



Writing the Bible

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Where we have been.

- The concept of Canon as authoritative in the Christian's life
- The concept of Life Setting or Sitz im Leben of the scriptural text.
- Bible as preaching to an audience rather than a written text (Social Criticism)



One day....

- Very long history of development of the Bible: ~2000 BC to ~200 AD.
- Many writers and many hands.
- Moses didn't sit down one day to write the Torah, neither did Isaiah sit down to write the book of Isaiah.
- Paul probably did sit down one day to write Romans.



Concept of Redactor

- In the beginning was the oral tradition...
- Torah is a compilation/edition of Oral and a little written tradition.
- Started to be compiled/edited/redacted probably at the time of David.
- Surfaces in the account of King Josiah but almost certainly not the complete version we have today. (2Ki 22). (cf <https://bible.org/article/book-josiahs-reform>)
- Read by Ezra (Neh 8) and would have been pretty near as we have now.



Concept of a Redactor

- A redactor takes existing tradition, either oral or written and:
 - Compiles it with other material that fits
 - Emphasises some parts, de-emphasises other parts.
 - Re-casts stories for the current situation
 - Corrects misunderstanding of their audience.
 - Explains historical oddities for their contemporaries.



Source theory of the Torah

- Five books, four sources, five phases of redaction.
- First is Yahwist eg Gen 2 & 3.
- Yahweh used to be transliterated as Jehovah so this is the “J” source.
- Called the Yahwist because tends to use YHWH to designate God.
- Comes from the Southern Kingdom and is the oldest source.



Source Theory of the Torah

- Second is Elohist.
- Comes from the Northern Kingdom
- Called the Elohist because redactor tends to call God “Elohim” in the text.
- Source is called the “E” source.



Source Theory of the Torah

- The Assyrians took the Northern Kingdom into exile in ~732 BC
- Not everyone went into exile. The E source went south to Judah.
- The two combined to form JE.



Source Theory of the Torah

- At the time of Josiah (2K 22) there was a revival or reformation of the true cult.
- The book of the law was found.
- This was the time of the Deuteronomic Historian or Deuteronomist (DTR).
- Deuteronomy became the start of the Deuteronomic History (DH) and the end of the Torah.
- DH runs from Deuteronomy to 2Kings.
- This gave us JED.



Source Theory of the Torah

- The final stage was post the Babylonian Exile.
- At the time as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah there was a strong reformation movement.
- The final redactor took JED and added material of their own for example Gen 1.
- This redactor is called the Priestly writer and added the “P” source.
- This gives us JEDP which if googled will provide more information



The Meaning of “Sources”

- It is very unlikely that a source was one person.
- In most cases the source was the work of a group or school that held the same tradition.
- J and E were the schools or traditions of the South and North Kingdoms respectively.



Deuteronomomic History

- The source theory of DH was still heavily discussed when I looked at it.
- Some suggested a Sitz of Josiah's reign (2K22) and no further redaction.
- Others suggested a single redaction during exile.
- Others still suggested a second redaction in post exile.



Chronicles and Kings

- The large part of Chronicles is word for word the same as other passages in the Bible (cf *Chronicles in Parallel* by Paul Chubb).
- One source theory for Chronicles is that they redacted an early version of texts largely from Kings to create their work.
- Despite this the focus is different. DH focuses on failures of the Israelites in cult and kingship.
- Chronicles focuses on how to do it right especially worship.



Isaiah

- There is an abrupt change from worry to hope at Is 40.
- There is a lesser change in Is 55 – 56 from hope to admonition.
- Three competing source theories:
 - Isaiah and his disciples created/compiled the whole of Isaiah.
 - Isaiah and his disciples created/compiled first Isaiah (1-39), The rest was created/compiled by an Exilic author called Deutero-Isaiah
 - First Isaiah: Is 1-39, Deutero-Isaiah: Is 40-55. Trito Isaiah: Is 56ff



Schools of Prophets

- Major prophets tended to gather disciples.
- See this also in spiritual leaders.
 - Samuel (1Sam 19:18ff)
 - Elisha/Elijah (2K2).
 - Apostle Paul etc
 - Even Luther had Melancthon
- They held, interpreted and produced the sayings of the great man.



Synoptic Source Theory/Problem

- Mark was the first gospel written.
- Luke's gospel grew up in Paul's churches and Matthew's in Hebraic churches.
- Luke and Matthew used lots of Mark's text to create their gospels.
- Both of them used another source that appears to be a list of quotes from Jesus. This is generally called "Q".
- Both of them also have material that is unique to them called Special M and Special L



Why is this important?

- Context of the passage and canonical level
- Explanation of detail
- Redaction criticism



Key Point or Take home

- Differences in text are due to differences in source and Redactor's purpose.
- Studying the way the redactor puts the sources together often gives insight into their purpose (Redaction Criticism)
- Only the final level is authoritative (canonical context).