

The first books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are the Pentateuch or the Torah. According to Jewish and Christian oral tradition, they were dictated to Moses by God, and scholars believe they were written by multiple authors over centuries.

Genesis took us from creation
to Adam and Eve
to Noah
to Abraham and Sarah and Hagar
through Issac to Jacob and his sons and daughters including Joseph

Exodus explains the conditions of the people in Egypt as slaves then tells us the Moses story. We learned the movie starring Charlton Heston has taken many liberties and we shouldn't go by that. We learned the 40 years in the wilderness was a journey, a path to becoming the loved people of God. Think of the Wizard of OZ. Dorothy starts in Kansas but goes on a journey with good and bad experiences only to presumably return to Kansas.

Leviticus is part of a collection of rules of life. These are holistic rules. They cover eating habits, social interaction, worship, and all other sides of life. When we tell our kids to eat their vegetables because I said so, we are developing obedience. God was teaching obedience to his people. These rules come from many sources, cultures, periods of time etc.

Numbers is back to a narrative. The Israelites are whining throughout the book. God and Moses take turns defending the Israelites. Moses is fed up with the whining and God brings him back. God is fed up with the whining and Moses brings him around. I identify with this book oddly. I personally have been fed up with our church and something has happened and it brings me back to being a champion for her.

Deuteronomy is a re-write of the books above with a human twist. It softens some laws and counteracts other. It gets rid of the little shrines and sacrifice alters all over the place and creates the PLACE WHERE GOD'S NAME DWELLS. This puts a bunch of Levites out of a living so it creates a few things so they don't starve and die.

I think reading it with this in mind it makes sense. If you read it literally it seems bizarre at times and God seems cruel. If you have a chance I suggest reading the first five books of the bible. Another name for the Ten Commandments is the Decalogue. How many can you find in the first five books?

Or perhaps Moses carved the whole thing down on a really big rock. Like I keep telling my sister, the Bic pen company had not been invented.