

# Confessions - Book Xii - Chapter Xxxi

by St. Augustine

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## Transcript

42. Thus, when one man says, "Moses meant what I mean," and another says, "No, he meant what I do," I think that I speak more faithfully when I say, "Why could he not have meant both if both opinions are true?" And if there should be still a third truth or a fourth one, and if anyone should seek a truth quite different in those words, why would it not be right to believe that Moses saw all these different truths, since through him the one God has tempered the Holy Scriptures to the understanding of many different people, who should see truths in it even if they are different? Certainly--and I say this fearlessly and from my heart--if I were to write anything on such a supreme authority, I would prefer to write it so that, whatever of truth anyone might apprehend from the matter under discussion, my words should re-echo in the several minds rather than that they should set down one true opinion so clearly on one point that I should exclude the rest, even though they contained no falsehood that offended me. Therefore, I am unwilling, O my God, to be so headstrong as not to believe that this man [Moses] has received at least this much from thee. Surely when he was writing these words, he saw fully and understood all the truth we have been able to find in them, and also much besides that we have not been able to discern, or are not yet able to find out, though it is there in them still to be found.

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