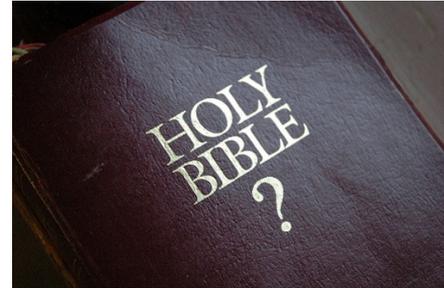# Biblical Criticism

Contemplating Valid Questions

If you took an introductory college course on classic literature, you may encounter the instructor making some claims about the Bible such as:

Moses did not author the first 5 books of the Bible.

The Gospels are not four independent accounts of Jesus Christ.

The historical Jesus was simply a man.

The Bible is mythological not historical.

Evaluating these claims takes us into the study of Biblical Criticism, a necessary and vital discipline for studying the Bible. If indeed God is a true and historical Being, then the Bible would be a true and historical document.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/bc1.aspx

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What is Biblical Criticism?

Biblical criticism is the evaluation of all questions regarding the meaning, truth, and worth of the Bible. It is a method used to study the Bible as an ancient manuscript and a method to determine if one's faith is grounded on truth or fiction.

Because no original manuscript (autograph) exists today, the Bible is translated from various copies and versions of the original manuscripts. Biblical Criticism studies the literary and historical origins of these manuscripts composing the Bible from two perspectives: lower and higher criticism. The term "lower" criticism refers to the fact that this form of study is foundational for any other forms of study.
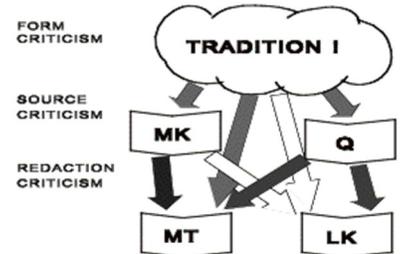
Lower Criticism attempts to determine as best as possible the text of an original manuscript. Essentially it looks at **what** the manuscript said.

Higher Criticism focuses its study on the sources used for a manuscript by studying a manuscript's composition. It attempts to determine authorship, date, and authority of the source documents and hypothesize how the source document may have changed before its inclusion with the manuscript. Essentially it looks at the **who**, **when**, **where**, and **why** of the manuscript.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/bc2.aspx

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Higher Criticism

Because Higher Criticism approaches the biblical manuscripts from a more hypothetical perspective, its greatest challenge is reconciling the role of supernatural events in biblical history.

Based on how critics approach supernatural events, which reveals their presuppositions, higher criticism is divided into two camps:

Constructive Criticism accepts the possibility of supernatural inspiration of the Bible.

Destructive Criticism takes a human rationalistic approach and views the Bible with a bias against supernatural influences.
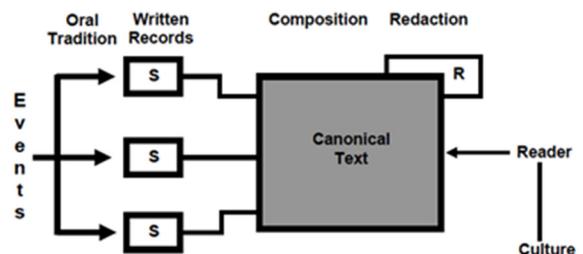
Higher Criticism (continues)

Destructive critics tend to use Higher Criticism as a method to speculate and historically reconstruct the Bible as a work of human fiction. Often based on skeptical assumptions, their conclusions are controversial. In many cases, the controversy is focused on the subjective method of analysis, or it fails to acknowledge the method's limitations, or in some cases, fails to be academically accountable.

> If Higher Criticism is so questionable and controversial, is it necessary to consider these methods as viable means to study the Bible?

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Presuppositions

The answer is **yes**! Higher Criticism is a worthwhile tool to help us understand perspective issues such as author, historical development and background, literary genre, and theological message within the context of the whole Bible.

> All forms of Biblical Criticism are necessary forms of investigation.

>> Whether one chooses to pursue constructive or destructive criticism reflects the contention between faith and revelation verses skepticism and myth.

>> The results of such inquiries will yield both correct and incorrect answers.

At the very core of the divisiveness is the question that reflects the difference in one's presuppositions:

> Is it the Bible or the human critic who is inerrant?

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Documentary Hypothesis

A Question of Mosaic Authorship

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy make up the Pentateuch, which Jewish tradition and internal evidence within the Bible has indicated was authored by Moses.

> Destructive higher criticism would disagree.

Of the 39 books of the Old Testament, scholars and skeptics question these 8 books the most:

> Genesis   Exodus   Leviticus   Numbers
> Deuteronomy   Joshua   Isaiah   Daniel.

The question regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch is significant. The controversy questions the reliability of the Old Testament and ultimately whether if there is a factual basis for Christianity.

Traditional Evidence

There is debate if the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) was once one book by itself, and in the making of the Septuagint, was divided into the 5 books. The Greek name *pentateuchos*, implying a division of the law into five parts, occurs for the first time about 150-75 AD in the letter to Flora by Ptolemy.

While the Pentateuch is largely an anonymous work, according to Jewish tradition, Moses is Its author.

There are several instances where the Bible attests to Mosaic authorship:

God Himself chose Moses to author the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch itself attests to Mosaic authorship.

Joshua, the successor to Moses, recognized Mosaic authorship.

King David acknowledged Mosaic authorship.

The historian of Jewish kingships referred to Mosaic authorship.

The prophets of God cited Mosaic authorship.

Jesus did not question Mosaic authorship, and the Apostles referenced Mosaic authorship.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh2.aspx

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Skepticism of Literary Evidence

However, skeptics charge that reference to internal evidence is circular reasoning and does not settle the question of who really authored the Pentateuch.

They say that the Pentateuch has inconsistencies that are hard to attribute to a single author. There are events that occurred before Moses' time, differences in divine name, parallel accounts, variations in diction and style, historical evidence of post-Mosaic dating, and discrepancies.

For destructive critics, the traditional view of Moses being the author around 1450 BC is categorically rejected.

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Dutch-French Critics

Dutch philosopher, Benedictus de (born Baruch) Spinoza was the first to publish a widely read theo-political treatise, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670, chapters VII-X), that challenged the dating and authorship of the Pentateuch with the hypothesis that it was composed by Ezra or a later editor. His hypothesis was based on historical evidence of post-Mosaic dating.

French physician, Jean Astruc, published Conjectures on the Original Memoranda Which It Appears Moses Used to Compose the Book of Genesis (1753), which proposed that the variations in God's name, Yahweh or Elohim, indicated that different sources were used for Genesis. This was the beginning of Source Criticism.

He felt that the inconsistencies, parallel accounts, discrepancies and contradictions were the result of combining the two different sources.

Astruc did not deny Mosaic authorship but he did deny its divine authority, and his work marked him as the father of the documentary theories.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh4.aspx

German Critics

As Source Criticism developed, it spawned various approaches such as the Fragmentary and Supplementary Approach.

The Germans led in the development of Source Criticism.

Johann Eichhorn, Oriental professor of Gottingen, published his work *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1780), whose approach of a fragment theory influenced many, and his work gave birth to the discipline of Higher Criticism (such as Form and Tradition Criticism).
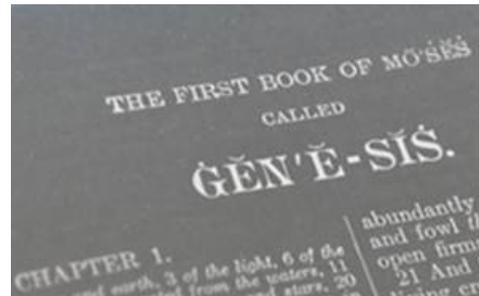
He felt that the Pentateuch was carelessly composed of fragments from various sources by a single editor.

Following him were others such as A. Geddes (1792), K. Ilgen (1798), J. Vater (1805), W. De Wette (1806), W. Vatke (1835), V. Humfeld (1853), K. Graf (1865), and A Kuenen (1874-77) who all published and developed the documentary theories further.

While all were either professors of philosophy and / or theology, they largely held that the Pentateuch was mythical or legendary and denied any possibility of the supernatural.

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Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis

Among scholars, there was great debate over the date of when and how the various sources came together to form the Pentateuch.

In 1878, Julius Wellhausen published two works: *Die Komposition des Hexateuchs* and *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, which was based on the work of K. Graf and the evolutionary theory of Darwin.

His classical work became known as the Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis or JEDP Theory to indicate the sequential evolution of the various sources. This hypothesis later became known as the **Documentary Hypothesis**.

Wellhausen perceived that the sources composing biblical literature reflected the historical development of Israel.

His explanation of how the sources evolved and were related to various stages of Israel's development was widely accepted among scholars.

Unfortunately some religious leaders, both Jewish and Christian, accepted this theory to cast doubt on the credibility of the Pentateuch in order to justify the priority and importance of their church and traditions.
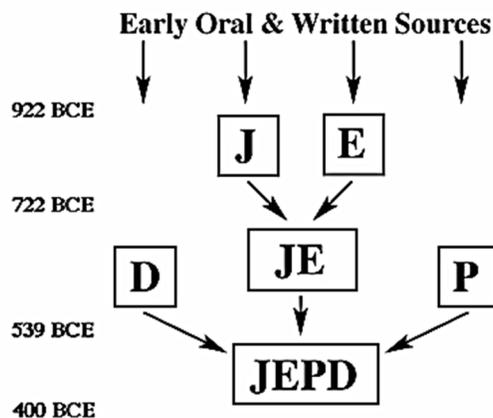
British and American Critics

German criticism of the Pentateuch influenced both British and American academic theologians in the latter part of the nineteenth century. S. Davidson (1862), C. Briggs of Union Theological Seminary in New York (1883-86), and S. R. Driver of Oxford (1891) published works that supported and advocated the Documentary Hypothesis.

Driver, from Great Britain, was perhaps the most influential scholar of the time, and his collaborative work, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (1906), is a reference still used today.

In contrast to their German counterparts, British and North American critics believed in the inspiration of the Bible.

However, their work in the Documentary Hypothesis demonstrated that they did not hold entirely to the idea that It was a direct revelation from God.

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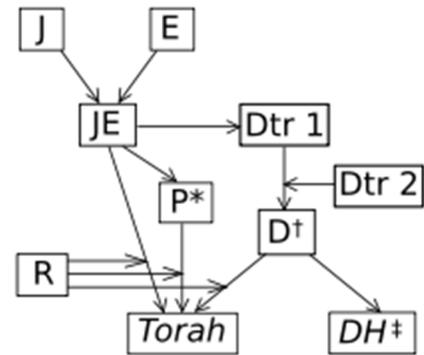
JEDP Methodology

What are the methods of Source Criticism and how did this lead to the basis for the multiple authorship of the Pentateuch?

There are essentially 3 steps to Source Criticism:

1. **Break up** the text. Source critical analysis begins with analysis of the fragments. Each critic looks for a break, inconsistency, or discontinuity in the text.

2. **Reconstruct** the sources. Fragments are grouped according to similarities such as style, vocabulary, theme, and chronological framework.

3. **Date** the sources. Relative dating among sources and absolute dating based on info within the source.

In breaking up and reconstructing the Pentateuch, critics found:

1. Variations in the use of divine names in Genesis

2. Variations in diction and style

3. Parallel or duplicate accounts (doublets)

4. Evidence of post-Mosaic authorship: discrepancies and anachronisms
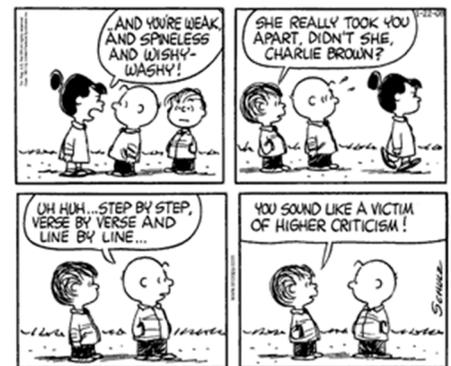
The Significance of Divine Names

The use of Divine Names has been pointed out as evidence of multiple authorship of the Pentateuch.

In Genesis 1, the Hebrew term Elohim was used to name God. In contrast, Genesis 2 used the Hebrew term Yahweh for LORD God. Destructive critics believe that an editor used one source for Genesis 1 and a different source for Genesis 2, because each had a different term for God and each account had a different literary style.

The Problems for Source Criticism

1. The **assumption** that the manuscript used for source criticism was without error. Proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis used the Masoretic Hebrew text of the Old Testament for their source criticism.

> When examining the divine names, Elohim and Yahweh, the Masoretic Hebrew text (MT) differed from the Greek Old Testament (LXX or Septuagint) in 180 instances and in a variety of different passages within the Pentateuch.

> The scribes of the MT were known to remove the sacred name of Yahweh, and indeed the LXX used the term Yahweh more extensively.

> This called into question the accuracy of the MT's textual transmission of divine names, and scholars held the earlier dated LXX in higher regard than the later dated MT in reliability. Because of this, using the MT causes significant problems for critics who use divine names as the basis to determine sources.

2. The **assumption** that the terms Yahweh and Elohim were equivalent names for God.

> Based on the verb "to be," the Hebrew word YHWH means "He is," and only in Exodus 3:14 is His full name YHWH revealed ("I am who I am"). Ancient Hebrew literary tradition had various terms and rules for their use when naming God, which described specific aspects and characteristics of God. In English language Bibles, Yahweh is translated as "LORD" because Judaism does not pronounce the sacred name of YHWH.

> Yahweh (LORD) is the covenant name of God and is used exclusively of the God of the Hebrews. It is used to reflect the context of His intimate and ethical character and personal covenantal relationship with man. Because Genesis 2 is more specific with the details of man, his original state, his home, and his helper, Yahweh is used.

> Elohim is the plural form of El, which by itself is a generic term for god. While a plural form of El, Elohim is usually translated in the singular form and alludes to Supreme Being, transcendent, and above the world. It is used when God is referred to as Creator of the world, Lord of the universe, omniscient, and omnipresent. Because Genesis 1 is devoted to the Creation account, Elohim is used.

> As another illustration of the use of divine names, consider Deuteronomy 5:9, "…for I, the LORD (Yahweh) your God (Elohim), am a jealous God (El),…"

3. The **misunderstanding** of Hebrew grammatical context.

> Understanding Hebrew grammatical nuances also explains another confusion with divine names, which has been used as evidence demonstrating another source. In Exodus 6:3, God reveals his name to Moses, Yahweh, and mentions that the Patriarchs knew him by another name; however, critics point out that this is a contradiction, because the Patriarchs in Genesis used Yahweh's name (i.e. Genesis 4:26; 22:14; 28:21).

> There are two interpretations of Exodus 6:3

>> 1. The confusion stems from the preposition, *beth*, found in front of the term *Yahweh* in Exodus 6:3. This preposition is known as the *beth essentiae*, which emphasizes the character and nature of the name Yahweh; thus, the phrase "by the name" in Exodus 6:3 is better translated as "in the character of Yahweh."

The Significance of Divine Names (continues)

> In this view, Exodus 6:3 would be read as, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob *in the character of* Elohim, but *in the character of* Yahweh I did not make myself known to them."

> While the Patriarchs knew of Yahweh, they knew Him as the covenant God; the God who protects and blesses. It was not until the deliverance and exodus of the nation of Israel from Egypt that God was seen as a savior and redeemer; the Patriarchs did not know God in this context.

> The evidence for this interpretation was the Targum of Psuedo-Jonathan which suggested that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew God as Elohim and by the name Yahweh as well; however, the latter was only a word to them without the experience of the Shekinah glory that usually was associated with that name. Medieval Jewish commentators also took the view that the Patriarchs did not understand the meaning of the *character* behind the *name*. (1)

> 2. In this second interpretation, the confusion stems from a misreading of Hebrew syntax. Because of Exodus 6:4, Exodus 6:3 should be taken in a positive, not negative sense. Thus Exodus 6:3 becomes a rhetorical question.

> In this view, Exodus 6:3 would be read as, "and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as Elohim. My name is LORD. Did I not make myself known to them?"

> In Exodus 6:3 "my name Yahweh" cannot be the direct object of the verb "made known," because it is reflexive in meaning. It is also unusual for a Hebrew sentence to have a subordinate phrase precede the negative Hebrew word *Ló* (not) because when used, *Ló* (not) would normally be the first word of a Hebrew sentence. (2)

The terms *Elohim* and *Yahweh* are not interchangeable or equivalent, and they convey subtlety different aspects of God. Their use is intentional and provide a context to the passage. Because of the aforementioned significant issues, Divine Names are no longer considered a reliable basis for identifying hypothetical sources in the manner of the Documentary Hypothesis.

References:
   1. Kaiser, W, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant*, Chicago, IL: Inter-Varsity Press (1984), p.140.
   2. ibid.

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Variations in Diction and Style
The Pentateuch covers a variety of subjects written in a variety of literary styles. This variety has produced differences in diction and style, which has been used to support the Documentary Hypothesis. Destructive critics presuppose that an author should write in a consistent manner, using the same vocabulary, words groups, and literary style. It is principally through this study of separating out the similar word groups, content, and styles that the various hypothetical sources Jahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly were determined.

What exactly is diction and style? Briefly it is all the elements of a written document. The following are some brief examples and short explanation:

   Sentence Structure – Do the sentences contain clauses or fragments? What is the word order?

   Pace – Does the text focus on description or action and plot?

   Expansive / Economical Diction – Is the text precise or elaborate? Does it have both? Why?

Variations in Diction and Style (continues)

Vocabulary – Are the words technical, flowery, slang, colloquial, poetic, etc.?

Figures of Speech – Does the text use imagery, metaphors, similes, etc.?

Use of Dialog – Is dialog used to tell the story? What role does it play in the narrative?

Point of View – Is it first, second, or third person?

Character Development – How are characters introduced and developed? What is their function?

Tone – What is the author's intent and attitude? What does the mood reveal?

What diction and style clues did destructive critics find in the Pentateuch that led to their deduction of the hypothetical JEDP sources?

1. **Vocabulary Differences**. Vocabulary differences that destructive critics use to differentiate sources can take several forms. One form is the use of different words to name the same person, tribe, or location. The use of divine names, Yahweh and Elohim, is a prime example. Other examples include: Horeb / Sinai, Jacob / Israel, and Ishmaelites / Midianites.

Another form is found in word grouping or phrases; some words are only found in association with certain words. For example, in Genesis 1, the word "create" is found in association with "Elohim". In contrast, "create" is absent in Genesis 2 when the divine title "Yahweh" is employed.

Problems with this evidence

The problem for destructive critics has always been the subjective basis of their source determination. Their use of vocabulary differences for source determination has been inconsistent. For instance, the hypothetical **J**ahwist source, defined by its use of Yahweh, may have the divine name "Elohim" in parts of it, and the hypothetical **E**lohist, defined by its use of Elohim, may have the divine name "Yahweh" in parts of it. And there is the other problem when the term "Yahweh Elohim" is used together.

Furthermore, destructive critics fail to take into consideration the context of the passage, or synonyms of Ancient Near Eastern literature, or the presence of a literary device such as parallelism, which could easily account for differences in vocabulary (for example, see: The Significance of Divine Names at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh9.aspx or The Selling of Joseph at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh11_joseph.aspx).

In another example using an ancient extrabiblical manuscript, the text of Merenptah's *Israel Stela* provides two additional names for Egypt: Kemit and Tameri, and five names for Memphis: Mennefer, Ineb-hedj, Inbu, Ineb-heqa, Hatkup-tah. Yet despite these multiple names for one location, not one scholar has suggested that the stela was created using multiple sources. (1)

Finally, the existence of vocabulary differences has been noted in extrabiblical texts whose single authorship is beyond doubt. (2)

2. **Style and Content Differences**. Difference in the literary style and its contents is another criterion that destructive critics have used to support their hypothetical source divisions. One example of stylistic differences is examining the literary style.

J is seen as a histo-biographical narrative of people and tribes; its theology focuses on man and describes God anthropomorphically.

Variations in Diction and Style (continues)

> **E** is seen also as a histo-biographical narrative but it presumes the division of the Israelites and focuses on Joseph and northern matters; its theology is on more religious and moralistic concerns.

> **D**, essentially the book of Deuteronomy, is seen as comprised of speeches and sermons about the covenant with God; its theology is focused on the unique position of Israel chosen by God.

> **P**, on the other hand, is seen as having a more technical content focused on chronology, temple regulations, record keeping, statistics, and genealogical lists and pertain more with issues of priesthood.

Redactors are the hypothetical editors that destructive critics use to explain how J, E, D, and P were creative integrated into the Pentateuch. Redactors are also used to explain the inconsistencies and problems with the Documentary Hypothesis.

> **Problems with this evidence**

> From a literary perspective, arguments based on style are not always conclusive. For instance archeology has found that variation in style was common in the Near East.

> The Biography of Uni (Egypt 2400 BC) was a narrative with summary statements, a victory hymn, and two different refrains repeated at varying intervals. (3)

> The royal inscriptions of Uratu kings (800-700 BC) contained a variety of writing styles: a fixed style when referring to the god Haldi, a different literary style when referring to the king, first person narrative of conquests, and statistical information about the Urartu forces, prisoners, and spoils of war. (4)

> Differences in diction and style do not necessarily mean that there are different authors; they could easily reflect the natural differences between different subject matter and carry their own distinctive vocabulary and style.

3. **Theological Differences**.

Among content differences, destructive critics have used theological differences as another means to differentiate sources. Some have taken this further to suggest that the hypothetical JEDP sources, together with their hypothetical dating, reflect the changing socio-theological changes in Ancient Semitic culture. For instance Wellhausen saw three views of religion from the JEDP sources:

> 1. **J** and **E**: natural religion with primitive worship.

> 2. **D**: Prophetic religion with ethical consciousness.

> 3. **P**: Priestly religion with ceremonial ritual.

Wellhausen postulated that the Pentateuch pointed towards an origin of animism (the worship of inanimate objects and nature with the belief that they have a spiritual life or a living soul) to henotheism (the worship of one god without denying the existence of other gods) to monotheism (the worship of one god and denying the existence of others).

> **Problems with this evidence**

> Wide acceptance of the Documentary Hypothesis was due largely to Wellhausen's superb presentation of how Hebrew religion developed. However, the evolutionary development of the Jewish faith has no evidence or factual basis. Modern archeology and a comparative study of Ancient Near Eastern literature found that animism disappeared centuries before the patriarchs appeared. Furthermore anthropologic studies of pre-literate cultures essentially found that all cultures had a belief in a supreme god (among lesser gods); animism was a very rare

exception.

Israel had always exhibited monotheism. But it is its government's embrace of monotheism and transforming into a theocracy that marks the Hebrew culture as very unique. This unusual theocracy existed while being surrounded by neighboring cultures who believed in polytheism and whose government was independent of theology. There is no evidence that the Hebrews invented, evolved, or borrowed monotheism.

Destructive Critics also see theological differences in hypothetical sources pointing to the evolution of worship from decentralization (J is unaware of centralization and D calls for centralization) to centralization (P assumes it).

Problems with this evidence

In view of Exodus 20, worship was indeed decentralized.

Exodus 20:22-24
22) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'You yourselves have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. 23) 'You shall not make other gods besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make for yourselves. 24) 'You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.

However, when read in context, the call for centralization of worship in Deuteronomy 12 is not significant for evolution. Instead, as in Deut 12:10, centralization was to occur when the Israelites reached the Promised Land and achieved peace and security. (5)

Deuteronomy 12:1-14
1) "These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. 2) "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3) "You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. 4) "You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God. 5) "But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come. 6) "There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. 7) "There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you. 8) "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; 9) for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. 10) "When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, 11) then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD. 12) "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. 13) "Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see, 14) but in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

As in most cases, the destructive critic's evidence supporting this evolution of worship was born from taking content out of its context.

Variations in Diction and Style (continues)

The following is a table summarizing the differences in vocabulary, style, content, and theology between the hypothetical sources:

Source	Jahwist	Elohist	Deuteronomic	Priestly
Vocabulary	YHWH – the covenant name of God Sinai	Elohim – the generic name of God Horeb instead of Sinai	YHWH – the covenant name of God	Elohim – the generic name of God
Content	-Emphasis on Judah -Personal biographies -Interest in ethics and theology but not sacrifice or ritual	-Emphasis on Northern Israel -Objective approach in narration and interested in sacrifice and ritual	-Expounds on the covenant with God -Emphasis on centralization of worship: bring all sacrifices and contributions to Jerusalem	-Emphasis on Judah -Has lists, regulations, and genealogies
Literary Style	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative / Legal	Narrative / Legal
Theology	God is described with human attributes and communicates verbally with man	God communicates through dreams and visions		
Dating and Location (hypothetical)	Written about 850 BC in the Southern Kingdom	Written about 750 BC in the Northern Kingdom	Written about 625 BC	Written about 500-450 BC

In the process of understanding the Documentary Hypothesis and criticism by destructive critics, there are several facts that must be kept in mind:

1. There has been a failure among destructive critics to reach a consensus on the constitution of the hypothetical JEDP sources.

2. There are hundreds of ancient manuscript copies of the first five books of the Bible, which are in the form that we have today. However, there has been no copy or fragment of the hypothetical JEDP sources ever found.

3. There is no extrabiblical record or mention of the hypothetical JEDP sources, of redactors, or of the editorial process in the development of the Pentateuch as hypothesized by destructive critics.

4. The lack of the above evidence and the failure to consider the literary unity of the Pentateuch is another piece of evidence that higher criticism and the Documentary Hypothesis are based on subjective notions and without scientific basis.

References:
1. McDowell J, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers (1999), p.506-508.
2. Dillard RB, Longman III T, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (1994), p.45.
3. Kitchen K, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, Chicago, IL: Inter-Varsity Press (1996), p.125.
4. Ibid.
5. Dillard RB, Longman III T, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (1994), p.46.

Parallel or Duplicate Accounts (Doublets)
Doublets are seemingly identical duplicative narratives of the same event, which source critics believe is one story told by two or three different authors living during different periods of time. They believe that this explains the differences and contradictions of each account. Found mostly in Genesis, doublets can also be found elsewhere in the Pentateuch.

The following are the most commonly cited doublets:
    The Creation Narrative (Genesis 1-2)
    The Flood Narrative (Genesis 6-8)
    The Selling of Joseph (Genesis 37:25-28, 36)
    Abraham's Half-Truth: passing Sarah off as his sister (Genesis 12: 10-20; 20:1-18; 26:6-11)

Today, largely as the result of a better understanding of Ancient Near Eastern Literary styles and culture, source critics no longer consider doublets as strong evidence of source documents; the alleged doublets were not a consequence of multiple authors, but instead a reflection of literary devices typical of that period. The following summarizes the problems that destructive critics face in light of Ancient Near Eastern Literary styles and culture.

1. Misunderstanding Ancient Near Eastern Literary styles: repetition.
Ancient Hebrew used restatement as a literary style in which the essential elements of an account is repeated with some variation and introduces more specific information to emphasize or focus on the relevant elements of the account. In comparative Near Eastern manuscripts (such as the Gebel Barkla Stela or royal inscriptions from Urartu, etc.), this literary pattern is observed as the author (scribe) makes a general statement or praise about a ruler and then duplicates (repeats or restates) the account with more specific and important details.

    For example, in the beginning of the Gebel Barkla Stela, there are general terms describing royal supremacy, and immediately following is a restatement that specifically elaborates on the triumphs in Syria-Palestine. In another example, the royal inscriptions from Urartu have the initial paragraph attributing the defeat of certain lands to the god Haldi and then the same victories are repeated in detail as achieved by the king.

2. Misunderstanding Ancient Near Eastern Literary grammar: paratactic sentence structure.
Ancient Hebrew sentence structure was usually paratactic, which meant that whole sentences were connected with the conjunction "and." Unfamiliar with this fact, source critics saw this sentence structure as a method used by redactors to join fragments from diverse sources.

A good example of a paratactic sentence is the literal translation of Genesis 1:1-4, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth **and** the earth was formless and void **and** darkness was over the surface of the deep **and** the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters **and** God said, "Let there be light" **and** there was light **and** God saw that the light was good **and** God separated the light from the darkness.

With the use of "and", ancient Hebrew rarely used subordinate clauses or phrases when the sentence expressed several ideas. Thus, the relationships of the ideas were left to the reader. In modern Bibles, translators replaced the paratactic sentence structure with modern forms and expressed the relationships between ideas. For example:

    if there was contrast, "and" was replaced with "but",
    if there was a purpose, "and" was replaced with "in order to" or "so that",
    if there was a temporal relation, "and" was replaced with "when" or "while" or "then."

Genesis 1:14 is a biblical example of how modern translations approach paratactic sentences. The bold font indicates the words supplied by translators:

    Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and **let them be** for signs and for seasons and for days and years; (Genesis 1:14)

Parallel or Duplicate Accounts (Doublets) (continues)
3. Misunderstanding Ancient Near Eastern Literary style: parallelism.
Ancient Hebrew used parallelism for both poetic and non-poetic purposes. This involved clauses that were paired to invite comparison and thus convey more descriptive information.

Another form of Hebrew parallelism is found in the literary device called a chiasm. Based on the Greek letter X (chi) describing the x-shaped literary structure, a chiasm is an inverted parallel literary structure where the central idea is located where the inflection or turning point has occurred. Hence, the ideas of this structure take the following sequential form A-B-C-X-C'-B'-A' where X is the central or important message.

4. Misunderstanding Ancient Near Eastern Literary forms.
Within Genesis, the Hebrew term *tôledôt* (or *toledoth*) is found twelve times and establishes a structural and directional unity that has been ignored by source critics. Based on the Hebrew root word for "giving birth," *tôledôt* means "generations," which, in other modern translations, may be seen as "account" or "story."

   The term *tôledôt* provides a **structural unity** to Genesis by serving as an introduction. It introduces the next section, often a genealogical list or historical account of the person named next to the term *tôledôt*. When examining the subjects associated with each *tôledôt*, they form a histo-theological division: five form the Primeval history or Covenants with Adam and Noah – human initiatives that caused failure, and five form the Ancestral history of Israel or Covenants with Abraham and his seed – God's initiatives that redeem man from his failures. This symmetry adds to the literary beauty of Genesis, but is lost by source critics.

   The term *tôledôt* provides **directional** unity to Genesis by delineating the scope of the passage. The first *tôledôt* begins with the widest scope: creation of the universe, and the last *tôledôt* ends with the smallest: the single human progenitor of Israel.

<p align="center">Verses containing the <i>tôledôt</i></p>

Primeval History / Covenants with Adam and Noah
   Genesis 2:4 Account of Heavens and Earth - Creation and Expulsion
   4) This is the **account** of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.

   Genesis 5:1 Generations of Adam - Adam to Noah genealogy and Sons of God
   1) This is the **book of the generations** of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

   Genesis 6:9 Generations of Noah - Flood and Rebirth
   9) These are the **records of the generations** of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

   Genesis 10:1 Generations of Shem, Ham, Japheth - Table of Nations and Tower of Babel
   1) Now these are the **records of the generations** of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood.

   Genesis 11:10 Generations of Shem - Shem to Terah genealogy
   10) These are the **records of the generations** of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood;

Ancestral History / Covenants with Abraham and His Seed
   Genesis 11:27 Generations of Terah – Abraham's story
   27) Now these are the **records of the generations** of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot.

Parallel or Duplicate Accounts (Doublets)(continues)

Genesis 25:12 Generations of Ishmael – Ishmael's genealogy
12) Now these are the **records of the generations** of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham

Genesis 25:19 Generations of Isaac – Jacob's story
19) Now these are the **records of the generations** of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac;

Genesis 36:1 Generations of Esau – Esau's genealogy
1) Now these are the **records of the generations** of Esau (that is, Edom).

Genesis 37:2 Generations of Jacob – Joseph's story
2) These are the **records of the generations** of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.

The only instance where *tôledôt* was used as a conclusion instead of introduction

Genesis 10:32
32) These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their **genealogies**, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.

The only instance where *tôledôt* was used as a restatement of a prior *tôledôt* (Gen 36:1 – Details of Esau's genealogy)

Genesis 36:9
9) These then are the **records of the generations** of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

Another literary form that source critics have not noticed is the systematic method by which the unchosen descendant of an ancestor is treated. The genealogy of the non-elect is typically given before the heir. For example, Cain is given before Seth (Gen 4:17-26), Japheth and Ham is given before Shem (Gen 10:1-4, 6-8, and 21-22), and Ishmael before Isaac (Gen 25:12-15, 19), and Esau before Jacob (Gen 36:1-10; 37:2).

Genesis 4:17-26 - Cain before Seth
17) **Cain** had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son. 18) Now to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael became the father of Methushael, and Methushael became the father of Lamech. 19) Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. 20) Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. 21) His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. 22) As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. 23) Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice, you wives of Lamech, give heed to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me; and a boy for striking me; 24) if Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold." 25) Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him **Seth**, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him." 26) To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 10:1-4, 6-8, and 21-22 - Japheth and Ham before Shem
1) Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood. 2) The sons of **Japheth** were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. 3) The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. 4) The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.

Parallel or Duplicate Accounts (Doublets) (continues)

6) The sons of **Ham** were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. 7) The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. 8) Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth.

21) Also to **Shem**, the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born. 22) The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.

Genesis 25:12-15, 19 - Ishmael before Isaac
12) Now these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham; 13) and these are the names of the sons of **Ishmael**, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam 14) and Mishma and Dumah and Massa, 15) Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah.

19) Now these are the records of the generations of **Isaac**, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac;

Genesis 36:1-10; 37:2 - Esau before Jacob
1) Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). 2) Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; 3) also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. 4) Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, 5) and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of **Esau** who were born to him in the land of Canaan. 6) Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob. 7) For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock. 8) So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom. 9) These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. 10) These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Esau's wife Adah, Reuel the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

37:2) These are the records of the generations of **Jacob**. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.

Thus doublets are intentionally used for a literary purpose and do not reflect the identification of sources in the manner of the Documentary Hypothesis.

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2. Kaiser WC, Davids PH, Bruce FF, Brauch MT, Hard Sayings of the Bible, Chicago, IL: Inter-Varsity Press (1996).
3. Kitchen K, Ancient Orient and Old Testament, Chicago, IL: Inter-Varsity Press (1996).

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Historical Evidence of Post-Mosaic Authorship
Higher criticism has shown that the Pentateuch contains a number of references to events, locations, and comments that point to non-Mosaic authorship. These inconsistencies can be categorized into two groups:

1) a-Mosaica, awkward if ascribed to Moses, and

2) p-Mosaica, likely written after (post) Moses

Historical Evidence of Post-Mosaic Authorship (continues)
A- Mosaica- awkward if ascribed to Moses
There are portions of the Pentateuch that speak of Moses in the third person. Deuteronomy has many examples of this third person perspective such as "Moses spoke", "he commissioned", etc. (Deut 1:1; 4:41; 4:44-45; 29:1-2; 31:1; 29:7; 29:22-26).

>   Writing in the third person does not conclusively deny Mosaic authorship. Another possibility of this literary style is the use of scribes under the direction or Moses. Based on ancient extrabiblical evidence, it is also possible that Moses himself wrote in the third person as exemplified by other ancient writers (Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, 1st century AD; Xenophon, Anabasis, 5th century BC; Julius Caesar, Gallic War, 1st century BC) (1). While the presence of A-Mosaica does suggest that Moses did not directly write some portions of the Pentateuch, it is not sufficient proof alone, and this does not deny the *essential* Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Yet there are portions of the Pentateuch that is difficult to understand if Moses did author these portions such as references to his humbleness or recount of his death and obituary (Deut 34:5-12).

>   In the case of Deuteronomy 34, tradition believes that Joshua, an inspired author, added the obituary of Moses. This is consistent with the fact that Joshua worked closely with Moses for over 40 years in which he served as military leader, served as assistant, accompanied Moses part way up Mount Sinai for the first set of laws, and assisted at the Tabernacle of Meeting (Ex 17:8-14; 24:13; 32:15-17; and 33:7-11).

Post Mosaica- likely written after Moses
Some of the verses identified as p-Mosaic are the consequence of *scriptural glosses*. The term *gloss* originated from the Greek term *glossa*, which literally means "tongue" or figuratively as "language".

>   In the course of studying the works of Greek authors, Greek grammarians used the term glossa when identifying a word that needed explanation and the explanation itself. Thus glosses explained any word that was difficult to understand.

>   Usually these glosses pertained to: a) foreign words, b) provincial words, c) obsolete words, d) technical words, or e) words used in an unusual form or sense.

Hebrew glosses (see the article: What is the Masorah? at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5Bible/TransWhatIsMasorah.aspx) were often short notes on questionable spelling or reading. These glosses would indicate a removal, transposition, or restoration of a consonant.

>   In some cases, the gloss indicated a removal or insertion of a whole word. Their purpose was to render the correct reading and understanding of the original Hebrew.

>   These Hebrew glosses were later collected and formed the basis of Rabbinical glossaries or lexicons that eventually were published such as the *Greek lexicon of Hesychius* (5th century AD). Today's Bible study tool, lexicon, is based on this concept.

Greek and Latin glosses were more extensive annotations reflecting exegetical and critical study. Historical, geographical, and biographical information may also be included.

>   Like Hebrew glosses, they were collected and formed the basis for later commentaries. The *Glossa Ordinaria* (started in the early 9th century AD) is one such example.

There isn't any question that glosses have ended up as textual additions; but, there is large debate of what are glosses, how the glosses got there, and who authored them.

Historical Evidence of Post-Mosaic Authorship (continues)

The Old Testament has some examples of textual changes. Ezra, author of the book of Ezra, was a Jewish scholar - priest and scribe (*sopher*).

Ezra, and *Sopherim* who followed him, namely (by tradition) Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Haggai, began to make emendations to the Text (alterations with the intent of recovering the original meaning) approximately during 440 BC – 331 BC.

They desired to a) update the script, b) correct errors that had crept into manuscript copies, c) clarify the original intent of the Canon, and d) demonstrate extreme reverence to God.

For example, they altered the script from its angular paleo-Hebrew form to the square Aramaic form and changed the spelling by inserting certain consonants to express long vowels (called *mattes lectionis*) to aid in reading the Text.

In another example, the name of God, *Yahweh*, was too sacred to read aloud, so it was replaced with *Adonai* in 134 verses. These changes were handed down to a later group of scribes, the *Masoretes*, who introduced the written vowel system and copied with extreme fidelity as custodians of the Text.

The Mosoretes refer to the emendations of the Sopherim as *Tiqqune Sopherim*, which was a list of eighteen alterations. At some point, this list of eighteen became twenty-six. The Sopherim were careful to account for their alterations and kept a record of these glosses called the *Masorah*, which were critical notes in the margins between or along side the Text. Masoretic scholarship continued the tradition of the Masorah until 1425 AD.

In the case of the New Testament, the scribal tradition was not as disciplined as the Mosoretes. Most of the suspected textual changes are believed to be the result of copyists including some of the glosses into the Text itself, possible completion of Old Testament quotes, and possible inclusion of parallel passages. While these changes introduced variant readings of the Text, these variations only account for .5% of the entire New Testament; thus, the New Testament is considered 99.4% pure with no part of the .6% representing any part of doctrine.

One possible clue of scriptural glosses is the presence of *anachronisms*, which is a term describing the misplacement of some event(s) or person(s) in the wrong historical setting. There are portions of the Pentateuch that contains geographical or historical information that could only be known after Moses. The following are often cited examples of this p-Mosaica:

Anthropologic anachronisms
　　Canaanites - Genesis 12:6
　　Edomite Kings - Genesis 36:31-39
　　Philistines - Genesis 21:32-34; 26:1-8, 14-18

Geographic anachronisms
　　Ur of the Chaldeans - Genesis 11:31
　　Dan - Genesis 14:14
　　Across the Jordan

Temporal anachronisms
　　This Day / As This Day

Historical Evidence of Post-Mosaic Authorship (continues)

The presence of post Mosaic additions does not deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Many of the additions were explanatory notes of the passage authored by Moses. Furthermore these additions do not upset the doctrine of biblical inspiration. Biblical inspiration refers to the final product rather than to the manner of writing. The Holy Spirit superintended the work of editors so that the final words of the Text, though obtained by different methods, are the words intended by God. It was this final Text (including editorial insertions) that Jesus Christ pronounced perfect (Matt 5:18 and John 10:35) (2).

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1. McDowell J, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers (1999), p.516-517.
2. Walvoord JF and Zuck RB, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, Wheaton, Il: Victor Books (1985), p.266.

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Examples of some discrepancies in the Pentateuch

While anachronisms are quoted widely, narrative discrepancies are also seen as evidence of post Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Narrative discrepancies represent perceived textual inconsistencies, differences, or disagreements within the narrative. And some discrepancies can be attributed to copyist errors as discussed in this article *The Reality of Copyists' Errors* by B. Thompson and E. Lyons.

One common example is Genesis 21:14. In this apparent discrepancy, Sarah has Hagar expelled from the family when Ishmael is a young man around the age of 14 - 17. Destructive critics of the late 1800s based their criticism on the translation of the Septuagint version of Genesis 21:14:

> *And Abraam rose up in the morning and took loaves and a skin of water, and gave* them *to Agar, and he put the child on her shoulder, and sent her away, and she having departed wandered in the wilderness near the well of the oath.* (Septuagint version – Gen 21:14)

> From this translation, destructive critics ask how it is possible for Hagar to carry this young man Ishmael on her shoulders?

It is a valid question; however, the Septuagint is well known to have many corruptions in its text. The collection of scriptures that make up the Septuagint has a complicated and varied translation history including a Hebrew book translated more than once, revisions to particular Greek translations, and instances of modifications and amplifications. Thus, while it is worthy for study and consultation, it is not a manuscript used for the basis of today's Old Testament translations.

> The more accurate ben Asher text (Leningrad Manuscript B19a), used as the basis of many contemporary translations, indicates the translation of Genesis 21:14 as:

> *So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.* (NASB – Gen 21:14)

> This apparent narrative discrepancy used by destructive critics, and repeated often today, is based on a manuscript that was produced in a manner that did not have the fidelity of Massoretic traditions.

Aaron's death represents an example of a geographical discrepancy that is used as evidence that the Pentateuch is a compilation of various sources. Critics point out that Aaron was buried in two different places: did Aaron die on Mount Hor or in Moserah?

Examples of some discrepancies in the Pentateuch (continues)

Numbers 20:27-28 – Mount Hor
So Moses did just as the LORD had commanded, and they went up to **Mount Hor** in the sight of all the congregation. After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

Numbers 33:38-39 – Mount Hor
Then Aaron the priest went up to **Mount Hor** at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the sons of Israel had come from the land of Egypt, on the first day in the fifth month. Aaron was one hundred twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

Deuteronomy 10:6 - Moserah
(Now the sons of Israel set out from Beeroth Bene-jaakan to **Moserah**. There Aaron died and there he was buried and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his place.

It is believed that Moserah is the name of the district where Mount Hor is located. A similar example is seen in Horeb, which is the name of the mountain complex where Mount Sinai is located. However, current extrabiblical literature does not answer the question of whether Moserah was the regional name for the area of Mount Hor.

The absence of knowing the precise definition of geographical terms has led to some confusion and fuel for those who challenge Mosaic authorship; yet, it is intellectually disingenuous to fail to consider that current scholarship does not fully understand the ancient Hebrew's use of geographical terms.

Another apparent narrative discrepancy that is often quoted is the disbelief that the events of Numbers 21 through 36 all took place in the span of 6 months. During this time the nation of Israel mourned the death of Aaron for 30 days (Num 20:23-29), the Caananites of Arad were defeated in the Negev (Num 21:1-3), Sihon king of the Amorites was defeated (Num 21:2-35; Deut 2:24-36), judgment against apostasy at Peor (Num 25:1-18), the census at the Moab plains by the Jordan River near Jericho (Num 26:1-63), Og king of Bashan was defeated (Num 21:33-35; Deut 3:1-7), and the Midianites were destroyed (Num 31:1-24).

In making this statement, critics have failed to include the context to the biblical narrative.

A possible and approximate route taken from Mount Hor to an area opposite Jericho, including the distance to confront the Caananites of Arad, is about 340 miles and would take about 19 days to travel. The campaign against Sihon king of the Amorites was along the way.

The travel time of 19 days, not including the time for the Arad and Amorite campaigns, was based on the travel time from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea. According to Moses, this 200 miles distance was covered in 11 days (Deut 1:2).

The campaign against Og king of Bashan was roughly a round trip of 200 miles north of the crossing point of the Jordan River.

While many of the ancient locations remain unknown, the travel itinerary was detailed and specific (Num 33:1-49). Despite not knowing where the Promised Land was, the Hebrews were impatient to get to there, and were frustrated with taking a circuitous route (Num 21:4).

The number of men available for military service was 601,730 (Num 26:2-51).

The itinerant Hebrew nation was highly organized. Lead by a hierarchy of leaders, the nation was organized in groups as small as 10. (Deut 1:15)

Examples of some discrepancies in the Pentateuch (continues)

> After the campaign against Sihon king of the Amorites, God placed the dread of defeat on Israel's enemies (Deut 2:25).

> Only 12,000 Hebrew soldiers were sent to destroy the Midianites and their five kings (Num 31:4-6), and all of them returned from battle (Num 31:48-50).

When one subtracts the 30 days of mourning and the approximate total travel time of 30 days to arrive at the jump off point into the Promised Land, the nation of Israel has roughly 120 days to complete all the activities commanded by God. So this alleged narrative discrepancy was a consequence of examining the biblical text without its context.

Discrepancies do exist and contribute to the difficulty of understanding the Bible; however, the source of many of them has been determined and no longer is contradictory to the biblical text. The few examples highlighted here demonstrate the variety of causes that have been identified: errors of the copyists, the practice of using multiple names for people and places, and misunderstanding the context of the passage.

Because much remains unknown the Ancient Near East and it literature, perhaps too much has been made about this in an attempt to discredit Mosaic authorship. History continues to show that as more is learned, the truthfulness of the Bible continues to be affirmed.

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Lexical Anachronisms of the Pentateuch

Hebrew is a Semitic dialect or language that developed in Canaan between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea during the latter half of the second millennium B.C. Biblical Hebrew was a conservative literary language, which coexisted with other linguistic (spoken) languages and dialects until the Babylonian Exile (6th century B.C.). A distinction must be made between linguistic Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew, because the spoken language was more susceptible to regional cultural influences, independent linguistic development and dialect diversity. With the literary form of Hebrew, scholars have noted that Biblical Hebrew before the Exile exhibited marked differences from Biblical Hebrew of literary works after the Exile:

Classical Biblical Hebrew (Biblical Hebrew Proper) – This encompassed the Pentateuch and other Old Testament books written before the Exile.

> Based on the earliest pieces of Hebrew writing in possession (such as the Gezer Calendar dated 900 B.C.), there is evidence that it belonged to the Canaanite group of languages.

Late Biblical Hebrew – This described the literary language of the Old Testament books after the Exile.

> The morphology, phonology, and lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew exhibit a significant Aramaic influence. For example, the Masoretes (6th century A.D.), responsible for establishing the vowel system for the consonant only Hebrew lexicon, used vowel features found in Aramaic.

After the Exile, Classical Biblical Hebrew disappeared from everyday life and was used primarily for literary, liturgical, and administrative purposes until the fall of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.

Because so little data is available for study, limited largely to the Old Testament, the origin of Hebrew is unknown. Without the ability of examining primary sources, scholars have developed other theoretical approaches to study the question of the origin and literary transmission of Hebrew such as historical reconstruction, comparative studies with other local languages and tracing dialect geography.

Lexical Anachronisms of the Pentateuch (continues)
Late Words
Identifying lexical anachronisms is one method that destructive critics use to deny Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Lexical anachronisms are the use of words that may not have existed during a certain period of time and their presence provides evidence of inconsistency with the dating of that manuscript. For example, if the word "computer" were found in a manuscript purportedly dated in the 1600 A.D., this "late" word would refute that early dating of authorship. In a similar manner, it is alleged that some words found in the Pentateuch were used after Moses' time.

While this approach does have merit, there are several problems that affect the interpretation and conclusion of the data. Among them:

1. Current scholarship does not have an extensive record of Ancient Hebrew; thus, there is no clear lexical basis for determining what is ancient or not. For example, Biblical Hebrew only has 8000 lexical terms preserved in the Old Testament, which isn't even enough to support a spoken language. Yet there is ample evidence that much of Biblical Hebrew is indeed ancient.

Biblical Hebrew has names of places and people that are not found in Late Biblical Hebrew or mentioned in any other ancient texts.

The popular etymologies of practically all of the patriarchal names are explained by synonyms rather than by their true roots, which indicates that their original meaning are unknown or forgotten.

Over a quarter of the words in the Bible appear just once, and 289 of them belong to root words used only once in Biblical Hebrew. While the meaning of most were determined on the basis of Rabbinic Hebrew or Comparative Semitics, there are several in which only the approximate meaning of a term can be discovered.

2. Some words found in the Pyramid Texts (2400 BC) disappear in usage until they were used in writings of the Greco-Roman period (300-30 BC). If dating based on the presence of late words was used, then the Pyramid Texts would be incorrectly dated at the later date.

3. Aramaic words, thought to be evidence of Late Biblical Hebrew, created when the Jews were replacing Hebrew with Aramaic, have turned out to be either Hebrew, Phoenician, Babylonia, or Arabic words. Some of these words are of linguistic languages that were concurrent with the time of Moses.

An example of this can be found in Genesis 31:47 where Jacob and Laban used different languages to name a heap of stones. Jacob used the Hebrew term "Galeed," and Laban used the Aramaic term "Jegarsahadutha."

4. Scribal traditions during the second millennium B.C. are unknown. It is not known when scribal glosses, intended to clarify the text (or update archaic terms or grammar), have been inserted as part of the text during the process of duplication. However, glosses introduced late words, which has been used to erroneously refute the early dating of the Pentateuch.

Late Spelling Patterns
In another approach, some scholars have studied the orthography of the Pentateuch to gain a better understanding of how the Bible was written and transmitted. In general, the older the text, the greater number of terms that will be spelled in an old fashioned manner. This principle of conservative spelling is used in all philological studies interested in determining the origin of any language.

For example, the pronoun "you" is spelled "thee" and "thou" in early English manuscripts dated hundreds of centuries earlier than today.

Lexical Anachronisms of the Pentateuch (continues)

From objective studies, the Pentateuch has been found to be the most conservative of all the books of the Old Testament. Within the Pentateuch, the books can be ranked in order of most to least conservative spelling: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Genesis, and Deuteronomy.

It has been determined that it is the priestly material that contains the most conservative spelling. Exodus and Leviticus are dominated by priestly material followed by Numbers and Genesis.

As an example of more technical detail, Genesis has a common 3rd person singular pronoun form *-hw*; Joshua and later works breaks this into masculine and feminine forms.

From another orthographic perspective, destructive critics have used spelling patterns as a basis to deny Mosaic authorship. They point to Proto-Semitic inscriptions on Semitic mining camp huts and stone tablets found in Southern Sinai dated around 1800 B.C., which have 27 consonants. Destructive critics contend that since Hebrew is probably a descendant of ancient Northwest Semitic (Proto- Semitic), it could not be possibly the language of Moses' time since it has only 22 consonants; thus, it had to be the product of later Hebrew authors.

1. Because the Semitic family of some 70 languages shares similar phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary, various scholars have argued that linguistic unity is the result of a common linguistic origin including the possibility common race or peoples. Their historical approach includes a hypothetical family tree of Semitic languages, which presumes the existence of a series of proto languages, which is not supported by any archeological data.

There is no archeological data to confirm these speculative presumptions, hypotheses and theories. Archeological data can only take scholars to a period in which there was already more diversity than unity, with distinct peoples across a wide area speaking languages, which have certain elements in common and undergoing a variety of independent developments.

Because of the absence of archeological data, there is considerable skepticism of scholars who use a family tree as part of their theory to explain the existence of a Semitic language.

2. Newer methods of investigation such as dialect geography and their contact points with other cultures, prove that the traditional classification of Semitic languages into 5 principle languages is inadequate (Akkadian, Canaanite, Aramaic, Arabic, and Ethiopic).

There is growing recognition that before the first millennium B.C., Northwest Semitic languages may not be simply seen as two distinct language groups Canaanite or Aramaic but rather as a group of languages with various features in common.

How Hebrew began still remains a mystery. Scholars are discovering that early language development was more complex than traditionally thought. The lack of archeological evidence has prompted some to impose hypothetical historical reconstructions as valid theories, which some destructive critics have used to deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. At this time, the lexicon and orthography of the Pentateuch provide more positive evidence for an earlier dating of second millennium B.C. than a later dating of first millennium B.C.; the evidence of lexical anachronisms has been presently insufficient.

References:
1. Sáenz-Baillos A, translated by Elwolde J, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993).
2. Miller G, "Good question... ...on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch?", from the website: A Christian Thinktank (http://www.christian-thinktank.com/qmoses1.html").

Beyond Literary Criticism

Today the original text critical arguments that once established the Documentary Hypothesis no longer sustain it. While the question of sources is still open to debate, considerable study is spent on understanding the issue of textual corruption such as what corruption was due to the normal process of copying and annotating and what corruption was due to a conscious effort to edit the text. However, it is the scientific disciplines of anthropology and archaeology, in the pursuit of reconstructing the early history of Israelite history, that is predisposed towards a late dating of the authorship of the Pentateuch as a compilation of early oral and written sources edited over a period of some 400 years by a variety of scribes and scribal groups with various literary tendencies.

While many scholars do not fully appreciate the contemporary literary and text critical arguments responsible for the demise of the original text critical arguments of the Documentary Hypothesis, they fail to acknowledge or address the problematic logical implications of accepting it.

   1. How and why is it possible that scribes or scribal groups would create a sacred body of work with the intentional and fraudulent claim of Mosaic authorship?

      How would this be morally possible within the context of the deuteronomic command of not altering the word of God (Deut 4:1-2) or with the emphasis of teaching its regulations to children (Deut 6:4-9; 11:18-20)?

      How could this deceit take place over a long time without anyone noticing its fraudulent nature given the Pentateuch's foundational role in the religious and socio-cultural life of the ancient Hebrew?

      Why would some of the Patriarchs, heroes of the Hebrews, be recorded as violating the Mosaic Laws?

         Abraham marries his half-sister (Gen 20:11-13)
            This was prohibited in Leviticus 18:9, 20:17, and Deuteronomy 27:22.

         Jacob marries his sister-in-law Rachel (Gen 29:15-30).
            This was prohibited in Leviticus 18:18.

         The designation of Isaac as the firstborn (Gen 21:10-13) skipped the first born Ishmael.
            This was prohibited or regulated in Deuteronomy 21:15-17.

         Jacob set up a standing stone as a focus of worship (Gen 28:18).
            This was prohibited in Exodus 34:13, Leviticus 26:1, Deuteronomy 12:3 and 16:21-22.

   2. If there is no literary or textual evidence nor archaeological or socio-cultural evidence that points to the existence of a scribal society or priestly redactor(s) of the Pentateuch's creation over the hypothetical 400 year period, why is the Pentateuch is still considered the creation of first millennium B.C. authors?

      Literary critics, who propose that Deuteronomy was composed to validate and legitimize the priesthood in Jerusalem during the first millennium B.C., cannot explain why Jerusalem is not mentioned even once as the central shrine for worship. Instead of Jerusalem, which is first mentioned in Joshua 10:1 after the Pentateuch corpus, Bethel is consecrated (Gen 28:16, 19; 35:14, 15). Furthermore it is not one but two sources responsible for this glaring omission: the hypothetical Jehovist and Priestly documents, which were presumably used to compile the Pentateuch.

When evaluating the biblical text, historians (including Christians) are faced with the challenge of understanding how the Bible reveals historical information that enables one to reconstruct a history. Hypothetical historical reconstructions can be tested by data from archaeology and the cultural and political history of the surrounding nations. And while interpretations of the archaeological data may reflect certain biases, the correct interpretation will be born out with the test of time.

Beyond Literary Criticism (continues)
Current archaeological data cannot conclusively affirm or deny Mosaic authorship or historicity of the Pentateuch; however, the cultural data can place the Pentateuch in the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 B.C.). This cultural match is made on the basis of analyzing the Patriarchal names, their migration patterns, and their legal and social customs.

Archaeology has been successful in discovering thousands of tablets in Mesopotamia and Northern Syria (i.e. Nuzi tablets, etc.) dated to the second millennium B.C., which has provided information on the culture and life during that time.

Patriarchal Names
The personal names of the Patriarchs have found similarities in extrabiblical texts of the early second millennium B.C. For example, *Abram* has parallels in documents of the First Babylonian Dynasty at Dilbat, and *Abraham* has been compared with *Aburahana* in the Execration Texts of the Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1900 B.C.). Assyrian texts of the Ur III period also refer to names such as *Til-turakhi* (Terah) and *Sarugi* (Serug).

The Patriarchal names such as Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are called *Amorite imperfect names* for their grammatical structure and orthography. Amorite imperfect names appeared as early as the third millennium, were very common in the second millennium, and dramatically declined in usage in the first millennium. The use of Amorite imperfect names indicates the likelihood of these individuals existing during the first half of the second millennium B.C.

The places mentioned in the patriarchal narratives also associates the Patriarchs with the Amorites. While the original homeland of the Amorites is unclear, *Amurru* in the Akkadian texts refers to northwestern Mesopotamia, which is where Abraham considered his ancestral homeland (Gen 24:1-10).

Mari and later Assyrian texts mention other cities located in northwestern Mesopotamia such as *Harran* (Haran, Gen 11:31; 12:4), and *Nakhur* (Nahor, Gen 24:10).

Having located similar names and places in extrabiblical texts associating the Patriarchs with an ethnic group with the same possible homeland of the first half of the second millennium B.C., there is a growing body of archeological evidence that the Patriarchs were indeed real people. And there is a fair degree of confidence that the Patriarchs originated in Upper Mesopotamia as part of the Middle Bronze Amorite and Late Bronze Aramean migrations.

Patriarchal Migration
The semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Patriarchs was consistent with Palestine in the early second millennium BC, which was a transitional time between a nomadic and settled way of life.

Egyptian Execration Texts and the Tale of Sinuhe (1900-1800 B.C.) reveal that tribal groups and minor city-states coexisted. The word used for Abraham's "armed men" is a hapax legomena (a word used only once in the Bible), yet it appears in the Execration Texts and a tablet from Taanach to mean "armed supporters."

The Tale of Sinuhe and the paintings by the Beni-Hasan tomb indicate that there was free and frequent travel between Palestine and Egypt.

Furthermore, there were foreign and Egyptian pharaohs who had residences in the eastern delta around 1950-1550 B.C. This would correspond to the time and location of the Patriarchs and their accounts of interacting with Egyptians.

Legal and Social Customs
The characteristics of various covenants made in Genesis (Gen 14:13; 21; 26; 31), compare very well with several early second millennium treaties from Mari and Tel Leivlan. In some cases the terms of the contract matches early second millennium B.C. norms, such as shepherding arrangements found in Old Babylonian shepherding contracts (Gen 30:29-34).

Beyond Literary Criticism (continues)

In examining various Ancient Near East treaties of other periods, it can be firmly said that the Genesis covenants do not correspond to the treaty format of third millennium B.C., late second millennium B.C. or first millennium B.C.

Sarah's unusual offer of her handmaiden / concubine Hagar to Abraham to produce an heir (Gen 16), and Rachel and Leah's offer of their handmaidens Bilhah and Zilpah to Jacob (Gen 30:1-13) were consistent with marital practices of second millennium B.C. as exemplified by contracts of the period and the Law Code of Hammaurabi (1795-1750 B.C.). A Nuzi adoption tablet serves as an example:

Furthermore, Kelim-ninu has been given in marriage to Shennima. If Kelim-ninu bears (children), Shennima shall not take another wife; but if Kelim-ninu does not bear, Kelim-ninu shall acquire a woman of the land of Lullu as wife for Shennima, and Kelim-ninu may not send the offspring away. Any sons that may be born to Shennima from the womb of Kelim-ninu, to (these) sons shall be given [all] the lands (and) buildings of every sort.

The prohibition of sending away the children of a concubine would be a reason for Abraham's reluctance to drive out Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:8-14).

The father's choice of the first born regardless of birth order has parallels with Ancient Near East documents as exemplified by a 1500 B.C. marriage contract from Alalakh on the North Syrian coast:

If Naidu does not give birth to a son, then the daughter of his brother, Iwashura, shall be given Irihalpa [as wife]. If another wife of Irihalpa gives birth to a son first and afterwards Naidu give birth to a son, the son of Naidu alone shall be the firstborn.

The choice of Isaac over Ishmael (Gen 21:10-13), Ephraim over Mannasseh (Gen 48:2-22) is consistent with practices found in the Ancient Near East.

Disinheritance, which Reuben experienced (Gen 49:1-4), was the loss of the rights of a firstborn. This was not an arbitrary decision of the father, and it was consistent with early second millennium B.C. culture.

The Law Code of Hammarubi, among others, addressed this issue as the result of a serious offense against the family.

Laban's daughters' complaint that their father "sold" them and "entirely consumed their money" (Gen 31:15) was very plausible during early second millennium B.C.

Old Babylonian texts and Nuzi tablets record that, on occasion, a father would withhold a part of the dowry. As additional evidence of the dating of the Patriarchs, the phrase "consume (our) money" appears in identical contexts in the Nuzi tablets.

Unusual behavior such as Rachel stealing her father's household gods (Gen 31:19, 30) does not seem out of the ordinary according to an adoption tablet from Nuzi:

The adoption tablet of Nashwi son of Arshenni. He adopted Wullu son of Puhishenni. As long as Nashwi lives, Wullu shall give [him] food and clothing. When Nashwi dies, Wullu shall be the heir. Should Nashwi beget a son, [the latter] shall divide equally with Wullu but [only] Nashwi's son shall take Nashwi's gods. But if there be no son of Nashwi's then Wullu shall take Nashwi's gods.

While it is not clear as to the purpose of owning the household gods, both the biblical and Nuzi tablet place an importance on it.

Beyond Literary Criticism (continues)

Based largely on the Nuzi tablets of 1500 B.C. and some earlier tablets, the evidence establishes that the socio-cultural details of the Patriarchs' lives fit more consistently within the context of the second millennium B.C. than any other period. Destructive critics who desire to date the Pentateuch's creation to the first millennium B.C. have very little archeological evidence to support their presumption.

While this is not fully conclusive, it can be said that the archeological evidence does seem to establish the fact that the Patriarchal narratives is an authentic reflection of the Ancient Near East during the early second millennium B.C. This would make it more likely that the Pentateuch was authored during this period, because many of its details such as social customs and city locations, would make little sense to an editor of the first millennium B.C.

References:

1. Browning Jr. DC, "The Patriarchal Period: The Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 B.C.)," an unpublished paper from the website: Daniel C. Browning Jr.'s William Carey University Homepage (http://www.wmcarey.edu/browning).
2. Douglas JD, et al. eds, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 3 vol., Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press (1998).
3. Kaiser Jr. WC, *A History of Israel From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*, Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers (1998).
4. Miller G, "Good question... ...on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch?", from the website: A Christian Thinktank (http://www.christian-thinktank.com/qmoses1.html").

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Validity of Mosaic Authorship

Why Moses? Moses was an eyewitness with first hand experience

The Pentateuch has details that would be used by an eyewitness with first hand experience. The information is descriptive and specific.

The author of Genesis and Exodus uses a higher number of Egyptian words than any other Old Testament book.

The author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, describes a desert atmosphere and lifestyle.

The Pentateuch does not reveal much familiarity about the land of Canaan.

Only Moses, who was born, raised and educated in Egypt, and did not enter the Promised Land, was qualified to be the eyewitness and author of the Pentateuch. No less than 13 inspired authors and Jesus attest to this.

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Why Moses? Moses was a literary artist

The Pentateuch has a smooth cohesive literary structure with each book sharing an essential part of the history, plot, and theology of the story.

The author intended the work to be read as a work of history that recounts what has taken place in the distant past.

The variety of literary genres and devices used were within the larger context of instructional history writing about God's work in their lives.

The literary beauty of the individual books within the Pentateuch surpassed the skill of redactor(s) mechanically combining a collection of stories.

Only Moses, who had the literary education in the royal court of Egypt and who the Lord spoke to as a friend, had the qualifications and skills to be the author of the Pentateuch.

Why Moses? Moses was the theocratic administrator

When Moses was chosen by God, he was uniquely endowed.

Moses would reveal the very words of God such that he would be as God to his brother Aaron who, in turn, would speak to the nation of Israel (Exodus 4:10-17).

Moses was God's chosen administrator to the nation of Israel.

God communicated publicly with Moses to establish him as His authorized representative (Exodus 19:9).

God communicated regularly with Moses at the tabernacle (Exodus 29:42; 33:9).

God communicated through Moses to teach the nation of Israel His Word (Exodus 24:2-4; 34:27-28; Deut 31:9, 24-26).

Thus when God spoke through Moses, his words would be the inerrant words of God.

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Why Moses? Moses was the recipient of written sources authored by God

He received the tablets containing the Decalogue at Mount Sinai.

Exodus 24:12; 31:18

Deuteronomy 4:12-14; 5:22; 9:9-11

Moses indicated that he used sources in writing about early Hebrew history. Using the tôledôt formula in Genesis, Moses refers to sources as:

Accounts, Generations, or Histories

Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2

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Why Moses? Conclusion

Despite the use of pre-Mosaic sources and indications of post-Mosaic glosses and elaborations, internal and external evidence affirms the essential Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

As receiver and transmitter of divine revelation, and teacher of God's laws and decrees to the nation of Israel,

Moses' original written word was equivalent to the inerrant Word of God.

From the Exodus to the Conquest,

Mosaic prophecies were fulfilled and authenticated the supernatural nature of the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch, authored by Moses, is totally reliable and trustworthy.

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Final Question

The Issue: Conflict - What was from God and what was from man?

While the Documentary Theory has not been entirely disproved, biblical criticism has shown the presence of pre-Mosaic sources and indications of textual updating such as later glosses and elaboration.

Genesis contains pre-Mosaic sources.

Explanatory notes were added to the Old Testament by later copyists.

Errors in copying were introduced by later scribes.

Redactions were made by later scribal communities in an attempt to correct errors introduced by earlier copyists.

Historical criticism has shown that it is difficult to delineate the scope and date of the sources or identify what is pre-Mosaic, Mosaic, or post-Mosaic. Acknowledging this tests one's understanding of biblical inerrancy.

How does the concept of textual updating reconcile with the belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible?

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The Logic of the Prophets and Apostles

Does this mean that the Bible isn't truly the word of God?

Consider the logic of the prophets and apostles:

If God is factually true (Rom 3:4),

Truth is an attribute and character of God (Jer 10:10; John 1:14; 14:6; 17:3),

God does not lie (Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; 2 Sam 7:28; Tit 1:2),

And God breathed out the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16),

Then the Scriptures are true (John 17:17; Ps 119:142, 151, 160).

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What part of the Bible is from God?

If this collection of absolutely authoritative words from God grew in size throughout early Israelite history, what part of it is inspired?

God's chosen writer of each book?

The writer's original manuscript (autographa)?

The process of copying and subsequent editing of manuscripts?

Defining Inspiration by Hermeneutics

The concept of inspiration can be seen from two passages:

> "for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pet 1:21)

> "moved by" (pheromenoi) – refers to divine origin and causality.

> "men" (anthropos) – refers to human agency.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 3:16-17)
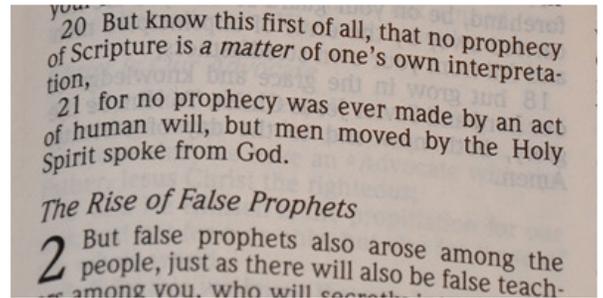
> "all" (pasa) – refers to the entire OT canon.

> "Scripture" (graphē) – refers to written documents.

> "inspired" (theopneustos) – instead of God breathed on every word, it is the very words were breathed out.

> "profitable" (ophelimos) – Because it is inspired, Scripture is profitable.

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation,
21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The Rise of False Prophets

2 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teach-

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Definition and Distinctions

Inspiration is that mysterious process by which the divine causality worked through the human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative and inerrant writings.

Revelation concerns the origin and giving of Truth (1 Cor 2:10).
"For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."

Inspiration relates to the reception and recording of Truth (2 Peter 1:20-21).
"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Interpretation focuses on the apprehension and understanding of Truth (1 Cor 2:14-16).
"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ."

References:
1. Geisler NL, Nix WE. *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/final5.aspx

Inerrancy

Inerrancy means that Scripture in the *original* manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. The Bible is true and completely free of error.

Since we do not have the original manuscripts, some will consider this definition as meaningless.

However, we know what the original manuscript comprises 99% of the Bible.

In many of the verses where there are textual variants, the correct reading is clear.

There are very few places where the textual variant is both difficult to evaluate and significant in determining the meaning.

In the small percentage of cases where there is significant uncertainty about what the original text said, the general sense of the sentence is usually quite clear from the context.

The study of textual variants have brought us extremely close to the content of the original documents.

Thus when we say that the original documents are inerrant, we are implying that over 99% of the words in our present manuscripts are also inerrant. Furthermore we know exactly where the uncertain readings are.

References:
1. Geisler NL, Nix WE. *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/final6.aspx

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Two Views

So how does one reconcile the fact of textual updating to the belief of inspiration and inerrancy?

There are two views on this:

1. Non-inspired Textual Updating (traditional view):

Authored by Moses, the original copy (autographa) of the Pentateuch was inspired and any later additions, while still true and correct, were not inspired.

These geographical, historical, or linguistic updates are considered as secondary textual variants of the original inspired autographa.
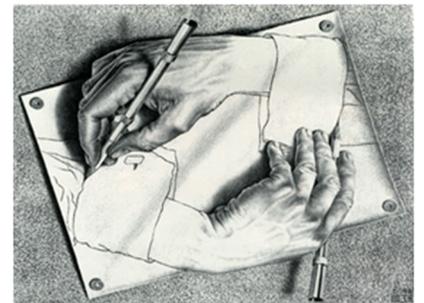
2. Inspired Textual Updating:

Authored by Moses, the original copy (autographa) of the Pentateuch was inspired, but was in its preliminary canonical form.

Later geographical, historical, or linguistic updates were inspired and were just as true and correct as the original inspired text until the inscripturation process and canon were completed.

References:
1. Geisler NL, Nix WE. *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/final7.aspx

Criticisms of the traditional view of Non-Inspired Textual Updating

If textual updating is not inspired by God, one is faced with the following questions:

1. Because of biblical passages such as Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6 and Revelation 22:16–19, textual updating cannot be considered part of the Bible.

> By this reasoning, our Old Testament should remove these non-inspired additions even though these redactions may be true and accurate.

2. What if some textual updates are not really textual updates at all but instances where God inspired the biblical writer to use the correct name at a time before its normal usage (i.e. Gen 14:14 use of Dan before its historical time)?

> The biblical author faces the problem that the readers of his period would not understand him.

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Criticisms of the view of Inspired Textual Updating

If textual updating is inspired by God, one is faced with the following questions:

> 1. Biblical passages, such as Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6 and Revelation 22:16–19, warns against anyone who may add or subtract words to both the Old and New Testament. These warnings emphasize the completeness and sufficiency of God's revelation and the integrity of God's Word.

> 2. How does one define "autographa?" If one defines inspiration as the process of recording Scripture until canonization, which version of the Text is the autographa?

> 3. How is "inspired textual updating" accomplished? If inerrantists accept small limited textual updates as part of the inspired process of inscripturation, by what standard limits the scribe or editor from making large redactions of the text?

> 4) When did the inspired process of inscripturation end? When did the Old Testament canon reach completion?

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Conclusion

While scholars who believe in inerrancy debate which view is correct, they unanimously affirm that Moses was author of the Pentateuch although it may have had some additions and revisions by later scribal editors.

> The fact that there are attempts to distinguish between inspired from non-inspired scribal activity reflects the divine nature of this human book the Bible.

> As testimony of the Pentateuch's authority, consider the Septuagint, which was the Old Testament manuscript available during Jesus' time. Despite its errors, which were considered human mistakes, the Septuagint never lost its authority as it was quoted in the New Testament. And it is worthwhile to note that the New Testament refers to most of the controversial passages of the Pentateuch.

1. Creation of the universe (Genesis 1)	John 1:3; Colossians 1:16
2. Creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1 - 2)	1 Timothy 2:13-14

Conclusion (continues)

3. Marriage of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1 - 2)	1 Timothy 2:13
4. Temptation of the woman (Genesis 3)	1 Timothy 2:14
5. Disobedience and sin of Adam (Genesis 3)	Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22
6. Sacrifices of Abel and Cain (Genesis 4)	Hebrews 11:4
7. Murder of Abel by Cain (Genesis 4)	1 John 3:12; Luke 11:51
8. Birth of Seth (Genesis 4)	Luke 3:38
9. The taking of Enoch (Genesis 5)	Hebrews 11:5
10. Marriage before the Flood (Genesis 7)	Luke 17:27
11. The Flood and destruction of man (Genesis 7)	Matthew 24:37-39
12. Preservation of Noah and his family (Genesis 8 - 9)	2 Peter 2:5
13. Genealogy of Shem (Genesis 10)	Luke 3:35-36
14. Birth of Abraham (Genesis 11)	Luke 3:34
15. Call of Abraham (Genesis 12 - 13)	Hebrews 11:8
16. Tithes to Melchizedek (Genesis 14)	Hebrews 7:1-3
17. Justification of Abraham (Genesis 15)	Romans 4:3
18. Ishmael (Genesis 16)	Galatians 4:21-24
19. Lot and Sodom (Genesis 18 - 19)	Luke 17:28-32
20. Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21)	Hebrews 11:11
21. Promise of Isaac (Genesis 22)	Hebrews 11:18
22. Offering of Isaac (Genesis 22)	Hebrews 11:17
23. Trial and honor of Joseph (Genesis 37, 38, 39, 40, 41)	Acts 7:9-10
24. The burning bush (Exodus 3:6)	Luke 20:37
25. Exodus through the Red Sea (Exodus 14:22)	1 Corinthians 10:1-2
26. Provision of water and manna (Exodus 16:4; 17:6)	John 6:31, 49-51; 1 Corinthians 10:3-5
27. Lifting up serpent in wilderness (Numbers 21:9)	John 3:14

References:
1. Geisler NL, Nix WE. *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.