

Listening Guide

This Listening Guide is designed to help you ask questions and take notes on what you're learning. The process will accomplish two things: first, it will help process the information in the lecture by keeping your mind engaged with the material. Second, it will allow you to collect your notes in one place for a summary of the lesson's content. If you choose to do additional study or want to teach the material to others, you will have a thorough set of notes to guide you.

You may print these Listening Guide pages separately and complete the information as you read, listen to, or watch the lessons. Or as an alternative, you can fill in the fields in this digital version and save to your computer once you are finished.

I. Introduction

II. Modern Critical Approaches

A. Presuppositions

[1] Modern critical views on the Pentateuch flowed from the Enlightenment in Western Europe.

1. Naturalism

[2] The belief that if spiritual realities exist, they have no discernable effect on the visible world.

[3] Led biblical scholars to reject the belief that the Pentateuch was inspired by God.

[4] In naturalism, the Pentateuch is viewed and handled like all other merely human writings.

2. Historical Development

[5] “Naturalistic historicism”: to understand any subject we must understand how it developed over time through natural causes.

- Biologists – attempted to explain how life originated and evolved.
- Linguists – traced historical developments of human languages.
- Archeologists – reconstructed the backgrounds and advancements of human societies.
- Religious scholars – worked to describe the naturalistic, historical evolution of world religions.

[6] Western scholars reconstructed the evolution of world religions:

- Animism: belief that objects in nature have spirits.
- Polytheism: belief in many gods.
- Henotheism: belief that one god was greatest among all gods.
- Monotheism: belief in one god.

[7] The Pentateuch presents Israel’s faith as consistently monotheistic.

[8] In the days of Moses, Israel’s faith was “codified” (written down).

[9] Modern critical scholars deconstructed the biblical portrait of Israel’s faith in order to conform it to modern ideas.

B. Authorship

1. Divine Names

[10] Early critical interpreters argued that the variety of names for God in the Pentateuch evidenced a long evolution of Israel's faith:

- Elohim – “God”
- Yahweh – “the Lord”
- Yahweh Elohim – “the Lord God”
- Yahweh Yireh – “the Lord provides”
- El Elyon – “God Most High”
- El Shaddai – “God Almighty”

2. Duplicate Accounts

Critical interpreters have argued that duplicate accounts in the Pentateuch reflect different oral traditions that were written down:

[11] “Two creation accounts” (Genesis 1:1–2:3; 2:4–25)

[12] Accounts of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 12:10–20; 20:1–18; 26:7–11)

3. Inconsistencies

Critical scholars claim that inconsistencies in the Pentateuch support their reconstructions of its authorship:

[13] Regulations for Passover (Exodus 12:1–20; Deuteronomy 5:6–21)

[14] Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

C. Interpretive Strategies

1. Source Criticism

[15] Originated in K.H. Graf, *The Historical Books of the Old Testament* (1866) and refined by Julius Wellhausen, in *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1883).

[16] Focused on parts of the Pentateuch they believed came from independent written sources during the monarchical period:

- “J” (the Yahwist) – scattered through Genesis and Exodus.
- “E” (the Elohist) – in Genesis and Exodus.
- “D” (the Deuteronomist) – primarily in Deuteronomy.
- “P” (the Priestly writers) – wrote Leviticus and edited other portions.

2. Form Criticism

[17] Originated in Hermann Gunkel’s *The Legends of Genesis* (1901).

[18] Form critics focused on oral traditions that predated Israel’s monarchs.

Twofold method:

[19] Analyzed passages to discover ancient oral genres (myths, folk-tales, sagas, romances, legends, parables, etc.).

[20] Associated these genres with the “Sitze im Leben,” or the life settings of these oral

traditions.

[21] Example: Genesis 32:22-32 was thought to be an ancient supernatural tale that was later associated with Jacob.

3. Tradition Criticism

[22] Focused on how primitive oral traditions and written texts developed into complex theological and political perspectives.

[23] Leading tradition critics:

- Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (1948)
- Gerhard von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament* (1957)

[24] Identified what they believed were competing theological beliefs found in the Pentateuch.

4. Redaction Criticism

[25] Focused on how hypothetical documents were edited together into today's version of the Pentateuch.

[26] Began as a way to explain the differences between the Gospels.

[27] They attempted to explain how different editors wove original sources together until the Pentateuch reached its final shape.

5. Contemporary Criticism

[28] Modern scholars have concentrated on the theological unity and depth of the traditional Hebrew text.

[29] Some forms of contemporary criticism:

- Rhetorical criticism
- Canonical criticism
- New literary criticism

III. Modern Evangelical Approaches

A. Presuppositions

1. Supernaturalism

[30] God ordinarily directs history in patterns discernable by science and reason.

[31] God also acts in ways that are without, beyond, and even against ordinary processes and natural causes.

[32] Supernaturalism assures us that God inspired the Scriptures, including the Pentateuch.

2. Historical Development

[33] Evangelicals believe Israel's faith developed through God's special revelation.

[34] Divine revelation caused Israel's faith to develop differently than other religions in the ancient Near East.

B. Authorship

[35] Evangelicals affirm that the Pentateuch came from Moses.

1. Biblical Evidence

[36] New Testament writers and Jesus himself affirmed Moses' authorship (Luke 24:44; John 5:46, 7:19; Mark 7:10; Romans 10:5; 1 Corinthians 9:9).

[37] Old Testament books associate the Pentateuch with Moses (2 Chronicles 25:4, 35:12; Ezra 3:2, 6:18; Nehemiah 8:1, 13:1).

[38] The Pentateuch explicitly states that Moses received God's revelations and was responsible for the Pentateuch (Exodus 24:4; Leviticus 1:1-2; Deuteronomy 31:1, 32:44).

2. Essential Mosaic Authorship

"We do not mean that [Moses] himself necessarily wrote every word... essentially, however, it is the product of Moses" (Edward J. Young, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1949).

Three factors of essential Mosaic authorship:

[40] Sources

- God's revelations to Moses (e.g., Ten Commandments)
- Oral traditions (e.g., Exodus 13:13, 16; 18:17-24)

[41] Independent documents

- "The book of the covenant" (Exodus 24:7)
- "The Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Numbers 21:14,15)

- “The book of the generations of Adam” (Genesis 5:1)
- A record of battle for Joshua (Exodus 17:14)

[42] Process

- Moses delivered much of the Pentateuch through oral recitation before it was written down.
- Moses likely employed amanuenses to write much, if not all, of the Pentateuch under his supervision.

[43] Updating

Some portions of the Pentateuch represent slight editorial updating after the days of Moses:

- Mention of “Philistines”
- List of Edomite rulers (Genesis 36:31-43)
- Use of the name “Dan” (Genesis 14:14; Joshua 19:47)
- Record of Moses’ death (Deuteronomy 34)
- Hebrew language:

[44] Language updated from “Proto-Hebrew,” the language of Moses’ day

[45] Some parts resemble “Paleo-Hebrew,” the language of Israel’s monarchs

[46] Majority resembles “Classical Hebrew,” used between the mid-8th and early-6th centuries B.C.

C. Interpretive Strategies

1. Thematic

[47] Treats the Pentateuch like a mirror that reflects on themes that are important to us.

[48] Minimizes the fact that Moses’ original themes were for the Israelites who followed him toward the Promise Land.

[49] Jesus and New Testament authors looked to the Pentateuch when they dealt with a variety of themes.

2. Historical

[50] Treats the Pentateuch like a window to history:

- Genesis – from creation to the days of Joseph.
- Exodus – from the death of Joseph to Israel’s encampment at Mount Sinai.
- Leviticus – laws and rituals received at Mount Sinai.
- Numbers – the march from Mount Sinai to the Plains of Moab.
- Deuteronomy – Moses’ speeches to Israel on the plains of Moab, as they were about to enter Canaan.

[51] Historical interpretation gives little attention to Moses and his original audience.

3. Literary

[52] Treats the Pentateuch as a portrait designed to impact its original audience in particular ways.

[53] Moses wrote the Pentateuch to prepare Israel for faithful service to God in the con-

quest and settlement of the Promised Land.

[54] Moses stood between two periods of time:

- “That world” – events that had taken place in the past
- “Their world” – the days of Moses’ original audience

[55] Three main ways Moses connected “that world” to “their world”:

- Background accounts that established the origins of their experience (e.g., Genesis 15:12-16)
- Models to imitate and reject (e.g., Genesis 2:24)
- Foreshadows of his audience’s world (e.g., Genesis 25:23)

[56] Literary interpretation discerns how Moses connected “that world” of the past to “their world” of his original audience.

IV. Conclusion