

INTRODUCTION TO THE TORAH

I. TORAH ("Law") = THE PENTATEUCH

A. The First Five Books of the Bible

B. Critical Approaches to the Pentateuch

1. Traditional
 - a. Assumes Moses as author of entire Pentateuch
 - b. Based on tradition, not biblical statement
 - c. Some problems: Moses' death/burial described; other hints of later material
2. Conservative
 - a. Recognizes evidence for complexity of Pentateuch
 - b. Assumes major role for Moses, with later editors
3. Source Criticism
 - a. Attempts to identify sources, or "documents," used to make final Pentateuch
 - b. Names used for God imply different sources/traditions
 - c. Resulting Sources/"Documents" according to classic Source Criticism
 - 1) **J** = "Jahwistic" source; God called Jahweh (Yahweh); arose in Judah (9th cent)
 - 2) **E** = "Elohistic" source; God called Elohim; arose in Ephraim (8th cent)
 - 3) **D** = "Deuteronomistic" source; mainly Deuteronomy & isolated texts (Exilic)
 - 4) **P** = "Priestly" source; material added by Priests (post-Exilic)
 - d. Sources assumed to be later; no role for Moses in most statement of this view
 - e. Classic "higher criticism"
4. Form Criticism: attempts to identify types of material, their function
5. Oral Tradition/Tradition History: emphasis on oral transmission; history of trad.
6. Redaction Criticism: focuses on "edits;" motives of editors
7. Canonical Criticism: focus on purpose of final author/editor (why this material?)
8. Other Approaches
 - a. Social-science approaches
 - b. feminist theology
 - c. reader-response criticism
 - d. etc.

C. Content

1. Primeval Prologue (Gen 1-11): The Universal Problem (Sin)
2. The Beginning of God's Salvation History (Gen 12-Deut 34)
 - a. God's call and promise to Abraham
 - b. God's covenant with Abraham's descendants (Israel)

II. THE BOOKS

- A. **Genesis** (Hebrew *Bereshit* = "in the beginning")
 - 1. Primeval Prologue (Gen 1-11)
 - 2. The Patriarchs (Gen 12-50)

- B. **Exodus**
 - 1. Oppression of Israel in Egypt; Moses (Exod 1-9)
 - 2. Passover; Exodus; Arrival at Sinai (Exod 10-19)
 - 3. Ten Commandments and Sinai Covenant (Exod 20-24)
 - 4. Cultic Legislation: Ark; Tabernacle; Priesthood (Exod 25-31)
 - 5. Violation of the Covenant (Exod 32-34)
 - 6. Implementation of Tabernacle Laws (Exod 35-40)

- C. **Leviticus**
 - 1. Law of Offerings (Lev 1-7)
 - 2. Consecration of Priests (Lev 8-10)
 - 3. Laws of Cleanliness (Lev 11-15)
 - 4. Day of Atonement (Lev 16)
 - 5. Israel as a Holy People (Lev 17-26)
 - 6. Vows and Tithes (Lev 27)

- D. **Numbers** (Hebrew *Bemidbar* = "in the desert")
 - 1. Census and Laws (Num 1-9)
 - 2. Journey to Kadesh-barnea; Aborted Invasion (Num 10-20)
 - 3. Wanderings in the Wilderness to Moab (Num 21-36)

- E. **Deuteronomy**
 - 1. Historical Retrospect (Deut 1-4)
 - 2. Moses' Second Speech (Deut 5-11)
 - 3. Collected Statutes and Rights (Deut 12-26)
 - 4. Cursing and Blessing (Deut 27-30)
 - 5. Death of Moses and Accession of Joshua (Deut 31-34)