

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_evangelical\\_quarterly.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php)

## THE WITNESS OF MOSES TO CHRIST

"We have found *Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write . . .*" (John i. 45).

THE fishing town of Bethsaida was a place on which high honour was conferred. It was the home of so many of those of whom it would yet have to be said that they turned the world upside down. It was the home town of Andrew and of his brother Simon. To it also Philip, who here speaks, belonged. Philip had heard the call of the Lord Jesus, "Follow Me". He had followed and he had found out who He was that he followed. He was full of the truth that he had thus come to know, and he showed an aggressive spirit such as was also shown by his townsman Andrew. For as Andrew first found his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus, Philip when he met his friend Nathanael must bring him also. Nathanael was, along with the others we have named, one of the set of young men who were to be our Lord's witnesses. Philip was so taken up with his discovery that Jesus was the Christ that he could not keep back from his comrade the knowledge of it. When he speaks as he does here he does so not only for himself but also for those who shared with him in the knowledge of the Son of God. They had found the Hope of Israel, who had been so long looked for. For His coming the fathers had waited, and now at last in the fulness of time He had come.

Philip and his fellows, we take it, had been stirred up by the message of John. They seem to have been his converts, being so many of the people prepared for the Lord. They had learned from his lips the searching and strict claims of the holy Law of God. In the light of this Law they had learned of their own guilt and danger of soul. From him, too, they had heard of the coming and of the nearness of the promised King, for John was the friend of the Bridegroom, and faithful to his trust as such he had told of His coming, and when He was revealed in public work he drew the attention of his disciples to Him. He had, as we see in the context before our text,

introduced two of his followers to the knowledge of Him Whose forerunner he himself was. When he did so he showed the insight that he had into the work which our Lord came to do. What he said by way of witness was through the Holy Ghost. For John bore witness as a prophet. He spoke of our Lord as the Lamb of God who bore that He might bear away the sin of the world. It was at the truth of the sacrificial character of our Lord's saving work, which came to a head in His death, that the apostles in their noviciate so often tripped and stumbled while their Lord was yet with them. Yet John saw into it and gave expression to this truth when he called our Lord the Lamb of God. The young men of whom we read here all came to see that Jesus was the Lord and in the words of our text Philip was their spokesman. What he said they would all say, for they had learned the same truth.

Let us now for a little look at the witness which Moses in his writings bore to our Lord. Moses had borne witness, and his witness was something more than that of the spoken word. It was written, and it is still on record. What was written might be read. It was to be found in the Law. This was not only given by Moses. It was by him written and his written word has been handed down through the ages and we have it still. The Pentateuch or the five books of Moses are his written legacy to the ages to come. That Moses wrote these books is what the unbelief of these latter days will not allow. By that attitude men cut themselves off from the tradition of Christian discipleship. For on this matter there is no note of dubiety struck in the teaching of our Lord, either in the course of His work as a Man of sorrows when He spoke what His Father gave Him to speak, or in the further and fuller messages that He has made known as the Risen Lord both before His ascension and after. Before He ascended He taught the apostles on earth. Since He ascended He spoke through them so that the words of their ministry were His own continued teaching ministry as their Lord now exalted. He spoke on earth to His apostles. He speaks from heaven through them. And the record they have left us raises no question of the books of the Law as being written by the Law-giver himself. The witness that he thus left on record comes from Moses as writer to all to whom the books of the Law came. And to the ends of the earth and to the end of time.

these books will be known as the books which Moses wrote and in which we have the Law.

But, when we read as we do here of Moses writing in the Law, it may be asked, "What do we mean by the Law?" The word is one that admits of a large range of meanings. It may be used, for example, of the concentrated essence of the Moral Law as we have that in the two great commandments on which hang all the Law and the Prophets. It may be used also of moral Statute Law as we have that set forth and laid down in the Decalogue with its two tables which deal the one with godliness and the other with righteousness. The Law might also be taken in the sense of the Civil Law under which the children of Israel were. Again there were instruction and prescription in regard to the worship that Israel were called upon to practise. Now the term as employed here is not used in any of these senses. Moses wrote down Law in each one of these meanings. The word is here used for the books in which they are all to be found. Those books had room for much more than strict Law. We find in them that History is given. This is the setting among other things of the proclamation of Law. In these books, too, we have Promise. The History tells of how and when and to whom it was given. And we have also in their pages the record of prophecy in the sense that Moses foretold what should come to pass. All these things are in the books. Yet they are not spoken of as the History or the Promises or the Prophecies but the Law, for the revelation that they give of Law has a special place in their pages.

It is then of the books of the Law that we read here. They took this name from the fact that they set forth the Law and the further fact that the Law which they set forth has such a leading place in their witness and teaching. In the Law Moses, who wrote the Law properly so called, wrote also of the Hope of Israel. What he wrote thus may take the form of either narrative or promise or prophecy or institution. It is found in these various shapes. Thus there are definite promises which bore on the hope that Israel cherished. It was a hope that they were warranted to cherish just because of the word of promise which God spoke and which Moses put on record. Then we may read of the promise that was given in the bosom of the curse that was pronounced upon the serpent. It spoke of the Seed of the woman who was to arise and who should

crush the head of the serpent at the same time as His own heel should be bruised. Here was the first ray of the light of hope for a lost world. It spoke of a Seed that was to come and that should suffer, but though this Seed was to suffer it was not to be in vain, for the victory should be His and He should crush the Serpent's head.

To Abraham also a Seed was promised, and the promise was given again to his son and his son's son that their Seed should have blessing for all the families of the earth. Those families were the children of a fallen race. Their first father had sinned and they shared in the disaster of his fall. The curse due to sin had spread over them all. Yet this promised Seed should be the channel of blessing, which meant that He must take away their curse that in its stead blessing might light and rest upon them. The Seed of Abraham is the Seed of the woman, and the Seed of the woman is the Seed of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. The Seed of the woman was to come of a definite line, and that became more definite as the promise was given again and again. It was first in the line of Isaac and not of Ishmael. It was then in the line of Jacob and not of Esau.

There was also the promise of Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the peoples should be. The Prince of peace was to come, and of His coming Jacob spoke, and Moses put his words on record.

Moses, too, spoke to the people of the prophet that should be raised up from among them like unto himself, and what he spoke he put in writing. To him the promise was given, and he passed it on to Israel, and we have the record of it yet. Other prophets were to arise but not one of them was to be like Moses, until at last one should come whose ministry should bring to an end the order of things that Moses himself set up. This Prophet was to be like Moses in those things in which Moses outstripped the other prophets. In nearness of standing in the Lord's counsel he was to be like Moses, as also in respect of the fact that under his hands a new order of things should be brought in, just as under the hands of Moses an order came in that set aside the old one of the early days of the fathers. Moses was the Leader of Israel as he was king in Jeshurun; so, too, should the great Prophet when he came be the Leader of the true Israel. And if Moses acted as priest in consecrating

Aaron and his sons, this Prophet like to him should be the Priest, too, to consecrate the whole royal priesthood. As Moses was the mediator between God and Israel, so, too, should the One of whom the promise spoke be the mediator between the Living God and the people that He had chosen to be His special possession. Of such a Prophet the promise spoke that was given to Moses, and that Moses made known to Israel before he died. With promises like those it was little wonder that Israel should look forward to the coming of the Seed of promise, the Shiloh, and the great Prophet.

The witness to be found in the writings of Moses to the Hope of Israel consisted not only in definite promises: it was also to be read in significant ordinances of which the covenant people might learn from his words. In his writings they might learn of sacrifice in general. It was an institution that had a symbolic meaning for the time that then was, and a typical reference to a greater and better sacrifice that was to be offered when the fulness of time should come. Each sacrifice as it was offered seemed to testify to the futility of all that went before it for the end of putting sin away, and as it was of like kind with them it virtually told of its own futility too. Yet those sacrifices were pointers to a sacrifice that should do what they could not do. This held of the early sacrifice of the burnt offering which was from the first, and of the varieties of sacrifice into which it opened out in the Law. There was not only the primitive and root sacrifice of the burnt offering; there was also the sin offering and the peace offering and the trespass offering and the Passover Lamb and so on. These all spoke of the Sacrifice that was to come and each of them was a type of one aspect or other of that sacrifice that should for ever put sin away.

There was further witness still in the books of Moses. In them were to be found personal foreshadowings of Him who was to come. There was not only Moses himself who combined in his own person the three offices that our Lord exercises as Mediator. There was also his brother Aaron who, as priest, was a foreshadowing of Him who is the one Priest of God's redeemed people. Apart from these two brothers there are two names that we shall mention, in whose record as that is given by Moses in the books of the Law we find a picture of the Saviour who was to come.

The one of those seems to be a contrast, the first man in contrast with the Lord from heaven. Yet while the one was the fount of death and disaster to those for whom he stood and who fell in him, and the other is the fount of life and hope and blessing to all for whom He stood, and thus they are in strong contrast the one to the other; yet in the case of each there is a likeness of relation to those for whom they stood and whose head each of them was—such a likeness as to warrant the statement that Adam was a figure of Him that was to come. The first Adam was the head of his natural posterity, while the second Adam is the everlasting father of His countless spiritual one.

The other of the two to whom we refer as pictures of our Lord, ordained types of which He is the antitype, is Joseph, in whose story we see the beloved of his father, visiting his unworthy brethren, sold by those brethren, yet destined to be the saviour of all his father's house from famine. To him those that hated him were to bow down. In the course of events he was brought down to the depths of abasement before he was exalted, and it was in that very depth that he found the key of his exaltation. When the time came for his advance he was raised from the dungeon to the throne; and with the resources of the kingdom at his disposal, as its keys hung at his girdle, he was able to fulfil his predestined part to save his father's house and to see his brethren bow down to him as new men and loyal servants. The likeness to the Father's Beloved in the salvation of *His* brethren is too obvious to be mistaken.

But over and above the definite promises and the significant ordinances and the personal foreshadowings, there were in the Law of Moses also manifested discoveries of Him of whom Philip says, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law . . . did write". He is the Lord of the angels. They do His bidding. He is also Himself the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Covenant whom the father of the faithful worshipped and with whom Jacob wrestled. In a pillar of fire by night and in a pillar of cloud by day He went in His manifested symbolic presence before the host of Israel to show them the way that they should take and to open the way before them.

In these books, too, we have the record of the vision of Jacob in the day of his distress, when the Lord drew near

to him and gave him not only His word of promise as bearing on the land and his seed and his own security, but also a discovery of the device of mediation that binds in one heaven and earth. In this vision there was granted a fresh discovery of the gracious thoughts of God, over and above the previous gracious revelations with the letter of which Jacob was acquainted from his youth. The Ladder of mediation that bridges the gulf between high heaven and earth beneath is the line of passage for angelic ministries. By it the angels go back who have done the work they were set to do. By it fresh angelic ministries go forth to do the task that is appointed for them. By it came down all the blessings of grace and the hope of glory. By it shall the children of the King go home to their Father's house. Our Lord in this same chapter sees in this Ladder Himself as made known to the lonely fugitive and to His early disciples. He said that they should see in Himself, the Son of Man, the embodiment of the device of mediation, and the angels of God going up and coming down upon the Son of man.

Moses wrote of the Messiah, and he wrote of Him in those divers ways, and what he wrote was in the hand of Israel and it is in our hand still. In his words there was more than Israel saw. They saw so much, yet there was much in what they read that was hid from their eyes. In the Gospel we are told what those things indeed meant. Thus with the light that the Gospel casts upon the witness borne by the writings of Moses in the Law, and with the teaching of the Spirit opening up to us the meaning and glory of these things, we should see more than Israel could see in the witness of the Law. It was, as written, an unfolding beforehand of truth that awaited for its full unveiling the fulness of the times; and that has now come and is with us.

Now this witness that was written by Moses so long beforehand was given in a setting of its own in the books of the Law. In other words, it was set against the background of Law. For it was the place and prominence that Law had in those books that caused them to be called the Law. It is Law that sets forth the claims of God, and it is Law that thus lets men see what their own case is and what they need. Over against the need which as Law those books bring to light, they show us what God in His grace has provided to meet such need. So ruin and remedy, sin and grace, Law and Gospel



are side by side in the early books of the Bible. And if the early revelation of grace and life and hope is given in the promises and prophecies and types and figures of the Pentateuch, it is afforded not only against the background of Law which is fitted to throw it into strong relief; it is given also in the setting of that Law, which shows the need that sin has created and that sinners have of the Seed of the woman, who is the Seed of Abraham, who is the Shiloh and the great Prophet. It shows their need of the Lamb in whom the whole institute of sacrifice finds its end and its fulfilment. It shows in the Mediator, the Angel of the Lord who is the Lord of the Angels, Him Who in the fulness of time came as Jesus the Son of man, Who was to save His people from their sins.

Such is the witness that we read still in what Moses wrote. He of whom these things are on record could say that Moses wrote of Him. And He of whom Moses wrote came in due season, put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and now lives with a life over which the shadows of death shall never fall. As the beloved Son of His Father, He has the Keys of universal dominion hanging at His belt. All the resources of Omnipotence are at His call and He waits to be gracious. His is an arm that is full of power and His hand is great in might and His right hand is highly exalted. His name is given as Christ the Saviour, and other name there is none given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. Across the gulf of the ages the foretelling and the foreshadowing found their fulfilment, and they found it in the coming of the Word Who was with God and was God, when He became flesh and dwelt among us and wrought out to the end the work that was given Him to do. Still the same for ever, He waits on His office of gracious mediation, God's own Son.

JOHN MACLEOD.

*Free Church College,  
Edinburgh.*