From the Editor's Notebook: Pointers on the Pentateuch

W. Ross Rainey

All material used by permission of the author, as published on plymouthbrethren.org. Many of these articles first appeared in Food for the Flock and Ministry in Focus.

Also online at https://plymouthbrethren.org/article/10592

Genesis

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Pointers on the Pentateuch

Genesis: The Book of Beginnings

Key Word: Beginning.

Message: Man’s sin met by God’s salvation.

Key Verses: 1:1 — “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” 3:15 — “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Introduction

In many ways Genesis is the most important book in the Bible. Every great truth springs from this book, just as great and mighty oaks spring from little acorns. E. W. Bullinger has said: “Genesis is the seed-plot of the whole Bible, and it is essential to the true understanding of its every part. It is the foundation on which the Divine Revelation rests, and on which it is built up. It is not only the foundation of all Truth, but it enters into and forms part of all subsequent inspiration; and it is at once the warp and woof of Holy Writ.”

Genesis is written in the historical style. It is fact, not fiction; prose, not poetry. This is the book of beginnings where we have the beginning of everything except God. As W. Graham Scroggie has picturesquely commented, Genesis is the “beginning of the universe, of life, of man,

of the sabbath, of covenants, of nomenclature, of marriage, of sin, of redemption, of death, of family life, of sacrifices, of nations, of government, of music, of literature, of art, of agriculture, of mechanics, of cities, and of languages; indeed, of everything we know. As to its limits, it is only the beginning; there is here no finality. It is a kind of daybreak book, a wondrous dawn … it is the small window through which may be seen, beyond the dark valley, the Land of Delights."1 Genesis may correctly be called the book of births, for in it we have the family tree of the Jews. The great prophecy-promise of Genesis 3:15 suggests the "New Birth," pointing to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of redemption He would accomplish.

Genesis is the first of the five books of Moses, known as the Pentateuch and also called "the Law" (cf. Matt. 22:40; Luke 24:44; John 10:34). The New Testament unanimously ascribes the human authorship of Genesis to Moses (cf. Matt. 19:8; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:31; John 5:46), though he undoubtedly incorporated sacred traditions handed down from the patriarchs, there also being traces of an editor's hand —probably Ezra's.

Time-wise Genesis covers a period of some 2,369 years. It is both interesting and instructive to note that, in Genesis 1-11, God takes only seven chapters to cover 2,000 years in relating the origin of the universe and race, while from Genesis 12 through the balance of the Old Testament another 2,000 years is covered in telling the story of Abraham and his family.

Outline

1. Generation (1-2)

2. Degeneration (3-11)

3. Regeneration (12-50)

Genesis may also be outlined from the standpoint of seven notable men brought before us in its chapters:

1. Adam — Promise (1-3)

2. Seth — Substitution (4-5)

3. Noah — Resurrection (6-11)

4. Abraham — Pilgrim (12-23)

5. Isaac — Christ (24-26)

6. Jacob — Discipline (27-36)

7. Joseph — God's Perfect Man (37-50)

Notable Notes

Harold Fortesque, when a junior reporter for a great London newspaper, turned in an embellished account for a social function he had been assigned to cover. Proud of his efforts, he awaited the editor's comments. "Cut it down to one sheet!" he was told. Protesting, Fortesque argued that this would be impossible. "Young man," barked the editor, "you have evidently failed to observe that the story of Creation is told in just ten words: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and earth'"! The very first verse in the Bible confronts us with the wonder of the Book of books; it is both simple and sublime.

Stressing the importance of Genesis, G. Campbell Morgan has said that "the whole system of the Christian religion depends upon the accuracy of certain statements made in this book." He cites the fact that in Genesis we have recorded seven "permanent values":

Theology (the science of God), Cosmogony (the science of the Universe), Anthropology (the science of Man), Sociology (the science of Society), Hamartiology (the science of Sin), Ethnology (the science of the Races), and Soteriology (the science of Salvation), all these subjects being dealt with “fundamentally and not finally.”2 Eric W. Hayden has said of Genesis: “Here in this book God’s nature is revealed, His universe described, man’s responsibility declared, society’s inter-responsibility recognized, sin as man’s failure affirmed, racial disunity attempted, salvation explained.”3 The name “Genesis” is one of Greek origin, stemming from the Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Old Testament Scriptures. As its name implies, it is a book of beginnings, the beginning of creation, life and the human race, marriage, the family, the state, nations, civilization, history, law, government, penalty, worship, covenants, the call of God, the elect people, promise, prophecy, language, literature, mechanic arts, fine arts, science, poetry, and of all else we know (to amplify a little of what has already been quoted from Scroggie).

The three great gaps which science and evolution cannot bridge (viz., the origin of matter, animal life, and man) are bridged in Genesis, the words “God created” standing at each of these three bridges in Genesis 1:1, 21 and 27. Ninety-nine per cent of the book’s purpose is to reveal the “Who” of creation; one percent to tell the “how” of creation.

The word “generations” indicates the successive divisions of the book and the gradual concentration on one line of ancestry — Israel (cf. 2:4, 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2).

By placing together the first five and the last four words of Genesis, we have a parable of ruin wrought by sin's entrance into the world: "In the beginning God created" — "a coffin in Egypt."

Genesis 1 and 2 tell us what God did; 3-11 what Satan did; and 12-50 what the God-man, Christ, would do.

Seven outstanding events are recorded in Genesis: the world's creation, man's creation, the fall, the flood, the pioneer of faith —Abraham, the migration to Egypt, and the coming of the Saviour.

In this great book of beginnings the LORD JESUS CHRIST is revealed as THE SEED. And it is a book wherein we see the failure of men met by the faithfulness of God.

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

For The Year Ahead

I want a principle within,

Of jealous, godly fear;

A sensibiliy to sin,

A pain to feel it near.

I want the first approach to feel

Of pride, or fond desire;

To catch the wandering of my will,

And quench the kindling fire.

From Thee, that I no more may part.

No more Thy goodness grieve,

The filial awe, the fleshly heart,

The tender conscience give.

Quick as the apple of the eye,

O God, my conscience make;

Awake, my soul, when sin is nigh,

And keep it still awake.

If to the right or left I stray,

That moment, Lord, reprove;

And let me grieve my life away,

For having grieved Thy love.

O! may the least omission pain

My well-instructed soul,

And drive me to the blood again,

Which makes the wounded whole.

—Author Unknown

The Annual Meeting

On October 31st, 1987, the Annual Meeting of FOOD FOR THE FLOCK INC. was convened at Don Valley Bible Chapel in Toronto. It was the unanimous decision of the committee to continue to publish “Food for the Flock” magazine through 1988, looking to our Lord for His continued wisdom and material provision. As our readers may have gleaned from past reports, we publish and mail the magazine on an extremely thin financial margin, but we rejoice and give hearty thanks to our Lord that in His great faithfulness He has enabled us to uninterruptedly publish “Food for the Flock” for 33

years. Thus it is with this same dependence on Him that we commit ourselves to still another year of publication.

It should be noted that Mr. Donald K. Steele of Lakefield, Ontario, is the new associate editor, this responsibility having been left vacant since the Home Call of Mr. James Gunn in 1983. Mr. Steele has served on the "Food for the Flock" committee for several years, even as it has been my joy to know Don since he was in his teens. He currently serves as an elder in the assembly at Lakefield and is employed as a grade school teacher at Norwood. He has written many articles which have appeared in the magazine over the years, his latest having been published in the September-October 1987 issue. We look forward to working together to bring you the best that we can in edifying, challenging, Christ-exalting written ministry.

Over this past year many personal expressions of encouragement and appreciation from home and abroad have been received relative to the helpfulness of the magazine in the lives of God's people. These not only gladden my heart but provide fresh impetus to forge ahead with the tasks at hand.

As editor, and on behalf of the committee, we join in expressing our sincere appreciation to our readers for your participation with us in helping to carry on this good work. Also we invite you to make any suggestions and/or kindly criticisms whereby we may be better able to serve you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25).

—W. Ross Rainey, Editor

1 W. Graham Scrogie, Know Your Bible, I, p. 21.

2 Eric W. Hayden, Preaching through the Bible, p. 13.

3 Ibid., p. 13.

Exodus

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Christ The Lord Is Risen Today

Christ the Lord is risen today,

Sons of men and angels say:

Raise your joys and triumphs high,

Sing, ye heav’ns and earth reply.

Lives again our glorious King,

Where, O death, is now thy sting?

Dying once He all doth save,

Where’s thy victory, O grave?

Love’s redeeming work is done,

Fought the fight, the battle won,

Death in vain forbids Him rise,

Christ has opened Paradise.

This popular Easter hymn by Charles Wesley (1707-1788) originally had eleven stanzas of four lines. In many formal churches it has become traditional to use it as the processional hymn at every Easter sunrise service.

The tune generally used is entitled “Easter Hymn” and was composed in the fourth century. It is interesting to note that Charles Wesley’s “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” was sung for 100 years to the “Easter Hymn”

tune, until the 1840 adaptation of Mendelssohn's tune to Wesley's Christmas carol.

Pointers on the Pentateuch

Exodus: The Book of Redemption

Key Word: Redemption.

Message: Redemption by purchase (i.e., blood) and by power.

Key Verses: 12:23 & 24 — "The Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever." 20:2 — "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Introduction

Exodus has been called "the sequel to Genesis," G. Campbell Morgan having said, "In the Book of Exodus nothing is commenced, nothing finished."1 The word exodus comes from the Greek and means "the way put," commonly known in English as "exit." The book continues the chain of events begun in Genesis, the patriarchal family having become a nation numbering between two and three million people during the three-and-a-half centuries between Genesis and Exodus. In Genesis 15:13-16 the Lord told Abraham that at least 400 years would elapse between the promise of Canaan as an inheritance and its possession as an inheritance (cf.. Ex. 12:40; Gal. 3:17 — the 430 years are from the time Jacob went down to Egypt until the exodus). The

book of Exodus covers some 216 years, its message having been accurately stated in Hebrews 11:23-29.

Exodus is a book which begins in gloom and ends in glory. It tells how God came in grace to deliver a people in bondage, and then how He came down in glory to dwell in the midst of a redeemed people. Exodus deals with a nation rather than with outstanding individuals, Moses being the prominent individual throughout the book, his name occurring over 700 times in the Bible. That Moses was the human author of Exodus is affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37). Moses was an outstanding type of Christ, illustrating the fact that throughout the Scriptures redemption is centered in a man, the Man Christ Jesus. Egypt is a type of the world, Pharaoh a type of Satan, and Israel a type of man, enslaved and needing redemption.

Commenting on the relation between Genesis and Exodus, W. Graham Scroggie has stated: “The connection between GENESIS and EXODUS is intimate. In the one the Divine purpose is revealed, and in the other the Divine performance is exhibited. In the one are human effort and failure, and in the other are Divine power and triumph. In the one is a word of promise, and in the other is a work of fulfillment. In the one is a People chosen, and in the other is a People called. In the one is God’s electing mercy, and in the other is God’s electing manner. In the one is the revelation of nationality, and in the other is the realization of nationality.”2

Outline

1. Slavery (1-2)

2. Salvation (3-15:21)

3. Separation (15:22-40:38)

Notable Notes

In Exodus, chapters 1-18 are historical; chapters 19-40 are legislative.

Exodus begins with the words: “Now these are the names …” (1:1), for redemption always involves names — names written by God’s grace into His book.

The great events in Exodus are:

1. The training of Moses.

2. The Ten Plagues.

3. The Passover.

4. The Red Sea passage.

5. The giving of the Law.

6. The ordination of a priesthood.

7. The construction of the Tabernacle.

Exodus should be studied in a number of ways:

1. Christologically.

2. Typically.

3. Prophetically.

4. Scripturally.

5. Spiritually.

6. Dispensationally.

7. Religiously.

8. Historically.

9. Institutionally.

10. Biographically.

11. Geographically.

There are three sets of three things which are significant to trace through in Exodus.

1. Slavery, Emanciation, Reconstruction.

2. Egypt, Red Sea, Sinai.

3. The Ten Plagues, the Passover, the Ten Commandments.

It is interesting to trace the word Exodus in connection with Luke 9:31 and 2 Peter 1:15. Only by exodus can there be eisodus (cf. Deut. 6:23).

Nationally, Israel's Ruler was to be Jehovah; its constitution was the Law given on Mount Sinai; its central shrine was the Tabernacle; its bond of unity was the spiritual worship of the one true God; and its hope was the "Prophet … like unto thee (Moses)" (Deut. 18:18)

Exodus provides a straightforward account of God's dealings with His people from slavery, to sons, to separation and service. Furthermore, the book is a source of instruction regarding the divine principles which underlie God's dealings with man. Still further, Exodus is a picture book of the New Testament, the original Pilgrim's Progress with the pillar of God's presence leading the way (Ex. 12:21-22). The book is a parable and parallel of the Christian's pilgrimage (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11).

Herbert Lockyer wrote: "If in Genesis the earth is born by the Spirit out of the water, in Exodus Israel is born

anew by the Spirit out of the water."3 In the book of Exodus the LORD JESUS CHRIST is seen as "THE LAMB OF GOD" (cf. Ex. 12 with John 1:29).

1 J. Vernon McGee, Briefing the Bible, p. 8.

2 W. Graham Scroggie, Know Your Bible, I, p. 26.

3 Herbert Lockyer, All the Books and Chapters of the Bible, p. 24.

Leviticus

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Pointers on the Pentateuch

Leviticus: The Book of Holiness

Key Word: Holiness.

Message: Access to God.

Key Verses: 17:11 — “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” 19:2 — “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy”. 20:26 — “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Introduction

The title Leviticus comes from the Septuagint, Levi pertaining to the priestly tribe of Israel. It is a book of ritual, not of history. The Law had been given from Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle established, the glory of the Lord having filled it. Thus, in this book, God no longer speaks from Sinai but from the Tabernacle. The Jews called it “Vayick-rah,” being the equivalent of the first three words of the book, “And He called” (1:1). Leviticus reveals the Lord’s call to holiness, the word “holiness” occurring 87 times, while “holy” and its cognates occur more than 150 times. The word

“atonement” is found 45 times, Hebrew 9:22b serving as a good summary of the message of Leviticus: “and without shedding of blood is no remission.” In fact, the best commentary on the book is the Letter to the Hebrews.

G. Campbell Morgan said of Leviticus: “The holiness of God shines like a white, fearful light upon the whole book.”

Dr. S. H. Kellogg called Leviticus “the greatest book” in the Bible.

Dr. Joseph Parker stated: “Considered as embracing the history of one month only, this may claim to be the most remarkable book in the Old Testament.”

Dr. C. I. Scofield observed that “Leviticus stands in the same relation to Exodus, that the Epistles do to the Gospels.”

Leviticus does not continue the story of Exodus, but defines the priesthood and ritual ordained there. It is ethical in character, its value being both moral and spiritual, while its dominant notes are oblation, mediation, separation, and sanctification.1 John Phillips introduces Leviticus by stating: “In Exodus we see how God gets His people out of Egypt. In Leviticus we see how God gets ‘Egypt’ out of His people. Exodus begins with sinners, Leviticus with saints. Exodus shows the way out from the land of bondage. Leviticus shows us the way into the sanctuary of God. Exodus is the book of deliverance, Leviticus is the book of dedication.”2 In a similar but more extended vein, W. Graham Scroggie has written: “Mark the connection between EXODUS and LEVITICUS. In the one the people are brought nigh to God, and in the other they are kept nigh. In the one is

the fact of atonement, and in the other is the doctrine of it. EXODUS begins with sinners, but LEVITICUS begins with saints, that is, as to their standing, though not necessarily so as to their state. In EXODUS we read of God's approach to us, but in LEVITICUS, of our approach to God. In the one book Christ is the Saviour, and in the other He is the Sanctifier. In EXODUS our guilt is prominent, but in LEVITICUS, our defilement. EXODUS reveals God as Love, and LEVITICUS reveals him as Light. In the one, we are brought into union with Him, and in the other we are brought into communion. EXODUS offers us pardon but LEVITICUS calls us to purity. In the one book we are delivered from Satan, and in the other we are dedicated to God. In EXODUS God speaks out of the Mount, but in LEVITICUS He speaks out of the Tabernacle."3 The outstanding character of Leviticus is Aaron, while the outstanding chapter is the sixteenth, revealing the Day of Atonement.

Moses, the man of God, was the human author of Leviticus.

Leviticus is God's Textbook on Holiness and God's Guidebook for the Priests (4:14; Heb. 7:11).

Outline

1. Access to God (1-10)

2. Acceptance by God (11-27)

G. Campbell Morgan Has Interestingly And Instructively Outlined Leviticus As Follows:4

1. Dedication: The Offerings (1-7)

2. Mediation: The Priests (8-10)

3. Separation: The People (11-22)

4. Consecration: The Feasts (23-24)

5. Ratification: The Signs (25-27)

Notable Notes

Though there were offerings in Leviticus complementary to them, the five main offerings (the first three of which were sweet savor offerings and the last two sin offerings), are as follows:

1. The Burnt Offering (1).

2. The Meal Offering (2)

3. The Peace Offering (3).

4. The Sin Offering (4).

5. The Trespass Offering (5).

There were seven annual feasts and fasts, the first four having been celebrated in rapid succession at the beginning of the year, the remaining three taking place in succession in the seventh month. The Lord Jesus Christ literally fulfilled the first four at His first coming and will literally fulfill the other three at His second coming, the interval between the feasts in Israel's calendar illustrating the time period between the first and second coming of Christ.

The seven feasts are:

1. The Passover.

2. The Unleavened Bread.

3. The Firstfruits.

4. Pentecost.

5. Trumpets.

6. Atonement.

7. Tabernacles.

In Leviticus is revealed a Sabbatic system: seventh day, seventh week, seventh month, seventh year, and a heptad of years, which heptad culminated in the 50th year called “the year of jubilee” (cf. 2 Chron. 36:21).

In the Old Testament the feasts were called “feasts of Jehovah,” but in the New Testament they had so deteriorated that they were referred to as “feasts of the Jews” (John 5:1; 6:4).

The “how” of constant communion with God is a question authoritatively answered by the numerous direct messages from God, words such as “The Lord spake,” “said,” or “commanded,” occurring some 56 times in Leviticus.

It is important to observe from Leviticus that priesthood is for a people already redeemed. As Aaron and his successors acted strictly on behalf of the people of Israel alone, who had been sheltered by the Passover blood, so Christ is the fulfillment of that type and intercedes only on behalf of His Church. There is no priesthood on behalf of the world, except as true Christians today pray for the world.

Leviticus deals with the problems of sin aid redemption, Hebrews showing us that the Levitical sacrifices, priesthood, feasts and all other ritual were “a figure for the time then present” and “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. 9:9; 10:1).

In Leviticus the LORD JESUS CHRIST is seen as our GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

1 W. Graham Scroggie, Know Your Bible, I, p. 29.

2 John Phillips, Exploring the Scriptures, p. 27.

3 Scroggie, op. cit., p. 30.

4 G. Campbell Morgan, The Analyzed Bible, p. 34.

Numbers

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Pointers on the Pentateuch

Numbers: The Book of Pilgrimage and Service

Key Word: Journeys.

Message: Discipline in the desert.

Key Verse: 33:1 — “These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.”

Introduction

The title “Numbers,” stemming from the Greek, is given to this book because of the two separate “numberings” of Israel, the first one in the second year of their journey (1-4), and the second on the borders of Canaan, some 38 years afterward (26). Its title in the Hebrew Bible is “b’midbar,” meaning “in the desert,” an accurate and appropriate designation since the book records the journeyings of the Israelites from Sinai until they arrived in the Plains of Moab. As already indicated, Numbers covers a period of 38 years and of the 27 chapters which tell of the events which took place after the people left Mount Sinai (10-36), 17 are occupied with the history of the last year (20-36). Chapters 15-19 represent a period of almost 37 years, but no itinerary is given because these years represent their wanderings as distinguished from their journeyings. As W. Graham Scroggie has said:

“The movements of God’s people out of His will are not on His calendar.”1 Numbers might well be called “The Book of Murmurings,” there being eight specific incidents of the same. The people murmured against their food and drink, their blessings and punishments, their leaders and priests, and even against God. Their murmuring led still further downward to lust to rebellion and to idolatry.

The outstanding characters in the book are Joshua and Caleb, the only two who entered Canaan out of the older generation which left Egypt. The key chapters are the thirteenth and fourteenth which record the great rebellion at Kadesh-barnea, the Israelites failing at that time to press on and possess the Land of Canaan. As a result of their unbelief, the entire generation, apart from Joshua and Caleb, was condemned to die in the wilderness (cf. Heb. 3:7-19).

That Moses was the human author of Numbers is confirmed by several passages in the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1, 3-6, 8; Heb. 3:2; 9:14; 12:9).

Scroggie helpfully shows the relation of Numbers to Leviticus as follows: “As EXODUS is connected with GENESIS, and LEVITICUS with EXODUS, so is NUMBERS with LEVITICUS. In LEVITICUS the subject is the believer’s worship, but in NUMBERS it is the believer’s walk. The one treats of purity, and the other of pilgrimage. The one speaks of our spiritual position, and the other, of our spiritual progress. The one is concerned with our condition within, and the other, with our conduct without. LEVITICUS is ceremonial, and NUMBERS is historical. In the one the Sanctuary is prominent, and in the other, the Wilderness. The one

emphasizes privileges, and the other, responsibilities. The one calls to fellowship with God, and the other, to faithfulness to God. LEVITICUS speaks of the priests, and access to God, and NUMBERS, of the Levites, and service for men."2

Outline

1. The Old Generation (1-20)

2. The New Generation (21-36)

Another way of briefly outlining the book is as follows:

1. Preparing (1:1-10:10)

2. Provoking (10:11-20:29)

3. Progressing (21-36)

Notable Notes

A good way to remember the contents of Numbers is to memorize the geographical movements it describes in connection with Israel. The three main movements are:

1. From Sinai to Kadesh-barnea (1-12).

2. From Kadesh-barnea through the various wilderness wanderings and back to Kadesh-barnea (13-19).

3. From Kadesh-barnea to Jordan (20-36).

Scroggie has further indicated that "This book is remarkable for the number of fragments of ancient poetry preserved in it, showing, incidentally, the use in the Pentateuch of other writings (cf. vi. 24-26; x. 35, 36; xxi. 14, 15, 17, 18, 27-30).

Moses, Aaron, and Miriam all died before the people entered into the Land; Law, Priesthood, and Prophecy bring us to the borders of our inheritance, but only our

Divine Joshua can bring us into it."3 One of the keynotes of Numbers is the word "service" which is used over 40 times and also translated "warfare." Our service, as was the case with Israel of old, involves conflict. Thus the redeemed of the Lord are to walk, to work, and to war, thereby serving as a forthright witness to those round about them.

Numbers sets forth both the goodness and severity of God. Again and again, in Israel's trek through the wilderness, God manifested His patience and longsuffering toward a murmuring, wandering and unthankful people.

The rebellion of Korah, one of the three great rebellions in Israel's history between the Egyptian and Babylonian captivities (this one; the one in Samuel's day, when they demanded a king; and the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death), is a divine classic in setting forth the apostasy of man and the patience of God.

Numbers is an incomparable Old Testament record of the Shepherd care of Jehovah for His ancient people, Israel. The order of the camp is beautiful and impressive — foursquare (speaking of universality), in the wilderness, with the Tabernacle of the Lord in the midst, all suggesting the Christian Church in the world with Christ in the midst (Matt. 18:20; John 20:19), proclaiming the gospel message to all men everywhere (universality). Jehovah is seen as Administrator, Protector, Counselor and Leader. Here, the nation is accounted in array, and then in advance. As a purified people they had been provided with every need for their desert pilgrimage.

The severity of God is revealed in His punishment of sin, even the sin of Moses, while the goodness of God is evidenced in the guiding cloud, the daily manna, the water from the rock, and the brazen serpent for healing — all serving as types of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To be saved from the initial sin of murmuring, which sin leads to the sins of lust, rebellion and idolatry, is a major step toward spiritual maturity (cf. 1 Thess. 5:18; Phil. 2:14). One of the great lessons to be learned from Numbers is that while the wilderness is a part of the necessary discipline of God's redeemed people, the long years of wandering as a result of unbelief are entirely unnecessary. What happened to Israel is for our warning, not for our imitation (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-11; Heb. 3:17-19).

Three chapters are devoted to the false prophet Balaam and his prophecies (22-24), hired by Balak, king of Moab, to curse the Israelites. These chapters are among the most unusual and interesting in all the Bible, revealing a great deal concerning Christ and God's plan for His people.

In Numbers the LORD JESUS CHRIST is revealed as the "STAR OUT OF JACOB" (24:17).

1 W. Graham Scroggie, Know Your Bible, I, p. 33.

2 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

3 Ibid., p. 34.

Deuteronomy

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Pointers on the Pentateuch

Deuteronomy: The Book of Review

Key Words: Remember (18 times), Obey (10 times), Love (22 times).

Message: The motive for and absolute necessity of obedience.

Key Verses: 11:26-28 — “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”

Introduction

The title “Deuteronomy,” derived from the Greek, means “the second law,” being suggested by the statement in 17:18, that the coming king shall “write him a copy of this law in a book,” “Deuteronomy” simply being the words copy and law together. Historically, the book has its setting in the Plains of Moab, though the book itself is didactic, not historical. However, Deuteronomy must not be thought of solely as a repetition of the law. It is that, but it is a repetition with a new tone and emphasis after almost forty years in the wilderness.

Of Deuteronomy, W. Graham Scroggie has said: “The book stands in relation to the four preceding books much as John’s Gospel does to the Synoptic Records, in that each gives the spiritual significance of the afore-related historical facts. The dominating notes of the preceding Books are all here; the choice of GENESIS, the deliverance of EXODUS, the holiness of LEVITICUS, and the guidance of NUMBERS.”1 In a sense, the entire book is a divine treatment on obedience, and some Bible students consider it the most spiritual of all the Old Testament books. It is recommended that Deuteronomy be read in one sitting.

Deuteronomy contains Moses’ final words to Israel, G. Campbell Morgan having listed the great leader’s discourses in three groups of two: two “retrospective,” two “introspective,” and two “prospective.” In these three aspects the goodness, patience, righteousness, love and sovereignty of God are considered.2 After more than thirty-eight years’ experience in the wilderness, and in the light of a new generation (apart from Joshua and Caleb), it was necessary for Moses, the great Lawgiver, to review and comment on the laws given at Sinai, and this he did just one month before the nation crossed over Jordan to go in and possess the land of Canaan. The addresses were first delivered orally, and then written down (cf. 1:3; 31:24-26). Among many other things, this great book shows what God can do with the yielded tongue of a man who some forty years before had complained to the Lord: “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Ex. 4:10). Moses’ discourses are among the most eloquent ever recorded in all literature.

Though Deuteronomy shows touches of a later writer, and contains an appendix (34), competent scholarship has shown that it has all the peculiarities of Moses' style, and any differences may be accounted for by the mellowing effect of age.

Outline

There are several ways in which Deuteronomy may be outlined, as indicated by the following examples:

1. The First Discourse (1-4)

2. The Second Discourse (5-28)

3. The Third Discourse (29-30)

4. The Fourth Discourse (31)

5. The Fifth Discourse (32)

6. The Sixth Discourse (33)

Appendix (34)

1. Retrospect (1:1-4:43)

2. Resume of Laws (4:44-27:10)

3. Warnings (27:11-28:68)

4. The Covenant (29:1-31:13)

5. The Song (31:14-32:47)

6. The Blessing (32:48-33:39)

—G. Campbell Morgan3

1. The History of Israel —The Backward Look (1-3)

2. The Holiness of Israel —The Inward Look (4-11)

3. The Heritage of Israel —The Forward Look (12-30)

4. The Hero of Israel —The Upward Look (31-34)

—John Phillips4

1. God’s Love in the Past (1-4)

2. God’s Love in the Present (5-26)

3. God’s Love in the Future (27-34)

—W. Graham Scroggie5

Notable Notes

Scroggie has summarily said: “The first part of DEUTERONOMY is Historical; the second part is Legislative; and the third part is Prophetical. Moses, at the close of his life, looked upon a new generation, a new land, a new life, new duties, and a new leader, and so there was the need for this new revelation of the Divine ‘love,’ nowhere mentioned until now, though much illustrated.”6 Deuteronomy was the only book quoted by Christ in His conflict with the Tempter (cf. Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13 with Deut. 8:3; 6:16, 13; 10:20). Little wonder, then, that Satan has fiercely attacked it through the so-called “Higher Critics” of the past. The book is frequently quoted by the prophets.

Deuteronomy contains the first reference in the Bible to the “children of Belial” (13:13), the first mention of death by hanging on a tree (21:22-23), the only reference in the Old Testament to the burning bush which led to Moses’ call and Israel’s deliverance (33:16), and the great prediction about a coming Prophet like unto Moses (18:15-19).

The central chapter of Deuteronomy is the 29th, where Moses, dealing with God’s covenant, condenses the argument of the entire book.

Deuteronomy has been called the “Book of Experience and Obedience” (6:4-5), not only insisting on the full obedience of God’s people, but stoutly condemning “spiritism” (18:9-14), asserting the overthrow of Satan’s power (34:2 with Matt. 17:3; Heb. 2:14; Jude 9), and it may be used effectively in Satan’s defeat (Matt. 4:1-11).

As literature, Deuteronomy ranks with Genesis, The Book of Psalms, and Isaiah.

The book deals with the moral, civil and ceremonial law. The law itself did not fail, but it was “weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Love and law meet and are fulfilled in Christ. God’s motive for His government and giving of laws is His love for man; man’s motive for his obedience in the truest and highest sense is his love for God (Deut. 6:4-5). There is love in the Old Testament, and there is law in the New Testament (cf. John 14:15).

In Deuteronomy the LORD JESUS CHRIST is seen as the PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES.

1 W. Graham Scroggie, Know Your Bible, 1, p. 39.

2 G. Campbell Morgan, The Analyzed Bible, p. 53.

3 Ibid.

4 John Phillips, Exploring the Scriptures, pp. 45-46.

5 Scroggie, op. cit., p. 40.

6 Ibid.