

Lesson 2

- I read and listened for 2 hours.
- I read 100% of the assigned reading carefully and took notes from it.
- I watched all of the videos.

Essay

1. *Provide a succinct overview of the Pentateuch. What is it? (no more than a couple sentences at most).*
2. *Then answer the question, “What is the purpose and message?” for each of the books that it contains (about one sentence each).*
3. *Identify at least one major event or feature that was new or challenging to your understanding of this portion of Scripture.*
4. *Identify 2-3 specific questions or issues that you would like to research further.*

The Pentateuch consists of the first five books of the Old Testament, or the Hebrew Bible, that describes cosmological, anthropological, and theological foundations in understanding God’s purpose and plan for this world. The Pentateuch informs the reader how God created everything ‘very good’ (טוב קאד, Genesis 1:31), including humanity in his image (Genesis 1:27), and subsequently how he plans to redeem fallen humanity through his covenant.

Genesis provides the origins of not just this world and humanity, but of how sin “drew people away from God” and God’s answer through “a program of revelation called the covenant” (Hill and Walton, 77). This covenant with Abraham as patriarch sees God’s promise to him partially fulfilled in Exodus, where the title wonderfully encapsulates his descendants’ salvation out of Egypt to receive the Mosaic law through Yahweh’s divine intervention and continued revelation. The law given to the Israelites are further laid out in the manual of Leviticus that circumscribes the holy standard by which the covenant people were to live in the presence and blessing of God. However, Numbers “contrast the faithfulness of God with the faithlessness and rebellion of the Israelites” (Hill and Walton, 143). Despite their sinfulness, the Lord still prepares Israel to enter the land promised to Abraham as his people via renewal of the covenant in Deuteronomy.

One aspect that I find challenging is the holiness of God and the conditions laid out in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Leviticus 11:44 is often translated “be holy, because I am holy,” yet the verb ‘be holy’ is in the indicative in both the Masoretic Text and Septuagint. I would like to research the Hebrew word throughout the Old Testament and also study if/how the Israelites would have progressively understood the concept based on God’s revelation from Exodus to post-exile.