

# Bible History Survey

## Part II: The Bible as a Historical Source

Ten Basic periods of biblical history:

1. Primeval/Proto-History (to 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, Genesis 1–11)
2. The Patriarchs (early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, Genesis 12 – 50)
3. Egyptian Sojourn and Exodus (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, Exodus – Deuteronomy)
4. Settlement in Canaan (mid to late 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, Deuteronomy, Joshua – Judges)
5. United Monarchy (early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, 1 Samuel, 1 Chronicles)
6. Divided Monarchy (early – mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, II Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles)
7. Exile and Return to Judah (6<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, II Chronicles, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah)
8. Intertestamental Period (4<sup>th</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, 1 & 2 Maccabees)
9. Life & Ministry of Jesus (early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the Four Gospels)
10. Apostolic era (mid to late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Acts)

How do we approach the Bible as a source of historical information? Dramatic shift in the answer to this question after the Enlightenment with the emphasis on man and his reason as the measure of knowledge (Locke, Hume, Kant, Lessing, Hegel)

Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677): Scripture a human composition written centuries after the events described

Jean Astruc (1684 – 1766): Books of Moses a composite document

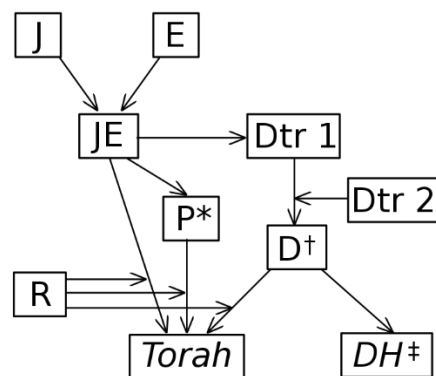
Johann Semler (1725 – 1791): Old and New Testaments not equally the word of God

Johann Eichhorn (1752 – 1827): all supernatural events described in the Bible can be explained on natural principles that were seen as miraculous by superstitious people

Ferdinand Baur (1792 – 1860): the four Gospels are later adaptations of earlier documents

David Strauss (1808 – 1874): Jesus not divine, “Jesus of history” vs. “Christ of faith”

Julius Wellhausen (1844 – 1918):



**J:** Yahwist (10th–9th century BC)

**E:** Elohist (9th century BC)

**Dtr1:** early (7th century BC) Deuteronomist historian

**Dtr2:** later (6th century BC) Deuteronomist historian

**P\*:** Priestly (6th–5th century BC)

**D†:** Deuteronomist

**R:** redactor

**DH:** Deuteronomistic history (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings)

Maximalists: accept the data given in the Bible as a source of history and use it as the framework for interpreting archaeological studies

Minimalists: accept the biblical witness only *after* external sources confirm it

**Tel-Dan Inscription:** Until 1993, there was no extra-biblical mention of David. Many scholars asserted that the David of the Bible was as historical as King Arthur. Yet in 1993, a mid-9<sup>th</sup> century BC (800s) stele was discovered in northern Israel. It is the account of an Aramean king defeating his two southern neighbors, “the king of Israel,” and “the king of the house of David.”



**Black Obelisk** of Shalmaneser III of Assyria (r. 858 – 824 BC): “The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: I received from him silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king [and] spears.”

