

## PART I

# Introduction to the Pentateuch

The Introduction focuses on the literature of the Pentateuch as a whole. The section will introduce the names of the five books of the Torah in the Masoretic (MT) and Septuagint (LXX) versions. The overview of the plot, setting, and central characters in the overarching story of the Pentateuch will be outlined. The section will conclude with an interpretation of the literary context of the Pentateuch and its relationship to the Prophetic Literature and to the Writings.

# Literature of the Pentateuch

## 1.1 Names of the Individual Books

The Pentateuch (“five books”) is the title of the first five books of the Bible in the Greek translation, also known as the Septuagint (LXX). The more original title is Torah, meaning “law,” in the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT). The Hebrew Scriptures attribute the revelation and composition of the Torah to Moses, reflected in the additional designation of the books as the “Torah of Moses” (Ezra 3:2).

The most common name for the individual books of the Pentateuch derives from the Greek translation of the Hebrew:

- Genesis (“origin”)
- Exodus (“going out” of Egypt)
- Leviticus (“relating to the Levites”)
- Numbers (“the numbering of the Israelites”)
- Deuteronomy (“the second law”)

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In Jewish tradition, the opening Hebrew words of each book provide the titles:

- Genesis = *Bereshit* (Gen 1:1, “in the *beginning*”)
- Exodus = *Shemot* (Exod 1:1, “these are the *names*”)
- Leviticus = *Vayiqra’* (Lev 1:1, “and Yahweh *called*”)
- Numbers = *Bemidbar* (Num 1:1, “in the *wilderness*”)
- Deuteronomy = *Debarim* (Deut 1:1, “these are the *words*”)

The five books were originally not books at all, but scrolls—a roll of flexible material such as parchment or papyrus. The five scrolls are of different length, as can be illustrated from a comparison of the words in each book in the New Revised Standard English translation:

- Genesis (37,728 words; 50 chapters)
- Exodus (30,279 words; 40 chapters)
- Leviticus (23,666 words; 27 chapters)
- Numbers (31,220; 36 chapters)
- Deuteronomy (27,463; 354 chapters)

The word count of the Hebrew version would be different, of course, but the comparison of the English translation indicates that Genesis is by far the longest book, and Leviticus, the shortest. The different lengths of the scrolls suggest that their separation was not mechanical, as though it were determined simply by length so that each scroll could be of the same size, but that the themes and the plot of the storyline influenced the separation of the scrolls.

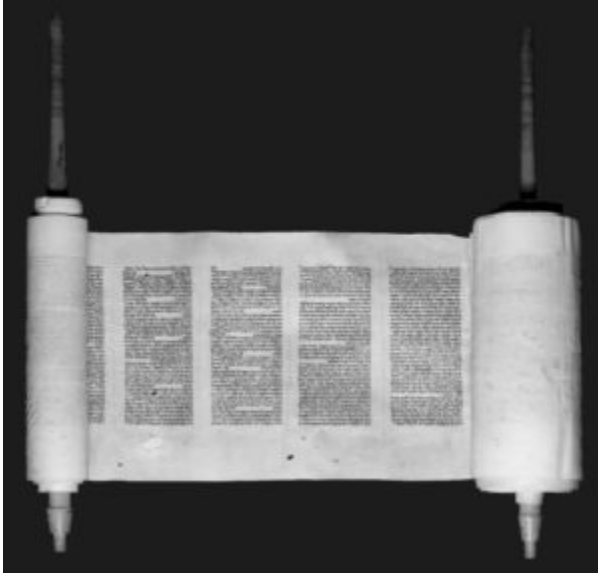


Figure 1.1: Torah Scroll. Ioánnina, Greece, mid-late 19th century. Ink on parchment; wood

### **Sidebar 1.1 Writing and Reading in the Ancient World**

The earliest writing in the Ancient Near East is from Sumerian scribes, who lived in the southernmost region of Mesopotamia (contemporary southern Iraq and Kuwait). These scribes invented cuneiform writing in the fourth millennium BCE; it is a form of writing that imprinted wedge-shaped symbols on clay tablets. The absence of an alphabet required many different symbols. The Akkadian Empire further developed cuneiform writing throughout the third and second millennia BCE, influencing correspondence among scribes throughout the Ancient Near East. The roots of Hebrew writing become more evident with the emergence of Northwest Semitic languages in the fourteenth through twelfth centuries BCE, associated with Ugaritic and Aramaic, languages

based on an alphabet, rather than the wedge-shaped symbols of cuneiform writing. An example of early or proto-Hebrew writing is the tenth-century Gezer calendar, in which seasonal activities are written on limestone; the writing of the Pentateuch reflects a later standard form of Hebrew from the eighth to the sixth centuries BCE, which undergoes changes to form the late biblical Hebrew in the fifth through third centuries BCE. In addition to clay or limestone tablets, scribes also wrote with ink on pots and potsherds, on animal hides described as parchment, and on sheets of papyrus made from reed plants. Writing was an important skill, making scribes prominent members of society in Ancient Israel. Although there is a long history of scribal writing, it is not yet clear how widespread literacy was among ancient people. For further discussion on writing and literacy, see Christopher A. Rollston (*Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*).

### 1.2 Plot, Setting, and Central Characters

A clue to the rationale for the separation of the five books emerges from the names of the books in Jewish tradition, which indicate an overarching plot. The story begins with creation (“in the beginning”) and follows the ancestral beginnings of Israel in Babylon to the land of Canaan. The account of the ancestors in Canaan leads to national slavery in Egypt (“these are the names”). Salvation from slavery progresses to the revelation of the cult at Mount Sinai (“and Yahweh called”), followed by a journey in the wilderness (“in the wilderness”) toward the promised land, which results in the death of the first generation of Israelites. The Pentateuch concludes with sermons by Moses to the second generation (“these are the words”), who prepare to enter the land that was denied to their parents.

The plot structure is further clarified from a more detailed

interpretation of the introductions and the conclusions to the five books. Genesis begins with the creation of the world, “in the beginning” (Gen 1:1), and it ends with the vision of the promised land by the ancestor Joseph at the time of his death; he makes his brothers promise to remove his bones from Egypt and to rebury them in Canaan, the land of promise (Gen 50:24–26). Exodus begins by naming the sons of Jacob who migrate to Egypt, “these are the names” (Exod 1:1), and it concludes with a description of the glory of Yahweh that descends into the tabernacle sanctuary, which Israel built at the foot of Mount Sinai (Exod 40:34–38). Leviticus begins with the divine address to Moses about proper cultic worship and sacrifice in the sanctuary at Mount Sinai, “and Yahweh called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting” (Lev 1:1), and it ends with the summary statement, “These are the commands that Yahweh gave to Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai” (Lev 27:34). Numbers continues the divine instruction to Moses, but the emphasis shifts from the sanctuary to the wilderness setting of the Israelite journey, “Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai” (Num 1:1), and it concludes by noting that the Israelites progressed in their travel toward the promised land from the wilderness to the “plains of Moab” (Num 36:13). Deuteronomy changes the focus from divine instruction to the “words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan” (Deut 1:1), and it concludes by underscoring the uniqueness of Moses, “never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face” (Deut 34:10–12).

Closer examination of the plot and the central characters in the Pentateuch indicates that the five books divide into two unequal parts: Genesis and Exodus–Deuteronomy. Genesis traces the ancestral origins of Israel from Babylon. It is composed in narrative, with no single character dominating the story. The central characters are the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their families, which include the matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel as well as Jacob’s children, who represent the twelve tribes of Israel. Exodus through Deuteronomy recounts the Israelite salvation from Egypt, the wilderness journey, and the revelation of law at the divine mountain.

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These books are a mixture of narrative and law, with Moses emerging as the central character who leads the Israelites over the period of two generations.

The geographical setting for the story of the Pentateuch is broad in scope, extending from Babylon to Egypt. Genesis traces the journey of Abraham from Babylon, his original home, to Canaan, while Exodus–Deuteronomy recounts the salvation of the Israelite nation from Egypt and their wilderness journey toward Canaan.

The structure of the Pentateuch may be illustrated with the following diagram.

**Table 1.1 The Structure of the Pentateuch**

Genesis		Exodus—Leviticus—Numbers			Deuteronomy	
Creation of World/ Origin of the Israelite Ancestors		Biography of Moses Salvation of the Israelite People				
Creation World And Humans	Origin of the Ancestors	Exodus	Wilderness Journey	First Generation Revelation of Law Mount Sinai	Wilderness Journey	Second Generation Revelation of Law Mount Horeb
Gen 1–11	Gen 12–50	Exod 1–15	Exod 15–18	Exod 19–40; Lev Leviticus  Num 1–9	Num 10–36	Deuteronomy

**Genesis: Creation of the World and Origin of the Ancestors**

Genesis narrates the creation of the world (Genesis 1–11) and the ancestral origins of Israel (Genesis 12–50). It traces the evolution of the world through a series of genealogies that narrow from the cosmos (2:4a, heaven and earth) and all humanity (5:1, Adam; 6:9, Noah; 10:1, Noah’s sons; 11:10, Shem) to the Israelite ancestors and other closely related people (11:27, Terah; 25:12, Ishmael; 25:19, Isaac; 36:1, Esau; 37:2, Jacob).

### Sidebar 1.2 Genealogy of Priests

The genealogies in Genesis are often described as the Toledot. This word derives from the Hebrew verb, *yalad*, meaning “to bear or bring forth a child” (Gen 3:16); “to beget” (Gen 4:18); “to assist in childbirth” (Exod 1:16). The Hebrew noun *toledot* occurs often in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:27; 25:12, 13; 36:1, 9; 37:2); Exodus (6:16, 19; 28:10); and Numbers (1:20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42; 3:1). It is meant to trace world history as the genealogy of the Israelite priesthood, who anchor their origin in heaven and earth (Gen 2:4); all humanity (Gen 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10); Israelite ancestors (11:27; 25:19; 37:2); Levites (Exod 6:16); and finally, Aaron and Moses (Num 3:1).

The genealogies trace the development of human history; they are also accompanied with dates that trace the history of the world. The creation of the first human (Gen 1:26–27) is Year 1 (anno mundi (AM) = Year of Creation). The chronology of world history emerges from the age of the characters as they have offspring. The birth of Seth provides an example: “When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” (Gen 5:3). Thus Seth is born in the Year 130 AM. When we continue to add the time spans between the birth of humans, the timeline of world history emerges: the birth of Noah, for example, is the Year 1056 AM (Gen 5:28) and he fathers Shem, Ham, and Japheth five hundred years later in the Year 1556 AM (Gen 5:32). The flood begins one hundred years after the birth of Noah’s sons, when he is six hundred years old (Gen 7:6) in the Year 1656 AM and it ends one year later, in 1657 AM, when Noah is six hundred and one years old (Gen 7:13–14). The system of dating continues after the flood, narrowing in scope. Noah’s son Shem, for example, gives birth to Arpachshad two years after the flood (1659 AM); the process continues until Abraham



is born in the year 1946 AM, and Jacob eventually enters Egypt in the year 2236 AM, setting the stage for the exodus in the year 2666 AM.

**Sidebar 1.3 Dates in the Pentateuch**

The chronology of the Pentateuch is difficult to interpret and it changes in the Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) versions. It is likely, however, that the chronology of events in the Hebrew version of the Pentateuch (MT) is based on the ancient belief that an era of world history includes 4000 years. The era of 4000 years extends from creation (Year 1 AM) to the rededication of the Temple under the Maccabees (Year 4000 AM). Thomas L. Thompson illustrates the system of dating in the following chart (*Mythic Past*, 75):

**Table 1.2 AM Chronology**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Adam	1 AM
Birth of Abraham	1946 AM
Entrance into Egypt	2236 AM
Exodus from Egypt	2666 AM
Solomon's Temple	3146 AM
Exile	3576 AM
Edict of Cyrus	3626 AM
Rededication of Temple	4000 AM

The chart clarifies that the dating of events in the Pentateuch has theological significance. Jeremy Hughes clarifies that the most significant events in the system of dating are associated with Abraham and the temple (*Secrets of the Times*, 46). The dating highlights Abraham as the ancestor of the nation (1946 AM), while the exodus (2666 AM) marks two-thirds of an era of world history. The temple becomes the central focus after the exodus; the system of dating highlights the

temple of Solomon (3146 AM); its destruction (3576 AM); reconstruction after the Edict of Cyrus (3626 AM); and finally, rededication (4000 AM) after its defilement by Antiochus Epiphany (who ruled 175–64 BCE).

The dating indicates that Genesis 1–11 narrates a broad sweep of time, which includes nearly two millennia (1946 years) between the creation of the first human (1:26–27) and the birth of Abraham, the eponymous ancestor of the Israelite nation (11:24). Genesis 12–50 narrows in scope to chronicle the family history of Israel, which takes place over a period of 215 years (1946–2236 AM). The main subject matter concerns the first three generations of Israelites, represented by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Genesis ends with the fourth generation of Israelites (i.e., Joseph and his brothers) settling in Egypt (Gen 47:9). Two themes dominate the narratives of the ancestors: the divine promises of many descendants and of a homeland (12:1–4). These two themes remain central to the plot of Exodus–Deuteronomy.

A central feature of the literature in Genesis is the repetition of stories. Representative examples in Genesis 1–11 include two accounts of creation (1:1–2:4a; 2:4b–25), two genealogies of humanity (4:17–26; 5), and two versions of the flood (6–9). The story of the ancestors in Genesis 12–50 is also characterized by repetition. There are two accounts of God entering into covenant with Abraham (15; 17); two versions of Hagar being driven out into the wilderness from the camp of Abraham and Sarah (16:1–14; 21:8–21); twice, Jacob establishes a worship site at Bethel (28:11–28; 35:1–8); and Abraham and Isaac falsely present their wives as sisters to foreign kings not less than three times (12; 20; 26), with the father and son even deceiving the same king, Abimelech (20; 26).

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy:  
Biography of Moses and Salvation of the Israelite People

Moses emerges as the central character in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. He is idealized as the savior of the Israelites and the mediator of divine law. Exodus through Deuteronomy is framed by the birth (Exodus 2) and death (Deuteronomy 34) of Moses, so that the majority of the Pentateuchal literature is confined to the 120 years of his life, as compared to the millennia that transpire in Genesis. Moses experiences a heroic birth (Exodus 2) and an exceptional divine call on the mountain of God while tending sheep (Exodus 3–4). During his career, Moses liberates Israel from Egypt (Exodus 5–14), leads them in the wilderness (Exodus 15–18; Numbers 11–21), and mediates divine law, which is recounted twice—initially at Mount Sinai in the wilderness of Sinai to the first generation of Israelites (Exodus 19–Numbers 10) and the event is recounted to the second generation on the plains of Moab where the revelation is identified as taking place on Mount Horeb (Deuteronomy). The leadership of Moses over the period of two generations indicates the separation of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers from Deuteronomy.

Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers:  
Moses and the First Generation of Israelites

Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are nearly inseparable in the literary design of the Pentateuch and clearly distinct from Genesis and Deuteronomy. Exodus 1 sets the stage for the story of salvation from Egypt. It indicates a significant break in time (1:6, 8) from the events in Genesis, later described as a period of 430 years (Exod 12:30), making the date of the exodus the year 2666 (Exod 12:40–41). During this period, the original family of seventy grows into a large nation (1:5, 7), which threatens the pharaoh (1:8–10), who enslaves the Israelites (1:11–14) and slaughters the male infants to maintain population control (1:15–22). The divine promises of descendants and land to the ancestors from the book of Genesis linger in the background, thus

fueling the plot. The central themes of the book of Exodus are the power of Yahweh to rescue the Israelite people from slavery (2–15), the divine leading of the people through the wilderness (16–18), and the revelation of law at Mount Sinai, accompanied by the building of the tabernacle sanctuary (19–40).

Leviticus and Numbers continue the setting of the Israelite encampment at Mount Sinai (Lev 1:1; Num 1:1) in order to develop further the themes established in Exodus, which included the construction of the tabernacle, the appearance of the glory of Yahweh, and the revelation of law. Leviticus describes the sacrificial rituals of the tabernacle (1–7), the ordination of the priesthood to mediate the rituals (8–10), the regulations for impurity (11–16), and the laws of holiness (Leviticus 17–27). Numbers shifts the focus from the worship practices outlined in Leviticus to the social world of the Israelite people by describing a religious community organized around the sanctuary (1–10). Once organized, the people leave the divine mountain and set out for the promised land of Canaan (10). But the first generation of Israelites—those who were saved from slavery in Egypt—die in the desert because of their lack of faith in the leadership of Moses and in the power of Yahweh to fulfill the promise of land to the ancestors (11–21). Numbers closes by gradually shifting the focus from the first generation to the second, who are the children of the exodus generation. It highlights the divine care of the second generation of Israelites in the completion of the wilderness journey, especially in protecting the people against the threat of Balak, the Moabite (22–24), before turning attention to Israel's future life in the promised land (25–36). In order to prepare for life in the land, the people are warned against intermarriage (25; 31); they are counted (26); the future cycle of worship in the land is described (28–29); rules of war are outlined (31); inheritance rights of women are detailed (27; 36); and the tribal boundaries and Levitical cities in the land are clarified (34–35).

#### Deuteronomy: Moses and the Second Generation of Israelites

The book of Deuteronomy is set apart in time from the story in Exodus,

Leviticus, and Numbers. The first generation of Israelites has died in the wilderness and Moses teaches the second generation on the last day of his life, dated year 40, month 11, day 1 after the exodus, or the year 2706 (1:3). The teaching of Moses progresses from the recounting of the exodus, the wilderness journey, and the revelation of the Decalogue (1–11), to the declaration of further law (12–26) that is tied to a series of blessings and curses (27–28), and a concluding section on the establishment of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, followed by poetic songs by Moses (29–33). Moses dies on Mount Nebo (34:1–5) upon the conclusion of his teaching at the age of 120 years (34:7). He is unique among humans, having seen God face-to-face and lived beyond that (34:10–12).

The story of Moses is also characterized by repetition. The narrative of the exodus includes two accounts of Moses's commission and the revelation of the divine name, Yahweh (Exodus 3 and 6), contrasting versions of the plagues (Exodus 7–10), and multiple accounts of the destruction of the Egyptian army (Exodus 14–15). The same technique of repetition continues in the story of the wilderness journey, where there are also multiple accounts of the Israelites' fear of conquest and loss of the promised land (Numbers 13–14). These instances of repetition are reminiscent of Genesis, where multiple versions of the most important stories also occur.

But the significance of repetition in the story of Moses exceeds the book of Genesis because of the recurrence of the revelation of law over two generations. The Decalogue (Exodus 20), the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21–23), and the Priestly legislation for the tabernacle (Exodus 25–40; Leviticus; and parts of Numbers) are promulgated to the first generation and the laws of Deuteronomy to the second generation. The law-codes create an extensive series of repetitions beyond the narratives. Examples include two mountains of revelation (Sinai in Exodus 24 and Horeb in Deuteronomy 4–5), two versions of the Decalogue (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5), conflicting cultic calendars (Exod 23:14–17; Leviticus 23; Numbers 27–28; and Deuteronomy 16), competing views of sacrifice (Leviticus 1–7; Deuteronomy 15), and

different laws concerning warfare (Numbers 31 and Deuteronomy 20), to name just a few of the many instances in which laws repeat in the teaching of Moses.

### 1.3 Literary Context of the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch is preserved in different canonical forms. The Samaritan version canonized only the Pentateuch and no other literature; hence, there is no literary context for interpreting the Pentateuch. The two other ancient canons combine the Pentateuch with additional literature, thus creating a context for interpretation. The two canons are the Hebrew Masoretic (MT) and the Greek Septuagint (LXX). The Masoretic version separates the canon into three parts: Pentateuch (Torah); Prophets (Nevi'im); and Writings (Ketuvim). The Septuagint (LXX) canon does not follow the three-part division of the Masoretic canon; it also changes the order and adds additional books. The interpretation of the literary context of the Pentateuch will follow the Masoretic (MT) canon, exploring the relationship of the Pentateuch to the Prophets and to the Writings (see Sidebar 1.5, “MT and LXX Canons”).

#### Sidebar 1.4 Tanakh

The Masoretic (MT) canon is often designated as the Tanakh, a word that combines the first letter of the Hebrew name of the three sections: [T]orah; [N]evi'im; and [K]etuvim.

**Sidebar 1.5 MT and LXX Canons**

The following chart compares the Masoretic (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX) canons. The three-part organization of the Masoretic canon is absent in the Septuagint. The Septuagint changes the order of the some books (indicated by underlining>, most notably placing the Prophets at the conclusion; it also adds additional books (indicated by *italics*).

**Table 1.3 MT and LXX Canons Compared**

MASORETIC CANON (MT)	SEPTUAGINT CANON (LXX)
<b>TORAH (PENTATEUCH)</b>	
1. Genesis	1. Genesis
2. Exodus	2. Exodus
3. Leviticus	3. Leviticus
4. Numbers	4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy	5. Deuteronomy
<b>NEVI'IM (PROPHETS)</b>	
6. Joshua	6. Joshua
7. Judges	7. Judges
	8. Ruth
8. Samuel	9. 1 Kings (= 1 Samuel)
	10. 2 Kings (= 2 Samuel)
9. Kings	11. 3 Kings (=1 Kings)
	12. 4 Kings (=2 Kings)
	13. 1 Chronicle
	14. 2 Chronicles
	15. <i>Esdrae</i> 1

16. Esdrae 2 (= Ezra and Nehemiah)

17. Esther

18. *Judith*

19. *Tobit*

20. *Maccabees* 1

21. *Maccabees* 2

22. *Maccabees* 3

23. *Maccabees* 4

10. Isaiah

11. Jeremiah

12. Ezekiel

13. Book of the  
Twelve

**KETHUVIM (THE WRITINGS)**

14. Psalms

24. Psalms

15. Proverbs

25. Proverbs

16. Job

26. Ecclesiastes

17. Song of Songs

27. Song of Songs

18. Ruth

19. Lamentations

20. Ecclesiastes

21. Esther

22. Daniel

23. Ezra-Nehemiah

24. Chronicles

28. Job

29. *Wisdom*

30. *Sirach*



31. *Psalms of Solomon*
32. Book of the Twelve
33. Isaiah
34. Jeremiah (Including Baruch, Lamentation, Epistle of Jeremiah)
35. Ezekiel
36. *Susanna*

### Pentateuch and the Prophets

The Pentateuch and the Prophets are related in the Hebrew canon through literary design and shared themes. The Pentateuch closes with the death of Moses (Deut 34:7–8). At his death, the narrator prepares the reader for the section of the Prophets by identifying Moses as a unique prophet, who passes on a portion of his spirit to Joshua, the first character to appear in the Prophets: “Joshua, son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as Yahweh had commanded Moses. Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face” (Deut 34:9–10).

The Pentateuch and the Prophets are tied together further, when the entire section of the Prophets is framed by references to the Torah of Moses. The section of the Prophets begins with the divine command to Joshua that he follow the Torah of Moses for successful leadership: “Be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the Torah that my servant Moses commanded you” (Josh 1:7). The Prophets ends with the similar command at the conclusion of the last book, Malachi: “Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel” (Mal 4:4).

**Sidebar 1.6 Former and Latter Prophets**

The Prophets is often divided between the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve). The separation accentuates a difference in literary genre and style. The Former Prophets are narratives about the life of Israel in the land and the Latter Prophets are poetic books that recount the careers of central prophetic figures.

**Former Prophets**

The central themes of the Pentateuch suggest a literary relationship with the Former Prophets. Yahweh calls the ancestor Abraham from his home in Babylon with the promise: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Gen 12:1-2). The divine commission contains two promises that are central to the story of the Pentateuch. Yahweh promises Abraham that he will become the ancestor of a great nation and that the people will have their own land. These promises raise the question of whether the narratives of the ancestors in Genesis and of the exodus and wilderness journey in Exodus–Deuteronomy are the whole story, especially since the divine promise of land remains unfulfilled.

The book of Deuteronomy intensifies the question of the Pentateuch’s literary context; it states that the second generation of Israelites has become a “great nation” of “wise and discerning people” (4:6), thus fulfilling one of the central themes of the Pentateuch. But the nation remains homeless, encamped outside of the land of promise, beyond the Jordan River in the plains of Moab (1:3), where, as we have

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seen, Moses addresses the second generation on the last day of his life. Does the Pentateuch really end with the death of Moses (Deut 34), leaving the promise of land incomplete, or does it continue into the story of the Israelites' life in the land? This is a question of the literary context of the Pentateuch, since the story of Israel's life in the land is recounted immediately after the death of Moses.

The Former Prophets contains the story of the Israelites' life in the land. In the Hebrew canon, the content of the Former Prophets includes the Israelite conquest of the promised land (Joshua 1–24, Judges 1–2); the settlement of the tribes in the land and their inability to secure it from other nations (Judges 3–21; 1 Sam 1–7); the rise of the monarchy as a more secure form of leadership that leads to the rule of the house of David in Jerusalem (1 Sam 8–31; 2 Sam 1–24; 1 Kings 1–22; 2 Kings 1–16); and the eventual loss of the land (2 Kings 17–25). The Assyrians destroy the northern kingdom of Samaria (2 Kings 17). The southern kingdom of Judah is destroyed by the Babylonians, who sack Jerusalem and exile the Davidic king and many of the people to Babylon (2 Kings 25). The Greek canon (Septuagint) extends the story further into the postexilic period to include the fulfillment of the promise anew with the return of the exiles in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles and the later rule of the Maccabees.

Interpreters question whether the Pentateuch should be read alone or with all or part of the four books of the Former Prophets, so that both of the divine promises to Abraham of nationhood and land are fulfilled. No one clear answer emerges, giving rise to a number of solutions about the appropriate literary context for interpreting the Pentateuch. The indecision arises from a range of shared literary motifs between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets.

The references to the Pentateuch in the Former Prophets illustrate the problem of determining literary context. The motifs “Torah,” “Torah of Moses,” “Book of the Torah,” and the “Book of the Torah of Moses,” in the Former Prophets are intended to refer to all or part of the Pentateuch. The following diagram provides the distribution of the motifs in the Former Prophets.

**Table 1.4 Motifs in the Former Prophets**

Conquest of the Land	Tribal Life in the Land	Rise of Kings	Loss of the Land under Kings
Joshua 1-24; Judges 1-2	Judges 3-21; 1 Samuel 1-7	1 Samuel 8-31; 2 Samuel 1-24; 1 Kings 1-22; 2 Kings 1-16	2 Kings 17-25
Josh 1:7-8 Torah/Moses/ Book		1 Kgs 2:3 Torah/Moses	2 Kgs 17:13, 34, 37 Torah
Josh 8:31-34 Torah/Moses/ Book		1 Kgs 10:31 Torah	2 Kgs 21:8 Torah/Moses
Josh 22:5 Torah/ Moses		2 Kgs 14:6 Torah/ Moses	2 Kgs 22:8, 11 Torah/Book
Josh 23:6 Torah/ Moses/Book			2 Kgs 23:24-25 Torah/ Moses/Book
Josh 24:26 Torah/God			

The book of Joshua contains many references to the “Torah of Moses.” It begins by linking the commission of Joshua to the death of Moses: “After the death of Moses, the servant of Yahweh, Yahweh spoke to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying, ‘My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses’” (Josh 1:1-3). Yahweh states that the “Torah of Moses” must be Joshua’s resource and guide in fulfilling the promise of land (Josh 1:7-8). Once in the land, Joshua writes a copy of the “Torah of Moses” on the stones of the altar at Mount Ebal (Josh 8:30-35) and at the end of the book, he commands the tribes to obey the “Book of the Torah of Moses” in order to secure their new life in the promised land (Josh 23:6). The references to the “Torah of Moses” certainly link the book of Joshua to the Pentateuch in some way. Strengthening the literary relationship is the recognition that the two divine promises to Abraham of nationhood and land are fulfilled by the close of the book of Joshua. The completion of these important themes, in combination with motifs that link the two bodies of literature, such as the “Torah