

the early part of it. But then, probably during the exile, a whole school of writers connected with the priesthood, wrote a document to glorify the priesthood and exalt its importance. This they call the P document, the Priestly document. This document gave a complete history which paralleled the others to a very large extent. After this P document circulated for a time, they say it was combined with JED by another redactor, the redactor of JEDP, who made the Pentateuch as we have it.

Those are the stages which are held by practically all the critics. Many of them would also say that J was made up of J1, J2, J3, and J4 and that there were various redactors who combined these, and they do the same with E and P. Some would say that this is not true of JE but only of P. But they all have, as you see, quite a series of redactors. The essence of their view is that they were complete and distinct documents which circulated independently before being combined, i.e., they were not merely supplementation. Most critics hold that E was written in Ephraim, the northern kingdom, not in Judah at all, but in the northern kingdom a century or so later.

To repeat, they say that J and E were combined by a redactor, and then the combined JE circulated independently, for a long time, but after another document D was written, and circulated independently, then a redactor combined it with JE. There was a whole series of redactors, and then eventually a redactor combined P with JED. Nearly all of them hold there were several divisions of P which were combined over a period of time by various redactors, but eventually you have P complete and you have JED complete, and then the two were combined together. It was formerly said that probably the D document was written by Hilkiyah the Priest in the time of Josiah and then hidden in the temple in order that it could be found, but that theory has largely been given up today. Now many hold that it was written sometime in the previous century by someone else. Many of them no longer believe that Hilkiyah was lying when he said this was an old document; they think he was deceived about the matter, but that it was written sometime within that century. There is also considerable discussion as to whether it was written in the northern or southern kingdom. Lately, they tend to think it was in the northern kingdom.