

UNIT II

THE ORIGIN, CANONIZATION, AND TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

Much uncertainty remains concerning the origin and canonization of Old Testament literature, especially the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, the Bible is so important to Protestant Christianity that its origin and process of canonization deserve to be discussed. Our knowledge of the origin and canonization of the New Testament is much more certain.

Lesson 4 discusses the traditional view and the more recent theories of the source-critical, form-critical, and traditio-historical schools concerning the origin of the Old Testament. These four approaches are receiving the most attention in Old Testament introductory studies today. Lesson 5 presents theories of the process of Old Testament canonization. What canonization actually is has to be established before historical evidences of its process can be reviewed. It is interesting that the Early Church used the Septuagint (Greek translation from Alexandria) more than the Hebrew Old Testament.

Lesson 6 discusses the origin of New Testament literature. The questions of source and authorship of the Gospels continue to be debated. The authorship of some of the thirteen epistles attributed to Paul continues to be questioned. Lesson 7 presents the process of canonization of the New Testament. Nothing new has appeared in this area of study for many years.

Lesson 8 discusses the transmission of the Bible. The background to the English Bible has a fascinating history. Until the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, copies of the Bible had to be made by hand. The printing press made it possible for the Bible to be placed in the hands of people at a reasonable cost. This development was very significant for the success of the Reformation.

LESSON 4

THE ORIGIN OF OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE

Introduction

Theories concerning the origin of the Old Testament elicit lively debates. Fifty years ago, scholars were concluding that the Documentary Hypothesis concerning the origin of the five books attributed to Moses had triumphed. Critical scholars dominated the field and overshadowed the ultraconservatives who continued to hold the traditional view concerning the origin of the books of the Old Testament.

Each Old Testament commentary and introduction is written with certain presuppositions, which are determined by the author's view of the origin of the books of the Old Testament. It is the purpose of this lesson to examine a few of the theories of the origin of Old Testament books in order to be more qualified to discriminate wisely when reading a writer's view or interpretations concerning the Old Testament.

The Traditional Jewish View

The Talmud is a body of Jewish laws and legends which were codified (to systematize a set of rules) and collected several centuries after Christ. Many of the laws and legends circulated orally and as separate writings long before the birth of Jesus. The Talmud gives a valuable statement concerning the Jewish traditional view of the origin of the Old Testament. *Baba Bathra 14b*, a section of the Talmud, states:

And who wrote them? Moses wrote his own book, and the section concerning Balaam, and Job. Joshua wrote his own book and eight verses of Law. Samuel wrote his own book, Judges, and Ruth. David wrote the Psalms at the direction of ten elders, namely Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Jeremiah wrote his own book and the book of Kings and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his colleague wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes). The men of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve (Minor Prophets), Daniel, and Esther. Ezra wrote his own book and the genealogies of Chronicles as far as himself.

According to Jewish tradition, the Great Synagogue was a permanent council established by Ezra which continued to exercise authority in religious matters until about 300 B.C. S. R. Driver found this tradition of the Jews to be interesting but destitute of historical value.¹

The Apocalypse of Ezra (2 Esdras 14:21ff.) records an interesting Jewish tradition which states a mechanical view of the origin of the Old Testament books. According to the story, the world was in darkness because the Old Testament had been destroyed by fire. Ezra requested that he be filled with the Holy Spirit so that he could restore the whole story of the world from the very beginning. Five men were trained to write quickly and to record the words he dictated. During a period of 40 days, 94 books were dictated and recorded. It was revealed to Ezra that 24 books were to be made public and 70 books were to be apocryphal (hidden). The legend probably arose in connection with Ezra's being regarded as the restorer of the Law.

¹ *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1892), p. xxxiii.

The body of Jewish laws and legends which were codified and collected several centuries after Christ is called the _____.

(Talmud)

According to the Talmud, who wrote the following books? (Write the name of the author above his books.)

(left to right--Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Hezekiah and his colleague, the Men of the Great Synagogue, Ezra)

The mechanical view of Ezra's restoration of 24 books is that Ezra was filled with the _____ so he could restore the books of the Old Testament which had been destroyed by _____. He dictated for _____ days to _____ scribes and produced _____ books. It was revealed to Ezra that _____ books were for public use.

(Holy Spirit, fire, 40, 5, 94, 24)

The Traditional Orthodox View

Until the eighteenth century, Christians were almost unanimous in agreeing with the Jews that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). It was recognized that Moses would not have recorded the Deuteronomic account of his death (Deut. 34:5-12). This part of Deuteronomy, along with the book of Joshua, was attributed to Joshua. Samuel was believed to be the author of Judges and his books (1 and 2 Samuel). Some recent conservative scholars have questioned the possibility of Samuel's writing his books since there is unity of style and purpose throughout the two books which extend beyond the death of Samuel. The date of 1 and 2 Samuel must be placed after the time of David since the whole length of his reign is mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:5 and is described in detail in 2 Samuel. The mentioning of the "Kings of Judah" in 1 Samuel 27:6 reveals the Kingdom was already divided when the books were written. Originally 1 and 2 Kings appeared as one book, and they were attributed to Jeremiah. The author must have compiled them after 561 B.C. since he mentioned Evil-Merodach of Babylonia who began to reign in that year. He used a number of sources in compiling the work, including the annals of Solomon for 1 Kings 3-11 (cf. 1 Kings 11:41), a book of history of the Northern Kingdom (1 Kings 14:19), and the chronicles of the kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29). The books of Chronicles were originally one book, and it gives evidence of being an integral part of Ezra and Nehemiah, which were one book. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah were attributed to Ezra.

The last date mentioned in Chronicles is the first year of the reign of Cyrus of Persia (about 537 B.C.). First Chronicles 3:9-24 gives a genealogy from David to six generations past Zerubbabel who lived in 537 B.C. Six generations at twenty or more years per generation would date the book, or at least the genealogy, no earlier than 400 B.C. The tradition that Ezra wrote his own book and the book of Chronicles is likely true.

The conservative view holds that the Old Testament was completed with the work of Ezra, about 400 B.C. Most early and many contemporary conservative scholars believe:

Isaiah is a unified work of the eighth century prophet by that name;

Jonah was written in the eighth century, perhaps by Jonah; Daniel was written in the sixth century; and,

Esther was written during the Persian period in the fifth century.

Critical scholars tend to date many of these books much later and argue for a compiled instead of a unified work. The writings of many conservative scholars argue for the traditional dates and authors of the books.

Until two centuries ago, most Christians considered that the literature of the Old Testament originated The process involved the self-disclosure of God and His will to the writer and the recording of the Word from the Lord. The separate books were collected eventually under divine guidance into the Old Testament. Recent critical scholarship has challenged the view of a simple origin for the literature of the Old Testament. Not only did the writing of the books extend over hundreds of years, but the process of composition was much more involved than previously thought.

The Challenge of Critical Scholars

The rise of the critical spirit

Previous to the nineteenth century, the prevailing view was that the Bible contained the timeless, universal, and final revelation which was directly applicable to each generation. The views on authorship, date, and place of origin of the Old Testament

Some scholars have questioned Samuel's writing of his books since there is a unity of _____ and _____ throughout the two books which extend beyond the _____ of Samuel.

(style, purpose, death)

List three sources used by the author of 1 and 2 Kings.

(annals of Solomon, a book of history of the Northern Kingdom, chronicles of the kings of Judah)

Give the books attributed to Ezra and the date he wrote them.

_____ B.C.

(1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, 400 B.C.)

Write the number of the scholars by their view.

1. Critical scholars
2. Conservative scholars

- a. argue for the traditional dates and authorship of the books.
- b. tend to date many of the books much later and argue for a compiled instead of unified work.

(1-b, 2-a)

books were borrowed from the Rabbis by the mediaeval church leaders. Several critical attacks were made against the traditional views across the centuries, but orthodoxy controlled the thinking of most biblical students.

A change in thinking prepared the way for the Reformation. The Middle Age was characterized by the strong authority of the Church which permitted little human freedom. The spread of classical learning in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries resulted in man's demanding greater freedom of thought. He no longer was willing to be controlled by an authoritative church. The new emphasis on learning and human interest is known as humanism. The quest for classical knowledge led to the rediscovery of Hebrew and Greek and a return to reading the New Testament in Greek. The claim of the Catholic Church to be the official interpreter of the Bible was no longer respected. The Bible, along with classical literature, was subjected to critical examination. The Protestant Reformation encouraged freedom of inquiry. The age of science, which was based on the critical examination of reality, was dawning. By 1750, the traditional view of the authorship and date of the literature of the Old Testament was being attacked.

Theories of Pentateuchal origins

In 1651, Thomas Hobbes insisted that the dates of the Old Testament books should be determined directly from the books themselves, without recourse to tradition. Spinoza's critical studies pointed out isolated contradictions and stylistic differences in the Pentateuch which caused him to question Mosaic authorship. Francis Astruc, a French physician (1751), argued that Genesis was composed of two main documents, one employing "Elohim" and the other "Jehovah" for God. J. S. Semler (1773) advocated that the Old Testament be studied according to the same principles that apply to other literature. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of divine inspiration and infallibility and the reverence for the Sacred Book no longer protected the Bible from critical examination. Later scholars continued to examine critically the literature of the Pentateuch and to divide it into smaller documents. This critical study of the sources of the material in biblical books is called source criticism.

Astruc held to Mosaic authorship of Genesis, but he suggested that Moses used documents. His view is often referred to as the *Early Documentary Hypothesis*.

In 1800, Alexander Geddes concluded that the Pentateuch was composed of a number of fragments without logical or chronological connection. Vater and Hartmann decided that the Pentateuch consisted of a number of brief post-Mosaic fragments which were combined into our present Pentateuch. This view has been labelled the *Fragmentary Hypothesis*.

Some scholars reacted to the theory that the Pentateuch was composed of many independent sections without any internal continuity. This view did not explain the deliberate structure and careful arrangement of the narrative sections, including the chronology that accompanies this structure. H. G. A. Ewald (1823) and others sought to solve this problem by assuming that one source served as the basic nucleus of the Pentateuch. He maintained that an Elohist source underlay the composition of the Pentateuch and Joshua, and that it had been supplemented by the addition of older sections such as the Decalogue. His theory is known as the *Supplementary Hypothesis*.

W. M. L. de Wette (1805) identified the law book of Josiah's reform in 621 B.C. with Deuteronomy. The theory was proposed that Deuteronomy was written shortly before its discovery in 621 B.C. This theory established a date by which other literature of the Old Testament was dated. Its religious development and grammatical style were compared to Deuteronomy. After the evolutionary theory in science was popularized by the published

Where did the mediaeval church leaders get their view on authorship, date, and place of origin of the Old Testament books?

(Rabbis)

Write the letter of the view by the name of the man who held that view.

- T. Hobbes _____ Spinoza _____
 F. Astruc _____ J. S. Semler _____
- Genesis was composed of two main documents, one employing "Elohim" and the other "Jehovah".
 - The dates of the Old Testament books should be determined directly from the books themselves.
 - The Old Testament should be studied according to the same principles applied to other literature.
 - Mosaic authorship should be questioned because of isolated contradictions and stylistic differences.

(Hobbes-b, Spinoza-d, Astruc-a, Semler-c)

The view holding to Mosaic authorship of Genesis but suggesting Moses used documents is referred to as the _____.

(Early Documentary Hypothesis)

The view that the Pentateuch consists of a number of brief post-Mosaic fragments which were combined into our present Pentateuch is called the _____.

(Fragmentary Hypothesis)

H. G. A. Ewald said that one source served as the basic nucleus of the Pentateuch and other smaller units supplemented it. This theory is called the _____.

(Supplementary Hypothesis)

De Wette identified the _____ of Josiah's reform in 621 B.C. with _____.

(Law book, Deuteronomy)

work of Darwin in 1859, the evolutionary theory was applied to Old Testament studies. Books which were judged to contain more primitive religious beliefs and practices were dated before Deuteronomy, and those revealing more complex religious practices and less superstition were dated after Deuteronomy. The work of A. Kuenen (1861) and K. H. Graf (1866) was popularized by J. Wellhausen (1876). By using the evolutionary approach and the date of 621 B.C. for Deuteronomy, these men claimed that investigations had enabled them to detect four documents in the Pentateuch:

1. The *J* Narrative written about 850 B.C. by a prophet of Judah in which Jehovah is the name of the deity. Most of the narratives in the Pentateuch are attributed to the *J* author (cf. Gen. 2-4).
2. The *E* Narrative written about 750 B.C. by a prophet of Ephraim who used Elohim as the name of deity until Exodus 3. After the name of Jehovah was declared to Moses (Exod. 3), both names were used for God. The Elohist Document is not found until Genesis 15. The author had a sublime and majestic concept of his God and used fewer anthropomorphic (human form or characteristic) expressions to describe God than the *J* author.
3. The *D* material pertains to Deuteronomy and the succeeding historical books. Following the theory of De Wette, Graf and Wellhausen dated this material shortly before 621 B.C. in Judah.
4. The *P* material refers to a priestly writer who composed the legal sections and the history bound up with the laws. His work is dated about 500 B.C. Genesis 1 and the book of Leviticus are examples of his formal, repetitious, precise, and abstract style.

According to the *J E D P* theory, Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch was placed in its final form about 500 B.C. in Judah by a compiler instead of an author. He correlated into one book four written sources which were dated much earlier. He added materials relating to priestly services, to the narratives of *J* and *E*, and to the laws of Deuteronomy. Moses may have been the source of some early material, but Mosaic authorship for the Pentateuch was denied. This view is known as the *(Later) Documentary Hypothesis* and is attributed to Wellhausen who popularized it. It continues to be very influential in Pentateuchal studies.

Supportive arguments of the Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis

Critical scholars denied Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch for the following reasons:

1. Anachronisms:²
 Genesis 12:6—"And the Canaanite was then in the land."
 ("Then" implies a later author who referred back to an earlier event.)
 Genesis 14:14—"And pursued them unto Dan." (Dan was not the name of the area until after the death of Moses.)
 Genesis 36:31ff.—"Before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." (The author seems to have lived after Israel had a king.)

² Anachronism refers to evidence in statements indicating a later date than that of the supposed author.

List three men who claimed investigations had enabled them to detect four documents in the Pentateuch.

_____, _____,

 (A. Kuenen, K.H. Graf, J. Wellhausen)

Give the dates, locations, and basic emphases of the four sources.

J source, about _____ B.C. in _____, using *J* _____ as the name of the deity.
E source, about _____ B.C. in _____, using *E* _____ as the name of the deity.
D source, about _____ B.C. in _____, primarily the material of Deuteronomy.
P source, about _____ B.C. in _____, the material relating to priestly services.

(*J* source--850, Judah, Jehovah,
E source--750, Ephraim, Elohim,
D source--621, Judah,
P source--500, Judah)

The theory made popular by J. Wellhausen says _____ was not the author of the Pentateuch. He says the Pentateuch was correlated into one book from four written sources. Moses may have been the _____ of some early material. This view is called the (_____) _____.

(Moses, source, (Later) Documentary Hypothesis)

Give two examples of anachronisms, which imply a later date than Moses for the Pentateuch!

(Choose answers from the text.)

Deuteronomy 3:14—"unto this day." (This phrase implies a date long after the time of Moses.)

Deuteronomy 34:10—"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." (The statement implies the author is referring back across many years to the time of Moses.)

2. Duplications or triplications:

- a. Two creation stories: Genesis 1:1-2:4a and 2:4b-23. The division of creation into six days is not presented in the second account, and the order of creation is not the same.
- b. Two accounts of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: Genesis 19:29 repeats the previous narrative.
- c. Two accounts of the origin of Beersheba: Genesis 21:31—its name commemorates a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech; Genesis 26:31—its name came from an incident concerning Isaac and Abimelech.
- d. Two accounts of the naming of Bethel: Genesis 28:19; 35:14f.
- e. Two accounts of the change of Jacob's name to Israel: Genesis 32:28; 35:10. The first account indicates the change came at Peniel, but the second indicates the name change came at Bethel.
- f. Two accounts of Jacob's changing the name of Luz to Bethel: Genesis 28:19; 35:14f. The first account indicates the name was changed when Jacob was on his journey to Paddan-Aram, but the second indicates the change came on his return many years later.

3. Disagreements in the narratives of the Pentateuch:

- a. The story of the flood: Genesis 6:19f.; 7:2. In the first account Noah is commanded to take a single pair of each species into the Ark, but in the second account he is told to take seven pairs of clean beasts and a single pair of the unclean.
- b. The duration of the flood: Genesis 7:12; 8:6ff.; 7:24. After 40 days of rain, Noah waited several seven-day periods before the waters were abated, but according to Genesis 7:24 the waters prevailed for 150 days and were not finally abated until a year and ten days after the beginning of the flood.
- c. The selling of Joseph: Genesis 37:27; 39:1; 37:28. The first verse states that Joseph was sold to some Ishmaelites who in turn sold him to the Egyptians. The second account states that he was kidnapped by the Midianites who sold him to Potiphar (Gen. 37:36).

Critical scholars also point out that the Pentateuch contains inconsistencies, discrepant statements in relation to the divine name, and differences of style.³ They have concluded that the origin of the literature was not from a single author. They propose that Israel's traditions circulated orally in different parts of the country and were eventually recorded. The different recorded traditions were then assimilated into a continuous story by a compiler instead of an author. Not only was this theory applied to the Pentateuch but other books of the Old Testament were also approached in the same way. Some scholars believe that the book of Isaiah is a compilation of three or more documents. The critical approach has led many scholars to conclude Psalms was written during the Maccabean period and not by David. Evidences of Greek influence have been claimed for

³ Summaries of the arguments of critical scholars may be found in H. H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950); and G. W. Anderson, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1959).

Give two examples of duplications or triplications in the Pentateuch.

(Choose answers from the text.)

Give two examples of disagreements in the narratives of the Pentateuch.

(Choose answers from the text.)

Critical scholars propose that Israel's _____ circulated _____ in different parts of the country and were eventually _____.

(traditions, orally, recorded)

many Old Testament books, resulting in their later dating during the Greek period of the third century B.C.

Many critical scholars have been too radical in their claims of detecting multiple sources behind each book. Conservative scholars have attacked the radical statements and forced some retreat, but they have been unable to discredit the critical method itself. Conservatives have not succeeded in explaining away the internal difficulties of the Old Testament or in proposing an acceptable alternative to the Graf-Wellhausen theory.

The Form-Critical Method

The analysis of documents by Wellhausen (source- or literary-critical studies) served as the foundation for a new emphasis in the study of sources. Hermann Gunkel concluded that the documents J E D P were not the earliest forms in which the traditions of the Old Testament were communicated. Gunkel presupposed that the traditions were passed down from generation to generation in unwritten forms. These traditions were transmitted by institutions and persons concerned with the life and interests of the community. Material related to the cult and worship, such as psalms and laws governing ritual and sacrifice, was preserved and passed on within the life of the religious institutions. The oral form permitted the expansion, reinterpretation, and adaptation of traditions to meet the needs of the developing community.

Gunkel concluded that various situations in the everyday life of ancient communities produced and utilized various structural forms for their expressions of folklore, history, and faith. The everyday situations included funerals, weddings, court hearings, worship, teaching, celebration of military victories and defeats, etc. Certain words and expressions were employed in particular situations. Since much of the biblical material had its original usage in these particular situations, a proper understanding of the material must attempt to relate it to its original situation in life. For example, a funeral song would be entirely different in content and form from that sung at a wedding. Many of the psalms have been related to liturgical and enthronement settings. A particular song reflects the original function it served, and the words reveal the faith of the people in that particular situation.

Gunkel's form-critical theory suggests that even though the definite writing of a document may have come late in history, the material could have circulated orally for a very long time. Behind the written biblical documents lie stages of development in the oral use of the materials. These stages can be traced by analyzing the literary forms and relating them to the community situations which gave rise to them.

The form-critical approach follows a systematic study of types of literature in the Old Testament and compares them with similar literature from the cultures of Israel's neighbours. This approach does not merely define the nature of the literature which comes down to us, but it comprehends the life and thought, the story and song which underlie it. Based on the assumption that oral tradition preceded the written forms, the approach attempts to trace the history of the forms and materials much farther back than the documents.

Some of the smaller units of material which were used in the composition of the documents are: speeches, including farewell and political speeches; sermons; prayers, including intercession, confession, and thanksgiving; records; letters; laws, including legal and ceremonial; narratives, including biographies and histories; etc. When small units of the same literary form are compared, it is discovered that many of the words and concepts are similar even for units taken from different sections of the Old Testament.

In his work on the book of Genesis, Gunkel concluded that the narratives of Genesis had originally been transmitted orally in

Hermann Gunkel said the _____ documents were not the earliest forms in which the traditions of the _____ were communicated. He claimed these traditions were passed down in unwritten forms or o _____ f _____.

(J E D P, Old Testament, oral forms)

The material for the biblical documents may have circulated o _____ for a long time before they were written.

(orally)

the form of independent sagas (prose narratives) which eventually had become associated with some particular person. In the hands of skilled story-tellers, the narratives took on the characteristics of that art. Eventually they were reduced to a literary form of considerable aesthetic value prior to the prophetic period. These stories which had circulated independently were gathered into the J and E documents and eventually were connected to the D and P documents to form the Pentateuch. Gunkel considered the narratives of Genesis to be basically folklore like that of any other ancient people and not necessarily historical fact. Gunkel differed from Wellhausen who asserted that the four documents were the writings of individual authors. Gunkel's view was similar to the Fragmentary Hypothesis which considered the documents as collections of small units.

John Hayes notes three limitations of form criticism:⁴

1. Some of the material in the biblical documents had no pre-literary history;
2. Our knowledge of the everyday and institutional life of ancient Israel is too limited to be able to reconstruct the situations in life; and,
3. Some of the pre-literary traditions may not have been bound to particular institutional usage.

The Traditional-Historical Method

Several Old Testament scholars in Sweden (Uppsala School) have rejected the Wellhausen source- or literary-critical theory. Their view is most clearly set forth in the Old Testament introduction by Ivan Engnell. The emphases of his approach are:

1. Oral tradition going back ultimately to Gunkel;
2. Divine-kingship based on the work of Mowinkel;
3. A cultic and psychological approach to the Old Testament based largely on Pederson.⁵

Engnell repudiated the Wellhausen evolutionary theory of the development of Israelite religion. He denied that the parallel sources of narratives in the Pentateuch ever existed. He suggested that the stories in small units of the Pentateuch circulated in schools of tradition. He emphasized that the ancient Near Eastern oral transmission would approach the accuracy which was maintained by fixed writings. Oral tradition and written fixation must not be contrasted to one another. Engnell has attempted to show the reliability of traditions which possibly were transmitted orally for centuries.

Considerations Concerning the Origin of Old Testament Literature

The inadequacy of determining documents by divine names.—C. H. Gordon, a linguistic scholar, stated in an article that a study of ancient Near Eastern literature has shown the complete inadequacy of using the divine names of Elohim and Jehovah as a basis for documentary analysis in the Pentateuch.⁶

The dependability of Old Testament history.—Archaeology is confirming the dependability of the historical statements in the Bible. It is also enabling us to understand better Israel's environment and to see the meaning of Old Testament statements in their environmental settings. Statements in the Bible attributing Scriptures to certain men should be regarded as true.

⁴ *Introduction to the Bible* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 16.

⁵ For a fuller discussion, see C. R. North, "Pentateuchal Criticism," in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. by H. H. Rowley (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 59ff.

⁶ *Christianity Today*, IV, No. 4 (1959), pp. 131ff.

Match by drawing a line from the man to his view:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Gunkel | 1. The four documents were the writings of individual authors. |
| Wellhausen | 2. The narratives of Genesis are basically folklore and not necessarily historical facts. The documents were collections of small units. |

(Gunkel-2, Wellhausen-1)

Engnell repudiated the Wellhausen evolutionary theory of the development of _____ religion. He attempted to show the reliability of _____ which have been transmitted _____ for centuries.

(Israelite, traditions, orally)

_____ is confirming the dependability of the historical statements in the Bible.

(Archaeology)

The possible co-existence of oral and literary communications.—Because of the scarcity of writing materials and the laborious task of copying the books of the Old Testament, the narratives and literary units of the Old Testament frequently would have been transmitted orally. Oral transmission would not exclude, however, a limited number of written sources. Wellhausen held that writing did not appear among the Hebrews until after the Early Monarchy (about 950 B.C.). According to Harrison, writing was a feature of life in Syria and Palestine from the earliest occupational periods.⁷ In Egypt, the place of Moses' education, the hieroglyphics (pictographs) of 3000 B.C. became represented by a hieratic script, a non-pictorial cursive form of hieroglyphics employed by scribes for the purpose of rapid writing. The Canaanites employed a native cuneiform language (wedge-shaped characters impressed into wet clay) as early as 1500 B.C. Inscriptions in the Sinai peninsula, dating prior to the time of Moses (about 1500 B.C.), demonstrate that an early form of alphabetic script existed (called Proto-Sinaitic, Early Canaanite, and Proto-Phoenician). W. F. Albright deciphered the inscriptions and traced their origin to the use of an alphabetic script by Semitic slaves brought in from Canaan to work the turquoise mines in the days of Thutmose III (1490–1435 B.C.). Other scholars place them in the time of the Middle Kingdom (about 1991–1778 B.C.). Similar script has been found on potsherds at Gezer, Lachish, Bethshemesh, and Hazor. "In summary it can be said that by 1500 B.C. the alphabet, as distinct from cuneiform writing and Egyptian hieroglyphs, came into use in Syria and Palestine. . . ."⁸

The unacceptability of the evolutionary presupposition.—The evolutionary theory of the development of Israel's religion has been discredited by archaeological discoveries. Many of the laws in the Pentateuch which previous scholars claimed to be late in development have parallels as early as the fifteenth century B.C. in other cultures.

The possibility of scriptural adaptations.—The need for new translations in our age because of the changes in language suggests that the same may have been true in the life of Israel. Undoubtedly, statements in the day of Moses would have needed to undergo some changes across the centuries. Late scribes may have made marginal notes to explain a particular point in the Scripture. These could have been inserted into the text by still later copyists. It would be very difficult on the basis of words and grammatical style to date an ancient document. The most a scholar could accomplish would be to suggest a date for the latest revision in which the documents were put into the words of that generation. It was probably after the time of Ezra that rules for copying, which prevented the scribes from changing any words, were established.

The limitations in understanding literary customs.—There is much which is yet unknown about literary rules and practices in early Israel. Using modern-day practices and customs for writing and applying them to ancient documents can be misleading. For example, present-day customs assign the authorship of a document to the person who actually wrote it even if his source material came from other writings. It is just as logical to credit authorship to the person who was responsible for the sources of the document rather than the person who actually wrote it. It

⁷ R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 204f.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Give two reasons the narratives and literary units of the Old Testament frequently would have been transmitted orally.

(scarcity of writing materials, the laborious task of copying the books)

What has discredited the evolutionary theory of the development of Israel's religion?

(archaeological discoveries)

It (would, would not) be difficult to date an ancient document on the basis of words and grammatical style.

(would)

Much is still unknown about _____ rules and _____ in early Israel.

(literary, practices)

may be that Moses is the real author of the Pentateuch in that he is the source of the traditions even though they may have undergone some changes and received additions from the hands of later writers or copyists.

The error of making inspiration depend on traditional views of authorship.—The inspiration and authority of the Old Testament do not depend on the point at which oral communication became fixed in writing nor how the literature was transmitted from a human standpoint. God is not limited to our concepts of how something should be done. His purpose is not defeated nor even weakened by human error.

The presumption of being dogmatic.—The last word has not been written concerning the origin of Old Testament literature. Traditional views of authorship should not be discarded lightly; however, the contributions from other theories of the origin of the literature of the Old Testament should be used to understand better its message.

The inspiration and authority of the Old Testament is not dependent on _____ views of _____.

(traditional, authorship)

Home Study Exercises

Basic assignment (to be answered by Levels 1, 2, and 3)

NOTE: Much unfamiliar material has been introduced in this lesson. Most students will need to refer to the reading material in answering the following questions.

1. According to the Talmud, _____ wrote the Pentateuch and Job; Joshua wrote _____; Samuel wrote _____, and _____; David wrote _____; Jeremiah wrote _____, _____, and _____. Hezekiah and his colleague wrote _____, _____, and _____. Ezra wrote _____ and _____.
2. Briefly relate the mechanical theory of Ezra's restoration of 24 books. _____

3. Give one reason why recent conservative scholars have questioned the traditional view of the authorship of Samuel. _____

4. What sources are mentioned in 1 and 2 Kings? _____

5. List the books probably written by Ezra and the date. _____

6. How do critical scholars generally differ from conservative scholars concerning the dates and authors of Old Testament books? _____

7. The view of the origin of the Old Testament was borrowed by the Mediaeval Church from _____

8. According to Astruc, Genesis was composed of two main documents. Name them.

9. What is the Fragmentary Hypothesis?

10. How does the Supplementary Hypothesis differ from the Fragmentary?

11. Why is De Wette important?

12. Give the date, location, and basic emphasis of each of the Pentateuchal sources.

J about _____ B.C. in _____

E about _____ B.C. in _____

D about _____ B.C. in _____

P about _____ B.C. in _____

Supplementary assignment (for Levels 2 and 3)

1. The JEDP source analysis theory is known as _____

or _____

2. Source critics support their view by pointing out in Scripture:

(1) _____ (2) _____

(3) _____ (4) _____

3. Gunkel's main emphasis was to study the _____

behind the written materials.

4. Examples of five smaller units Gunkel studied are: _____

5. Underline the correct ending:

In the traditional-historical method, Engnell emphasized that--

(1) there existed definite parallel written sources of the Pentateuch.

(2) the literary forms reveal a pre-literary community life which produced particular forms.

(3) oral tradition is dependable and must not be contrasted to fixed writings.

6. In the debate concerning early oral or written transmission, what contribution has archaeology made? _____

7. What are the limitations of the form-critical method?

Advanced assignment (for Level 3)

1. From a reference book, such as *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, *The Interpreter's Bible*, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, *The New Bible Commentary*, read and outline an article on a subject such as "The Literature of the Old Testament," "Form Criticism of the Old Testament," "History of Pentateuchal Criticism (or Studies)," etc.
2. Answer the following:
 - (1) In determining the origin of Old Testament literature, what is the basic emphasis of conservatives, source critics, form critics, and the traditional-historical critics?
 - (2) Do you consider the traditional-historical method to be essentially different from the Fragmentary Hypothesis?

Seminar Discussion

1. How far should the traditional view of the origin of Old Testament literature be followed?
2. What contributions have source and form critics made to the study of Old Testament literature?
3. Which consideration do you believe to be the most important concerning the origin of Old Testament literature?
4. Can the Pentateuch be both Mosaic in origin and sixth century?