

The Bible Vindicated! - 8

We have seen previously how the Higher Critics denied that Moses could have composed the first five books of the Old Testament, because such writing was not possible in his times. Modern science has dispelled these claims which were based on an ignorance of the facts on the ground - or shall we say by what as been uncovered by the archaeologist's spade.

Such denial is only one of many attempts by those writers who made a determined attack on the veracity and trustworthiness of the Bible. One of these was launched by Wilhelm M L De Wette, a German theologian and Biblical scholar,. In his book, *A Critical And Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the O.T.* he found fault with the Scriptures in various ways.

One of the classes of criticism he called, "Later circumstances and events are alluded to." One of the passages in which he found unchronological, p. 56, was "The Canaanite was then in the land" - Genesis 12:6 and "The Canaanite and the Perizzite were then in the land" - Genesis 13:7.

De Wette comments on these - "A remark no one would naturally make until after these nations were driven out, that is, after the time of Joshua." To this he adds on p.60, In Genesis 36:31, there is mention of kings of Israel: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."

De Wette's point is clear enough - he is claiming that Moses could not possibly have written these statements, because they could only make sense if written long after Moses' time, when the Canaanite cities and lands had all been conquered, and later ruled by the Israelites kings.

Once again, unfortunately the critic was suffering from ignorance - this time, of the actual message in the book of Genesis. One way to read is with the desire to learn what the author is conveying. But De Wette was merely scanning through to find what he judged as errors - not a good way of getting the writer's intended message!

The book of Genesis is organized in a unique way. The word "generations," = Heb., *toledoth*, occurs for the first time in Genesis 2:4 "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" -

This statement summarizes what occurred in the creation week which was just described. Afterwards, this expression "these are the generations" occurs at the beginning of nine more sections in Genesis plus once more in the book of Ruth, in the ancestral list ending in David.

In all this we keep in mind the message recorded by Peter, that "prophecy [the speaking or writing a message from God] never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" - 2 Peter 1:21. But we are still left with the question of how could Moses have written these passages mentioned by De Wette?

An attentive reading through the remaining sections in Genesis can lead to a satisfactory answer. The book of Genesis summarizes the events of history through Divine lens, as it were - that is, how these events played a part in God's plan with mankind.

It shows how He chose to work with one man, Abraham, who He would make the exemplar, the model for imitation in his faith in God, for his descendants who would become the nation of Israel. It would be through that nation that God would bring about His purpose.