

God Speaks Through People, by Frank H. Morgan, illustrated by Ian Campbell
A Student's Reading Book for Intermediates (12-14 years of age, grades
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"There are inconsistencies in the Bible. If we are going to read it intelligently and understand what God is saying to us through it, then we must recognize this." (p. 18)

"When you first read the story of Saul and David, it looks like one story. If you read it very carefully, you will find it is a mixture of two or more stories woven together. One group of people in Israel wanted a king. They felt they would never be a great nation until they had one. Another group did not want a permanent king. They believed that all the evil which came upon the nation came because they chose a king as their leader instead of God. When the Old Testament was put together, both stories of the choosing of the king were retained. These stories represent two accounts of the same event written from two different points of view.

Ordinary readers like ourselves would not be able to tell these stories apart, but skilled biblical scholars can, and they have given names to them. In algebra you let the unknown equal x. It could be any other symbol, but it has to have a name. Scholars call these differing accounts or stories "documents", because they were not always part of the Bible but had a separate existence at one time. They are known as J, E, D, P, and the Chronicler.

J is the oldest, and bears this letter because it always refers to God as "Yahweh". The scholars who gave this name were German, and the German spelling is "Jahweh". E is the next, and is so called because it refers to God as "Elohim". D is the next one, and is so called because most of it is found in the book of Deuteronomy. P is later still, and bears this letter because it represents the final editing done by the priests. The Chronicler contributed the history found in the Books of Chronicles and joined his writings to those of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Contradictory stories in the Bible can be accounted for, because two historians recording the same event had different opinions about its importance and meaning." p. 19