

DEFENDING THE BIBLE'S CREDIBILITY
"Part I: Answering Liberal Theology's 'Higher Criticism':"
A. Answering The (Literary-Analytical) Documentary Hypothesis
(2 Peter 1:16-21)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Early last week, I received a call from Bobby Johnson, Jr. about the battle Reverend Walter Kalasnik is having with his cancer.

I called Reverend Kalasnik, and he sounded weak but thankful for the call. One of his vertebrae has collapsed, creating a temporary duel with pain, but he is handling it well with codeine and Tylenol.

In thinking of this Christian brother's probable 1998 departure to be with Christ, and of his past ministries in so many area churches over his decades of faithful ministry, I wondered what OUR future holds without a Walt Kalasnik around!

(2) On December 27th I attended a presentation by a scientist on the Bethlehem Star at the C. C. S. U.'s planetarium. He laid out the stellar formations over Palestine at the birth of Christ and proceeded to share his view of what the "Bethlehem S tar" was all about. He revives an old theory that the illusionary but *naturally* explained orbital "back-ups" of Jupiter and Saturn in the direction of Bethlehem (SSW) from Jerusalem near the constellation Pisces was what excited the magi. Though I like to commend such a presentation to unbelievers as a Gospel witness, I know that the Bethlehem star was **not** these planets: Scripture says the star pointed out the **abode** of Christ *in* Bethlehem to magi traveling the 7 miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem (Mtt. 2:9), something **naturally recurring** planetary orbital illusions cannot do!

Afterwards, in talking with others who had witnessed the same program, I had to report that the Scientist's presentation was not fully Biblical! On the way home I wondered, "Will we ever make headway with the truth in an environment where the Bible's miracles have been so long explained away as natural events?!"

(3) While visiting the Terwilliger's home on New Year's Day, I got into a discussion with Mike before we ate supper about the seeming futility of many who braved the cold in Times Square just to watch a lit ball drop on New Year's Eve! We noted how so many of the unsaved are living lives of pointlessness, something obvious at New Year's Eve!

Well, with seeming setbacks that match steps forward even in the CHRISTIAN experience, let alone the plight of those without the Lord this New Year, where's the MEANING to our life experiences for 1998 -- how is life not a creaky treadmill?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need:* "Some say the Pentateuch is not God-inspired under Moses' pen, but that SEVERAL authors wrote these 'errant' books! Well, the New Testament records JESUS' witness that Moses wrote them all (Mtt. 19:4-8; Jn. 7:19), so who's right, and HOW do we know?!"**

- I. "Liberal" theologians allege that the Bible is not God-inspired, but needs more authoritative, "higher" scholars to explain its "myths".
- II. Many of them deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, holding to the following PILLARS of the Documentary Hypothesis: [Cassuto (Prof. of Bible (1940s) at the Heb. Univ., Jer.), The Doc. Hyp. (Jer.: Magnes Press, 1941 [trans. & repr. 1972 at Central Press, Jer.] p. 14; '73 DTS Notes, B. K. Waltke (Ph. D., Harv.; Th. D., DTS)]
 - A. The 2 *names* of Elohim & Jahweh in the Hebrew text used for God **allegedly** reveal 2 authors, each favoring a name, Ibid, Cassuto, p. 14f.
 - B. Variations in language and style, like saying "100 and 20" versus "20 and 100" for "120" **allegedly** reveal multiple authors, Ibid. p. 14, 52.
 - C. There are **alleged** contradictions of viewpoint in the Pentateuch, indicating it was compiled by multiple authors. For example, it is **felt** that texts using **Elohim** show a more **distant** God than those using **Jahweh**, implying opposing beliefs by 2 authors, Ibid., p. 14, 55-56.
 - D. There are **alleged** duplications and repetitions of the narratives that "betray" an errant duplication of but one "actual" historical account. For example, it is **alleged** that Gen. 1's creation account **followed** by God's **resting** from creation in ch. 2:1-3 to be **followed** in turn by Gen. 2:4-25 where God **again** creates shows **two** authors wrote **conflicting mythical legends** of origins, Ibid., p. 14, 69-70!
 - E. There are **alleged composite details** of one section of a writing in another, indicating errant excess duplications by multiple authors. For example, it is **alleged** that Jacob's pose as Esau by use of his clothes **and ALSO** by use of hairy skins proves the existence of **two accounts of one event** by **two** authors with **differing** views, Ibid., p. 14, 86ff!
- III. **Yet, each of these PILLARS fails under close examination:**
 - A. **All five pillars** of this hypothesis **fail** under close scholarly analysis:
 1. Re: the **first** pillar, that of multiple divine names to mean multiple authors, the Dec. '78 National Geographic, p. 737-738 shows that ancient Semitic peoples used **several** names for **one** deity, annulling the reason to assume multiple authors behind 2 divine names.
 2. Re: the **second** pillar, that of variations in language & style to mean multiple authorship, Cassuto corrects linguistic errors by Liberals:

- a. The Hebrew writers used the **descending** order (100 + 20) when a number existed **alone** but an **ascending** one (20 + 100) where it appeared in a **list** of several numbered items, Ibid., p. 52!
 - b. He notes **other** similar language use errors by Liberals, p. 42-54.
 3. Regarding the **third** pillar, alleged contradictions in viewpoints, Cassuto explains how the different divine names detail God's different **roles**; "Elohim" pictures God as Creator and "Jahweh" has God in His covenant relation with Israel, Ibid., p. 56-68.
 4. Regarding the **fourth** pillar, that of alleged duplications revealing multiple authors, Cassuto shows how Gen. 2 **purposely omits** large parts of creation (like the heavens) in aiming **only to comment** on the **moral** issues of Genesis 1, **typical** of ANE styles, Ibid., p. 69ff.
 5. Of the **fifth** pillar, that of literary composites to show multiple authors, Cassuto shows how dividing the context of Jacob's trick to appear to be Esau into 2 accounts counters the whole **point** of the **event** itself! The event is **one**, reported by **one**, Ibid., p. 84-105.
 6. Cassuto summarized his case, saying: "Since . . . the whole structure of the documentary hypothesis rests on the five pillars enumerated . . . and subsequently we found that all these pillars were without substance, it follows that this . . . edifice has . . . nothing to support it and is founded on air." (Ibid., p. 100)
- B. Also, Scripture's witness fully opposes the Documentary Hypothesis:
1. Jesus noted that even every part of a letter in Scripture's autograph manuscripts bears the Creator God's authority, Mtt. 5:18 :
 - a. Jesus said every jot & tittle in Scripture is noteworthy, Mt. 5:18.
 - b. The "jot" is a small Hebrew letter, the **yodh**, and a tittle is a stroke in a Hebrew letter that distinguishes it from another like the mark on a capital "Q" that makes it different from an "O"!
 - c. Since the existence of the universe is tied to the authority of these letters, they bear the Creator-God's authority, Mtt. 5:18!
 2. Moses wrote the Pentateuch acc. to Jesus, Mtt. 19:4-8 & Jn. 7:19.
 3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that all of Scriptures are also God-inspired!
 4. Thus, since Scripture asserts that every part of the Pentateuch was written by Moses under the Creator-God's authoritative inspiration, Scripture completely opposes the Documentary Hypothesis!

Concluding Application: The Documentary Hypothesis is errant, and we can trust the Pentateuch and Christ's salvation Gospel which it upholds, enjoying God's blessing in heeding His Word, Psalm 1!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

The Lord pointedly illustrated this lesson to me **both** on **New Year's Day** as well as on this season's **Christmas Day**:

(1) After sitting down for supper at Mike and Pam's on New Year's Day, a call came in from Janice Allard, Mike's sister. As Mike heard her share some wonderful news, my mind raced back several years to what had begun as an **uncomfortable** event!

One summer afternoon, I was splitting firewood with Mike Rindflesh's motorized splitter. A young man was helping me with the wood when suddenly I got a knotty chunk jammed on the splitter wedge. Knowing I was Mike's "minister" and not wanting me to put myself out, the youth grabbed my maul to start banging on the chunk while I tried to wriggle it free with a gloved hand. As he was taking some whacks, I abruptly moved my hand in the way of the maul to adjust the chunk without warning, and the maul glanced off the edge of my gloved hand, pinching a finger just a bit. My hand naturally jerked back, and the young man thought he had seriously injured me! I tried to encourage him, pointing out that I had moved my hand on my own, and that there was no significant or lasting damage!

Yet, he was so distraught, that he left the job early. I then wrote him a note, slipping in a \$5 bill for him to use at Bess Eaton's on me, encouraging him to forget about the incident! Then he felt better!

Well, back to the call to Mike from Janice -- she had phoned to relay information that this young man had announced to her that New Year's Day that he had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior!

I then realized that the **Lord** had possibly used the pinched finger incident years ago as a **stepping-stone** to bringing the youth to Christ! If so, the "mauling" of the finger was **wonderfully worthwhile!**

(2) On Christmas Day, a spiritually very needy party rang my doorbell, and that "interruption" led to a counseling session December 26th that could produce a reconciliation for a number of people! Thus, the "interruption" on Christmas Day was **wonderfully worthwhile!**

God illustrated to me, both on Christmas Day and later on New Year's Day, that He plans to take what may APPEAR to be "downer" events and, using His cross-to-glory path, make great witnessing opportunities and honor for us out of them! Now, that's MEANINGFUL!! It doesn't get any better than that!