

Leviticus-Numbers-Deuteronomy
The Poetic Bible: An Epic Poem
(volume 3)

By

[Bobby Gawthrop](#)

c 2004

Paradigm for priesthood met,
Aaron first, his lineage set.

Holy place, that inner space,
high priest stands for yearly grace.

Aaron now, symbolic scene,
sprinkled blood for people clean.

High priest's hands on live goat lain,
prefigures Christ, eternally slain.

Imputation, corporate sin,
the goat to bear the sin within,
sin laden goat now driven far,
from out the camp, beneath the stars.

Tree of wood, that future place,
the place of skull, that holy space,
corporate sin bore on Him,
the One Who knew no sin within.

In fluid form, life be red,
if essence gone, then life be dead.

Great God decreed, principle heed,
life's fluid seat ye dare not eat.

Fluid red on altar poured,
atonement made for sins abhorred,
but bulls and goats ye dare not cheer,
twas sins reminder "year by year".

Corporate sin, yea, one by one,
with faithful hearts their eyes do run,
to greater day, in future done,
“the death of death”, in God’s dear Son...

Great God doth speak to Moses here,
in the midst of second year,
descended glory dwelling there,
holy tent, Sinai’s air.
Pharaoh’s phantom, lingering doom,
in Hebrew mind his spectre looms,
though out the chains of Egypt’s land,
some doubts still reign in desert sand.

Yet Sovr’n speech, healing balm,
holy vocals, soothing calm,
conversation, Friend to friend,
God and Moses to attend,
revelation to impart,
of what to do and where to start.

Testimony tablets two,
and other holy things accrue.

Of all the sons of Israel’s clan,
of all the males in Sinai’s sand,
of all the sons of Israel fair,
the Levites called, the Levites rare.

Testimony tablets twain,
Yet tabernacle not disdain,
“So the Levites shall keep charge
of the tabernacle of the testimony.”...

Levitical priesthood from Aaron runs,
from loins descend to priestly sons,
to Aaron born, four sons bred,
same mother’s milk, same mother fed.

Infamous in days of yore,
be Abihu and Nadab’s lore,
though two be true on Aaron’s ship,
the firstborn and his brother slip,
wretched, dirty in their skin,
mortal still, and therefore sin.

Great God alone doth set the tone,
His way approach, His way alone,
death did come, no vibrant hue,
Aaron's firstborn and Abihu.

God smote them dead, how dare them bring,
strange fire before our God and King.

Dear reader be warned!, and linger ill,
those ways of old be God's ways still.

Dare you approach the LORD in vain?,
if you do, taste His disdain.

Autonomous days, manmade ways,
Repent! And to our God be praise.

Moses now to Aaron speaks,
"It is what the LORD spoke, saying',
'By those who come near Me
I will be treated as holy,
And before all the people I will be honored.'" ...

God's presence runs long, His ears do itch,
from tongues of men roll words black as pitch,
mumbling murmurs, rumbling rumors,
the peoples' words grow dark like tumors.

Awakened anger, sleeping tame,
burning anger hot with flame.

"Then fire from the LORD burned among them",
outskirts of camp consumed,
smoke and ash, ascending plume,
stricken sinners, imminent doom.

Flames extend, waxing heat,
soot and ash beneath their feet,
they cry in turn as camp now burns.

Mediation, fretted tears,
intercession, trodded fears,
Moses now into the breach,
Moses prayed, his LORD beseech.

Anger wanes, dying flames...

Amidst the rubble, the rabble roused,
desirous greed could not be housed,
“Who will give us meat to eat?”
though manna rained from portal high,
Israel's sons despised God's treat.

“and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly”,
and Moses now was all but saintly,
the people wail, weep aloud,
their corporate weight be Moses' shroud,
bow strung too tight, emotions frayed,
death's freedom flight to God he prayed.

“Was it I who conceived all this people?
Was it I who brought them forth,
that You should say to me, ‘Carry them
in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant,
to the land which You swore to their fathers’?
Where am I to get meat to give to all these people?
For they weep before me, saying, ‘Give us meat
that we may eat!’ I alone am not able to carry
all this people, because it is too burdensome for me.
So if You are going to deal thus with me,
please kill me at once, if I have found favor
in Your sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness.”

Words be bold, but truly spoke,
Heaven's mercy, kindled, stoked.

God chose Moses, elected he,
to feed, and guide, equip the sheep,
Moses now to do the choosing,
men to share his burden bruising,
70 chosen, elders find,
Spirit empowers heart and mind.

Moses rests in stationed fate,
ever true to first estate,
till spirit enters heaven's gate.

Though burdens share,
his heart still tows,
weighted load that none can know.

For in his hand a shepherd's staff,
to guide God's flock, o'er field and stone,
inward parts yet stretch and ache,
for to bear a staff "of power is to be alone"...

Great God doth speak,
"spy out the land of Canaan",
Israel's sons to receive,
but present day inhabitants,
no mercy, no reprieve.

Leading men from Hebrew clan,
from Jacob's pride, on Paran's sand.

40 days, in many ways,
promised land to spy and gaze.

12 went out, a full cohort,
12 returned with mixed report.

'Milk and honey, fresh and sweet,
clustered grapes, flowing treat,
but cities strong, inhabitants tall,
we dare not enter, lest we fall'.

The stench of fear reaks from their heart,
10 spies undone from mission's start,
faith's demise, from out their breath,
God's Word despise, thus their death.

So the people "said to one another,
'Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.'"

Yet two there be,
heart's faithful hue,
covenant valor,
covenant true.

Jephunneh's son,
Caleb by name,
a godly man,
enduring fame.

“We should by all means go up
and take possession of it,
for we will surely overcome it.”

Joshua too, his colors true,
The son of Nun be not outdone.

“But all the congregation said to stone them with stones.”

Great God doth speak,
His glory shone,
to Moses' ear,
before the throng.

'The people's spurn on Me does turn,
covenant breakers in the sand,
Israels' sons, Hebrew clan,
despite My signs, despite My love,
despite my manna from above'.

Desperate mediation needed,
Moses' intercession treated.

“Pardon, I pray, the iniquity
of this people according to the
greatness of Your lovingkindness,
just as You also have forgiven this people,
from Egypt even until now.’

So The LORD said, ‘I have pardoned
them according to your word; but indeed,
as I live, all the earth will be filled with
the glory of the LORD.’”

40 years for 40 days

Many in that corporate clan,
would never enter promised land,
falling corpses, promised ill,
year by year, till promise filled...

Rebellion's Ruse, Bold and Brass
Korah's crew, company crass.

“and they rose up before Moses,
together with some of the sons of Israel,
two hundred and fifty leaders of the
congregation, chosen in the assembly,
men of renown.”

Korah sought, staff to steal,
cunning plot, by LORD revealed,
haughty halos to adorn,
black heart's night, impaled with scorn.

First estate, ne'er would they rest,
the LORD they sought to try, to test.

Twisted tongues, mouthing mutter,
perverted palats, useless utter.

“They assembled together against
Moses and Aaron, and said to them,
‘You have gone far enough, for all the
congregation are holy, every one of them,
and the LORD is in their midst; so why
do you exalt yourselves above the assembly
of the LORD?’”

Moses prostrate, before his King,
by grace, his humbled heart to bring.

Unsheathed, sun awakes, horizon's morrow,
unseen death, coming sorrow.

“and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying,
‘Tomorrow morning the LORD will show
who is His, and who is holy, and will
bring him near to Himself; even the one
whom He will choose, He will bring
near to Himself.’”

Rebels stand in Korah's shadow,
but Aaron dwells in holy hallow,
rebels, pride, chide, leered,
then “the glory of the LORD appeared.”

Korah, Dathan, Abiram,
traitors row,
rebel leaders,
the death bells toll.

Back away! Traitors dwell,
present tents, future hell.

“So they got back from around the dwellings
of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram;
and Dathan and Abiram came out
and stood at the doorway of their tents,
along with their wives and their sons and their little ones.”

Moses speaks, words sublime,
unseen air, death bells chime,
reputation, claimed and staked,
Moses pure, or Moses fake?

New way of death, unique demise,
vindication, Moses' prize.

Quiver, quake, split and shake,
open earth; ground's mouth agape.

“and the earth opened its mouth
and swallowed them up, and their
households, and all the men who
belonged to Korah with their possessions.”

“But on the next day”,
e're the sun set and rise,
the people spurn, their God despise.

Mumblin' Israel,
apostate seed,
against their LORD,
their griping be.

Patience wanes, the Godhead seethes,
righteous indignation breathes.

No pale lit moon,
no brighted sun,
God's wrath goes forth,
"the plague has begun!"

Moses, Aaron, fall and plead,
Directive Moses, Aaron heed.

Aaron "took his stand
between the dead and the living,
so that the plague was checked.

"But those who died by the plague
were 14,700, besides those who died
on account of Korah.

"Then Aaron returned to Moses
at the doorway of the tent of meeting,
for the plague has been checked."

Great God doth speak to Moses,
"Speak to the sons of Israel,
and get from them a rod for each
father's household: twelve rods,"

A budding rod, a blossomed sign,
to show the one of God's design,
throughout the night, 12 rods did rest,
within the tent of meeting's breast.

On the morrow, Levi's house,
Aaron's staff to shine,
amidst the many, one bore fruit,
Your man LORD, consecrated Thine.

To stop their stir, mumbling unctions,
people saved from self destruction...

Heifer red, no blemish found,
no labor seen, and thus is sound,
in fluid form, life be red,
if essence gone, then life be dead.

The priest now, symbolic scene,
sprinkled blood for people clean,
but bulls and goats ye dare not cheer,
twas sins reminder "year by year".

Corporate sin, yea, one by one,
with hearts of faith their eyes do run,
to greater day, in future done,
"the death of death" in God's dear Son...

Mumbling, rumbling, grumbling chatter,
repetition, sinful spatter,
rebellious rogues, opposition rise,
quothing quarrels, God's trust despise.

"If only we had perished when our brothers
perished before the LORD!...Why have
you made us come up from Egypt,
to bring us into this wretched place?"
Assembled body, corporate, one,
in the desert, in the sun,
to Moses' staff eyes do run,
miracle to soon be done.

Desert Rock, Moses speaks,
staff to strike, upon its peak,
water flows, enough to splurge,
people quenched, prolonging dirge.

Bodies safe in desert land,
yet hearts still far from promised land.

God's corporate flock, distrust, disdain,
covenant breaking, sinful, vain,
God's patience long, His grace to glean,
as water flows from Christ unseen.

Yet, something strange herein this scene,
Moses slips, as one still green.

Commanded, once his staff to tap,
yet twice upon the rock did rap,
superfluous be second stroke,
moment by moment trust now broke.

Nursing, weaning corporate sheep,
to guide the flock of YHWH's keep,
thus he must, submit and trust,
God's ways be right, God's ways be just.

Infliction, Deity's belt,
God's undershepherds, sorely felt,
autonomous seeds in sand were sewn,
thus Deity's displeasure known.

"But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,
'Because you have not believed Me,
to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons
of Israel, therefore you shall not bring
this assembly into the land which I have given them.'"

At Hor's hoary mount,
Great God doth speak,
'Fleeting life, days fly and scatter,
Aaron to his people gather'.
Priestly garb from Aaron strip,
Aaron now to take his trip,
priestly garments, Aaron's son,
heaven's rest, Aaron done.

"When all the congregation saw
that Aaron had died, all the house
of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days."

Moses too the death bell toll,
journey through, life's stages roll.

Six score complete,
this orb now floating,
two score replete,
God's way promoting.

Though heaven's state secure, in store,
his earthly home would be no more.

O'er desert, flooded tears,
Captained clan, 40 years.

Moses! Moses! Captained clan,
through 40 years in desert sand,
harbor's precipice, safe she stands,
a stone's throw from the promised land,
through rebellious rivers, through wrathful waves,
through course corrections, punishment paved.

Through highs & lows, in joy & terror,
through patience & plague, his costly error.

Caught between Divine and man,
from burning bush to desert sand.

His body suffered many a rack,
his soul absorbed what body lacked.

The race now run, victory won,
Moses fades toward setting sun.

Contemplation, termination,
God to end his duty, station.

He wrote no dirge, though death his thought,
heavenly illumination sought,
no muse inspired Moses' pen,
God's Spirit breathes the words within.

Moses, the man of God prayed thus:

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place
in all generations. Before the mountains were born
or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

“You turn man back into dust and say,
'Return, O children of men.' For a thousand years
in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by,
or as a watch in the night.

“You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep;
In the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew.
In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew;
Toward evening it fades and withers away.

“For we have been consumed by Your anger
and by Your wrath we have been dismayed.
You have placed our iniquities before You.
Our secret sins in the light of Your presence.

“For all our days have declined in Your fury;
We have furnished our years like a sigh.
As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,
or if due to strength, eighty years,
yet their pride is but labor and sorrow;
for soon it is gone and we fly away.

“Who understands the power of Your anger and Your fury,
according to the fear that is due You?
So teach us to number our days, that we may
present to You a heart of wisdom.

“Do return O LORD; how long will it be?
And be sorry for Your servants. O satisfy
us in the morning with Your lovingkindness,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

“Make us glad according to the days you have afflicted us,
and the years we have seen trouble. Let Your work appear
to Your servants and Your majesty to their children.
Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
And confirm for us the work of our hands;
Yes, confirm the work of our hands.”

Psalm now writ, his song to sing,
approaching sound, death's bell to ring.

Recitation, explanation,
illustration, application.

Israelitish clan amass,
assemblage whole, future cast.

“Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak;
and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
Let my teaching drop as the rain,
my speech distill as the dew,
as the droplets on the fresh grass
and as the showers on the herb.
For I proclaim the name of the LORD;
Ascribe greatness to our God!

The Rock! His work is perfect,
for all His ways are just;
a God of faithfulness and without injustice,
righteous and upright is He.”

“Remember the days of old,
consider the years of all generations.
Ask your father, and he will inform you,
your elders, and they will tell you.
He found him in a desert land,
and in the howling waste of a wilderness;
He encircled him, He cared for him,
He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.
Like an eagle stirs up its nest,
that hovers over its young,
He spread His wings and caught them,
He carried them on His pinions.
The LORD alone guided him,
and there was no foreign god with him.”

“See now that I, I am He,
and there is no god besides Me;
It is I who put to death and give life.
I have wounded and it is I who heal,
and there is no one who can
deliver from My hand.
Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven,
and say, as I live forever...
Rejoice, O nations, with His people;
for He will avenge the blood of His servants,
and will render vengeance on His adversaries,
and will atone for His land and His people.”

Moses' recitation done,
shouldered next to son of Nun,
final exhortation he,
thickened air, solemnity.

'Recessed heart, God's law to heed,
perpetuation godly seed,
water them, nurture them, no mere trifle,
herein hangs life, covenantal cycle.

Er'e yet the globe one turn did spin,
Great God addresses Moses' sin,
'Nebos's mount, crescent grand,
Canaan's view, promised land'.

Stingless spectre, doomless death,
Lingering low, bated breath,
Close, immanent, growing bolder...
Nearing, peering, gleering,
Steering through space and time.

Tolling bells race,
Sovereign timing,
The Reaper's pace.

Looming, zooming, longing, calling:
'Moses! Moses! He tolls for thee,
He beckons thee'.
No shepherd born, yet called, clad, and bred,
for two score years, he watered & fed,
chastising sheep, their wounds addressing,
final drama, a shepherd's blessing.

Supported by his staff of power,
rose he in momenteous hour,
Moses, the man of God, blessed the congregation.

Reminiscent formal blessing,
Jacob aging, deathbed resting,
one by one, son by son,
Hebrew clan to spread and run,
from days of old to present testing,
from Patriarchs to Moses' blessing.

“There is none like the God of Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to your help, and
through the skies in His majesty.

“The eternal God is a dwelling place, and
underneath are the everlasting arms; and
He drove out the enemy from before you,
and said, 'Destroy!' “So Israel dwells in
security, the fountain of Jacob secluded, in
a land of grain and new wine; His heavens
also drop down dew.

“Blessed are you, O Israel; who is like you,
a people saved by the LORD, Who is the shield
of your help and the sword of your majesty!
So your enemies will cringe before you, and you
will tread upon their high places.”

“Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab
to mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is
opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him
all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, and all Naphtali
and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all
the land of Judah as far as the western sea, and
the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho,
the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

“Then the LORD said to him, ‘This is the land
which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’;
I have let you see it with your eyes, but you
shall not go over there.’

“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there
in the land of Moab, according to the word of
the LORD. And He buried him in the valley
in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor;
but no man knows his burial place to this day.

“Although Moses was one hundred and twenty
years old when he died, his eye was not dim,
nor his vigor abated. So the sons of Israel wept
for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then
the days of weeping and mourning for Moses
came to an end.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the
spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands
on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him
and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

“Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel
like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,
for all the signs and wonders which the LORD
sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against
Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, and
for all the mighty power and for all the great
terror which Moses performed in the sight of

all Israel.”

Body buried,
sepulchered silence,
no pomp, no bugle,
nor graveyard violence.

Dear reader,

The books of Moses, full, replete,
the books of Moses now complete,
Biblical foundation laid,
from heart of God to written page,
Creation through that “Fall” so ill,
redemptive history moving still,
salvation’s story, carving, conquering,
his staff of power and pen attesting.
The first five books, done, e’re cold,
yet revelation still untold.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*. If you would like to discuss this article in our online community, please visit our [Reformed Perspectives Magazine Forum](#).

Subscribe to Reformed Perspectives Magazine

RPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like RPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [Reformed Perspectives Magazine](#), please select this [link](#).