaved by the Egyptians, the most powerful empire of the time. It’s tombs still stand as marvels of their power. I know, I’ve seen them. In fact, you can see the Great Pyramid of Giza from space.

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<sup>4</sup> Life Application Study Bible, Genesis 1:1

<sup>5</sup> Romans 3:23 (NLT2)

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 12:1-3 (NLT2)

Yet, all that earthly power would not stand before the might and power of the Lord God. The nation of Egypt was devastated by the 10 plagues, to the point that the Egyptians gave them their wealth as they left.<sup>7</sup>

### **Finally, The Law.**

The Law was given to the people of Israel to teach them a different way from what they had lived in for those 400 years in Egypt. It was a way of worship, community life, and devotion to God and to one another. It called for holiness of spirit and deed. God said in Leviticus 11:45:

*I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.*<sup>8</sup>

And this leads us to our next point.

### **The final mega theme in the Pentateuch is Obedience.**

The opposite of sin is obedience. Obeying God restores our relationship to Him. The only way to enjoy the benefits of God's promises is to obey Him.<sup>9</sup>

Okay, I'm getting long, so let me move along.

Each week, I will suggest a key verse in each section. There are so many it could be, but I pick one. I would say the key verse in the Pentateuch is Deuteronomy 7:9:

*Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.*<sup>10</sup>

This verse tells us that He is God, He is faithful, and He is loving. Anyone who says to throw out the God of the Old Testament doesn't know the God of the Old Testament.

Finally, each week, we will see how each section points to Jesus. In fact, all of Scripture points to Jesus. The whole Bible is built around the beautiful Son of God and the promise of eternal life to those who accept Him. The Bible was written that we might believe, understand, know, love, and follow Christ.

Bible scholars suggest there are more than 300 Old Testament prophetic Scriptures completed in the life of Jesus Christ. Circumstances such as His birthplace, lineage, and method of execution were beyond Christ's control and could not have been accidentally or deliberately fulfilled.

In the book "Science Speaks", Peter Stoner and Robert Newman discuss the statistical improbability of one man, whether accidentally or deliberately, fulfilling just eight of the prophecies Jesus fulfilled. The chance of this happening, they say, is 1 in 10<sup>17</sup> power. Stoner presents a scenario that illustrates the magnitude of such odds:

"Suppose that we take 1 to the 10<sup>17</sup> power of silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just

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<sup>7</sup> See Exodus 12:36

<sup>8</sup> Leviticus 11:45 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> Life Application Study Bible, Genesis

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 7:9 (NLT)

the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing those 8 prophecies and having them all come true in Jesus.”<sup>11</sup>

So, how the Pentateuch points to Christ:

**First, the first chapter.**

Genesis 1:29 reads:

*Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves...”<sup>12</sup>*

From the very beginning, the Bible has hinted the Trinity. God wasn’t talking to any human; no humans had been created yet. He was talking to His only begotten Son.

Paul affirms this in Colossians:

*for through [Christ] God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.<sup>13</sup>*

The Pentateuch tells us of Jesus.

**Second, the promise that Satan will be defeated.**

In the Garden of Eden, Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden tree of knowledge. In the serpent’s judgment, God declared:

*So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”<sup>14</sup>*

The Pentateuch predicted that though Satan would strike a blow against the woman’s offspring – Christ – Christ would crush his head. He will be defeated.

**Third, we would be blessed through Christ.**

In the story of Jacob, he receives a dream, a vision, at a place he would later call Beth-el, the house of God. In that dream, God said:

*Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.<sup>15</sup>*

Jesus came through the lineage of Jacob, and all the families of the earth have been blessed because of it.

**Fourth, the prediction of the cross.**

In Numbers 21, we find a story of the Israelites:

*Then the people of Israel set out from Mount Hor, taking the road to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom. But the people grew impatient with the long journey, and they began to speak against God and Moses. “Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness?” they complained. “There is nothing to eat here and nothing to drink. And we hate this horrible manna!” So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many were bitten and died. Then the people came to Moses and cried*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.learnreligions.com/prophecies-of-jesus-fulfilled-700159>, downloaded 4/26/2022

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 1:26a (NLT2)

<sup>13</sup> Colossians 1:16 (NLT2)

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 3:14-15 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 28:14 (NLT2)

out, *“We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take away the snakes.”* So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD told him, *“Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to a pole. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!”* So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze snake and be healed!”<sup>16</sup>

The bronze snake was placed on a pole, much like the Son of God was placed on a cross, and by looking upon them both, the people were healed.

**Finally, the need for the cross.**

In the Pentateuch are the laws and guidelines for dealing with personal and corporate sin. And in every case, and no matter the severity, one thing was common: the shedding of blood. The blood represented life, and in order for sin to be forgiven, a life must be given.

Now, God is too loving to require your life for every lie, every cheat, every lustful look, every sin you commit. So, He devised an alternative plan.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*<sup>17</sup>

The sacrifices of the Pentateuch show the need for the cross.

The story is told of a South Sea Islander who proudly displayed his Bible to a G.I. during WW II. He had received it as a present from a missionary some time before.

The soldier said, “Oh, we’ve outgrown those sorts of things like the Bible.”

The native, who had been a Cannibal before he was saved, simply smiled back and said, “Well, it’s a good thing we haven’t, because if it weren’t for this Book, you would be our evening meal!”

Let the Bible transform your life.

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<sup>16</sup> Numbers 21:4-9 (NLT2)

<sup>17</sup> John 3:16 (NIV)