

The subpoints under this I would like to mention are:

A. This agreement was never perfect, i.e. the alleged consensus of scholarship. We noted how all through the 19th Century there was the supplementary theory held by most scholars, and at the end of the century some men still held to it. Some men of the older scholars. There were many different views which were held by many different individuals. Although since 1880 all the younger scholars have accepted the distinction between P and JE in just about in the same form, there has never been an agreement as to the exact division between J and E. There are tremendous differences in the viewpoint as to where J ends and where E begins. There is no exact consensus of opinion on that.

Some who accept most of the criticism have written with the idea of trying to prove that E never existed, that E is simply supplementation to J and other such viewpoints as that. In the last 50 years there have been quite a number of critical scholars who have advanced new individual theories for the arrangement of the books, theories which have not found great acceptance to any extent by others, but have been adopting the same general methods and carrying it through with quite different results than those which are held by the bulk of those who held the critical theory.

The consensus was never perfect--this agreement.

B. This Consensus shows, not the truth of the hypothesis but its most defensible form. Given that there are such documents and that there are two main ones P and JE, then the attempt is made to see are there more indications in the verse to put it in P or to put it in JE? One such indication would be, What makes a unified document that gives you a whole story? How do you divide it in such a way that there are two parallels--one in one document and one is in the other?

Many scholars have studied it with the attempt to find out exactly what is most probable on this line, and it shows not the truth of the hypothesis, but given the hypothesis it's the best way you can work it out. That is all it shows, and even with that there are as we have noticed a great many points where it is necessary to say a redactor has interfered with it here. He has changed the name God to Lord; he has changed the name Lord to God. He has changed male and female to man and his wife. He has made this or that or the other alteration.

C. (I touched under A but will mention it here for purposes of completeness) Critical positions varied widely until 1878 when Wellhausen's development theory fixed it in a definite form, which has been accepted by the great bulk of scholars ever since that time. Among the many different viewpoints which were held and presented by different writers in those days, now people will go back to 1830 and find one man who wrote something that sounds quite a bit like Wellhausen, and they will say he was a great precursor of the Wellhausen theory! And a man who was not even thought of in his day--