

Contents

PREFACE	VII
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE TORAH	XVIII
THE TORAH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE	XXIX

GENESIS

Introducing Genesis	3
Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Literature	7
Travels in Canaan (map)	14
Part I: Prologue	
Creation [1:1-2:3] <i>The creation of man • The seventh day</i>	16
Part II: Beginnings The Lines of Heaven, Earth, and Primeval Man	
Man in Eden [2:4-24] <i>Man and woman • The names of God</i>	28
The Expulsion from Eden [2:25-3:24] <i>The Tree of Knowledge: three interpretations • The Tree of Life</i>	34
Cain and Abel [4:1-26] <i>Farmer and shepherd • The rejected sacrifice • Am I my brother's keeper?</i>	43
Primeval Man [5:1-6:8] <i>The early generations • The divine beings</i>	50
The Flood [6:9-8:14] <i>The generation of the flood • The man Noah • Two questions about God • The two sources of the flood story</i>	56
After the Flood [8:15-9:29] <i>The rainbow • The crime of Ham • The Noahide laws • A source of Jewish law</i>	66
The Nations [10:1-32] <i>The table of nations</i>	73
Babel and after: The End of Prehistory [11:1-26] <i>Conclusion of the prologue • Historic background • Interpretations</i>	79

Part III: The Line of Terah Abraham

The Call of Abraham [11:27–12:9] <i>The call • The choice • The challenge • Blessing and curse</i>	90
Wanderings [12:10–13:18] <i>You are my sister • The Promised Land</i>	96
The War of the Four against the Five [14:1–24] <i>Abraham the Hebrew • Melchizedek</i>	102
The Covenant between the Pieces; the Birth of Ishmael [15:1–16:16] <i>The reality of the covenant • The nature of the covenant • The ritual</i>	108
The Covenant of Circumcision [17:1–27] <i>Circumcision • An ancient practice • Identity and name</i>	115
The Messengers [18:1–15] <i>Angels</i>	121
Sodom and Gomorrah [18:16–19:38] <i>Abraham's argument with God • The merit of the few • The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah • Lot</i>	126
Crises [20:1–21:34] <i>Human feelings and divine purpose</i>	136
The Akedah [22:1–24] <i>The sacrifice • The test • Questions about the God of the Akedah • Father and son</i>	145
The Death of Sarah [23:1–20] <i>Sarah • Machpelah</i>	155
Rebekah at the Well [24:1–25:18] <i>On marriage • The servant's prayer</i>	160

Part IV: The Line of Isaac

The Twins [25:19–34] <i>The birthright • The moral problem</i>	172
The Life of Isaac [26:1–35] <i>Isaac's personality</i>	178
Isaac Blesses His Sons [27:1–28:9] <i>The deception • Was Isaac really deceived? • Rebekah</i>	184
Jacob's Dream [28:10–22] <i>Trial and trembling</i>	193
Jacob in Haran [29:1–30:43] <i>The tribal ancestors • Biology and faith</i>	198
Jacob's Departure from Haran [31:1–32:3] <i>Rachel's theft</i>	208
Jacob Becomes Israel [32:4–33:17] <i>The struggle • The reconciliation</i>	216
The Rape of Dinah [33:18–34:31] <i>The tragic element • The reprimand</i>	225
Births and Deaths [35:1–36:43] <i>The Edomites • The character of Esau</i>	231

Part V: The Line of Jacob

Young Joseph [37:1–36] <i>Reuben and Judah</i>	243
Tamar [38:1–30] <i>Destiny</i>	249
Joseph in Egypt [39:1–40:23] <i>The temptation • Dreams</i>	255
The Elevation of Joseph; the Brothers' First Visit [41:1–42:38] <i>A man in conflict</i>	263
The Second Visit [43:1–44:17] <i>On divination</i>	273
Joseph Reveals His Identity [44:18–45:15] <i>A test</i>	280
Jacob Goes to Egypt [45:16–46:27] <i>A paradox</i>	286
Jacob in Egypt [46:28–47:27] <i>The shepherds • Political morality</i>	293
The Blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh [47:28–48:21] <i>The blessing</i>	301
Jacob's Testament [49:1–27] <i>The vision of Jacob</i>	307
The Deaths of Jacob and Joseph [49:28–50:26] <i>Measure of a man</i>	313
Haftarot	319

EXODUS

Introducing Exodus	363
Exodus and Ancient Near Eastern Literature	367
Major Theories on the Israelites' Route from Egypt to Kadesh-barnea (map)	378

Part I: Prologue

Israel in Egypt [1:1–22] <i>The absence of God • Slavery in Egypt</i>	381
Moses [2:1–25] <i>Literary notes • The character of Moses</i>	387

Part II: The Mission

The Call [3:1–4:18] <i>The vision • Moses' faith • The signs • The Divine Name Ehyeh</i>	396
Return [4:19–6:1] <i>The bridegroom of blood • Pharaoh's hardened heart</i>	410
The Second Revelation [6:2–7:13] <i>My Name יהוה • Linguistic excursus on the Name יהוה</i>	419

Part III: Confrontation and Exodus

The First Six Plagues [7:14–9:12] <i>The plagues—natural or supernatural?</i>	434
The Last Four Plagues [9:13–11:10] <i>The pharaonic view</i>	445
Passover and Deliverance [12:1–42] <i>The historical Passover • Passover in the Christian tradition</i>	456
Addenda to the Passover Observance [12:43–13:16] <i>Tefillin • Literary analysis</i>	468

Part IV: The Road to Sinai

Rescue at the Sea [13:17–14:31] <i>The pillar of cloud and of fire • Rescue at sea • The route</i>	477
Shirah—The Song at the Sea [15:1–21] <i>The poem • The women danced</i>	487
In the Wilderness [15:22–16:36] <i>The manna</i>	495
Foes and Friends [17:1–18:27] <i>The memory of Amalek • Jethro</i>	505

Part V: Revelation and Commandment

At Sinai [19:1–25] <i>The covenant • The Chosen People</i>	520
The Decalogue—General Introduction; the First Three Commandments [20:1–7] <i>The first commandment • The second commandment • The third commandment</i>	531
The Decalogue—The Sabbath Day [20:8–11] <i>Origins • The Sabbath in the Bible • In later days • The Sabbath in Christianity, Roman antiquity, and Islam</i>	546
The Decalogue—The Fifth to Tenth Commandments; Postscript [20:12–18] <i>The fifth commandment • The sixth to tenth commandments</i>	553

Part VI: Laws

Laws on Worship, Serfdom, Injuries [20:19–21:36] <i>Slavery in the Torah • An eye for an eye • The ox that gores</i>	564
Laws on Property and Moral Behavior [21:37–23:9] <i>Protection of the weak • Dealing with the enemy • Capital punishment • Virgins</i>	576
Laws on Cultic Ordinances; Affirmation of the Covenant [23:10–24:18] <i>Israel's society (as reflected in the Book of the Covenant) • "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk"</i>	587

Part VII: Sanctuary and Service

Ark, Lampstand, Tent, and Altar [25:1–27:19] <i>The cherubim • Table and bread • The lampstand (menorah)</i>	603
The Regular ("Perpetual") Light; Priests and Their Vestments [27:20–28:43] <i>The regular light • Urim and Thummim</i>	616
Investiture [29:1–31:18] <i>Incense • Ordination • The shekel</i>	626

Part VIII: Apostasy and Second Covenant

The Golden Calf [32:1–33:6]	644
<i>The calf—history • The calf—theology • The role of Aaron</i>	
A New Covenant; the Nature of God [33:7–34:35]	655
<i>The nature of God</i>	
The Building of the Tabernacle [35:1–38:20]	666
<i>Kindle no fire on the Sabbath • Bezalel—on art in Judaism</i>	
The Erection of the Tabernacle [38:21–40:38]	680
<i>The Tabernacle—its form • The Tabernacle—its meaning</i>	
Haftarot	691

LEVITICUS

Introducing Leviticus	733
Leviticus and Ancient Near Eastern Literature	740

Part I: Laws of Sacrifice

Introduction	750
<i>Ancient concepts of sacrifice • Ancient sacrifices • Sacrifice in the Bible • Talmudic views • Medieval views • Modern attitudes • The sacrificial legislation of the Torah</i>	
The Olah—Burnt Offering [1:1–17]	756
The Minchah—Meal Offering [2:1–16]	761
Zevach Shelamim—Sacrifice of Well-Being [3:1–17]	765
Chatat—Sin Offering [4:1–35]	768
Chatat—Sin Offering; Asham—Guilt Offering [5:1–26]	774
Laws of Sacrifice—Olah, Minchah, Chatat [6:1–23]	780
Laws of Sacrifice—Zevach Shelamim [7:1–38]	784

Part II: The Dedication of the Tabernacle and The Ordination of the Priests

The Divine Presence in the Sanctuary [8:1–10:20]	792
<i>The prohibition of intoxicants • Priestly perquisites</i>	

Part III: Permitted and Forbidden Foods

The Dietary Laws [11:1–23]	808
<i>A few definitions • The scope of the dietary laws • The reason for the dietary laws • The dietary laws in Jewish history • Some modern problems • Reform Judaism and the dietary laws</i>	

Part IV: Defilement and Purification

Defilement from Animal Carcasses [11:24–47]	818
Defilement through Childbirth [12:1–8]	825
Defilement from Tzara'at [13:1–46]	828
<i>A note on Judaism and medicine</i>	
Tzara'at of Garments [13:47–59]	836
Purification from Tzara'at [14:1–32]	839
Tzara'at of Houses [14:33–57]	845
Defilement by Discharge from the Sex Organs [15:1–33]	849

Part V: The Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur [16:1-34]	858
<i>The message of the Day of Atonement • The origins of Yom Kippur • Azazel • The hazards of the Yom Kippur service • Atonement and return • Some problems of the biblical material</i>	

Part VI: The Law of Holiness

Further Laws about Sacrifice and Food [17:1-16]	872
<i>Secular slaughtering prohibited • The prohibition of blood</i>	
Sex Offenses [18:1-30]	877
<i>Biblical attitudes toward sex • Postbiblical Jewish attitudes • Modesty • Incest • Homosexual behavior • Bestiality • Molech worship</i>	
The Life of Holiness [19:1-37]	889
<i>Holiness • Sanctifying and profaning the Name • The golden rule</i>	
Punishment of Sex Offenses [20:1-27]	903
Laws concerning the Priests [21:1-22:33]	908
<i>The priestly role • Israelite priesthood • During the Second Temple • In later centuries • The laws in chapters 21 and 22</i>	
The Festival Calendar [23:1-44]	919
I. Calendar Reckoning	919
<i>The day • The week • Months and years • The names of the months • Changes and controversies • Eras</i>	
II. The Biblical Holy Days	923
<i>Sabbath • Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread • The offering of the omer • The omer period • The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) • Festival of the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) • The Day of Atonement • The Feast of Booths (Sukot) • Shemini Atzeret • New moon</i>	
Oil, Bread, and the Blasphemer [24:1-23]	935
<i>Oil for the Temple lamps • The bread of display • The blasphemer</i>	
Sabbatical Year and Jubilee [25:1-55]	940
I. The Sabbatical Year	940
II. The Jubilee Year	941
<i>The law • Was the law ever practiced? • The Book of Jubilees • The influence of the jubilee law</i>	
III. Slavery	945
Blessings and Curses [26:1-46]	953
<i>Tochechah • The problem of retribution • The sources of hope</i>	

Part VII: Supplementary Laws

Vows, Gifts, and Dues [27:1-34]	964
<i>Erech, Erkecha • Hekdesh • Cherem</i>	
Appendix I (to Chapter 11) [The Dietary Laws]	972
Appendix II (to Chapter 16) [Order of Service for the High Priest on the Day of Atonement]	974
Appendix III (to Chapter 18) [Prohibited Degrees of Relationship for Marriage]	976
Haftarot	977

NUMBERS

Introducing Numbers	1011
Numbers and Ancient Near Eastern Literature	1014
Part I: Of Census and Law	
In the Desert [1:1–2:34] <i>The census figures</i>	1026
Priestly Service [3:1–4:49] <i>The first-born</i>	1037
Laws of Holiness—The Ordeal [5:1–31] <i>Ordeals • The ordeal in Jewish law</i>	1049
Vows of Abstinence [6:1–21] <i>The nazirite • Alcohol and hair</i>	1057
The Priestly Benediction [6:22–27] <i>How the blessing was spoken • The power to bless</i>	1063
Of Princely and Priestly Things [7:1–8:26] <i>The symbolic context</i>	1069
The Second Passover; the Cloud; the Silver Trumpets [9:1–10:10] <i>The development of law</i>	1080
Part II: A People Wandering	
Of Rebels and Prophets [10:11–11:35] <i>The fleshpots of Egypt • Prophetic power</i>	1088
Of Prophecy and Punishment [12:1–16] <i>The uniqueness of Moses • How Aaron was punished</i>	1098
Trial and Condemnation [13:1–14:45] <i>Travels of the spies and the land of Canaan (map) • The morality of conquest • Two traditions</i>	1104
Various Laws; Fringes [15:1–41] <i>The law of fringes</i>	1118
The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram [16:1–17:15] <i>Two traditions • The punishment • Korah's argument</i>	1126
Of Priests, Levites, and Israelites [17:16–18:32] <i>The flowering rod • Pidyon ha-ben—Redemption of the first-born</i>	1135
The Red Cow; Laws of Purification [19:1–22] <i>The red cow</i>	1144
Thirty-Eight Years Later [20:1–29] <i>The second murmuring • The sin • Aaron the man</i>	1151
Wandering and Warfare [21:1–22:1] <i>The way north (map) • The way north (commentary) • The copper serpent • The lost book</i>	1159
Part III: The Story of Balaam	
The Story of Balaam [22:2–24:25] <i>Curses • The speaking ass • A people apart • Balaam—prophet or sorcerer?</i>	1171

Part IV: At the Gates of the Promised Land

Punishment and Reward [25:1-18] <i>The moral and historical problem • The priesthood</i>	1191
Of Census and Women's Inheritance [25:19-27:23] <i>The second census • The laws of inheritance</i>	1199
Offerings; Festivals; Vows of Women [28:1-30:17] <i>Moon and calendar • Sacrifice as worship • The status of women</i>	1208
War and First Settlement [31:1-32:42] <i>The slaying of the prisoners</i>	1222
Review of the Wanderings; Boundaries of Canaan [33:1-34:29] <i>The boundaries of the Promised Land</i>	1233
Levitical Towns; Cities of Refuge [35:1-36:13] <i>The blood avenger</i>	1242
Haftarot	1251

DEUTERONOMY

Introducing Deuteronomy	1289
Deuteronomy and Ancient Near Eastern Literature	1297
The Route to the Plains of Moab (map)	1307

Part I: Prologue

First Discourse

The Setting [1:1-5] <i>These are the words</i>	1311
First Review [1:6-45] <i>The nature of Jewish law • Two generations</i>	1316
Second Review [1:46-3:29] <i>Varying traditions • God's realm</i>	1326
Summary: To Observe the Law [4:1-43] <i>Neither add nor detract • The course of Jewish law</i>	1338

Part II: Second Discourse

The Decalogue [4:44-5:30] <i>The commandment of social conscience • The doctrine of free will</i>	1352
The Shema [6:1-25] <i>The Shema—its meaning • The love of God • The Shema in Jewish liturgy</i>	1364
Dealing with Idolatry [7:1-26] <i>The treatment of conquered nations • Mixed marriage</i>	1376
The Good Life [8:1-9:5] <i>Not on bread alone • Chastisements of love • The source of wealth</i>	1385
The Stiff-Necked People [9:6-10:11] <i>Defiance • The intermediary • A note on the Levites</i>	1394
The Good Land [10:12-11:25] <i>Why love the stranger? • On the geography of the land</i>	1404

Part III: Third Discourse

The Divine Command [11:26–32]	1416
The Central Sanctuary [12:1–13:1] <i>The centralization of worship • Blood and meat • Do not inquire</i>	1419
False Prophets [13:2–19] <i>Prophets</i>	1428
Of Food, Tithes, and Social Equity [14:1–15:23] <i>Tithes • Dietary laws</i>	1436
The Holy Days [16:1–17] <i>The Pilgrim Festivals in contemporary observance</i>	1447
Administration of Law and State, I [16:18–18:8] <i>The administration of justice • The monarchy • The pursuit of justice</i>	1455
Administration of Law and State, II [18:9–19:21] <i>More on the cities of refuge • Magic and mantic</i>	1464
Administration of Law and State, III [20:1–21:9] <i>The conduct of war • The uses of nature • Unsolved manslaughter</i>	1473
The Social Weal, I [21:10–22:12] <i>Burying the dead • Regard for animals • Reward and punishment</i>	1482
The Social Weal, II [22:13–24:22] <i>The prohibition of taking interest • Divorce • Individual and collective responsibility</i>	1492
The Social Weal, III [25:1–26:19] <i>Chalitzah • Thanksgiving</i>	1505
Blessings and Curses, I [27:1–26] <i>Blessings and curses</i>	1514
Blessings and Curses, II [28:1–69] <i>Comparisons and uses</i>	1520

Part IV: Final Appeal and Farewell

The Last Oration [29:1–30:20] <i>Commitment for the future • The accessibility of Torah • Turning back</i>	1535
Moses Prepares for Death [31:1–30] <i>Two theological questions • Joshua, Moses' successor</i>	1546
The Song of Moses [32:1–52] <i>The poem—its setting • Structure of the poem • The ambivalence of God</i>	1555
The Blessing of Moses [33:1–29] <i>Comparisons • Analysis</i>	1567

Part V: Epilogue
The Death of Moses

End and Beginning [34:1–12] <i>Moses—man and legend</i>	1580
Haftarot	1589
HAFTAROT FOR SPECIAL DAYS	1634
NOTES AND REFERENCES	1690
ABBREVIATIONS	1774
BIBLIOGRAPHY	1776
BLESSINGS	1785