

Bible Basics – The Inspired Authors

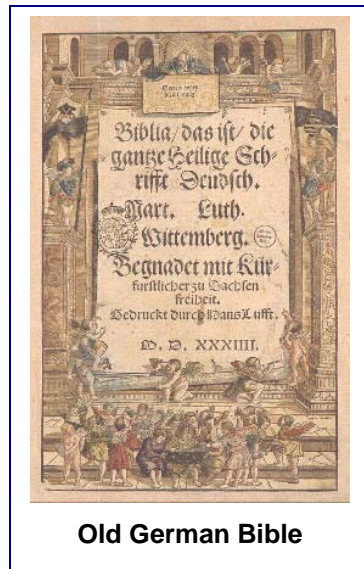
Overview

Often, when we read the bible it seems like that there are many authors – and this is true since earthly authors wrote the inspired words of God. These authors came from many walks of life and in many different periods of time. We see this very clearly on the very first pages of the bible in the book of Genesis.

In the beginning of Genesis there are two quite different accounts of the creation event. This is not due to a mistake or conflict since two different authors wrote the accounts from their position in life. This is particularly so in the Old Testament. Authorship in the New Testament is more clearly defined but you can still the different type of author.

The Jewish mentality and culture

Again, we have to keep in mind that the mentality of the Jew in the documentation of the Word was different from you and I use. They never intended their writings to be history book nor a science book. They were writing about what they felt God was telling them through the prophets, what they observed in nature, and how to live.



Old German Bible

Who are the biblical types of authors?

In the Pentateuch which are the first 5 books of the Bible you will find the concept of different authorship very clearly. You can find 4 separate but complex sources for the Word. They are the **Yahwist**, **Elohism**, **Priestly** and **Deuteronomism** - abbreviated as Y, E, P and D

– characteristics. A brief discussion of this as follows:

- The **Yahwist** is concrete and imaginative and you will find the name of God translated as Lord when this style is used. The Yahwist is responsible for the second chapter of Genesis where you can detect a change in the order of creation from Chapter one.
- The **Elohism** prefers the generic name for God – **Elohim** - and is more sober and moralistic. See 1 Samuel 10:5 for an example.
- The **Priestly** style will be obvious from its emphasis on genealogy (see Matthew 1:1-17) and worship rules (see the book of Leviticus). They would emphasize the Sabbath Day, preserving the traditions associated with worship and the Temple.
- The **Deuteronomism** influence comes out in the centralization of worship in the Jerusalem temple – which you will find in the book that carries its name - Deuteronomy. This is a homiletic style in presentation of the Hebrew law.

Many authors but one inspirational source

Each writer used his particular style and needs when he wrote the Word and you will sometimes find them intermixed in the same book, chapter or verse. As mentioned above, this is very well shown in the book of Genesis. Chapter One has an account of creation that presents man as the climax of creation and after the other creatures. Chapter Two is chiefly concerned with the creation of man who is now shown as being made before the other creatures which are made for man's sake. To the Hebrew writer there is no discontinuity here and both were considered of great importance to them because God was still the inspiration for the Word.