

Divisions

The Pentateuch is divided into five books,—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

These names are not found in the Hebrew, but are taken from the Septuagint Greek version. The Greek translators, however, probably found the fivefold division already in existence and only invented the names as labels for their contents.

Contents of Genesis

Genesis (that is, Beginning) is the book of Origins, and is of the nature of an introduction to the history of the Jewish nation. It gives (a) the Origin of the world, (b) the origin of man, (c) the origin of sin, (d) the origin of separate languages and nations, (e) the origin of the people of Israel, (f) the origin of the twelve tribes.

All these matters are treated in such a way as to throw light on the religious history of mankind as a whole, and to bring out the special mission of Israel as God's peculiar people, chosen to receive a revelation of His will and to witness for Him among the nations of the earth. As might be expected, there are many great gaps in the history represented only by a few names, and the chronology of the whole period is still very uncertain. Ussher's dates which have long appeared in many English Bibles are now considered by most authorities as far too short for all the earlier parts.

Contents of Exodus

Exodus (that is, Departure) gives an account of the departure of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, also of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, and of the setting up of the first tabernacle or tent for public worship.