

How We Got The Bible

Understanding the Process
& History of the
Canonization of the Bible

Part IV

Historical Narratives

- 1) Deuteronomistic Books: Joshua, Judges, Samuel (I&II), and Kings (I&II) – people and leaders were judged as “good” or “bad” based upon their faithfulness to Deuteronomy
- 2) Ezra-Nehemiah
- 3) Chronicles (I&II)

Historical Narratives

- No consensus among scholars of authorship or dating
- Dating only by inference and comparison
- Authorship attributed to famous individuals to ensure survivorship of the writings
- Not “history” as we define it
 - Not interested in balanced objective fact-telling
 - Written in a moral/religious framework to inspire the same
 - Not “fiction” – selective accounts retold

Historical Narratives

- *Joshua*: Conquest and settlement in Canaan.
- Judges: 200-300 year period before the monarchy (*Samuel*)
- Samuel: Unification of the tribes under the monarchy of Saul then David (*Samuel*)
- Kings: Division on the nation and tracing the kingdoms of the North and South and their falls (*Jeremiah*)

Historical Narratives

- *Ezra-Nehemiah* : Renaissance of Israel / Religious Renewal
 - 538: Edict of Cyrus of Persia
 - 520: Rebuilding of the Temple (Haggai & Zechariah)
 - 445: Rebuilding of the Walls

Historical Narratives

- Chronicles : Post-exilic re-envisioning and retelling of the history of Israel from Joshua through Kings (*Ezra*)
 - Emphasis was on Israel as a religion and not a nation
 - Focus: Temple, Priests, Levites, Zion
 - Kings judged by how they dealt with the priests

Prophecies

Prophecies

The word “prophet” derives from the Greek word *προφητης* (prophetes) which means to foresee. Seeing into the future, however, is but one small part of what prophets did in Israel.

Biblical Titles of Prophets

- ✓ Seer: One who receives and reports visions (Amos 7)
- ✓ Diviner: One who is able to communicate with God for the discovery of useful information to those who seek his counsel (mainly used in relation to Samuel; I Samuel 9)

Biblical Titles of Prophets

- ✓ Man of God: A holy man of God who personifies God in a unholy world, possessing power and the fear of the people (mainly used in relation to Elijah and Elisha – II Kings 6)
- ✓ Prophet: One called to a certain task to speak/interpret for God

Prophets

- Functioned as intermediaries between Israel and God
- Usually arose in times of crisis, religious or civic
- Were typically reformers, teachers, and advisors
- Gave commentary and perspective on past, present, and sometimes future events

Prophets

- Warned Israel of their wickedness and impending doom
- Reminded Israel of God's faithfulness, their covenant obligations, and the necessity of turning back to God
- Provided Messianic Prophecies of the coming of Christ
- Were usually "Central" or "Peripheral"

Prophetic Literature

1. Symbolic Actions: Behaviors that were meant to send messages to Israel – Isaiah 20
2. Commissioning Reports: Accounts of the prophets calling – Jer. 4; Isaiah 6; Ezek. 1-3
 1. Confrontation
 2. Initial Words about context
 3. Commissioning
 4. Objections
 5. Reassurance
 6. Sign

Prophetic Literature

3. Visionary Reports: Account of what the prophet saw in a vision from the Lord and its meaning – Amos 7; Ezek. 37
4. Legendary Accounts: Narratives of a prophets power – II Kings 4
5. Historiography: The prophets role in national affairs – Isaiah 36-39
6. Biographies: Retelling of historical events with a repeated thesis – Jeremiah 37-44

Prophetic Literature

7. Divine Revelations: Instances where the prophets give counsel to Israel's inquires based upon revelations from God – Ezekiel 20; Zechariah 7,8

Dating Debate

Most of the Bible's prophetic literature centers around the event of the Exile. The dating of the prophecies is determined by the Babylonian monarchy. The challenge is that the Babylonian Kings adopted the names of their predecessors without dynastic numbering, i.e. Henry the IV, VIII, etc. which makes dating difficult

Dating Debate

There is a debate on the dating of prophetic work between scholars and traditionalists/fundamentalists.

MAJOR EVENT

Scholars: Dating must be post-event

Traditionalists: Dating can be pre-event

