

SHOULD THE BIBLE BE CRITICIZED?-2

January 10, 2016

Last week's article discussed the definition and purpose of Biblical criticism, determining that proper criticism is appropriate and needed. However, "higher criticism" is destructive in nature, and its purpose is to disprove the authorship and inspiration of the Bible. This article will address the arguments used and their weaknesses.

ARGUMENTS AND WEAKNESSES

Over the years, many arguments have been put forth in support of "higher criticism," and their supposed successes in discrediting the Bible. One such effort is known as the Documentary Hypothesis, which has developed the idea that the Pentateuch was a compilation of many different authors. These separate writings were supposedly found and compiled by editors known as Redactors. These same Redactors allegedly discovered and compiled these documents sometime after the Exile, somewhere between 536 B.C. and as late as 400 B.C. (Class Notes, 2007). The proposed divisions are based upon subject matter and the names employed to reference God. This hypothesis would make the Pentateuch mere human history, and not divinely inspired. Here, the four documents will be discussed briefly.

The "J" or "Jahvistic" document is a supposed document that was authored by an individual or individuals that referred to God as Jehovah, by which He was known during the Patriarchal period.

The "E" or "Elohistic" document was supposedly authored by an individual or individuals that referred to God as Elohim, a very generic term, also used during the Patriarchal time until the time of Moses.

The "D" or Deuteronomistic document is included as the Deuteronomist sources. This theory states that Moses did not author the book of Deuteronomy, it is simply a series of first person sermons by Moses, compiled by redactors.

The "P" or Priestly document portion of this hypothesis states that the book of Leviticus had to be written by a group of priests, because it deals with the rules and regulations that governed the activities of the priests. The "P" document does not use the name Jehovah, until the time of Moses, and comprises a significant portion of the last 15 chapters of Exodus, and the entire book of Leviticus (Katz, Ben Zion. 2014. "Book Review: The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis." *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, July 1: 7).

The idea that the Pentateuch has many authors because God is called by various names is a weak argument to say the least. There are not three or four names that refer to God in the Old Testament, but literally dozens of names. One such name is, El-Shaddai, "Elohim Almighty," which is the equivalent of God's saying, "I Jehovah, am Elohim" (Coffman, James Burton. 1985. *A Commentary on Genesis*. Abilene, TX, pg. 8-9). In chapter 22 of Genesis, it is very apparent that the names "Jehovah" and "Elohim" are used interchangeably. Elohim is used in vv. 1, 3, 8, 9, and 12; Jehovah in vs.11 twice in vv.14, 15, and 16. Despite this fact, those that support this false theory attribute chapter 22 to "E." Because God's names have been used interchangeably, this destroys the Documentary Hypothesis, based upon sources using the various names of God. One must remember that the arguments of the critics fail because 1) no two of them have consistently agreed on the exact identification of the various documents and to which part of the Pentateuch these belong, 2) there is absolutely no objective proof for the existence of the source documents, and 3) it is a known fact that authors change their styles of writing over time (Clayton, Bill. 1998. *Background and Chronology in the Book of Deuteronomy*. Edited by Curtis A. Cates Sr. Memphis, TN, pg. 315).

Jesus honored the Pentateuch as the word of God. In Matthew 15:3-4, He quoted from Deut.5:16, Exodus 21:17, and Exodus 10:12 as the inspired message from heaven. Throughout the ages, those who accept the Bible as God-breathed, have believed Moses to be the scribe and the Holy Spirit to be the author.

The study of the first five books of the Bible helps to confirm the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Both archaeology and history have proven the existence of people, places, and events recorded in those divinely inspired historical books. Christ referred to the Pentateuch as the Word of God, and they occupy their rightful places in the Bible. No hypothesis or theory has ever shaken the foundation of the Bible, and it never will!