

The Bible: Its Pentateuchal Structure

by F.W. Grant

The Bible's structure is a reflection of God's perfect plan, with the Old Testament presenting the Creator-God and the New Testament presenting God speaking in the Son, the Saviour.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Exodus 20:2, Leviticus 20:7, Numbers 14:22, Deuteronomy 10:12

Topics: "Biblical Structure", "Divine Government"

Description

F.W. Grant delves into the Pentateuchal structure of the Bible, highlighting the significance of the five books of the Law as the structural basis of the entire Bible, with the Old Testament having four Pentateuchs and the New Testament having one. Each division of the Old Testament represents a Pentateuch, emphasizing the earthly part of revelation and the ages of probation and exercise under divine government. The books of the Law are viewed both as literal history and spiritual type, signifying the re-establishment of God's authority over the new creature.

Transcript

THE BIBLE: ITS PENTATEUCHAL STRUCTURE

THE Bible as a whole has sixty-three books; Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles being really only one each: our present division of them having been adopted from the Septuagint. And $63 = 7 \times 32$. Here we have, then, the symbol of perfection, and that of divine manifestation intensified, - "God glorified in His perfectly accomplished work."

It is, as God's testimony to man, divided into two parts, perfectly distinct, the Old Testament and the New. ("Testament" and "covenant" are the same word in the original.)

In the Old Testament, we have the Creator-God, sovereign and almighty. And here thirty-six books ($36 = 3 \times 12$) exhibit Him in holy and manifest government. In the New Testament, we have God speaking in the Son, also Son of Man, the Saviour. And its twenty-seven books (33) show us how He has gloriously manifested Himself. Eight writers (the new-covenant number) carry us on to new creation.

ITS PENTATEUCHAL STRUCTURE

THE five books of the Law - far from being a comparatively modern compilation; are in fact the structural basis of the whole Bible which consists of just five Pentateuchs, which correspond, not in number only, but in respective lines of thought. Of these, the Old Testament has four Pentateuchs, the New Testament,

one. They compare as follows:-

THE LAW Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

THE COVENANT HISTORY Joshua, Judges/Ruth, Ezra/Nehemiah/Esther, Samuel/Kings, Chronicles

THE PROPHETS Isaiah, Jeremiah/Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, The Minor Prophets

THE WISDOM BOOKS Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

THE NEW TESTAMENT The Gospels, Acts, Paul's Church Epistles, Non-Pauline Epistles, Revelation

Too large in character to have this justly exhibited in one table, the relation of these books to one another must be sought in the analysis of the individual books themselves, or of the sections to which they belong.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE main divisions of the Old Testament are, then, four in number, each division being a Pentateuch. Four Pentateuchs, or 4 X 5, give us the number of the world and of trial, along with that of exercise under divine government. The Old Testament is the earthly part of revelation, addressed to the earthly people of God, though typically, of course, going far beyond this.

Then it speaks also of the ages of probation and exercise, especially under the law, times measured and characterized by the forty centuries of their duration before Christ came.

The divisions are-

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW, in which are enforced God's almighty power and sovereign rights.

THE COVENANT HISTORY. 2 is the number of legal covenant, and this characterizes the whole. Thus it is a history of discord, division, and the enemy's power, though with divine interventions in deliverances, which stand as types and assurances of the final deliverance to come.

THE PROPHETS then give us God's voice-the reasoning of divine holiness with man, that he may be partaker of it, as it is seen in the visions of the future he shall be, and the glory of God be then fully displayed.

THE PSALM-BOOKS are the books of experience and trial in the world, - speaking of the lessons he has learned in it, the wisdom which is their outcome, and the goodness of God which turns sorrow into song.

THE LAW

The books of the Law have a double character; as literal history and as spiritual type. Both need to be considered, the literal fact being the necessary basis of the other; and in both respects the numerical structure is significant, and the same. We have literally, then; -

Genesis : the ages of promise, and the birth of Israel.

Exodus : the people redeemed and taken into covenant with God.

Leviticus : their sanctification in view of His holiness.

Numbers : their trial in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy : the moral summing up as wisdom for the land.

Spiritually, the Christian side; the Law as a whole signifies "the re- establishment of the authority of God over the (new) creature."

Genesis : (new-)creation life.

Exodus : redemption and fellowship with God through a Mediator.

Leviticus : sanctification through the offering of Christ and the work of the Spirit.

Numbers : testing in the divine path through the world.

Deuteronomy : the ways and end of divine government.

THE dispensational types seem to be scattered through these books, coming out here and there into unmistakable prominence, and then disappearing, always linked with, and apparently dependent upon, the individual ones, which seem to extend throughout each book and the whole series of books, and to be the thread upon which all else is strung. God has been pleased thus to show us what to Him His saints individually are, and to enforce upon us that personal walk with God which we see in that type of the Church, Enoch.

It will be seen, moreover, that in this way the types are exhibited, not as fragmentary and hap-hazard as to order, but in perfect connection with each other and with the whole : a thing which certifies to us their interpretation, and places it far beyond the possibility of being merely conjectural, while it puts a wholesome restraint upon the imagination in the things of God, and assures to our hearts the full inspiration of His entire Word.

Let it be noted, too, that this typical meaning gives us alone to see the real importance of many parts of these books, which as simple histories would seem unworthy of the detail with which they are narrated. What, for instance, should we make of the lengthy account of the mission to take a bride for Isaac, if the mere history were all? As it is, although we have only penetrated into it a little way, what is already seen cheers us, not only with the precious things we find there, but also with the assurance of abundance to reward our further search. Thus God would never allow us to shut up His Word as if we knew it, but bring us to it again and again with fresh and ever-growing delight and interest. May He grant it to all readers of this, and that by the truth they may be sanctified.

Excerpted from F. W. Grant's The Numerical Bible, Volume 1 - The Pentateuch (1890)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fw-grant/the-bible-its-pentateuchal-structure/>

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