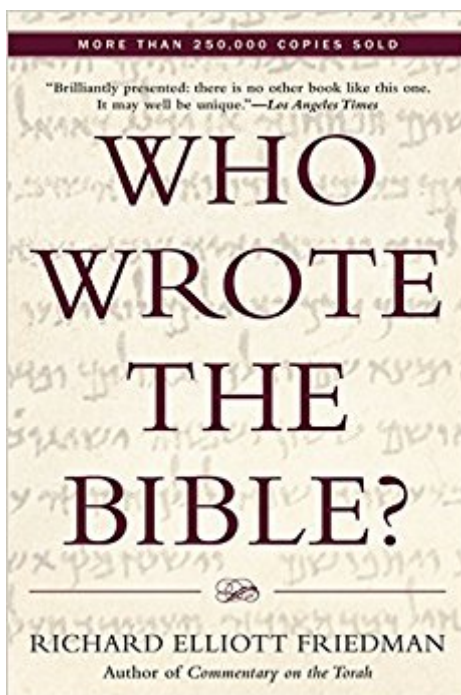


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# Who Wrote The Bible?



## Synopsis

The contemporary classic the New York Times Book Review called "a thought-provoking [and] perceptive guide," *Who Wrote the Bible?* by Richard E. Friedman is a fascinating, intellectual, yet highly readable analysis and investigation into the authorship of the Old Testament. The author of *Commentary on the Torah*, Friedman delves deeply into the history of the Bible in a scholarly work that is as exciting and surprising as a good detective novel. *Who Wrote the Bible?* is enlightening, riveting, an important contribution to religious literature, and as the Los Angeles Times aptly observed in its rave review, "There is no other book like this one."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"J," "P," "E," and "D" are the names scholars have given to some authors of the Bible, and, as such, they are very important letters to a lot of people. Churches have died and been born, and millions of people have lost faith or found it, because of the last two centuries of debate about who, exactly, wrote the canonical texts of Christianity and Judaism. Richard Elliott Friedman's survey of this debate, in *Who Wrote the Bible?*, may be the best written popular book about this question. Without condescension or high-flown academic language, Friedman carefully describes the history of textual criticism of the Bible--a subject on which his authority is unparalleled (Friedman has contributed voluminously to the authoritative *Anchor Bible Dictionary*). But this book is not just smart. Perhaps even more impressive than Friedman's erudition is his sensitivity to the power of textual criticism to influence faith. --Michael Joseph Gross

Friedman carefully sifts through clues available in the text of the Hebrew Bible and those provided by biblical archaeology searching for the writer(s) of, primarily, the Pentateuch. He does so with clarity and engaging style, turning a potentially dry scholarly inquiry into a lively detective story. The reader is guided through the historical circumstances that occasioned the writing of the sources underlying the Five Books of Moses and the combining of these diverse sources into the final literary product. According to Friedman, the most controversial part of his case is the identification of the writer and date of the Priestly source. This book is neither comprehensive nor unduly complex, making it a good introductory text for beginners and nonspecialists. Recommended for all academic libraries. Craig W. Beard, Harding Univ. Lib., Searcy, Ark. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ok, I have read some of the negative reviews posted on about this book and I understand to a certain extent why they would reject this book. It can easily be perceived that the Bible is a uninspired mish mosh of writings from unknown or suspected authors other than whom the book is said to be written by. I suppose the author's humanistic and intellectual approach to breaking down the Bible and its authors lends itself to some of these perceived rejections. But careful study and examination of the what the author is saying does not as a whole negate the truth or inspiration of God's Word. In fact, for me, as an evangelical Christian and lifetime Bible Study student, it opens up the Bible even more. It answers some questions I had in my thoughts and clarifies certain things. I think Mr Friedman did a great job however there were few parts (and I mean few) that I disagreed with such as where the author surmises that Moses hitting the rock in Exodus and again in Numbers is a record of the same event in two different and contradictory places (Mt Sinai and Meribah) that was placed by the Bible "writer ". I believe what the Bible says...period. If it records it as two separate events, then its two separate events. Nevertheless, I do suggest true students of the Word read this book in order to obtain some amazing insight. I already have so many "rabbit trails" I want to explore and study because of this book...such as why the Bible separates at times the two terms, Levites and Priests...I used to think they were one and the same. However, after reading this book it has brought me to the new awareness that it (the Bible) may be referring to priests that originated or stem from the Mushite (Moses) line and those of the Aaronic Line, hence the distinction between Levites and Priests. More research to be done. I did read in one review that this book may not be for "baby" Christians to which I do I agree. This book is certainly "steak" and not "milk"! And the approach (by the author) that Moses was not the author or more precisely the final scribe of the

books we have now in the Bible maybe true, however, what was noticeably absent from the book was that Moses WAS and IS the first original scribe (the author is God of course) from which these Bible scribes obtained their texts from. One only has to search two words in the Bible to confirm what I mean: "MOSES WROTE..." Exodus 24:4 Moses wrote..., Numbers 33:2 Moses wrote..., Deuteronomy 31:9 Moses wrote..., Deuteronomy 31:22 Moses therefore wrote..., Joshua 8:32, Mark 12:19, Luke 20:28, and John 5:46. You get the idea. At the end, Friedman wraps it up nicely though through quote from a christian writer which I wholeheartedly agree with: (From Christian writer Andreas von Maes) - "But in truth there is no great need for contending concerning the writer (of the Bible books) as long as we believe that God is the author, both of the events themselves and of the words wherewith they have been communicated to us..." AGREED!!! To that end, I do like the work Friedman did in this book. I do not feel it takes away from the Bible except in the few parts I disagree with and really there aren't many. After all no one is perfect besides Yeshua :-) Keep an open mind and see for yourself and I expect it will open up the Bible even more for you if you let it.

Excellent book. Answers many of the questions I had about the Bible as a teenager. Makes a lot of sense and fits in with other theological books I've read. If you've wondered why Genesis chapter 1 says God made man and woman out of the dust of the earth, and chapter two says Eve was made from Adam's rib, it's explained. Or why, it says the flood was forty days and forty nights, then later on one-hundred-fifty days, it gives you insight. I go back and read the book again every few years I like it so much. It's logical, well researched, but not pendentic. I've loaned it to friends, and usually ended up having to buy another one.

It's a shame that such an honest and simple approach at asking where the Old Testament came from (yes, the title is a misnomer, the book has nothing to do with the Bible as a whole but just the Pentateuch) wouldn't come from those who claim to hold the Bible on the highest pedestal. Nevertheless, here we have it for all to read, and it's a very challenging, and rewarding read. Don't dismiss it as "popular" writing.

Required reading for those who have difficulty accepting, or do not accept, that the Torah, also known as the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible, was given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. It presents an alternative explanation, known as the Documentary Hypothesis, for the origin of the text. It makes a logical argument, with evidence using textual analysis, that the Torah is actually an amalgam of various sources and traditions, from a period covering several hundred years, and was

redacted (edited) by a single person into the form we know today. Richard Elliott Friedman, the author, makes a case that the Redactor (editor) might have been Ezra, the Scribe, who was a prophet during the post-exilic period, c. 538 B.C.E. and later, to a remnant of the Jewish people who had returned from the Babylonian exile back to Jerusalem. Ezra's work has been dated to the fifth century B.C.E. The book shows no disrespect for the Torah. It is an academic, rather than a theological, work. Any judgements or conclusions are left to the reader. A remarkable, perhaps life-changing book. Highly recommended, particularly for people of faith.

If you're interested in the history of the foundations of our Judeo/Christian heritage, and interested in understanding how the human gets turned into the "divine", this is really a good book. Although you need to be better educated than I in the Hebrew Bible itself to get the most from the book.

The documentary hypothesis, as Friedman lays it out, is that the Torah was composed by four different groups plus an eventual compiler. Each had its own political agenda. This narrative comes together as an absolutely fascinating look at the life and times of the biblical authors. It should be noted that Friedman is sensitive to the fact that details such as this might disturb some readers and in his conclusion, he gives several ideas about how the faithful might reconcile them to their understanding of the text in terms of interpretation.

The Bible is certainly the most important 'book' ever written. When we consider the current brouhaha over *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Set A Watchman*...with a shy but still living author we marvel at the amazing work of this book. And the great story of discerning the pieces and the construction history is awesome. Yes, it gives we poor readers a framework to help us understand the how, when, where and why of the construction. And it pains us (or at least me) to realize how complex it is and how simplistic most of us are in our understanding. Thank you Professor.

Perhaps the single most iconic study of the Tanakh/Old Testament of the past forty years. Brilliant exposition of the basis of the historical Old Testament, how and why it came to be, and what it means in understanding the current status of Judaism and Christianity in relationship to their origins.

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