

Does Moses Matter?

June 2021

“No smoke of incense or other savor will be so offensive to Satan as your occupying yourself with God’s commandments and words, speaking, singing and thinking concerning them. This is truly the consecrated water, the sign which Satan avoids and which puts him to flight.”
(Dr. Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*)

It is no surprise that the devil hates the Word of God intensely. He has waged war on that sacred Word since the conversation with our first parents in Eden. He is well-aware of its importance in the relationship of Man to God.

Likewise, the unbelieving world loves to despise this Word, because it sanctifies us before God through faith in Christ. These enemies of the Gospel will find any way possible to undermine the authority of Scripture, even from inside the visible Church. They know that any attack on the Word is an attack on Christ, who is the Word made flesh.

One place where such assaults have become routine is in questioning the long-standing historical consensus that Moses authored the first five books of the Bible. To undermine him as author damages the credibility of the Old Testament, along with the New Testament writers, and ultimately Jesus Christ Himself.

Among professors in many universities and seminaries today, it has become commonplace to deny that Moses wrote Genesis through Deuteronomy (the Pentateuch). Claims are made that all of the Old Testament was written at a time much closer to the first century, cobbled together by editors who were crafting a legendary past. By these skeptical accounts, the Jewish people were not God’s chosen nation, but a nation that invented itself around a made-up god.

These so-called scholarly denials downplay the miraculous events recorded for us in the Great Exodus from Egypt, such as the crossing of the Red Sea or the night of the Passover. At the feet of such scholars many Christians have either lost their faith or had it deeply shaken. As Christ Himself warns, false teaching that undermines the Scriptures will never do anything but cause harm to His faithful.

What a wonderful survey of the Old Testament our Lord Himself must have provided to the two travelers on the road to Emmaus when we are told,

“Beginning with Moses and all the prophets He explained to them what was said in all of Scripture concerning Himself.” (Luke 24:27) As St. John writes, “The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

This is why we continue to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39) that testify about Christ our Savior, so that we may possess the eternal life that He graciously gives us in these sacred pages. “Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

No Old Testament person is mentioned in the New Testament more than Moses. Jesus and His apostles present Moses as a man of history, a prophet of God, and a forerunner of the Messiah. Jesus is that Messiah, or Savior, who came to fulfill what Moses wrote. As Jesus told His disciples after rising from the dead, “all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” (Luke 24:44) The Letter to the Hebrews demonstrates in detail how Moses’s writings align with the life and work of Jesus Christ, who gave Himself as the atoning sacrifice for all our sins.

How blessed are we in that hope!

Rev. Don Moldstad is the chaplain and a professor of Religious Studies at Bethany Lutheran College.

Learn More:
www.els.org/apologetics

To discover the connections between archaeological research and the books of Exodus and Joshua, watch “**Why Does Moses Matter to Christians?**” live on June 23–24 or later via free online archives: www.blc.edu/2021-moses.