

II UNITY AND AUTHORSHIP

Traditionally the authorship has been ascribed to Moses by both Jewish and Christian scholarship. Ben-Sira (Ecclus. 24.23), Philo (Life of Moses, 3.39), Josephus (Ant. 4.8.48), the Mishnah (Pirqu Aboth 1.1), and the Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b) are all unanimous in their acceptance of the Mosaic authorship.

Sections definitely assigned to the pen of Moses are the account of the conflict with Amalek (Ex. 17.14), the words of the covenant the Lord made with Israel on Mount Sinai (Ex 24.4), the summary of Israel's journeys from Egypt to Jordan (Num 33.2), his final counsel to all Israel, Joshua, and the sons of Levi (Deut 31.9), and his song (Deut 31.22).

The testimony of the rest of the OT indicates belief in Mosaic authorship. Joshua who was contemporary and assistant of Moses as well as his successor made frequent reference to Moses. Joshua refers to that which was written in "the book of the law of Moses" (Josh 8.31), and he charges Israel to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses (Josh 23.6). David charged Solomon his son to live according to that which is "written in the law of Moses" (1 Kings 2.3). When Josiah was king, Hilkiah the priest found "a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses" (34.14). On two occasions Ezra records that the altar of burnt offering was built and the service of the Levites was enacted according to what was written in the "law" or "book" of Moses (Ezra 3.2; 6.18). Ezra publicly read from the book of the law of Moses (Neh 8.1-8). Daniel in his prayer of confession of sin and that of his people mentions that which is "written in the law of Moses" (Dan. 9.11,13). Nine OT books specifically relate Moses to the written law, or record.

The testimony of the NT is equally decisive with seven books specifically relating Moses to a written document, and Christ Himself who is God manifest in the flesh giving his endorsement to both the content and scope of what the Jews of His day regarded to be written by Moses (Mk 12.19; John 5.46-47; Lk. 24.27,44).