

# When Moses Wrote of Jesus

## 1. Introduction

*“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:45-47 (ESV)*

### **Genesis-Deuteronomy:**

In the above passage, Jews were offended by Jesus because He healed a man on the Sabbath and because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.<sup>1</sup> Jesus then addressed this issue in a monologue spanning nearly thirty verses,<sup>2</sup> at the end of which Jesus made a remarkable statement: The Jews hoped in Moses, but they did not believe the writings of Moses. The same can be said of some Christians today: Some Christians hope in Jesus but they do not believe Jesus, because if they believed Jesus, then they would do as He said.

In this statement, Jesus is clear: It is not the *words* of Moses the Jews did not believe, but the *writings* of Moses. In the Greek, Jesus used the word ἔγραψεν (*egrapsen*), stemming from γράφω (*grapho*). Our English words *graphics*, *graphite*, or words ending in *-graph* (such as *autograph*) come from this. Because of His wording, the focus of this study will be on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books were universally and traditionally thought to have been written by Moses, except the last parts of Deuteronomy,<sup>3</sup> and there is good indication that this is to what Jesus referred.

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1 John 5:18.

2 John 5:19-47.

3 Orr, James. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved digitally from Logos. Under section “Pentateuch – Authorship, Composition, Date.”

**What to expect:**

This study has a couple of purposes. One is simply to examine more closely the words of Jesus to the Jews in John 5. The words of Jesus are remarkable, both in His claims about Himself and in His accusation against the Jews.

Another purpose is to build our faith in Jesus as God's Messiah, and reading Old Testament books predicting His Messiahship is a good way of doing this. Historically we have records of books such as Isaiah written *before* the life of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Isaiah is one of the oldest and best preserved of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Qumran in 1947. It is almost totally complete, with all 66 chapters of the Hebrew text, and is dated to 125 B.C. In Isaiah we read that God would send someone apart from Himself,<sup>4</sup> yet the one sent would be God.<sup>5</sup> The Messiah would be a king who judges,<sup>6</sup> yet the Messiah would suffer and be crushed by God.<sup>7</sup> If Jesus of Nazareth were a mere human being, then many of these prophecies were outside of His control, such as being pierced<sup>8</sup> or buried with the rich.<sup>9</sup> Yet Jesus fulfilled all of them. So when Jesus claimed that Moses, the prophets, the Psalms, and all the Scriptures were written about Him,<sup>10</sup> we would do well to see if He spoke the truth by comparing the record of His life with Scripture.

It is best not to expect this study to touch on every part of Jesus in the Pentateuch. It may not be possible to find every place which purposely alludes to Jesus. It is also best not to expect to agree with every part of this study. Because not every Old Testament prophecy is specifically

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4 Isaiah 42:1-4.

5 Isaiah 9:6.

6 Isaiah 32:1-8.

7 Isaiah 53:1-12.

8 Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:32-35.

9 Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-61.

10 Luke 24:25-27, 44.

revealed in the New Testament, there is a certain amount of speculation, and one must decide for oneself if that which is presented in this study refers to Jesus or not.

As we look through these five books, keep in mind that the Pentateuch is not an end in and of itself. It points toward something much greater. While the five books of Moses had glory in them because they were ultimately written by God, the glory of Jesus far surpasses them. In fact, the five books cannot be understood properly without reading them through the lens of Jesus and His Messiahship.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.