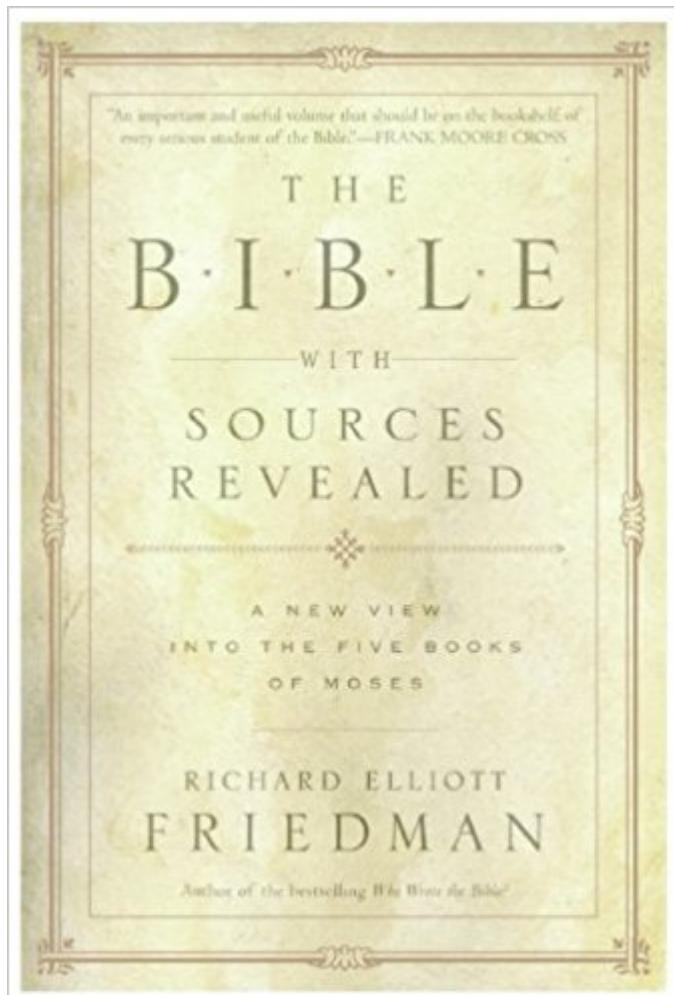


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The Bible With Sources Revealed



Synopsis

One of the World's Foremost Bible Experts Offers a Groundbreaking Presentation of the Five Books of MosesIn The Bible with Sources Revealed, Richard Elliott Friedman offers a new, visual presentation of the Five Books of Moses -- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy -- unlocking the complex and fascinating tapestry of their origins. Different colors and type styles allow readers to easily identify each of the distinct sources, showcasing Friedman's highly acclaimed and dynamic translation.

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Customer Reviews

Why is the Bible so hard to read? The answer lies in the Documentary Hypothesis, conceived over a hundred years ago. This book presents a comprehensive collection of evidence supporting this theory, all in a concentrated format in the first 31 pages. The rest of the book presents the author's translation of the Torah (1st 5 books of the Bible), coded to alleged authorship, with extensive footnotes & explanations. What a job! The short version is as follows: "J" wrote a story representative of Southern Judean interests. "E" wrote one about Northern Israeli interests. When the North and the South united, the Priests in charge could not get rid of either well known document, so he (they) wrote "P", making the story more to his (their) liking. King Josiah "took charge" at age 8. Because of his age, he was heavily influenced by the priests. After he attained young adulthood, the main priest conveniently found "D" (mainly a set of laws) that so impressed

the young king that he had the whole tome read aloud to the masses. All these sources and editions were put together by an editor, called the "Redactor" into the final 5-book work. The Redactor may have been Ezra, a priest of the Second Temple after the Jews returned from exile in Babylon. Evidence for this elaborate theory consists of differences in linguistics, terminology, content, narrative flow, connections with other parts of the Bible, relationships among the sources to each other and to history, and convergence (several different lines of evidence converge). This data is fascinating, well-presented, and quite convincing. The above is my light summary of the Documentary Hypothesis. The heart and soul of the book, however, is in the text of the Torah itself, which is color coded.

Centuries of copying, moving, editing and tinkering have caused monotheism's "holy book" to be viewed with some doubt. The "Hebrew Bible", or Torah, transmogrified into the "Old Testament" by Christianity, is the fundamental origin of the faith of millions. Once thought to be authored by Moses, who would have had to pen much of it after his death, scholarship finally concluded that The Book was the work of many authors. Friedman has done an outstanding job of sorting out who [at least in the abstract] produced the texts accumulated into what was known as The Books of Moses. A proponent of the Documentary Hypothesis, he has lined out with vivid clarity which author created which text of The Book. In his Introduction, Friedman insists that whatever interpretation of authorship is to be followed, it must be based on evidence. This challenges the idea that "faith" is sufficient support for how the authorship of this anthology should be viewed. Empirical evidence, he argues, is the only solid basis to consider in assessing origins. To perform this feat, he has accumulated "the largest collection of evidence ever assembled". He then presents the source texts to demonstrate their artistry, their notions of the divine, the history of their nation and how they view humanity. The books, he notes, were assembled from sources as any historical rendering should be done. He identifies the authors by letter designations, mostly arbitrary, but clearly distinct. Each author has an identifiable reference in time and place. The first two, "J" and "E", and their editor ["redactor"] "RJE" are scribes from the 8th and 9th centuries BCE. "J" is a resident of the southern kingdom of Judah, while "E" is an Israelite priest in the north.

The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses by Richard Elliott Friedman is a very helpful book for students of the Bible. Friedman's opening two chapters are amazingly succinct. In a very few pages, Friedman lays out an incredibly compelling case for what is known as the Documentary Hypothesis. This is the widely accepted theory that the first five books of

the Bible are a compilation of four main documents, known by the letters J, E, P, and D, which were woven together by later editors known as Redactors. After the introductory material, the book is a translation of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In his chapter, "Collection of Evidence," Friedman catalogs the seven main arguments for accepting the Documentary Hypothesis. They fall into these categories: linguistic, terminology, consistent content, narrative flow, connections with other parts of the Old Testament, relationships among the sources, and convergence of the evidence. I find Friedman's explanation clear and convincing. What does it matter whether you buy into the idea that sources by J, P, E, and D form the Pentateuch? Because, if you are somewhat familiar with this concept, certain "problems" with the text suddenly become clear as you read the new English translation that follows Friedman's opening chapters. By using two different ink colors (blue and green) and a variety of fonts, average Bible readers like you and me can easily understand various contradictions and redundancies in the text. The four strands are clearly set off, thanks to the wonders of modern technology in printing. Here's an example of how seeing the sources helps you understand what's going on in the Bible texts.

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