

A tropical island scene with a crescent moon and the text 'PENTATEUCH' overlaid. The scene features a sandy beach in the foreground, turquoise water, and a large, dark, jagged rock formation in the center. Several palm trees are scattered around the base of the rock formation. The sky is a clear, bright blue, and a thin crescent moon is visible in the upper right quadrant. The text 'PENTATEUCH' is written in a large, black, serif font with a white outline, centered over the island.

PENTATEUCH

TITLE

- The Pentateuch (Gk. “five-volumed”) consists of the first five books of the Bible, i.e., Genesis through Deuteronomy. The Hebrew term for it is *torah* (“law” or “instruction”), so this is how the NT refers to it (Gk. *nomos*, “law”).
- Although the Pentateuch contains many laws, **it is essentially narrative with episodes of law-giving**, but in the broader sense of *torah* all the Pentateuch can be seen as instruction, for it teaches as much through the history it records as by the law it gives. Another name for the Pentateuch found in some translations is “the five books of Moses.”



FOUNDATION

- The Pentateuch is not simply the beginning of the Bible; it is also the foundation of the Bible. It serves to orient the reader for reading the rest of the biblical story line. **It introduces the key promises that show God's purposes in history and that lay the groundwork for the coming of Christ.**
- A review of the contents of the Pentateuch shows that its **center of gravity is the law-giving at Sinai.** All of Exodus 19 to Numbers 10 is devoted to the events that occurred in the vicinity of Sinai: the declaration of the Ten Commandments, the building of the tabernacle, the laws governing sacrifice, entry to the tabernacle, and the celebration of the festivals.





COMPOSITION

- For more than 2,000 years, readers of the Pentateuch assumed that Moses was its author (cf. Mark 7:10).
- This was a natural conclusion to draw from its contents, for most of the laws are said to have been given to Moses by God (e.g., Lev. 1:1), and indeed some passages are explicitly said to have been written down by Moses (see Deut. 31:9, 24).
- The account of his death could have been recorded by someone else, though some held it was a prophetic account by Moses himself (Deuteronomy 34).



MAIN THEME

- The theme of the Pentateuch is announced in **Genesis 12:1–3**, the call of Abraham: “Go from your country ... to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Here God promises Abraham four things:

- (1) a land to live in
- (2) numerous descendants (“a great nation”)
- (3) blessing (divinely granted success) for himself
- (4) blessing through him for all the nations of the world.

SUB THEMES

- Each time God appears to the patriarchs, the promises are elaborated and made more specific.
- **The fulfillment of these promises to Abraham constitutes the story line of the Pentateuch.** It is a story of gradual and often difficult fulfillment.
- The Pentateuch is a story of divine mercy to a wayward people.

