

Week 2 Essay

I've listened to about 4.5 hours of audio Bible (ESV in YouVersion) separately for an hour in each sitting, including first halves of Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy up to Ch.7 as of this writing. I read 100% of the assigned Ch.3 carefully, took notes, and watched the corresponding lesson video. I listened to all of the assigned textbook lesson videos, and followed along in their corresponding chapters in the textbook to highlight key points and to note any additional points shared by the authors in the videos. I watched all of the assigned Bible Projects' overview videos on the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch is a five-volume series of books in the Bible that tell the story of God's creation of the world and his start of a covenant relationship with it through Abraham's family, who is to become a holy nation that reflects God's holiness and through whom all the nations would one day be blessed in knowing their one true God Yahweh. The books tell a theological history of how God begins to faithfully form the Israelites through instructions for holy living as given to Moses and through great and grievous events that reveal God's wisdom, power and faithfulness.

The purpose of the first volume, Genesis, is to begin the story of God establishing a covenant with His chosen people, Abraham's family, to be in right relationship with Him amidst His created world that's fallen in sin. Exodus shows how God delivers His people from slavery in Egypt and begins to reveal who He is and to dwell among them. Leviticus provides a handbook for holy living for God's people so that they may enjoy His presence and blessing.

Numbers documents the people's rebellion against God in their volition and God's patient, faithful provision in response, while the consequence of their disobedience nonetheless becomes a warning. Finally, the purpose of Deuteronomy is to renew the covenant between God and His people from Mt. Sinai and to call the second generation from Exodus to live in obedience to God's laws as they prepare to enter the promised land.

One feature of this portion of Scripture that was newly fascinating and freshly appreciated was God's holiness that calls for the kind of meticulous instructions as outlined in Leviticus. In relating to Holy God, even sacrificing something less than perfect, i.e. blemished or defective, would be an affront to who God is and to how preciously He has created human beings whom the animal sacrifices were substituting, and a minimization of grievous disorder that sin brings to the relationship with Holy God. Another feature that was newly helpful was the encouragement in Exodus lesson video to take the cue whenever God "slows down" in the narrative, e.g. in detailed description of the tabernacle, and to similarly slow down and focus on what God is doing and establishing, especially how God's presence now has an address among people and how an important groundwork is being laid for "Immanuel theology" (Exodus 25:8).

A few questions that rose are: 1) The Bible Project describes Lamech as the first person mentioned to have more than one wife like a possession; why did this multiple-wife tradition continue even among God-loving people like King David, and why was it okay (or *was* it okay, to God?); 2) How should the detailed priestly duties and their importance in Leviticus inform the modern-day pastoring? Now that Jesus is our ultimate High Priest and we as God's people (both Israelites and beyond) compose His "kingdom of priests" in Christ, what parallels albeit the different contexts can be drawn between a Levitical priest and a modern-day pastor, as both would call for holiness of God's people in order that we may enjoy God's presence and blessing?