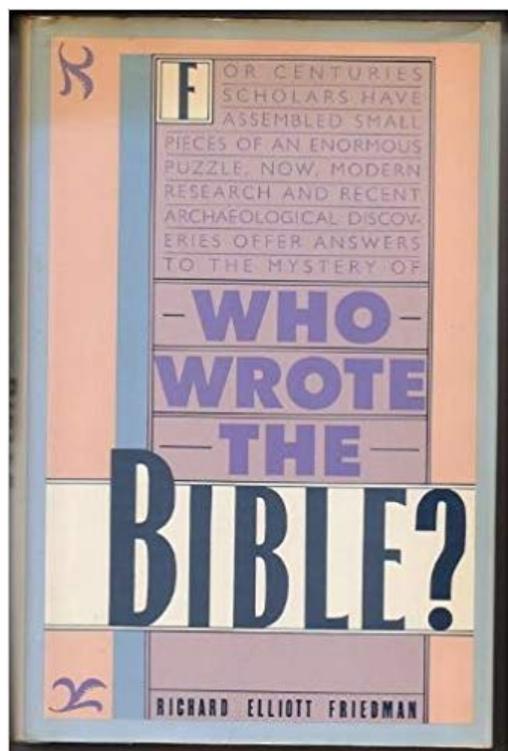


Who Wrote the Bible? *by* Richard Elliott Friedman



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"It is a strange fact that we have never known with certainty who produced the book that has played such a central role in our civilization," writes Friedman, a foremost Bible scholar. From this point he begins an investigation and analysis that reads as compellingly as a good detective story. Focusing on the central books of the Old Testament--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy--he draws upon biblical and archaeological evidence to make a convincing argument for the identities of their authors. In the process he paints a vivid picture of the world of the Bible--its politics, history, and personalities. The result is a marvel of scholarship that sheds a new and enriching light on our understanding of the Bible as literature, history, and sacred text.



Reviews of the **Who Wrote the Bible?** *by* Richard Elliott Friedman

Shomeshet

Richard Elliott Friedman is an eminent Biblical scholar with an illustrious career that includes previous books with titles like Commentary on the Torah. Ordinarily describing an author that way is

an indirect way of warning readers that his book is going to be dense and rather dull. Nothing could be farther from the truth in this case. *Who Wrote The Bible* comes with a large section of notes and a lengthy Appendix, but it is written for the general reader in a lively, informal style that sacrifices none of its scholarly rigor.

Since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Biblical scholarship has concluded that the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament), as well as the books which follow them, are the products of numerous authors writing at various times in the history of the Hebrew Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. What Friedman has done here is to use his own years of research to analyze the work of earlier scholars and explain his agreements or dissents from their theories. The most fascinating sections are those in which Friedman presents sections of the Bible which are familiar to studious Jews and Christians, explaining which were written by early priests, which were produced in either Israel or Judah, and which came from the period after the Babylonian Exile. It makes for an intriguing read that depicts the Old Testament as the outcome of years of study and thought by numerous men (and sometimes women) who worked to understand what God intended for His people.

It's an unfortunate fact that many people regard Biblical studies such as this one as in some way blasphemous, as if using humanity's intellect and imagination to better understand the world could in some way be offensive to God. Rest assured that, while Friedman's readers will be challenged and informed by his scholarship, their faith will not be weakened unless they want it to be.

Kagalkree

I simply cannot recommend this book highly enough. It is absolutely brilliant!

As a student of ANE languages, as well as a student of understanding the Jewish background and geography of the Bible, I thought I had a firm foundation for approaching the scriptures and understanding them from a scholarly point-of-view. However, I was mistaken. Without the material presented here by Dr. Friedman, I dare say the student misses a treasure of nuance and humor. Yes, I say humor because you can't help but smile when you see the underlying motivations for stating half of the doublet one way and the other half another way.

Can this knowledge shake the faith of the some? I imagine so. The idea that a writer's own biases went into producing these contributing JEPD documents will be contrary to those who think the authors of the Bible were simply sitting there taking dictation. But, hopefully, what comes out of all of this is a stronger, informed faith that is not plagued by childish notions.

This book helps turn Christian children into Christian adults. Bravo!

Kulalas

I learned so much from reading this book. Mainly I learned about the 4 strands of the Pentateuch, the J strand for Jahweh (German), the E strand for Elohist because the people referred to God as 'elohim, the P strand for Priestly Source because it's mainly laws, and the D source for Deuteronomistic History- from Joshua to 2 Kings. There is a Holiness Source -H- which the author didn't mention and which can be found in the Catholic Study Bible (RG 111). This Holiness School brought worship from the tabernacle to everyday life.

J and E were combined when Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was overtaken by the Assyrians around 722 BC. Refugees fled into Judah, and an editor (the author says that Ezra was the redactor) combined the refugees' E manuscript with their J manuscript. That's the reason for 2 creation stories and 2 flood stories. Ezra also redacted the entire Pentateuch, according to the author.

This was a great book, and I really learned a lot!

Nuadora

A titanic achievement of scholarship, this book would require several re-readings to comprehend it

thoroughly. The title is a misnomer, since the book only identifies the authors of 11 books of the Old Testament. The author provides his own translations of biblical verses from the Hebrew, but the translations are difficult to understand--I found myself having to repeatedly turn to my own New Revised Standard Version to understand the verses. The book is quite time-consuming to read, because the biblical citations are not in the text; rather, one must continually follow footnotes to the back of the book in order to discover what biblical verses are being cited. I plan to re-read this book, to learn more from the feast of knowledge that is presented.

Landamath

This is an excellent book. I would encourage anyone to read it.

For those who find comfort in believing that the Bible as a WHOLE, was written by "holy men" moved by the Spirit of God, brace yourself.

The main focus of this book, is the Torah, or the first five books of the bible believed to have been written by Moses.

However, after reading this book, the BELIEVER especially, will be encouraged, or forced, to apply critical thinking skills, when reading ALL scripture, Old Testament and New.

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