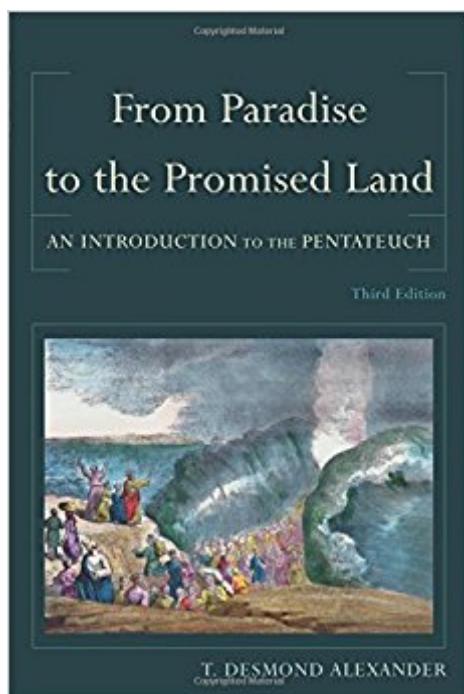


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# From Paradise To The Promised Land: An Introduction To The Pentateuch



## **Synopsis**

A senior biblical scholar provides a new edition of his introduction to the Pentateuch that guides students through a crucial portion of the Old Testament.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This new edition includes updated references and added material that reflect recent pentateuchal research as well as the author's refined judgments. Praise for previous editions "In this up-to-date and scholarly work, Alexander shows how the first five books of the Bible make sense and hang together. More than that, they lay the foundations of Christian theology so that no one can properly understand the rest of the Bible who has not come to terms with them. Alexander will be found to be a lucid and reliable guide to this vital part of Scripture." --Gordon J. Wenham, Trinity College, Bristol "Two virtues about From Paradise to the Promised Land have especially struck me. One is the comprehensiveness of the way it seeks to help us grasp the Pentateuch. The other is the way Alexander shows us how different themes hold these books together--themes such as the sanctuary, kingship, and the land. Both these features open up possibilities in grasping the Pentateuch as a whole." --John Goldingay, Fuller Theological Seminary "Desmond Alexander provides an introduction that considers the Pentateuch as a whole, both thematically and theologically. The Pentateuch is presented as a unity, yet the variety of topics within it receive substantial and penetrating treatment. It is the sort of study that many readers and their teachers have long wanted on this first section of the Old Testament." --J. Gordon McConville, University of

Gloucestershire" There is no doubt that theology undergraduates and anybody who takes an interest in the riches of the Pentateuch are indebted to Alexander for providing us with a highly readable, informative, and at times even innovative book." --Michael Widmer, *Themelios* "[A] wealth of useful and accessible information on the Pentateuch. . . . This book is especially welcome as a solid introduction accessible to undergraduate students." --Eric W. Bolger, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

T. Desmond Alexander (PhD, The Queen's University, Belfast) is senior lecturer in biblical studies and director of postgraduate studies at Union Theological College in Belfast, Ireland. He is the coeditor of the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

Truly this volume is one of the great contributions to the theology of the Pentateuch. Alexander tediously attacks the crumbling foundations of the Documentary Hypothesis and old school liberalism. He shows the weakness of their arguments and posits that we take the Pentateuch at face value and attempt to look at it as a cohesive whole with a story to tell and underlying messages for the reader. It is this story and the messages of the Pentateuch that Alexander then displays for his readers. Moving through the Pentateuch both historically and topically, the writer deals masterfully with the genealogies, the blessing and cursing in Eden, the nature and import of the Abrahamic Covenant, the significance of the Passover, the impact of the Covenant of Sinai both for Israel and for believers today, the implications of the tabernacle, the command to be holy, the significance and symbolism of the sacrificial system and dietary laws, the gift of the Promised Land, the reason why the murmuring of the people was so important to God, the Semitic view of the topics of love and loyalty as treated in the Pentateuch, and the question of the election of Israel. In all of these areas, Alexander carefully lays out the theology of the Pentateuch and then follows this up with a connection to the New Testament. It is in these New Testament connections, Alexander shows his true prowess as a biblical scholar. I would wholeheartedly recommend this work for the student of the Pentateuch who is struggling to find the purpose and application of this most difficult, yet seminal, section of Scripture to his or her life in the 21st century.

The core of this book is exegetical-literary analysis of the themes of the Pentateuch, which was very helpful to me in guiding my study of the first five books of the Bible. He covers themes that I had not noticed in my own study, chief among which was the temple-city idea and the (related) theme of creating a holy nation suitable for God's dwelling place out of a small tribe, a theme which explains

much of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that was mysterious to me. Also well-explained is the theme of faith, which in my mind had been overshadowed by the legal demands at Sinai. Each chapter's structure, analyzing the text, connecting it to the rest of the OT and then (separately) connecting it to the NT was extremely helpful. Alexander didn't answer all my questions, but I'm indebted to him for the tremendous amount he did do. Highly recommended! Full disclosure: I read only the middle section (a bit less than half the book) dealing with his explanation and exegesis of the Pentateuch. The first section (some hundred pages or so refuting the higher critical approaches) wasn't germane to my study, and the book concludes with nearly 70 pages of indices and further reading suggestions, so I skipped that, too.

Absolutely fabulous! This book does a tremendous job describing the travels of Moses and the Israelites. The parallels of their journeys through the Wilderness and the journeys that we face today are so eerie, yet, so relevant that it is a must read for all. "Thumbs-up" as Ebert would say.

I recommend reading all of T. Desmond Alexander's work. He tends to have great ideas that are put simply enough that anyone can pick it up.

I used this book as a textbook for a class on the Torah. It works at a beginners level, but if you want to 'go deeper' it does that as well.

This text is thorough, yet still readable. Given our distance in time from the ancient world, understanding context is key to faithful readings of any portion of the Bible. Though I read this in Seminary, this text would be an excellent resource for anyone seeking to better understand the Scriptures.

Writes in a way that really gets you thinking about new perspectives. Has great insight into the texts. Helpful.

Great reference type book with lots of metanarrative tie-in.

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