

(5) Summary

Now there is a legitimate question as to whether authorship means Moses wrote every letter and part. Could he have used sources for some or could someone have appended a portion after his death? These questions are not easily answered to everyone's satisfaction but actually the concept of authorship is that he (Moses) is the responsible source. He may have had a secretary (as Paul did) and yet have been the ultimate authority for the whole. There could conceivably be some scribal additions unknown to us in the present form, etc., but the thrust is--not to every scrape of the pen--but to the concept of authority and in this regard Moses seems to have been the one who assigned the structure its unity and message. Authorship, in other words, does not mean every blot on the blotter, but does mean responsibility for content and order.

c. Alternative views to Pentateuchal authorship

1. The most common is the idea of gathered sources. This we will discuss later under the documentary theory and its expression. But for the moment, the idea is that the Pentateuch is a collection of various accounts from differing backgrounds which together give something of the history and aspirations of the Hebrew peoples.

2. Some also think the work is the production of cultic groups who wrote, or contrived, literature to justify their particular existence. The groups suggested are many but the common idea is that the Pentateuchal literature identified and verified these groups in the national life of Israel.

3. It is also suggested that the Pentateuch formed out of oral sources...just talked about, reported, and repeated and eventually these jelled to where someone could write them down...a long, long time after the days of poor Moses.

All of these views, and some similar ones not mentioned in this regard, are totally unsatisfactory in regard to the presentations from the Bible. They are widely held in academic institutions of our time...many of the "church schools." In the long run they are totally destructive of anything approaching a "biblical faith" and prepare the stage for a humanizing of the entire biblical literature. Further details on many of the ideas proceed with the notes that follow.