

1894

The consistencies of the inconsistencies of the Pentateuch

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/47362>

"Downloaded from OpenBU. Boston University's institutional repository."

Thesis.
R. J. Wyckoff.

Read J. S.

The Consistences of the Inconsistences of the Pentateuch.

-----0-----

If Moses wrote the Pentateuch, then Moses must have been a very loose and inconsistent writer, variable in style, inaccurate in statement and illogical in his reasonings and withall a very poor geographer. All these I do not believe Moses was, there is too much to admire in the Great Law Giver to pile upon his back the difficulties which the Pentateuchal question presents, therefore, I shall endeavor to render one phase of the question consistent, which regarding Moses as an author is involved in inconsistencies.

-----0-----

Let us consider first some of the evidences of the comparative lateness of the Pentateuch as we have it, and second, give some of the evidences establishing the different dates of the different documents. One of the strangest facts that confront us is this, that, supposing the ceremonial law was compiled and prescribed as an authoritative code for Israel before the conquest, we would naturally look for and expect the code to continue to be authoritative for Israel in the future; we would also expect this to preclude subsequent revelations and preclude the power of the Prophets from abrogating

it or instituting new laws, but we are surprised to find the very opposite true and in accepting candidly the conclusion that the law was not given at one time, we remove the apparent discordance between the several parts of the Old Testament. I believe that the law was written and enforced mainly and specifically to bring Israel back to a system of worship which would destroy their idolatry, which they contracted from the surrounding Nations.

Let us suppose that the Pentateuch came to us from the hand of Moses and read Lev. 17 and see how this law tallies with Israel's actions through all the Judges and Kings. In Lev. 17 chapter it appears as a perpetual law that no animal can be lawfully slain for food unless it is presented before the central sanctuary and its blood sprinkled on the altar. This is a good law and its observance ought to have had a wonderful effect upon Israel but this finished Pentateuchal Law was not in force during the Judges and Kings. The popular worship gives us such places of worship as Shiloh, Bethel, Ramah, Gibeon &c and this free access to God is totally incompatible with the statutes of the second code. This popular ^{for worship} is not an offspring of the Lev. code, for we do not find any realizing ~~sense~~ of the inaccessibility of Jeho vah confined as he would be under

the Lev. Laws to one sanctuary. They worship Him freely every
 where—from Dan to Beer, Sheba. This finished Pentateuch —
 which was written after Ezra's time and for a specific purpose
 then in demand. If written earlier it was not surely
 enforced before Josiah and I am also sure that its precepts were
 not obeyed by David or Solomon and the Levi. harshness was—
 never executed in the Temple of Solomon though God recognized
 the validity of the Temple with his visible presence. If the
 Pentateuch was in existence at or immediately after Moses' time
 why is it that we do not hear its voice. Where was this code
 from Joshua to Ezra—a period of one thousand years? The proph-
 ets before and of the eighth century B. C. never speak of a
 written law of Moses and deny any ritual law as binding upon
 their actions. I am convinced that the Hebrews before the
 exile were acquainted with a two-fold Torah, a priestly and a
 prophets' Torah. The prophets' Torah was mostly oral. Sometimes
 God demanded the prophet to write His word as in Jeremiah
 36- 2- In this Torah Jehovah demands no sacrifice and it has
 nothing to do with works. Forgiveness of sin is shown by the
 continued favor of God. When the people sinned they attempt-
 ed to turn away God's anger by sacrifices, which mode of pro-
 pitiation they learned from the Nations around Israel. God's

Covenant with Israel was the Ten-Commandments, see 1st. Kings, --
 8 Chapt., 9--22, Deut. 5th. Chapt., 2--22 -- The Prophets --
 would keep Israel clean, the Priests would defile Israel and --
 they did:-- They polluted the sanctuary and did violence to the
 law, -- Zeph. 3rd. Chapt 4, The Priestly Torah was legal and
 ritual, while the Prophets' Torah was spiritual and lacked the
 ceremonialism of the priests.-----

----- Now the Pentateuch as we have it I believe is a fusion
 of these two Torahs and came in force as one during the reforma-
 tion era of Ezra and to reconcile them it was called Masaic. --
 as the Psalms are called Davidic and the Proverbs Solomonic.

I have been striving briefly to show that the Penta-
 teuch was late in its issue, that it had no place in the history
 of Israel before the exile and as a system did not govern Is-
 rael up to the time of Ezra. -- One more point and I am done with
 this.-----

The Pentateuch is not a Law Book but a composit history
 with certain codes of law in it.-----

There are three codes:-----

----- The first, is in Ex. 21-- 23 and was given on Horeb

The second the law of Deut. Chapt. 12- to 26 = 16
 This is largely a repetition of the first and covers the same

ground except the Charge of Treason in Ex. 22, 28 - - This Code presupposes a system of civil judges, see Deut. 16-18.

-----The third the Lev. legislation:-----

----- This is quite distinct and deals with the sanctuary and the Priesthood. - Now it is conclusive that if these three codes were all Mosaic they were all given in the short space of forty years. - But we are sure that God did not deal with His people under the prophets by this ritual law. - His method was quite different. - This third law was not a part of Israel's movements in the wilderness. - In Ex. 33-7 which is non-Lev. the tent is outside of the camp. The Lev. account of this does not occur till chapter 40. In Numbers chapt. 10 the Lev. account puts the arch in the midst, verses 11 to 28 of the line of march. - In verse 33 to 36 the arch went before. This can only be explained on the supposition that the first is Lev. in its account, the other historical. The Lev. account was evidently written after Ezra when the city had grown around the temple and it no longer stood apart.

Let us now look at some of the more specific proofs of the lateness of the Pentateuch. - In Genesis 36 = 31 we read a list of Kings who reigned in Edom before there reigned a King in Israel.

This evidently betrays a date subsequent to the introduction of Monarchy into Israel and carries us down to Saul, at least if not to David. A person contending for the authorship of Moses for Genesis could say that this was an interpolation, but this easy way of escaping will not stand the highest tests of reason. We might also suppose that Moses was endowed with prophetic sight, and saw the history of Israel down to David or Saul. But I cannot accept this. Another proof that it was written in Canaan is this. In Hebrew the common phrase for "Westward" is "Seaward" and for "Southward" is "Negeb" which means parts of land and was a district South of Judah. These expressions could only be formed in Palestine, yet they were used in Exodus 27, at Sinai, where the sea did not lie West and Negeb South. Another proof is that the Pentateuch displays a better knowledge of Palestine than it does of the Country Southeast. In Numbers 21, 14 is a quotation from the Book of Wars, which is citing the conquest of Israel, Moses would not cite this. In Genesis, 14-14 "as far as Dan," Judges 18-29 the first name of the city was Laish. This would infer that Genesis was written subsequent to the Judges.

Let us, secondly examine as far as present data will

allow, the dates of the separate documents which we assume as conclusive, the Pentateuch is composed.

As a student, dependent largely upon the researches of specialists for information, whom shall I accept? The Church Fathers, Josephus, Philo not only ascribe the Pentateuch to Moses but also Job, and they affirm that the Pentateuch was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and by Ezra was miraculously restored. - Shall I accept this or shall I bow to the dictum of learned and patient scholars who, for one hundred and fifty years have been studying the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch? I think reason answers for me to accept the latter. Assuming the documentary hypothesis as true let us examine into the date of the most important Document D, which stands for the Deuter^{no}omic Code and comprises Chapter 13 to 26

In the reign of Josiah 620 B. C. a book is found in the temple by the High Priest Hilkiah and upon the revelations of this book Josiah institutes a reform. This book was not the Pentateuch because Jeremiah, the Prophet at the time quotes this Code and is in full spirit with it, but shows no knowledge of the Lev. code or of the Pentateuch as in existence. Moreover it was so short that Shaphan could read it aloud before the King, see 2nd. Kings, 22- 10 and all of it before the

people, it was, moreover in the form of a Covenant. . . .

Finally its contents may fairly be inferred from 2nd. Kings, 23, - I to 24, which described the reforms Josiah pledged himself to carry out. If we examine these reforms we find the following exact comparisons and requirements of the Deut. Code:-

- II Kings, XXIII,	-- 7--	carriers out	Deut.	XXIII--7--	Fol
" " "	9	"	"	XXVIII	9
" " "	10	"	"	XXVIII	10
" " "	11	"	"	XXVII	3
" " "	14	"	"	XXVI	21 Fol
" " "	21	"	"	XXVI	5
" " "	24	"	"	XXVIII	11

It is concluded from the above that the book found was the Deut. Code and that its injunctions had been neglected so far back as Joshua, for which neglect they were to suffer the wrath of God. In Deut. 4- 38 " To give the land xxx as it is this day"; also the use of Dam for Laish would point to a post-Mosaic period. But the general character of the legislation is adapted to a people used to a city and village life, this would point to a period after the conquest. Ist. Sam'l. is as ignorant of this Code or the Lev. code as a

little child, which he was. The simplicity of his temple--- duties as a boy are in strange contrasts to the ceremonialism and priestly offices of Lev.

- - If we read carefully the Code of Deut. chapter 12 --- and the following the story of the reform of Josiah as related in 2nd. Kings, 22 chapter we learn at once the nature of the revelation. Josiah's whole energies were expended in destroying the Bamoth or local sanctuaries and altars and concentrating the worship at Jerusalem, this demand for the destruction of the places of worship was made on the basis that these shrines were of a Canaanitish origin and that they corrupted the people. This truly was a radical innovation, for as we pointed it out in starting we found the Book of the Covenant sanctioning popular worship every where. Altars dedicated to the popular worship dotted the country everywhere and they were never deemed of as illegal. The language in Deut. 16, 21 is very plain "Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah or any kind of tree beside the Altar^{er} of the Yahweh thy God which thou shalt make thee, neither shalt thou set up any pillar (macebah) which Yahweh, thy God hateth". See also Lev. 26, 1 This is

a strict prohibition and yet in Isaiah 19, 10 he prays for a Macebah in the land of Egypt. This is conclusive, it seems

to me that even Isiah was wholly unacquainted with this Code and its prohibitions, and if this be so our document D cannot be older than Isiah's time and hence it is quite probable.

it appeared shortly after the seventh century. Of the date of the document P. I have no conclusion to offer, I am convinced from its internal evidence of its lateness and following this would almost lead me to conclude that it was later than any

other. As an illustration we are impressed with the style of the document. Its lofty religious ideas, its anthropomorphic conceptions are very less frequent than document D. its monotheism, its absence of aniconisms, all these would lead us to infer its very late date, for if evolution in

thought, diction and style are evident anywhere in history of peoples they are patent here. There can be no question about the introduction of the law it embodies. It was during

the time of Ezra, but just when it originated I have no opinion even. There is strong evidence for making it

post exilic or at least after the code D, for an analysis of Deut. II-6 reveals the J. E. narrative of Numbers 16, but the absence of the document P containing the story of Korah.

On the other hand there are passages in Deut. which seem unmistakably to point to quotations from the Lev. code P. There

is no doubt that J and E are older than D, for much of the latter is quotation, often verbatim from one or both of the former. Both of these documents, J and E, assume a friendly attitude to local sanctuaries and no evidence convinces me that it was in existence before the Conquest. As a narrative combined it fits best the age of the great Prophets Amos, Isaiah & and corresponds exactly with Assyrian period; 850 to 722 B.C., which document is the older of J and E. I do not know. If Genesis the 2 chapter fourth verse and the following is any indication of the style and thought of J for the same reason that I gave J older than P, I would put it older than E, how much I do not know. Good authorities say about fifty years. I need not point out the internal evidences for their late date, for they are numerous and conclusive, for myself at least. Whatever period these documents finally fall in, however late they may be, the mere fact of date if it only be true does not rob the bible of its majesty for me. I know that it is God's Word, He used it to teach his people, it teaches them still and I find it sufficient to satisfy my deepest thirst.