

*Evolutionary Approaches Now Survived*

Book Review: The Religion of Israel, From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile, by Yehezkel Kaufmann; translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.  
 Review in Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol LXXXI, Part II, June 1962, David Noel Freedman, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, pp. 185-190

p. 186 It would be a mistake, nevertheless, to treat the book as an anachronism. Kaufmann is too forceful and independent a thinker to be ignored. It may be of special importance to us that he has refocused attention on the earlier results of critical scholarship. Whatever the developments and refinements in recent years, the foundations of modern biblical scholarship were erected by Wellhausen and his associates (based on the work of precursors). While Wellhausen's reconstruction of the history of Israelite religion has proved untenable, his evolutionary approach has survived. While there has been widespread dissatisfaction with the details of the documentary hypothesis, the classic pattern, JEDP, for the sources of the Pentateuch is still widely accepted. Kaufmann has challenged frontally the whole Wellhausen structure, and proposed an independent synthesis of Israel's religion and literature. Kaufmann accepts the basic source analysis of the Pentateuch, but reverses the order of D and P. He argues persuasively and in detail that P is pre-exilic throughout its contents, does not presuppose the doctrine of the single central sanctuary promulgated in D, but clearly antedates the latter. There are many implications in such a radical shift, and it will be necessary to restudy all the evidence before a verdict can be reached, if one is possible. In view of the complexity of the material in each source, and the apparent incorporation of older and newer elements, a clear decision as to priority may never be reached. It is the present view of the reviewer that D and P are roughly parallel and contemporary sources, and that direct dependence of either upon the other cannot be demonstrated.