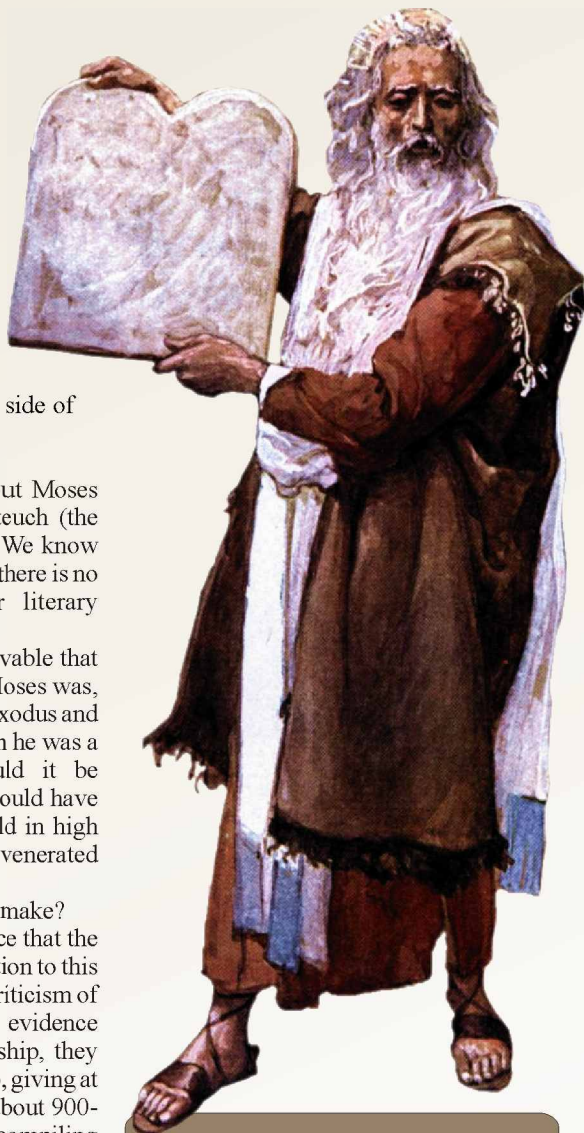


Who Wrote The Law?



The Bible specifically states that Moses wrote “the law,” made a book of it, and put it into the side of the ark (Deut. 31:24-26).

The critics deny it.

What is unreasonable about Moses being the author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible)? We know that Moses could write and that there is no historical, archaeological, or literary reason for denying it.

Why should it be inconceivable that a literate man, as educated as Moses was, would write a chronicle of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings in which he was a chief participant? Why should it be inconceivable that his works would have been retained by Israel and held in high esteem? There is no more venerated figure in all Israel's history.

But what difference does it make?

It makes so much difference that the critics have devoted more attention to this subject than any other in their criticism of the Bible. In spite of all the evidence pointing to the Mosaic authorship, they have chopped the Pentateuch up, giving at least five authors dating from about 900-700 B.C., and delayed the final compiling of the books until after the Babylonian captivity!

Why? On the basis of what evidence?

Consider the Evidence

The critical theories generally deny that Moses wrote the Law. It is supposed to have been written in various periods of religious development over a span of centuries. Now since the Bible makes it

quite clear that Moses wrote the Law, we must surely expect the critics to have a very good reason for disputing this.

It's worth taking the time to examine these reasons—by going directly to the foundations upon which these theories are built.

The critics advance three main “clues” from which they derive their theories.

Clue Number One

Astruc's Clue (1753). Certain passages in Genesis call God JHWH (Jehovah) and in others He is referred to as Elohim. This is interpreted to mean a difference in authorship (A. Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible*, p. 167).

Virtually all of the literary analysis of the Pentateuch has proceeded from this observation. How much, however, can really be learned from a purely literary analysis of a document?

The reader can easily judge this for himself by a simple examination of his own Authorized Version of the Bible [King James Version of 1611]. In it the word YHVH, or YAHWEH, (pronounce Jehovah by some) is usually rendered in capital letters, and occasionally by the word GOD, also in capital letters. The word Elohim in all of its forms is simply translated “God,” with no capitals. By going through and marking the words it becomes quite simple to get an overall view of the distribution of these titles or names of God.

The first thing Astruc noticed was the first chapter of Genesis used the term Elohim exclusively.

Did Moses write the first five books of the Bible? Hebrew tradition and Jesus say he did. But the Bible critics disagree. Why? What are their reasons? What proof do they offer? Can we know who wrote the Law? And does it really matter?

It must be remembered that Astruc was a Frenchman, and had for ten years resided in Paris, at a time when the niceties of style were as much studied as the punctilious of etiquette. We can hardly be surprised, then, that he should conclude that an author who used the name Elohim thirty-one times in a chapter containing only thirty-one verses, must have no other name for God. For how otherwise could he have inflicted or endured what to the sensitive Frenchman was so frightful a monotony? (John Urquhart, *The New Biblical Guide*, Vol. 1, p. 22)

In the second chapter of Genesis, however, Moses combines the two words into "Yahveh Elohim." For Astruc, this was inconceivable. It seemed impossible to impute to Moses "a fault which no other writer has ever committed." He asked:

Is it not, on the contrary, more natural to explain this variation by supposing, as we do, that the Book of Genesis is formed of two or three memoirs, joined and stitched together in fragments, the authors of which had each given to God always the same name, but each a different name—one that of Elohim, and the other that of Jehovah or Jehovah-Elohim? (Astruc, quoted by John Urquhart, *ibid.*, p. 43.)

But one simple fact was taken into consideration by the critics. YHVH and Elohim are not synonyms! They are two different names for God—and consequently have entirely different meanings. It is necessary for a writer to choose one of the other or both according to the emphasis which he wishes to place on the name.

What have we proved? That distribution of the divine names in Genesis may be interesting and there may even be some significance in the choice of words in that particular passage. But it certainly cannot be regarded as proof of multiple authors!

[Besides, Moses, as an author, is not bound by the literary style and writing of the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th or the 20th Centuries, therefore his writing cannot be judged by our literary standards.]

No Evidence From Computers

Now what about the differences of style within the Pentateuch? Does this prove that multiple authors were involved? A recent computer test of the style of the Pentateuch indicated multiple authorship. But is this kind of evidence proof?

Recently two theologians "commissioned" a computer to make a purely literary analysis of the Epistles of Paul. The computer was programmed to

analyze key words in the author's vocabulary, their frequency of use, and the length of sentences. Their conclusion? "Only five out of thirteen letters tested were written by Paul."

The results of the computer research were considered as conclusive evidence that Paul did not write all the Epistles attributed to him. This conclusion was widely publicized.

Later, however, scientists used the same computer to make an analysis of contemporary authors—notably Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond. The computer's conclusions: Ian Fleming didn't write them all!

Of course, Fleming did actually write the books. They have grossed
t o o

determine authorship.

Many of the greatest writers known to man are quite inconsistent in their style. Sir Walter Scott has been criticized frequently for his unevenness of style.

Let us grant that he could write abominably. But is there any great writer, especially any great novelist, who does not sometimes nod? Dickens has appalling lapses of style; so has Thackeray; so has George Meredith... (John Buchan, quoted by O.T. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses*, p. 70).

Another illustration can be found in the works of Thomas Hardy. Buchan calls the last two paragraphs of *The Woodlanders* "the most beautiful passages written in our day by any novelist." However, there was such a lapse in style that he is able to quote two thirds of a specific sentence and say, "Could anything be better?" Then, after quoting the rest of the very same sentence he says, "Could anything be worse?" (*Ibid.*) If the critics found this in the Bible, they would assume that a different man wrote the last half of the sentence!

We see then that [computer-generated] literary analysis, including Astruc's clue, is unable to determine the authorship of the Pentateuch. [It is noteworthy that if there is something the computer tests can accurately prove, it has accurately proven that authors or writers, whether Moses or those in our time, do not follow a strict literary rule or style of writing.] We are now ready to look at the second foundational "clue."

Clue Number Two

De Wette's Clue (1805). The Laws of Moses are ignored until the time of Josiah; then we begin to hear of the central sanctuary described in Deuteronomy 12. Moreover, the literary style and moral and religious tone of the books are centuries ahead of Moses' day (A. Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible*, p. 167).

Now De Wette wasn't entirely wrong. The Laws of Moses were generally ignored until the time of Josiah. But here's where a rather simple-minded assumption leads the critics astray: It is an axiom of criticism that if a law is ignored, broken or generally unknown at any given point in an historical account, it may be concluded that the law was in reality introduced at a later date and the historical account is inaccurate. In other words, the Law of Moses is supposed to have come along

much money for an unknown author to sit quietly on the sidelines while another author soaks up the money. But employing the standards by which the Epistles of Paul were judged, Ian Fleming didn't write all of his books!

The works of Graham Greene and G. K. Chesterton were also found to have "more than one author." But Dr. Robert Churchhouse, who conducted the experiment at the Atlas Computer Laboratory in Chilton, Berkshire, refuted his own results and felt this was "highly unlikely." In other words, the computer's literary analysis wasn't able to accurately

after Josiah began in his reign.

The Sanctuary

We are told by the critics that it is in Josiah's time that we begin to hear of the central sanctuary described in Deuteronomy 12—as opposed to a number of high places where offerings might be offered. The reader should examine Deuteronomy 12 for himself. It contains instructions, not merely for offerings and sacrifices, but for the observance of Holy Days. God specifically instructed them that were not to observe these Holy Days anywhere they pleased, but they were to go “unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there.”

The place is not specified. It is simply to be a place where God selects.

Now for the critics to proclaim that this idea of a central sanctuary was unknown until the time of Josiah, and that therefore Deuteronomy must have originated about that time, they must overlook entirely the historical record of First Samuel.

A man named Elkanah is described—the father of Samuel. We are told: “And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship...the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh” (I Sam. 1:3).

Notice that he left his own city and went to a sanctuary elsewhere. Reading on in the account, we find that there was a high priest at this central sanctuary, that it was a place to which people went to pray (I Sam. 1:9, 10), and that Elkanah offered his sacrifice and his vow there (I Sam. 1:21), as commanded in Deuteronomy 12:6-7.

In other words, to say that we only begin to hear of a central sanctuary in the time of Josiah simply overlooks the plain record of all the Biblical history leading up to that time.

Laws Disregarded

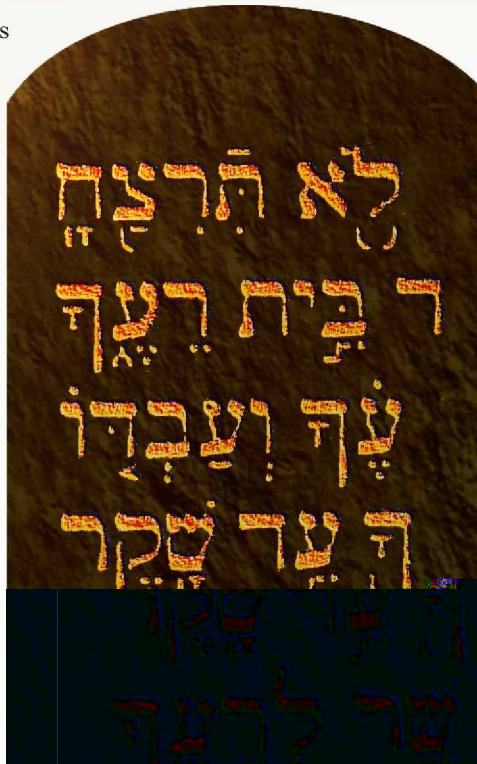
The key to clue number two, however, lies in the critic's idea that laws which Biblical record indicates were unpracticed were in fact not in existence.

But this argument fails to take into account the *fact* that these laws *again* fell into disuse and became generally unknown *after* Josiah's time in precisely the same way as before Josiah.

In addition, the reader should look into II Kings 22 for himself and judge whether the Law of Moses really was totally new to Josiah and the priests. The

book which Hilkiah found in the Temple was no ordinary book of laws. It is described as “the book of the law.”

The direct article is present in the Hebrew. Furthermore, the reaction of Josiah when he heard the words of this law makes no sense whatsoever if he had had no such knowledge of the existence of such a law before this time. Who would be foolish enough to swallow a totally new book concerning which there was no tradition and of which no one had heard—and suddenly decide that it was a book of great religious authority? Why would Josiah accept it? And how could he possibly impose it upon the people unless there was at least some knowledge of its authority?



It is clear that while the contents of the book came as a great shock to Josiah and the others, the existence of the book and its authority did not.

Centuries Ahead

De Wette goes on to point out that, “The literary style and moral and religious tone of the books are centuries ahead of Moses' day.”

True. The moral and religious tone of the books is indeed centuries ahead of Moses' day. In fact, the moral and religious tone of the Law of Moses is centuries ahead of our own day!

The Laws of Moses are centuries ahead of their time in every way—scientifically as well as morally. Where health is concerned for example, the Laws of Moses are an island of common sense in a sea of paganism.

The especial value of the Hebrew contribution to the development of scientific medicine was the complete repudiation of the dominance which magic was thought to exercise in the whole realm of pathology, and the substitution of a rational prophylactic approach (R. H. Harrison, Healing Herbs of the Bible, p. 14).

Now the evolutionary approach would have us to believe that the Hebrews grew out of paganism into this new phase—that it represents the natural progress of the human mind. But is this idea historically accurate? What in fact did the human mind do with these laws?

It is therefore unfortunate that the Jews of the apocryphal period abandoned their inheritance and began to adopt the ancient Babylonian practice of using spells, amulets and charms in the prevention and treatment of disease ... In later Judaism the physician became increasingly involved in magic and superstition (ibid., pp. 14, 15).

The Law of Moses—given by God—lifted the Hebrews out of the paganism and filth of Egyptian medicine, but the human mind couldn't hold on to it. Israel reverted to the pagan superstition over and over again. It was only occasionally, as in the case of Josiah, that revivals of faith in God and obedience to His law took place.

Now what is left of De Wette's clue? We find that his evidence for his hypothesis about the writing of the Biblical laws in the time of Josiah is based on a naive substitution of an evolutionary concept of the development of religion for what was in fact simply a degeneration in Israel's religion. We find that the central sanctuary was in use from the time of the Judges. And when we come to the point regarding the moral and religious tone of the books, we simply come back again to the question, “Are these laws of human or divine origin?”

It is true that no man living in Moses' time could have originated these laws. The critical argument is that they were written later. Yet, in fact, these laws would not have originated from the mind of any man at any time in the history of Israel—or in the history of the world! [The health laws of “clean and unclean meats” alone of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are glaring evidences of

a “Mind” that is beyond Moses or any of Josiah’s time. And it is only in the 20th Century, at the advent of the study of Genetics, can we prove that these health laws concerning animals are well founded.]

The history of Israel proves conclusively beyond any shadow of a doubt that both Judah and Israel were by

represent a stage in Israel’s religious development, but a stage in their religious degeneration.

Notice also that Graf held that God could be worshiped anywhere at any shrine in the earliest stage. Yet we have already seen in I Samuel 1 that Elkanah had to leave his city and go to the central sanctuary.

No one could have palmed off a spurious law of Moses on these hard-headed, stubborn, rebellious people and made them believe it was divine

nature hostile to this law—before and after the time of Josiah! They were hostile to the law because it was the Law of God, and no one—I repeat no one—could have palmed off a spurious law of Moses on these hard-headed, stubborn, rebellious people and made them believe it was divine! Either there was some admittedly divine authority in this book or it could never have been accepted!

Clue Number Three

Graf’s Clue (1866). There are three stages in the development of Israelitish religion. JE {The two “documents” containing YAHWEH and Elohim} corresponds to a stage, running up to the time of Josiah, when God might be worshiped anywhere at any shrine; any layman could offer his sacrifice, and images of Jehovah were tolerated. D corresponds to a stage when worship was centralized at Jerusalem, and priests and Levites only might minister at the altar. After the exile, a full and complicated ritual was laid down by P, and only priests could minister (A. Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible*, p. 168).

All this, of course, is purely hypothetical. A key is found in the remark that “images of Jehovah were tolerated.” Tolerated by whom?

Certainly not by God!

The “Graf Clue” is based on his own mistaken interpretation of the history of Israel. It is based squarely on the evolutionary concept of culture, which has since been discarded.

It is quite true that there were numerous altars in Israel which are spoken of in Judges, Samuel and Kings and there were images held by some people—including Michal, David’s wife. All this proves nothing except the fact that the people were disobeying the law. It doesn’t prove that the law was not in existence. Furthermore, it does not really

Graf-Wellhausen Theory

Actually, this “clue” is not a clue at all, but is pure theory. It was taken in hand by a literary critic named Wellhausen and developed into what is now known as the Graf-Wellhausen Theory. Strangely, this theory was not based upon literary analysis or archaeological discovery. It was founded entirely on the German philosopher Hegel’s evolutionary philosophy.

There is no proof of these three stages of Israel’s religious “development” at all. The Bible doesn’t back it up in any way. Nor does archaeology. However, at the turn of the century the Graf-Wellhausen Theory was held in the highest esteem. Dr. C. F. Burney wrote of this theory:

This latter hypothesis [i.e., the Graf-Wellhausen Theory] with the reconstruction which it involves of our view of the development of Israel’s religion after B.C. 750, may now be regarded as proved up to the hilt for any thinking and unprejudiced man who is capable of estimating the character and value of the evidence (H. M. Wiener, *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism*, p. 176).

Here we encounter intellectual blackmail. If one disagrees that this hypothesis is “proved up to the hilt,” then he is regarded as either unthinking, prejudiced, or incapable of estimating the value of evidence. Many a scholar has been intimidated by this approach. The Graf-Wellhausen Theory was almost universally accepted among higher critics of the day.

But has the theory stood the test of time and evidence? No, it hasn’t.

The Theory Falls

Since 1908, a tremendous amount of new material has become available which

has forced a complete reappraisal. One of the top contemporary Bible scholars, writing in 1960, tells us that:

The generally accepted account of Israel’s history and religion produced by Wellhausen and popularized in the late 19th and early 20th centuries survives, to be sure, today. It is especially among non-specialists that it is accepted as indubitably valid, and particularly among those who would claim the label “Liberal,” religious as well as secular (G. E. Mendenhall, “Biblical History and Transition,” *The Bible and The Ancient Near East*, p. 36, emphasis mine).

The specialist in the field have had to realize that Wellhausen’s theory was really not based upon evidence as well as on philosophy. However, there are always those who don’t get the word. Mendenhall goes on to point out:

Yet, Wellhausen’s theory of the history of Israelite religion was very largely based on a Hegelian {evolutionary} philosophy of history, not upon his literary analysis. It was an a priori evolutionary scheme which guided him in the utilization of his sources. Such evolutionary schemes have been rejected nearly everywhere else ... Hypotheses are basic to research, to be sure, but they should arise on the basis of some sort of evidence, not simply be transferred from a philosophic system.

Now this was not published by some obscure religious quack, but in a collection of articles by the most noted Biblical scholars and archaeologists in the world. It reflects the scholarship and research of recent years. Yet many theologians are still blissfully unaware of it!

While many people assume that critics have successfully repudiated the Bible, the facts are stacking higher and higher all the time repudiating the critics. Wellhausen, as others have done, started with an assumption which prejudiced the rest of his work and guaranteed a false conclusion.

The Three “Clues”

Now, what is left of the three foundational “clues” upon which the critical theory was built? Astruc’s “clue” was found to be inconclusive. De Wette’s “clue” was spawned in ignorance of essential evidence. And Graf’s “clue” was not a clue at all but an expression of an evolutionary theory or religion which has since been rejected by scholars.

There is, therefore, no foundation for the critical theories which deny the

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Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But there is a very good foundation to support the truth that Moses was the human author of the Pentateuch.

The Test of Language

If the Pentateuch was written long after the time of Moses and only was finally finished after the Babylonian captivity—as the critics would have us to believe—there should be certain clearly defined linguistic evidence available. Late Babylonian and Persian influence should be present, and there should be no special Egyptian influence. Furthermore, the history and archaeology should be “full of mistakes and anachronisms” (A. Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible*, p. 161).

These tests certainly apply equally to other books of the Bible, which were in fact written at a later date.

Such books of the Bible as Ezekiel, Daniel and partly also of Ezra and Nehemiah, which were admittedly composed during and immediately after the exile, reveal in language and style such an unmistakable Babylonian influence that these newly entered foreign elements leap to the eye (A. S. Yahuda, *The Language of the Pentateuch in Its Relation to Egyptian*, p. xxix).

The Pentateuch, however, presents a totally different picture. The influence of the Babylonian language in the Pentateuch is so minute as to be negligible and what is there is extremely archaic, dating back to the time of Abraham. This, of course, is exactly what we would expect.

It is when we look for the Egyptian influence, however, that we begin to get the full picture. Yahuda finds even the early chapters of Genesis “full of Egyptian influence.” For example, the word *tebah* is used for Noah's ark, and is

an Egyptian word. It occurs twenty-six times in Genesis, twice in Exodus (dealing with the little ark that the baby Moses was hidden in) and nowhere else in the Old Testament.

Piltner lists some of the more notable Egyptian words found in the Pentateuch. Read his conclusion:

These words alone (there appear to be others in the Pentateuch) show, firstly, a strong Egyptian influence upon the writer, which is adequately and best explained by his having been, although a Hebrew, instructed in Egyptian schools; in other words, they point to Moses; and secondly as they are words of everyday life—including a liquid and dry measure, and linen and woolen textiles—indicate strong and persistent Egyptian influence upon the common life of the Hebrews which admits of no explanation satisfactory as that of the sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt for a considerable period (W. T. Piltner, *The Pentateuch, A Historical Record*, pp. 506, 507).

This powerful Egyptian influence in the Pentateuch, which shows itself most distinctly in the Exodus, is unmistakable evidence of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Kyle says:

These words are of such unusual meaning and of such temporary use in Egypt, belong so peculiarly to the place and the times and are used with such absolute accuracy throughout the Pentateuch, that it is incredible that scribes of a late period in Israel's history could have attained to such a linguistic nicety. The passages in which these words occur must have come from the Mosaic age, the only age when some of them were employed in Egypt (M. G. Kyle, *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism*, pp. 249, 250).

Finally, if, as the critical theory would have us to believe, the Pentateuch was of late origin and based on early myths and legends, we would expect the

history and archaeology to be full of mistakes and anachronisms. This however, is not the case.

Then when the archaeological data of the Mosaic age are laid all along the course of the Pentateuchal narrative, it is found to be so uniformly harmonious with that narrative, with the customs, the institutions, the topography, the itineraries, and the history, as far as these are known, all the way from the shadows of Hebrew slavery in Egypt to ... the turning back from Kadesh-Barnea, as to make one marvel that different authors in different centuries should have been so uniformly successful in the representations of historical fiction (ibid., p. 251).

And so in conclusion, everything in the Pentateuch is as it should be for Moses to be the author.

What Difference Does It Make?

Let's return to the original question. What difference does it make whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch? Why have the critics devoted so much time trying to prove that the Pentateuch was composed of documents written from about 750 B.C. onwards?

The answer is simple. Once we admit the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, it becomes impossible to deny the divine origin of the Law. The evolutionary concept of the development of Israel's religion requires a passage of time in which a law could evolve. The Law, they reason, therefore had to be the result of trial and error of a form of “natural selection.”

No single living man in *any* given age of history could *possibly* have written such a Law. In this the critics are correct. *God*, not Moses, is the Author of the Law! **[*The Good News of Tomorrow's World*, February 1971] AG**