Introduction to the Pentateuch

*Reading Genesis*

* Structure of the book: “the generations of…”
  + Gen 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens
  + Gen 5:1 This is the list of the descendants of Adam. When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God
  + Gen 6:9 These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God.
  + Gen 10:1 These are the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; children were born to them after the flood.
  + Gen 11:10 These are the descendants of Shem.
  + Gen 11:27 Now these are the descendants of Terah. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot.
  + Gen 25:12 These are the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave-girl, bore to Abraham.
  + Gen 25:19 These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son
  + Gen 36:1 These are the descendants of Esau (that is, Edom).
  + Gen 37:2 This is the story of the family of Jacob
* The Promised Family and Promised Land
  + In Genesis 12-50, the promise of a family to Abraham and the land of Canaan drives the narrative.
  + Gen 17:7-8 *I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God*

*Reading Law and Ritual in Exodus – Deuteronomy*

* Consider the Context
  + Narrative context: “How does this passage fit into its current location?”
  + Broader biblical context: “How does this law/ritual fit into the biblical story?”
  + Ancient Near Eastern context: “How does this text make sense in ancient culture?”
  + Our context: “How does this biblical passage interact with the context of our own lives?”
* Case Study: Numbers 15:27-41
  + An individual who sins unintentionally shall present a female goat a year old for a sin offering. 28 And the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the one who commits an error, when it is unintentional, to make atonement for the person, who then shall be forgiven. 29 For both the native among the Israelites and the alien residing among them-- you shall have the same law for anyone who acts in error. 30 But whoever acts high-handedly, whether a native or an alien, affronts the LORD, and shall be cut off from among the people. 31 Because of having despised the word of the LORD and broken his commandment, such a person shall be utterly cut off and bear the guilt. 32 When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses, Aaron, and to the whole congregation. 34 They put him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him outside the camp." 36 The whole congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 37 The LORD said to Moses: 38 Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. 39 You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. 40 So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God. 41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

1. What would you say is the primary concern of the law in this passage? (vv. 27 – 31)
2. Why would the author place the story of the Sabbath-breaker immediately after this law? (vv. 32 – 36)
3. How do you think the law concerning tassels fits into this setting? (vv. 37 – 41)
4. So, what do we as Christians do with a passage like this?